

Newsletter

Summer 2008



Parents' Pride

The Gurung Family has every reason to be proud of the achievements of their children

Sergeant Gam Nahadur Gurung, who lives with his wife Kabita and four children in Morden, joined the British Army in 1978 and retired in 1994, after serving almost 17 years in the British Army with The Queen's Gurkha Engineers. He returned to the UK from Nepal as a visitor in 2003, and then applied for a Training and Work Experience visa which was granted. Currently he is working as a bricklayer Instructor/Assessor at a College in central London. He and his family are happy living in Morden and say



"We would like to express our thanks and gratitude to Haig Homes. We have been here for the past four years. We are lucky to be the first Gurkha family to be given a place at Haig Homes."

They are very proud of their children; their eldest daughter Susan graduated from Kingston University in Information and Technology with a degree ceremony held at the Barbican Centre, London in January 2008. Currently she is working as a Discipline Technical

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Diamond and Golden Wedding Anniversary Celebrations

Maurice and Muriel Allo who live in Jersey, celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversary in May. To celebrate, they spent some time in Muriel's home country, Wales, in the Rhonda Valley with her brother and sister's families and, the most wonderful surprise, they were joined by their son Robert, who lives in Australia and had come over especially. Muriel said *"It was absolutely lovely to have Robert there, we knew nothing about it – he just walked through the door – he is such a good son to us. We had a wonderful time in the Rhonda valley with my nephews and nieces, it was really special but then I suppose we have been married for 60 years which is quite an achievement!"*

Mary and Dennis Ryan who live at Bury St Edmunds, celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary on the 29th March this year.

Mary remembers her long and happy marriage *"Dennis and I met in April 1955. In the August of that year, he went to Norfolk on his last T.A. Camp after his National Service in the Suffolk Regiment (1950-52) during the action in Malaya.*

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STAFF AND AGENTS

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STAFF

Garry Woodford, formerly our Agent in Hampshire with Home Group (previously Warden Housing Association), has joined Haig Homes as Estates Surveyor (South). He will be a familiar face to many of our tenants in the Portsmouth, Southsea, Salisbury and Lymington area and will now meet many more throughout the South of England.

“Joining Haig Homes will allow me to meet many more of you in your homes throughout the South. With many years in Social Housing, as well as general building I am looking forward to using my experience to improve our service. Haig Homes is more than a varied collection of buildings to look after, it’s where you and your family live and I want to be part of the team that ensures you are proud of your home. I know Haig tenants will continue to offer me the hospitality and courtesy I have enjoyed in the past, I now have the opportunity to do so at more venues.”



Roy Chamberlain has taken over the position of Housing Needs Manager. Roy has been with Haig Homes for 16 years firstly as Housing Manager and then, for the last couple of years, on secondment to the IT department with a key role in the delivery of the new IT system.

Glenn Kay was appointed IT Assistant in April. Glenn has worked on a temporary basis for the Trust for over two years whilst completing his IT studies and now joins Peter Burns, the IT Manager, in (amongst of course, other more important things) sorting out all our day to day computer problems.



Roy Chamberlain



Glenn Kay

AGENTS

Peter Labey has been appointed as the Trust’s Representative in Jersey as from 1st June 2008.

CivvyStreet.com

The Royal British Legion sponsors a resettlement, learning and work website www.civvystreet.org which provides a 'one-stop-shop' of impartial information for Service leavers and members of the ex-Service community.

Online Version of Service Leavers Pack

Is now available at www.spva.mod.uk
Click on Service Leavers Pack link.
Up to date information on terminal benefits, resettlement, Reserve Liability and welfare support is available.

Seafarers' Benefits Advice Line

Confidential telephone advice is available on many subjects including welfare benefits, tax credits, employment, debt, relationships – Tel: 0845 7413318.

Design a Haig Homes Christmas card

Calling all young, middle and elderly – are you a budding, or maybe flowering, artist? If we use your design for a Haig Homes Christmas card, you will receive a prize of £10. Your design needs to:

- reflect the fact that we are a housing charity (can be through use of logo)
- show our ex-service background
- incorporate our logo
- be in black and red and maybe one further colour

Send your design on an A4 piece of paper to Anna MacLeod (address at bottom of back page).

