



HAIG HOUSING TRUST

# Newsletter

Autumn 2010



## Young Mother is awarded Borough Commander's Award for Bravery for saving the life of two people



Years of training for tough front line work in the 47th Regiment of the Royal Artillery, meant that young mother, Christina Knight, was prepared to risk her life by bravely entering a house on fire which resulted in her saving the life of another mother and her 4 year old daughter. Her selflessness was recognised and she received a certificate for bravery from the Mayor of Merton, the Borough Commander and the Fire Chief.

Christina describes what happened, *"It was freezing cold in February and I was going to stay in but decided I would take my 9 month old daughter up to the shops to buy some essentials. As I walked through the estate, I could smell burning and I could hear an alarm. As I crossed over the road, I could see smoke pouring from a top bedroom window. I called the fire service immediately on 999. There were two other women coming up the road and, without thinking, I gave them my daughter, in her buggy, for them to look*

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## John Ashmore raises over £1,700 for Haig Homes

One of our contractors, John Ashmore of JRM Property Services Ltd, known to many of our tenants throughout the country, has taken part in the 10km Edinburgh Men's Health Survival of the Fittest Challenge and has raised an impressive amount for the Trust.

He said *"I had been working for Haig Homes on the houses in Portsmouth for 10 months and I was reaching 44 and thought that while I was staying away from home for four days a week I would try and get fitter. I started running along the promenade at Southsea where we were renting accommodation.*

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**HAIG HOMES & HAIG HOUSING TRUST  
CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR OFFICE OPENING HOURS**

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# TRUSTEES, STAFF & AGENTS

## TRUSTEES

Mr Peter Cleminson CBE has joined Haig Homes as a Trustee.



**Colonel Terry English** has retired as a Trustee of Haig Housing Trust. Previously a long standing trustee of Haig Homes, Colonel English was very proactive in the foundation of Haig Housing Trust and became a founder Trustee in 2008. His unfailing support for both Trusts over the years has been enormously appreciated.



## STAFF

Rory Ingleby-MacKenzie is now Operations Director of Haig Housing Trust and Phillip Johnson has joined as Operations Manager for Haig Housing Trust.

### Retirement

Nick Greenwood, Haig Homes Finance Director of 17 years, retired at the end of August. He said, *"I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at Haig Homes but have to admit I am looking forward to pursuing my hobbies and interests"*. We



are joined by Rakesh Gulati in the role of Finance Director for both Haig Homes and Haig Housing Trust.

### Maternity Leave

We have said a temporary goodbye to Carron Gibson, Repairs Administrator, who is now on maternity leave having had Harry in October. Congratulations!



## AGENTS AND VOLUNTEER ESTATE MONITORS

Volunteer Estate Monitors monitor the 'service delivery' on their estate. One person, checks up that our service contractors do what they have been asked, and will ultimately be paid, to do.

We currently have VEMs on 15 of our estates: Ashtead (Purcell's Close), Carlisle, Enfield, Gloucester, Hampstead, Haslemere, Liverpool, Newcastle, Oxford, Penzance, Salisbury, Sheffield, Southend, Sunderland, Woolwich and Warrington.

If you are interested in becoming the Volunteer Estate Monitor for your estate, please contact Head Office on 020 8685 5777. The Volunteer Estate Monitor (VEM) is not employed by the Trust and is not a tenants' representative. The role is to check up on the estate, for example, making sure that any communal lights are working, or that contractors have cleared up properly after themselves when the job is finished, highlighting any problem with other agencies' services such as council refuse collection, and carrying out important tasks for the Trust like checking communal meter readings and returning feedback to the Trust on grounds maintenance work carried out on communal areas.

John Ashmore's fundraising for Haig Homes, continued from front page....

*Many miles of pounding the prom at night through last winter, I managed to lose three stone running every night I stayed away from home. I ran a half Marathon in September and then decided to sign up for the very challenging Men's Health Survival of the Fittest race.*

*I decided to try and raise some money for Haig Homes because we have found the tenants, on the whole, to be a delight to work for and, after completing contracts in Birmingham, Norwich, Portsmouth, Isle of Wight, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Wimborne, I wanted any money I raised to go where I could see it being spent. I like the work that Haig Homes does and wanted to support them."*

John completed the course in very quick time and describes his pain.....

*"The Edinburgh course is as hard as they get. Over 10km, it has several stings along the way which truly add distance and hardship, mainly of the steep variety! A superb setting for the start on the Royal Mile, then soon vaulting a hay bale wall then disappearing into the first of many narrow, dark and steep passages. Then up the super tough Jacob's Ladder stair climb, leading to the amazing 360 degree view from Calton Hill.*

*We scrambled through 2kms of wrecked cars, a Mad Max-esque, post-apocalyptic streetscape and then over the Army Assault Course. Descending gladly, we passed the dramatic buildings of Scottish Parliament with the crags of Holyrood Park rising above. Then we reached the waterslide, with the mini-mountain of Arthur's Seat as an impressive backdrop. Not that I noticed that for long, hurtling down the slide! Up and running again through the 1km disused Innocent Railway Tunnel complete with mirror disco ball and on through the Spider's Web and deep down into the Men's Health @ Work Zone, a bewildering array of fencing and obstacles.*

*Well, what goes down must come up, and from here there is a seemingly never-ending ascent up into the intimidating Festival Fun zone – a few minutes of 'Badger, Badger' hard core techno and you could escape once again to the streets with a climb back to the Royal Mile and the Under Armour inflatable assault course. Back down AGAIN on cobbles to the Cowgate, (my legs were really hurting by now!) and into the (in)famous Grassmarket for a 'Parkour' workout. Surely it was nearly over?! Behold your entry into West Princes Street Gardens in the shadow of Edinburgh Castle and engaging all-wheel-drive for the Land Rover Obstacle, before the final run to the mighty Men's Health Wall of Fame.*

*After this massive final effort to get to the Finish Line – I had certainly survived Edinburgh MH Survival of the Fittest 2010. A little beaten and slightly stirred. But a Survivor!"*

We are very impressed with John's achievements and are very grateful to him for the effort he has made fundraising for Haig Homes.



## Remembrance Day

Various Acts of Remembrance were held on estates throughout the UK.

If your estate has a memorial stone or similar and you would like to be provided with a wreath to lay on Remembrance Day (or Remembrance Sunday) next year, please contact Anna MacLeod on 020 8685 5781.



*Some of the tenants at Bury St Edmunds on Remembrance Day with the newly refurbished commemoration stone.*

## RAF Benevolent Fund Visit to Haig Homes

Wing Commander Paul Hewson, Regional Director of the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund for London, Home Counties & South of England attended a tea party for ex-RAF Haig Homes tenants in Morden where he made a presentation of a cheque for £15,000 to Haig Homes as a contribution "towards the cost of your (Haig Homes) continuous modernisation programme, thus benefiting RAF Veterans and their families".



*Wing Commander Paul Hewson handing over a cheque to HH Chief Executive, Major General Peter Besgrove.*

## VETERANS UK

Veterans UK can now provide locally based 'through life' support around the UK, for the Armed Forces community from its five Veterans Welfare Centres.

NORCROSS, Blackpool, Lancashire

Tel: 01253 333494

GLASGOW, Scotland

Tel: 0141 2242709

CENTURION Gosport, Hampshire

Tel: 02392 702232

IMJIN, Gloucester

Tel: 01452 510825

KIDDERMINSTER, Worcester

Tel: 0121 6262000

There is a FREE Veterans UK Helpline 0800 169 22 77 (BT Mobile, Orange or 3 Mobile customers will not be charged for this call)

These offices will concentrate on providing guidance and advice over the telephone:

8.15 – 17.15 Monday - Thursday

8.15 – 16.15 Friday

[www.veterans-uk.info](http://www.veterans-uk.info)

## Families of War Veterans could be missing out on inheritance tax savings

The family of an 85 year old injured in Burma in 1944 who then died in 2006 of causes attributable to his earlier injuries have avoided large inheritance taxes by using the 'death in active service' exemption.

It's not only Second World War veterans' families who are the only possible claimants. The rules apply to anyone who dies from wounds, accidents or disease contracted whilst on active service with the armed forces, so would include those who have served in other conflicts such as Korea, the Falklands, Northern Ireland, Iraq or Afghanistan. Their families may be eligible for the complete exemption from inheritance tax. **Amendments to death certificates can be made** with supporting evidence that injuries or afflictions received formed an ongoing problem through life.

Philip Reed, the solicitor who used this tax exemption said, "*Veterans UK agreed the cause of death was linked to those injuries and a full exemption was granted by the MoD. I am sure many families are not aware of this. It is really important for veterans to record their sustained injuries when making their will. If we have the information in advance, we can present a much better case to the MoD*".

## Digital switchover

The UK's current analogue TV signal is being replaced with a digital signal which everyone will receive through an aerial (Freeview).

All Haig Homes tenants should have received a leaflet explaining the switchover. If you do not have one and would like one, please phone 020 8685 5777 to request a copy.