Reduction of Council Tax on Homes with adaptations for disability (not Scotland)
(The Council Tax (Reductions for Disabilities) Regulations 1992)

Your Council Tax may be reduced by one band (only applicable in bands B-H) if the following conditions apply

- (a) that there is a disabled resident who needs either space for a wheelchair to be used inside the home, or a special or additional kitchen, bathroom or other room, and
- (b) that this space or room is essential or of major importance to the well-being of the disabled resident because of the nature and extent of their disability.

For the purposes of the regulations, a disabled resident means a person who has their sole or main residence at that address, and who is substantially and permanently disabled (whether by illness, injury, congenital deformity or otherwise). In less obvious cases, supply a note from a doctor, or other qualified professional such as an occupational therapist or social worker confirming that the disabled resident needs the extra space or room described above. (Your doctor may charge you for supplying this information and this charge would be your responsibility for payment).

- (c) The application must be made by the person who is liable to pay the Council Tax.
- (d) The calculation of any reduction is on a daily basis and is directly related to the period of time that the disabled person is resident at the property.

You must make a new application each year. It is unlikely however, that a full application will be necessary in later years, and it may be sufficient for the Council to seek only confirmation that the circumstances have not changed since the original application.

If you have any queries about this, please contact your local Council.

NEWS AND NOTES

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Facebook for the Forces

Forces365.com will shortly be launching the first social network website for former and serving military personnel.

The site will mainly be used to connect friends together and reunite ex-Servicemen and women, it is completely free to use. Features include photo galleries, blogs, profile comments, groups, videos and a 'salute' mechanism.

Another feature of the site is the Remembrance memorial.

Visit Forces365.com now at: <http://www.forces365.com/>

Were you an Officer? Are you thinking of moving?

Officers' Housing may be available through the Officers' Association

Haig Homes housing assistance is available to all ranks; however, there are some housing options specifically for Officers and The Officers' Association may be able to help when Haig Homes cannot. The Officers' Association's accommodation is:

- **Huntly** – a residential home for single male and female ex-Officers of HM Forces and their widows or widowers. The home is set in South Devon overlooking the Teign estuary.
- **Macdonnell Gardens** – an estate of twelve bungalows for disabled Officers' of HM Forces and their families near Watford.



If you want to know more information about Huntly, Macdonnell Gardens and the work of the Officers' Association, please contact the Officers' Association www.officersassociation.com tel: 020 7808 4166 or 0845 873 7140 or Huntly on tel: 01626 775223.

MONEY PROBLEMS

If you have difficulties in managing your money, there are various organisations around to help.

Try looking at the FSA (Financial Services Authority) website for money matters – it includes budgeting and other tools at

www.moneymadeclear.fsa.gov.uk

Or, if you live in one of the London Boroughs there is a debt advice website at www.capitalise.org.uk

Haig Homes is a member of COBSEO

Haig Homes is one of 62 organisations and 65 regimental associations who are members of The Confederation of British Service and Ex-Service Organisations.



Cobseo represents the views of the Service and Ex-Service community to the Government and the Ministry of Defence through exchanging information, sponsoring research, identifying issues of common concern. www.cobseo.org.uk

GET INVOLVED!

'Good Neighbour' Award

Applications to the 'Good Neighbour' Award showed that around the country there are some very nice and kind people living on our Haig Homes estates.

We decided to draw two names out of the entries received. Mrs Phyllis Straker from Carlisle and Mr Jack McGinnis have each won a £25 voucher in recognition of their kindness.

Marion Oliphant of Evelyn Close in Cheltenham nominated Jack McGinnis and his partner June who help with Mrs Oliphant's husband David who sadly suffers from Alzheimers. Mrs Opliphant told us *"I am David's sole carer and Jack helps me every day. He is just terrific."* She went on to say *"We are both in our 80s and, as two of our sons live abroad and one in Edinburgh, I am eternally grateful to Jack for all he does for us – I think he deserves a medal!"* Mrs Oliphant also had some heartening words to say about other neighbours on the estate *"I would like to say that all the neighbours are great at keeping an eye on David"*.