To keep your TV service, you will need to convert your TVs to digital before your area's switchover date which are as follows:

**Already completed:** Border, West Country Granada, Wales, STV North, West

### Other areas:

**Channel Islands** due to switch on 17th November 2010

**STV Central** switch has started and will be complete by June 2011

**Yorkshire** due to switch in August 2011

**Central** switch starts in March 2011 due to complete in September 2011

**Anglia** switches from March 2011 to November 2011

**London, Meridian, Tyne Tees and Ulster** are all due to switch in 2012

For a more accurate prediction you can enter your postcode and house number in the postcode checker [www.digitaluk.co.uk](http://www.digitaluk.co.uk) where you can also find further information.

**Still unsure? Please call Digital UK on 08456 50 50 50**

**digitaluk**

## Poppy Calls: Free Handyman Service Goes National

The pilot scheme set up by The Royal British Legion which offers assistance with jobs in the home for ex-Serving members of the Armed Forces has now been rolled out throughout the UK.

Designed to help members of the ex-Forces community to remain more independent in their own homes, Poppy Calls offers help with awkward jobs around the house, such as minor repairs. A Legion 'Handyman' or 'Fitter' has been on call in several areas across the country to provide necessary assistance and practical advice, with the use of a Legion-branded and well equipped van.

The initiative is part of the Legion's welfare service 'Poppy Support' and is offered to those who have served in the Armed Forces and their widows or dependents.

Further information on Poppy Calls can be obtained by calling **01480 478031**.

## Recruitment campaign launched for 29,000 Census Collector roles

Thousands of temporary part time and full time jobs are available from supervisory roles to general collectors in 2,000 locations across England and Wales. The roles are ideal for:

- anyone looking to earn extra money
- community focused individuals
- parents returning to work
- students and graduates
- semi-retired, retired and pensioners

Contract periods range from four weeks to ten months. These roles provide flexibility around working hours – there is the choice of working 15, 25 or 37 hours a week, so individuals can fit the work around their current commitments. These are great opportunities to earn some extra cash close to home, as well as helping out the local community. Information from the census will be used to make important decisions around future policies, planning, services and funding for local communities for years to come.

Recruitment will continue during 2010 into early 2011. If you are interested go to [www.censusjobs.co.uk](http://www.censusjobs.co.uk)



## HomeSwapper Mutual Exchange Service

Haig Homes is a member of a mutual exchange matching website which our tenants can use FREE of charge. You can register at [www.homeswapper.co.uk](http://www.homeswapper.co.uk) and, once your application has been approved by Haig Homes, you will be able to find tenants (both Haig Homes and other landlords) who wish to exchange properties. HomeSwapper will e-mail you with details of possible exchange partners.

If you do not have access to the Internet, local libraries have internet access available for public use or you can ask family and friends. HomeSwapper will send you details of possible exchange partners via your mobile phone.

**Please note you would only be able to exchange your home with someone who is eligible for Haig Homes housing, they should be ex-Service themselves or be a widow or widower of a Service person or be responsible for the care of a dependent of an ex-Service person.**

*If you have any questions about this scheme please contact Roy Chamberlain, Housing Needs Manager.*



## Tickets For Troops Marks First Anniversary with Bumper Christmas Giveaway

TICKETS For Troops have announced a bumper Christmas giveaway of free tickets for the Armed Forces and their families ranging from Top Gear Live Shows, to England football matches and seasonal pantomimes to mark its first anniversary.

Since it was launched last year over 70,000 troops have signed up and over 250,000 tickets have been generously donated by sporting organisations, musical venues, acts and theatres.

*Members of the Armed Forces can register for Tickets for Troops through the website [www.ticketsfortroops.org.uk](http://www.ticketsfortroops.org.uk)*

## INTERNAL DECORATING ALLOWANCE

The decorating allowance starts on the first anniversary of the tenancy start date. Thereafter, the annual allowance is added each April

- The allowance can only be 'saved' for a maximum of three years
- If there is any breach of tenancy, the allowance will be suspended until rectified

**We no longer 'pay back' on receipts\* for decorating items and have introduced a store card to use at a nominated store to purchase specified decorating items. So, if you want to take advantage of your decorating allowance, you must use a store card. To get the card, apply in writing to the Trust choosing either a Homebase or B&Q store card.**

The card will be credited with the total allowance entitlement which can then be used, providing:

- There have been no rent arrears within the last 6 months (excluding Housing Benefit arrears which are paid direct to the Trust)
- There have been no other breaches of the Tenancy Agreement for 6 months
- There are no other monies owed to the Trust, for example, for a rechargeable repair

If you want to use your own decorator, we will pay you back the proportion covered by your allowance on receipt of a copy of the decorator's invoice. We will not pay the decorator direct.

All tenants should have a leaflet with the list of decorating items, the allowance will cover. If you do not have a copy please telephone 020 8685 5777 and request a copy.

*\*Jersey and Lyminster are exceptions as there are no specified stores in the area.*



## POLICY UPDATES

Two policy leaflets are enclosed with this newsletter. Please place them in your Tenants Handbook and Information Pack, discarding the earlier versions. The two new leaflets are:

- Pets
- Transfers

A full review of the Tenant Selection and Allocation Policy is under way. We have started with a full review of the waiting list, contacting all applicants to check whether they still need to be considered for housing with the Trust. If so, they have been asked to complete a new form and the applications have been re-assessed. This will give us up-to-date information as to who is seeking to be housed by the Trust, the size of households, their circumstances and where they want to live. The results will inform the policy review.

Requests made at the conference to review existing tenancies where a divorced/separated spouse gains a new partner with no Service connection and when dependant children of divorced / separated spouse leave full time education will be considered.

## Tenant Services Authority: Service Standards

The Trust is expected to comply with the Tenant Services Authority's 'Regulatory Framework' for all Housing Associations, published in November 2009 which includes consultation on the local standard for landlord services.

We have therefore set out our standards, known as our 'Local Offer', we are offering to meet in relation to the six service areas identified by the TSA.

Due to the wide geographic spread and the small number of Trust properties in any one location we have developed a national standards document and we are asking for your views on the draft document which is enclosed with this newsletter.

We believe that there are two parties to the relationship between the Trust and its beneficiaries so we would be especially interested to know what you think tenants might offer in return.

*Please send your comments to: [haig@haighomes.org.uk](mailto:haig@haighomes.org.uk) or in writing to: Pat Horgan, Policy and Performance Manager by 15th January 2011.*

## TENANTS CONFERENCE 2011

The 2011 Tenants Conference for both tenants of Haig Homes and Haig Housing Trust will be held in Birmingham on **Wednesday 16th March 2011**. The previous conferences have been a success and tenants have found the day interesting. Hopefully, holding the conference in the Midlands, will enable more people to attend this time.

If you are interested in attending the conference or even if you are undecided at the moment but would like to be kept informed, please let us know by one of the following methods:

- Fill in the form on the back page and send it to Haig Homes
- Telephone 020 8685 5781 and give your name and address
- Send an email to [anna@haighomes.org.uk](mailto:anna@haighomes.org.uk) giving your name and address and put 'Interest in Conference' in the subject bar

Travel expenses to and from the conference venue will be paid and, where necessary and by prior arrangement, the Trust will provide overnight accommodation. In addition, people attending the conference will get a cash incentive. We will gather information about your specific needs, once you have registered your interest in attending the conference or being told more about it.

This is the only opportunity to register your interest in the conference, it is unlikely there will be a reminder sent out. This does not commit you to attend but, if we don't hear from you, we will assume you are not interested.

If you have any queries, please contact Anna Macleod on 020 8685 5781 or [anna@haighomes.org.uk](mailto:anna@haighomes.org.uk)



*Tenants attending the 2010 conference held in Sheffield*

## WHY AREN'T ALL JOBS 'POST INSPECTED' RATHER THAN EXPECTING TENANTS TO FILL IN SATISFACTION FORMS?

In line with most social landlords, we carry out an automatically generated sample of 'Post Inspections' which can be a surveyor, agent or other approved person's visit or a telephone call to the tenant. Our policy for inspections is as follows:

5% of repairs valued between £350-£1,000 have post inspections

100% repairs over £1,000 have post inspections

We will also contact any tenant raising an issue on their satisfaction questionnaire and that may result in a post inspection as well. It is important we receive your completed questionnaires back quickly, particularly if you feel there is a problem, so we can get it sorted for you as soon as possible. Currently about 25% of people return their questionnaires and the information is very useful for us. In addition to the post inspection targets, and in response to a request made by tenants at the last conference, we are now piloting a scheme to telephone 10% of the people who have not returned their questionnaire to find out if things are alright. If someone from the office rings to ask about your satisfaction about the repair, it is in response to this request and we would appreciate if tenants recognised that we are trying to help and are interested in the response. Remember, if you return your questionnaire, your name automatically gets put into a draw each month for a prize of £25 if your name is picked.

Recent winners include:

Mr Fisher, War Memorial Cottages, Norwich

Mrs Wilson, Mount Merrion Avenue, Belfast

Mr Rouse, Artillery Place, Harrow

Mr Winn, Netherhampton Road, Salisbury

Mrs Gardener, Haig Place, Birmingham

Mrs Dann, Haig Close, Bristol

## SOME EMPTY PROPERTIES SEEM TO TAKE A LONG TIME TO RE-LET AND INVOLVE A LOT OF WORK WHICH MUST BE EXPENSIVE

In an ideal world, tenants would leave their properties in a good condition but, sadly, sometimes the Trust can incur high costs bringing properties up to a liveable and re-lettable standard

Circumstances include:

- A tenant leaving the property in a shocking state
- An elderly tenant may move to a nursing home or pass away. If there is no-one to clear the property, this expense has to be borne by the Trust
- A change in Housing Regulations may mean empty properties must achieve a higher, and more costly, standard than previously achieved.