Mrs Gwenneth Clarkson from Carlisle nominated Mrs Phyllis Straker *"because she has been such a brilliant friend and neighbour. She virtually saved my life in June 2004 by contacting the doctor very quickly. The doctor told her that if she hadn't acted so quickly, I would have been gone by the time the ambulance got here. She is still looking after me and is very attentive – she deserves the 'Good Neighbour' Award"*.



Gwenneth Clarkson and Phyllis Straker

Congratulations to both of our winners!

'Good Neighbour' Award

This is your chance to let an exceptional Haig Homes neighbour of yours know how much they mean to you. You can nominate someone* for a £25 prize if they have made your life better, or the estate in general better, perhaps by:

- Helping people on the estate less able than themselves
- Helping with chores
- Listening to problems
- Visiting someone living alone
- Making an outstanding act of goodwill

Your appreciation will be shown via this newsletter and your friend/neighbour's name will go into a draw for the prize. To enter someone you care about, please send details to Anna MacLeod, Haig Homes, Alban Dobson House, Green Lane, Morden Surrey SM4 5NS by September 12th 2008. Please include the following information:

About Yourself:

Your name

Your address

About the person you are nominating:

Their name

Their address

The reasons why you are nominating them

.....

.....

* This cannot be a relative or a member of your household

HAIG HOMES GAS SERVICING POLICY

It is a statutory requirement for us to carry out safety checks and to service gas installations in our tenants homes to reduce the risks from carbon monoxide gas or explosion. You will therefore understand why we will take whatever measures necessary to gain access to your home in order to carry out this service to keep you safe.

We follow a specified process which includes a series of letters informing tenants why we need access and the legal action we will take if we have to. Some letters are sent by recorded delivery to ensure the message arrives, and the message is written in very plain English and is to the point.

If we are not able carry out this check because access is refused, we can obtain a court injunction. Currently judges are awarding in the region of £600 costs against tenants. After that, if we still are refused access, the tenant will be in contempt of court and could be subject to immediate arrest and imprisonment.

We use the latest information provided by our contractors. Very occasionally, a letter may be sent based on inaccurate or out of date information. This is unfortunate but it is better to send a letter in error than miss servicing any property by the deadline requirement of the Gas regulations.

You will be provided with a copy of the Certificate when the check is carried out.

Car Parking Improvements

There has been a big improvement in the parking availability for tenants in Artillery Close, Paulsgrove, Portsmouth. For years, tenants wanted to use a central area in front of their homes to park their cars but the ground was owned by the local authority. The ground has now been formally adopted by Haig Homes and, to the satisfaction of the tenants, we have been able to provide long awaited parking arrangements.



Before



After

North and South Divide

Haig Homes estates department often receives comments that there is more money spent in the South of England than in the North. The planned programme of works and the budget is set depending on work needing to be done regardless of the location around the UK of the estates/properties.

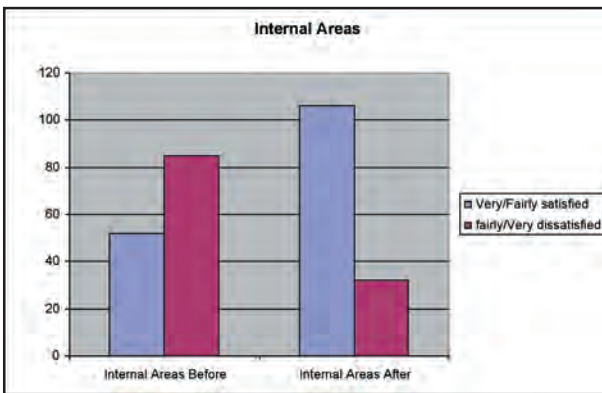
This financial year there is £536k budgeted for major repairs and improvement projects in the North whilst the South is scheduled to have £206k spent on similar works. These works are of course subject to any changes which may affect budgets and expenditure. The Trust is on target to meet the Decent Homes deadline of 2010.

Wyvern Villas Improvement Project

At the end of last year, a project to improve 12 flats at Wyvern Villas in Bristol was completed. The tenants were fully consulted on the improvements needed and a satisfaction survey, comparing levels of satisfaction before and after the work was done, shows how pleased they have been.