*Examples of how two Haig Homes tenants left their homes. Haig Homes contractors have to be employed to clear the property before the refurbishments can be made before re-letting adding to the cost.*

## TACKLE REPAIRS EARLIER BEFORE THEY GET WORSE

Where possible, repairs are dealt with before they get worse. However, priorities set by the Trust may not match the priorities of the tenants. For example, we may leave a repair as we know that a full refurbishment of the same area is scheduled in the near future. However, there have been times when legitimate repairs have been overlooked and have got worse but fortunately, the new repairs reporting system is redressing this problem.

## Winter is coming!

In January and February of this year, we experienced some very bad weather and many households were affected. To avoid some of the problems of last year, the Trust is considering grit bins on some estates where possible but it may be sensible to follow some simple steps if this winter is as bad:

- Buy some salt before you might need it – you can get suitable salt from garden centres. Spread the cost by getting a little salt each month and before an emergency causes shops to run out
- Keep a wind up torch in case of power cuts
- Get in some essential supplies – tinned and dried food
- Be a good neighbour ... check on your elderly neighbours regularly
- If you don't have to go out, don't
- Have secondary back-up heaters or hot water bottles and blankets
- Clear paths quickly; soft snow is easier to clear than impacted snow
- Cover external pipes before a cold snap and, if your pipe has frozen, try to defrost it slowly using a hot water bottle
- Don't use dishwashers when it is really cold outside as the hot water on the cold waste pipe may cause problems



**Remember:** To prevent excessive condensation, keep air flow going. Open windows a little especially when cooking or bathing.

*If you would like more information about how to avoid condensation problems, please contact the Property Services Department for a leaflet.*

## Practical Housekeeping

**Apart from some charitable donations and grants, the money the Trust uses to carry out repairs etc on tenants' homes, comes from the rental income paid by tenants. Each call out and each repair, costs money and there are some things that some, maybe thoughtless tenants do which impact on the other tenants. For example:**

- Fly tipping things like dumping sofas etc – you can call your local council and, in most areas, they will take large items away free of charge or for a nominal fee. If the Trust has to take it away, the cost is borne by tenants.
- Missing Contractors, Surveyors or Tenants Liaison Officers' appointments. The Trust is charged by contractors for missed appointments and this is therefore ultimately paid for by other tenants.

**There are other things which save money for everyone:**

- Please read the Maintenance Policy leaflet in your Tenants Handbook and Information Pack to familiarise yourself with which items are the tenants responsibility and which are the responsibility of the Trust.
- Look through the Handy Hints Booklet in the Tenants Handbook and Information Pack and check it before calling Haig Homes for a repair. It may be a very simple job to put right and by doing it yourself, you will save the Trust, and therefore all tenants, money.
- Large repairs, which could have been prevented by the tenant, may be recharged to the tenant. For example, keep your outside gulleys (at the bottom of drainpipes) clear. By letting them get clogged up, the water cannot drain away and will seep out causing damp. Using too much washing powder or pouring cooking oil or fats down sinks and WCs may clog the pipes and gulleys. Any repairs needed, caused by this damp, may be considered to be the tenant's fault if the gully has been allowed to become blocked. This cost may be re-charged to the tenant. Look at Page 49 of the Handy Hints Booklet to see what to do.

**Remember to call Haig Homes, not your agent, for any repairs needed  
Telephone 0845 602 4225 (calls are charged at a local rate but calls from  
mobile phones may be higher) or 020 8685 5777 and choose  
Option 1 for Gas and Option 2 for Repairs**

# TENANTS NEWS

## Armed Forces Day Commemorations and Celebrations

Various events and celebrations were held throughout the country for Armed Forces Day 26 June 2010 and there were events organised by tenants on some of our estates.

Mary Smith from Sheffield arranged for the Armed Forces Flag to be flown from their flagpole at Ogden Close and, in Bury St Edmunds, Haig Homes tenants gathered together for a barbeque. Mark Reavell was in charge of the cooking, he said, *"On the afternoon of Saturday 26 June, the residents of Minden Close held a barbeque for Forces Day and a collection for Help for Heroes. The afternoon was very successful and everyone commented on what a great day they had. The residents donated the food which I then cooked for everyone. The guests were asked if they would kindly make a small donation to Help for Heroes on arrival, they all happily did so, making a final donation amount of £100. To help the day go extra well, the managing director of Marlow's Home and Garden kindly donated a 2-seat bench for the residents to use in the back garden.*

*We were blessed with beautiful weather and entertained by recordings of military band music both new and old, all in all everyone had a wonderful day."*



## Snowdon Challenge

In May, Roy Chamberlain, our Housing Needs Manager, with a friend Don MacLeod, took on the Snowdon 500 Challenge in aid of Prostate Cancer Research. They raised over £1,600 towards the total £160,000. The challenge involved trekking to the summit of Snowdon, the highest mountain in Wales, and back to base, a round trip of 9 miles, within six hours.

Roy said, *"It was quite extraordinary trekking up the steep side of Snowdon, arriving pretty exhausted at the top, to be faced with happy energetic people, including our wives, who had come up in the train!! It was a great experience; we arrived at the top in pretty good shape and were even happier after a pint of good Welsh beer back at the bottom!"*



## 60 years with Haig Homes

Several tenants have celebrated 60 years with the Trust this year. Mrs Knowles and Mr Chapman at Douglas Haig Road, West Earham, Norwich, Mrs Sellwood in Portsmouth and Mrs Robinson at Mount Merrion Avenue in Belfast.

Mrs Marjorie Spencer of Liverpool will celebrate 60 years with Haig Homes on 16th January. Marjorie has fond memories of her time in the house, *"I have loved this house and am now the only tenant of the original 10 to be here. We were shown the plans of the proposed 10 houses to be built in Allerton and watched the first footing being put in. It became a Sunday outing to see how our house was being built. I say 'ours' but I know that the house is the property of Haig Homes but for 60 years I am proud to say I've paid my full rent to the Trust. The house we chose is called 'The Grange' in memory of all who have been wounded or died in the 59th division of the Artillery.*



*Mr Jack Chapman and his wife Evelyn were presented with a certificate by Ian Lonsdale, the local Agent, on their 60th anniversary of becoming tenants of the Trust.*

*All through the time in the Army, my husband Arthur's commanding officer was Brigadier Crawford (of Crawford Biscuit Company) and they served right through the nightmare days and nights on the Dunkirk beaches. Arthur was wounded in May 1944, two weeks after we got engaged and spent 18 months in hospital where two weeks before our wedding he had his leg amputated. Arthur was so brave. Sadly he died two years ago.*

*We brought up three sons and over the years we fostered 74 children from the age of six week old twins to three years old, and we enjoyed every minute. Sadly, we lost our second son to cancer on his 40th birthday. After my son's death, I volunteered with our local 'Marie Curie Hospice'. The good side of 21 years of volunteering is that when I spent seven weeks in hospital after a bad fall, I was never without a visitor. This was a relief for our two remaining sons to know I was being well looked after and they travel up whenever possible.*



*Marjorie and Arthur celebrating their Ruby Wedding. They went on to celebrate both their Golden and Diamond anniversaries.*

*Two years ago, aged 82, I did a sponsored swim with Duncan Goodhew ex-world champion. We visited 5 different pools in Liverpool, swimming with the local children and raising money for the "Marie Curie" local hospice. I still swim most days but have bad asthma which has put me in hospital a bit this year but I will stay in my home for as long as I can; I am 84 now and still manage to look after my garden with a little help with lawn cutting by the Trust, I pay a gardener to do the rest. In my garden I have apple trees, gooseberries and rhubarb in abundance and up until this year grew my own potatoes".*



Congratulations to Jean and Spencer Hudson in Hampstead who celebrated their Diamond (60th) Wedding Anniversary this year.

## **“Nothing is Impossible” Haig Homes tenant becomes Councillor**

Gam Gurung has come a long way in life from a humble start and has recently been elected as Councillor for Collier’s Wood. He hasn’t finished yet ... he is aiming higher, as he explains: *“I was born in 1959 on the foothills of Mount Annapurna in a small village in Nepal. I am the youngest son with five brothers and a sister.*

*My father suffered from Polio and was unable to contribute to the family income, or help with everyday chores. However, we were a big hearted family and pulled together to make ends meet. My childhood was a happy time in my life, and my upbringing taught me the values I live by today, where I believe determination and attitude is just as important as ability to succeed.*

*My education started at home with my father up to the age of six, then at Primary School in the village until I was eleven when I left as I was required to work as a shepherd to help out my family. After two years I was able to return to school where education was quite poor, but despite this I achieved a GCSE equivalent.*

*In January 1978, aged 18 I joined the British Army and after passing the selection I travelled to Hong Kong to start basic training. The training was physically and mentally demanding. I was learning new skills, techniques and discipline which lead to the foundations of becoming a good soldier. On completing basic training I joined the Queens Gurkha Engineers part of the Royal Engineers.*