Internal Areas

Tenants were asked what they thought about the **internal areas** of the property; they were asked about lighting, floor covering, decoration, appearance, sound and noise, doors, windows, security, privacy and the balcony areas. Satisfaction levels rose as follows:

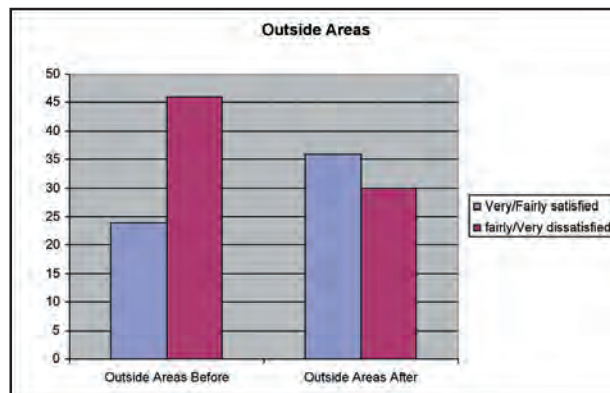


Before improvements



External Areas

Tenants were asked what they thought about the **external areas** of the property; they were asked about lighting, decoration, appearance, storage shed areas, drying lines (the only issue where satisfaction levels went down as fewer drying lines were available after the improvement project – this should be rectified), fencing, pathways, estate security, estate privacy and the entry doors. Satisfaction levels rose as follows:



After improvements



Poppy Calls: An initiative to help ex-Forces people remain more independent in their own homes

The Royal British Legion is offering assistance with jobs in the home for ex-Serving members of the Armed Forces. *Poppy Calls* is designed to help with awkward jobs such as minor repairs and fitting essential devices such as smoke detectors, changing light bulbs, very small minor repairs or 24 hour care community alarm systems.

The initiative is part of the Legion's welfare service 'Poppy Support' and is offered to beneficiaries who qualify for Royal British Legion assistance. This includes those who have served in the Armed Forces and their widows or dependants.

The service has now been successfully launched across Suffolk, Lincolnshire, Lancashire, Derbyshire, South Wales and North and South Yorkshire. This is to be extended across further regions through the remainder of 2008 and into 2009, with a view to becoming a national service by 2010.

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



HOUSING MANAGEMENT

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GRASSED AREAS ON HAIG HOMES ESTATES

Many of Haig Homes estates have lovely grassed communal areas. The temptation to use these areas for children to play on and to exercise dogs is considerable but both can cause a nuisance and dogs can cause serious health hazards.

Dogs

Please do not let your dog foul on the communal grassed areas. Please take dogs off the estates or to fenced-off areas provided specifically for dog walking. Also make sure that you clear up any mess left by your dog. Clearing up after your dog is a condition of being able to keep a dog on a Haig Homes estate and you will be in breach of your tenancy if you do not do this.

Children

Children can play on the grassed areas subject to the following **guidelines**:

- play is supervised by a responsible adult
- toys and litter are removed afterwards

Children should not:

- cause a disturbance or nuisance to other residents
- climb trees or damage property
- play outside in the evening i.e. after 6 pm
- cycle, skate or use scooters on the footpaths
- play in the car parks
- play ball games
- set up tents on the grassed areas

Some Haig Homes tenants are elderly and frail and they need to be able to step out of their front doors in safety. They also deserve some periods of peace and quiet whilst in their own

One of the pleasant grassy areas on a Haig Homes estate



HOUSING MANAGEMENT

homes. Many of our houses have their own gardens where young children can play safely with their friends.

Please be considerate to your neighbours

One of our contractors recently also highlighted an increasingly serious problem concerning the grassed areas – *“Obstructions (such as stones) are being placed on the grass areas. This causes a serious hazard and danger. Last week a big flint caused considerable damage to (my mower) blades. It is also a considerable health and safety issue for me, my staff and the tenants as the stone shatters into many pieces.”* Damage to contractors’ equipment will have an effect on cost. Please explain to children that this is anti-social and potentially dangerous. If you know of children who are doing this, please report them to your Tenant Liaison Officer in order for us to try and stop this before it becomes a greater problem.