*During my 17 years service I travelled through many countries, I learnt some of their languages, and today I can communicate in five languages including British sign language for the deaf. I reached the rank of Sergeant, and in 1990 I was awarded the Certificate of Appreciation for the United Nation Honour Guard, and, in 1993, I received the Long Service Good Conduct Medal (LSGC).*

*I retired in 1994 to give our children a better education, and we moved to England in 2003. We lived in a two bedroom flat and then I applied to Haig Homes and was fortunate to be housed in a four bedroom house in Morden.*

*I work as a bricklayer tutor at a College, a skill I learnt with the Engineers. Over the last two years, I have achieved an undergraduate Diploma Teaching in the lifelong learning sector (DTLLS). This was one of my hardest achievements and at times I felt like giving up but continued with the support of my tutors, mentors and colleagues, to whom I am so grateful.*

*I was involved with setting up the ‘South London Nepalese and Gurkha Association’ and was chairman until last year. I had joined the Labour party in 2004 after retired Gurkhas were given the right to live in this country as I felt very indebted with this decision, which, all the Gurkhas had been waiting for after 200 years legacy with the British Army. I became close with party members and learnt some of the party principles and was asked to stand in the councillor selection process for the general election May 2010. After three determined attempts, I was successfully selected for Collier’s Wood.*

*I was over the moon. My future goal now is to be Mayor of Merton. Now, I agree with the saying: Nothing is impossible.*

*When I look back at my life, there are many people to thank for helping me take the right path and I would especially like to thank my wife, my children and other family members, for if it was not for them, all these achievements would not have been possible and mean nothing to me. I fully agreed with the motto that ‘behind every successful man there is a woman’.*



*Gam Gurung waiting nervously for the results of the election which he was successfully made Councillor.*



## Morden Fun Day, celebrating 150 years of the Cadet Force

Haig Homes residents and members of the local community in Morden celebrated 150 years of the Cadet Force with a thoroughly enjoyable Fun Day in June. There was entertainment for all ages with various displays including traditional Khukuri dances by the ex Gurkha's from the South London and Nepalese Gurkha Association, bouncy castle for all ages, white elephant stall and three types of food stations: Nepalese food provided by the local Gurkha community, Indian food provided by members of the local Ahmadiyya Mosque Community and British food, provided by other tenants of Haig Homes.



Brave Young Mother continued from front page.....

*after and went to the house.*

*The door was ajar and I could see children's shoes in the hall. The smoke was everywhere, really thick and it made my eyes water. I had a horrible feeling that something was really wrong when, through the blur I could see cartoons still playing on the television. I quickly looked around the ground floor and couldn't see anyone and then the smoke got too much for me; I couldn't breathe, so I had to come out.*

*It felt like I'd been inside the house for a long time but in reality, it was only a few minutes. I phoned the police this time as I thought there was something strange going on but, while I was waiting – don't ask me why – I felt I had to go back in and double check. This time, I struggled upstairs and looked around – nothing in the first bedroom. In the second bedroom – nothing; so I made my way out but, again, something drew me back into the second bedroom. This time, I saw it was L-shaped and, round the corner, I was horrified to see a mother and a small child on the floor. I shook the mother and shouted and shouted at her to wake up but I think the smoke had got too much for them – I thought they were both dead. The little girl stirred a bit so I scooped her up and, wrapping her in a towel to keep warm outside, I ran down the stairs with her and left her with the others outside and ran back into the house.*

*I still couldn't wake the mother and I couldn't breathe and, at that point self preservation kicked in and I thought about my little girl.*

*As I could hear sirens, I went back down the stairs, my eyes streaming, out to my daughter. The Fire Brigade were able to get the mother safely out of the house and I am glad to have been told that both the mother and child made a good recovery."*

At Haig Homes, we are all immensely proud of Christina for her selfless actions, she was very brave.



## Betty Hyde celebrates her 90th Birthday

Betty Hyde, who lives in Morden, celebrated her 90th Birthday at the beginning of November with a beautiful cake which she shared with her friends in the RAF Association at their meeting. Congratulations!!

## Two Funds Managed by Haig Homes

### *The Charles Wray In Memoriam Pension Fund*

Small annual pensions can be paid from this fund to former members of the British Armed Forces who are suffering incapacity or disablement attributable to active service. **You do not have to be a Haig Homes and Haig Housing Trust tenant to apply to this Fund so please pass on this information to anybody you feel may be eligible to apply.**

### *The Mrs Willie James Charity*

This small fund aims to award grants up to £500 to alleviate hardship for any Haig Homes and Haig Housing Trust tenants. Grants are given for such items as white goods, furnishings or medical expenses.