Rent Payments: Why am I a week in arrears? I am paying my rent regularly

Some people have queried the fact that their rent statements shows them to be in arrears and owing one week’s rent. You may feel that you are paying your rent regularly and think that this is wrong. Rents are payable weekly; if you want to pay less frequently, ie fortnightly or monthly, you must ensure that you pay enough and in time to keep your account in credit. All tenancies start on a Saturday, so, your rent must be paid before a Saturday. If you are not paying your rent so that it has cleared in time for the Saturday, then your account will look as though it is in arrears. It is best to pay your rent during the week so that it is in your rent account before Saturday.

RAISING AWARENESS OF HAIG HOMES

Do you know anyone who might need housing by Haig Homes?

We are keen to ensure that as many people as possible know of Haig Homes and what we have to offer. If you know of anyone who is coming out of the Services shortly, or who has been out for a while and is in housing need, please let them know about us. On some of our estates, particularly in the north of England, Carlisle and Sunderland for example, waiting lists are very small and we may well be able to help qualifying beneficiaries with their housing problems.



Also, to help us spread the word, the JSHAO (Joint Services Housing Advice Office) have kindly agreed for a representative from Haig Homes to make a short presentation about the Trust at their one-day briefings, which take place in Regional Resettlement Centres (RRCs).

We have visited RRCs in Plymouth, Aldershot, Portsmouth, Uxbridge and Tidworth so far and have visits arranged for Northern Ireland, Cottesmore, Catterick, Rosyth and Colchester. This is a good opportunity for us to let people, who might be potential beneficiaries of the Trust, know about us.

Post Office Closures

The closure of smaller Post Offices makes things difficult for some people to pay their rent. Don’t forget you can pay your rent with your rent card using the payzone payment network available where you see this sign. If you are unsure of where your nearest payzone point is either contact your Income Officer or look on www.payzone.co.uk or telephone 08705 134360.



Parents' Pride... continued from front page

Clerk for a company in Leatherhead. She feels she has been lovingly supported by her parents and says, *"I would like to thank my beloved parents, who brought me into this world. They have always loved, helped and supported me whenever I needed. Without their love and support I would not have achieved my success. I am very proud of my parents."*

Her two younger sisters, Pratistha and Akanshya are following closely behind. Pratistha is 21 years old, and is in her 2nd year at university studying adult nursing which will hopefully lead to a good career. Akanshya is 11 years old and is in her last year at the local primary school. Susan says, *"She is very intelligent and a popular girl at her school and has been selected as the Chair of School Council by her fellow pupils. She changes school in September 2008 and we are very optimistic that she will continue achieving in her academic studies as well as her leadership qualities."*

The girls have a little brother, Prayaas, who is seven years old. Recently, he has been awarded as Best Player of the Year under 7's group at his local Football Club.

Susan sums up what she and her sisters and brother feel about their parents, *"By the grace of God, we have been very fortunate to be blessed with such supportive parents. We all would like to express our hearty gratitude and are immensely thankful for whatever you have been doing for us till now. We will just pray to God that he will keep showering his blessings upon us like this forever."*

In Memoriam

Eric Dew MBE

19th October 1917 – 22nd April 2008

Former Haig Homes Tenants
Representative and Chairman of
MESTA (Morden Ex-Service Tenants
Association – no longer in existence)

Diamond and Golden Weddings... continued from front page

At that time I was 18 years old and apart from looking after an invalid mother with multiple sclerosis and working in Charrington Coal Office in Loughton, I was also a Cub Master at St Mary's, Loughton 39th Epping Forest Group. Dennis and I got engaged in November 1955 but my mother said I had to wait until I was 21 to get married! We did as she wished and Dennis was a great help in looking after her. Sadly, she did not live long enough to see us married.

We started our married life in a small bungalow in Billericay, Essex, where Dennis commuted to North Weald Aerodrome where he refuelled Treble One Squadron and by 1961 we had two children, Bridget and David.

Then, in 1961, the government closed North Weald. After several moves and jobs Dennis became a Customs Officer in Colchester. In 1981 he was moved to Felixstowe on the Docks, eventually retiring in 1989 as E.O. In 1994, we received a letter from the Suffolk Regiment Association offering us a flat in the Memorial Homes at Bury St Edmunds and we have been here ever since. Haig Homes took over the properties in 2002.



One of the ceiling plaques in the Suffolk Regiment Chapel

50 years seems to have gone so quickly. We have had our ups and downs in our married life but we are still together! We have eight grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

Having our friends and family at our celebrations was the icing on the cake. We had a wonderful thanksgiving for marriage service

in the Suffolk Regiment Chapel in St Mary's Church, Bury St Edmunds and afterwards a wonderful meal at the Regency House Hotel. It is a day Dennis and I will always remember."

Congratulations to both couples on their long and happy marriages. If you are celebrating an anniversary – or anything else for that matter – and would like to tell us about it, please contact Anna MacLeod (contact details on back page).



Mary and Dennis on their wedding day flanked by her Cubs.



The happy couple fifty years on

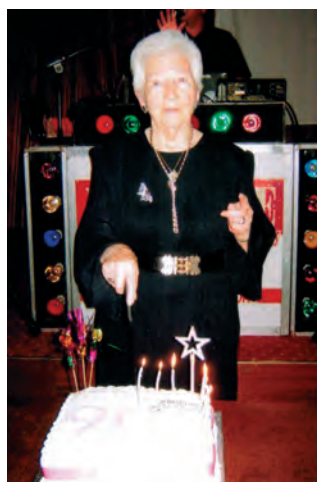
Haig Homes Nonagenarians!

Cathie Stevenson and May Chapman who both live in Edinburgh have celebrated their 90th birthdays. Cathie (left), who was 90 last year, is just back from a visit to her daughter in New Zealand. She says that the next time she goes, she's going via Singapore, since they wouldn't let them off the plane in Los Angeles!

May Chapman (right) was 90 in April, and held open house all day as it was the only way everybody could get to see her. May was a much loved dinner lady at the local primary school until she retired.

Tall Ships Trip for Liverpool Girl

Lucky Heather Chadwick has been chosen to go on a Tall Ships trip to Norway from Liverpool in July. Heather will write an article about her experience which will be in the next newsletter.



Cathie Stevenson



May Chapman

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 or your estate for example?

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Re-write a well known song and we will publish the best one in future newsletters. This poem below should be sung to the tune of 'My Favourite Things' from the Sound Of Music.

*Maalox and nose drops and needles for knitting,
Walkers and handrails and new dental fittings,
Bundles of magazines tied up in string,
These are a few of my favourite things.*

*Cadillacs and cataracts, and hearing aids and glasses,
Polident and Fixodent and false teeth in glasses,
Pacemakers, golf carts and porches with swings,
These are a few of my favourite things.*

*When the pipes leak, When the bones creak,
When the knees go bad,
I simply remember my favourite things,
And then I don't feel so bad.*

*Hot tea and crumpets and corn pads for bunions,
No spicy hot food or food cooked with onions,
Bathrobes and heating pads and hot meals they bring,
These are a few of my favourite things.*

*Back pains, confused brains, and no need for sinnin',
Thin bones and fractures and hair that is thinnin',
And we won't mention our short shrunken frames,
When we remember our favourite things.*

*When the joints ache, When the hips break,
The eyes grow dim,
Then I remember the great life I've had,
And then I don't feel so bad.*

Send your rearranged versions to Anna MacLeod at the address below.

Works Order Prize Draw

Recent £25 prize draw winners:

Mr D Oliphant, Cheltenham; Mrs T Mitchell, Leeds
Mrs M E Cooper, Harrow; Mr D Stonnell, Morden
Mr T Moran, Isle of Wight

If you would like the chance of winning £25, send in your completed Works Order form on any work that has been carried out on your home and your name will automatically be entered into a draw.

Two Trusts 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 tenant to apply to this Trust so please pass on this information to anybody you feel may be eligible to apply.**

The Mrs Willie James Charity

This small charity aims to award grants up to £500 to alleviate hardship for any Haig Homes 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.

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 **BRILLE**, please contact **HAIG HOMES, ALBAN DOBSON HOUSE, GREEN LANE, MORDEN, SURREY SM4 5NS** or telephone **020 8685 5777**