*If you think you might be, or know of someone who might be, eligible for either of these Trusts, please contact Mrs Lynda Stevens, General Secretary on 020 8685 5777.*

## Christmas Quiz

Try your luck at Haig Homes Christmas Quiz. All correct entries received in the office by January 31st will be entered into a draw to win £10. Send your entry to Haig Homes Christmas Quiz, Alban Dobson House, Green Lane, Morden Surrey SM4 5NS or put your answers with your name and address in an email and send it to [haig@haighomes.org.uk](mailto:haig@haighomes.org.uk)

1. In which fairytale would you find a handsome prince and a pumpkin? .....
2. What did Captain James Cook discover and name on December 25 1777? .....
3. Who wrote the Christmas story entitled 'The Snowman'? .....
4. In which poem did a turkey perform a wedding ceremony for a cat and a nocturnal bird? .....
5. The ruddock is an alternative name for which bird? .....
6. In which decade was the Charles Dickens novel 'A Christmas Carol' first published? .....
7. Who was crowned the King of England on Christmas Day in 1066? .....
8. What is the same 'weighty' name for a snow leopard? .....
9. Turpentine is obtained from which tree? .....
10. Who wrote the song 'White Christmas'? .....
11. Who, with Midge Ure, wrote the song 'Do they know it's Christmas'? .....
12. In which type of tree was the partridge found? .....
13. How many birds were calling in 'The 12 Days of Christmas'? .....
14. Jacob Marley was the Clerk of which literary character? .....
15. Good King Wenceslas was the Patron Saint of where? .....
16. Hedera helix is the scientific name for what? .....
17. Ankara is the capital city of which country? .....
18. Which screen lover starred in the films 'The Sheik' and 'Blood and Sand'? .....



### HAIG HOMES & HAIG HOUSING TRUST CHRISTMAS OFFICE CLOSURE



#### EMERGENCY COVERAGE - HOMESERVE CALL CENTRE

The operating hours of Haig Homes and Haig Housing Trust during the Christmas and New Year Holiday period are outlined below: Please keep this list to hand in case of an emergency.

17th December	- CLOSED from midday	28th December	- CLOSED
20th December	- OPEN	29th December	- OPEN
21st December	- OPEN	30th December	- OPEN
22nd December	- OPEN	31st December	- CLOSED
23rd December	- OPEN	3rd January 2011	- CLOSED
24th December	- CLOSED	4th January 2011	- OPEN
27th December	- CLOSED		

If you have an emergency repair requiring immediate attention when the offices are closed, please call



**Homeserve 0845 757 3842**



With all best wishes from the Staff and Trustees for the Festive period and for the New Year

# 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 of Haig Homes 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 Homes, Alban Dobson House, Green Lane, Morden, Surrey SM4 5NS.

If you need copies of any Haig Homes information in **LARGE PRINT** or **BRAILLE**, please contact **HAIG HOMES, ALBAN DOBSON HOUSE, GREEN LANE, MORDEN, SURREY SM4 5NS** or telephone 020 8685 5777



यदि तपाईंलाई हँग होम सँग सम्बन्धीत कुनै पत्रसुचना अनुवाद गर्नु परेमा, अथवा मौखिक सम्बादको नमिती अनुवादको आवश्यक परेमा, हाम्रो हेड अफिसमा सम्पर्क अथवा पत्राचार गर्नु होला



## Haig Homes and Haig Housing Trust Conference 2011 – 16th March Birmingham

Please fill in this form to indicate that you might be interested in attending the Tenants Conference in March. This does not commit you to attend; it just means you will be kept informed about the event. IF YOU DO NOT REGISTER YOUR INTEREST (by email, phone or by returning this slip) YOU WILL RECEIVE NO FURTHER INFORMATION. If you register your interest you will be consulted on any matters you feel should be covered at the conference.

**Interest in this Event** (please tick ONE box)

- I am interested in attending tenants Conference in March 2011
- I am undecided/not sure I would attend but would like to be kept informed

Name: ..... Telephone: .....

Address: ..... Mobile: .....

Email address: .....

Please indicate if you would prefer to be contacted by email rather than letter about this conference YES / NO

Please return this slip to Anna MacLeod, Haig Homes, Alban Dobson House, Green Lane, Morden Surrey SM4 5NS or email the information to [anna@haighomes.org.uk](mailto:anna@haighomes.org.uk) or telephone to register your interest on 020 8685 5781.

This newsletter is printed using recycled paper.

Do you want to comment on or contribute to the newsletter? If so, contact Anna MacLeod, Haig Homes Newsletter Editor, Alban Dobson House, Green Lane, Morden, Surrey SM4 5NS. 020 8685 5777 fax 020 8685 5778 email [anna@haighomes.org.uk](mailto:anna@haighomes.org.uk) **Deadline for contributions March 31st 2011**  
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