



# THE BANNER

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## Haley joins the team

We recently welcomed Haley Woodhead to our Customer Services Team. Haley joined us in March and currently takes your calls along with Helen, Sue, Lisa & Chantelle as well as providing administrative support within the office.

Before coming to DAMHA, Haley worked as an estate agent and prior to that she worked in shoe retail.

She says: "I am really enjoying it and have never worked anywhere as nice as this."



## No more gas fires

As a result of more residents opting for electric fires, DAMHA will no longer be installing or renewing gas fires in our homes.

This decision by the trustees follows a trial conducted over the last four years and the outcome of two focus groups where residents discussed the safety concerns and the advantages and disadvantages of both types of fires.

If you have a working gas fire then we will continue to maintain and service it as long as parts are available. Should it become un-repairable then you will be offered an electric alternative.

## Benefit changes

In January of this year the government announced changes to the way in which mixed age couples access benefits.

Previously when the older partner of a couple reached pensionable age, he or she was able to move from working age benefits and claim pension age benefits, such as Pension Credit, for the couple. The change, effective from 15th May 2019, means that couples are unable to claim pension age benefits until both partners are of pensionable age.

The change, effective from 15th May 2019

Those mixed age couples already in receipt of Pension Credit or pension age Housing Benefit will be unaffected.

If you are approaching pensionable age and would like advice on what benefits are available then call head office on 0191 3881111 or 07824 573091 to arrange an appointment with Jean Patterson, our welfare benefit specialist.

## Contents Insurance Scheme

As a resident of DAMHA you are eligible for a home contents insurance scheme starting from just 64p per week for standard cover of £7,500. To find out more please contact us on freephone 0800 0432642

## Going swimmingly in Consett

We are delighted to have started work on a £3.5 million scheme to transform the site of a former public swimming pool into 24 affordable homes for older people.

The two-bedroom bungalows are being built on the site of the old Belle Vue Swim Centre on Ashdale Road, which was demolished in 2016.

Along with our development partner Karbon Homes, contractor Surgo Construction and Homes England, which is providing a grant of just over £1 million

towards the cost of the scheme, DAMHA is working towards a completion date of January 2020 for the new homes.

It forms part of our ongoing development programme, which will see a total of 61 new two-bedroom bungalows built in the Durham Coalfield area over the next few years.

Paul Mullis, DAMHA Chief Executive, said: "We are delighted to have started work on our latest affordable housing scheme in County Durham.

We are delighted to have started work on our latest affordable housing scheme in County Durham.

"There is a real shortage of high-quality two-bedroom bungalows for older people in the County, so like our other schemes, this development scheme will help to meet the need for homes of this type."



# Planned maintenance

We will be spending over £1 million upgrading hundreds of our homes over the next 12 months.

Group of homes	Number
<b>WINDOWS</b>	
Coquet Close	12
Elmtree Court	20
Foxcover Court	20
Derwent Valley Cottages	12
Waterson Crescent	10
Whitwell Court	15
Mackintosh Court	21
West Cornforth	8
Flemming Field	20
Ullswater Court	3
Coniston Court	8
Chester Road, Shiney Road	12
Redesdale Court	16

<b>BOILER/FIRE RENEWALS</b>	
St Chads, Thornley	11
Coquet close	12
Redesdale Court	16
Waterside Court	7

<b>KITCHENS</b>	
Pelton Lane Ends	6
Flemming Field	20
Greenside	10
Marley Hill	8
Russell Close	7

Group of homes	Number
<b>EXTERNAL DOORS</b>	
Shotton Road	41
Adair Terrace	12
Flemming Field	20
Eldon Bank Top	12
Tan Hills	14
Gair Court	7
Broom Lane Whickham	6
Stargate lane	12

<b>HEAT METERS</b>	
Bumer House	27
Rutherford House	35
Gray Court	10

<b>FENCING</b>	
Wheatley Hill	
Castle Dene	
South Pelaw	
Pelton Lane Ends	
Dene Bank	

<b>PAINTING (WROUGHT IRON)</b>	
Pelton Fell	
Flemming Field	
Shotton Road	
Other TBC	



Starting from April 2019, DAMHA will carry out a range of work on almost 600 properties in areas such as Durham, Seaham, Horden and Peterlee.

The work will include installing new double glazed windows and doors, boilers/fire, kitchens, fencing and painting of wrought iron gates.

This forms part of a rolling planned maintenance programme DAMHA carries out to ensure its properties, some of which are 100 years old, meet national housing standards.

One of the residents who had a new kitchen fitted as part of DAMHA's planned maintenance programme in 2018/19 was Leeann Scott (pictured above with her daughter Amy), who lives in Redesdale Court, Peterlee.

She said: "Having a new kitchen enabled me to change the layout and it meant I got more worktop and cupboard space, which is what I needed.

"I was able to choose from a good selection of units, worktops and flooring, so I felt fully involved and I couldn't be happier."

# Planting the seed

Children at a school near our Chester-le-Street head office have a spring in their step following our latest donation.

To show our appreciation for singing at our end of year residents' forum in December, we recently gave £50 to Cestria Primary School.

The school has now used this money to buy new planters, bulbs and a bird feeder, ready for spring.

It forms part of an ongoing partnership between the school and DAMHA.

DAMHA Chief Executive Paul Mullis said: "Cestria Primary School is very close to our head office and over the years we have built up an excellent relationship with the children singing at several of our residents' events and also helping to design a logo to mark our 120th anniversary.

"Their latest performance in December was fantastic and as well as singing, the

children had also gone to the trouble of making Christmas cards for our residents, which were gratefully received.

"We were only too happy to make another small donation to the school and we look forward to visiting in the spring to see the wonderful things they have planted."

The children always enjoy singing to the residents and they are already looking forward to returning this Christmas.





## Going bananas

Forget an apple, according to Greta Halpin it's a banana a day that helps keep the doctor away.

And as she turned 100 recently, she should definitely know.

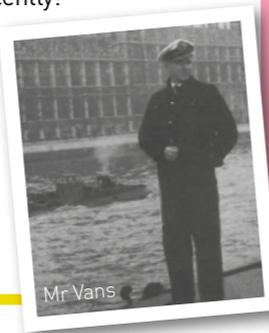
Greta, who lives in our Aged Miners' Homes in Marsden Road, South Shield, reached her centenary on 15th April.

With six children, 10 grandchildren, 17 great-grandchildren and 6 great, great-grandchildren, there were no shortage of well-wishers at her home.

Greta puts a number of reasons down to her longevity, one being eating bananas pretty much every day of her life.

She says: "I have always loved bananas and even during the Second World War when they were scarce, I still managed to get a penny off my mother to buy one from my local shop.

"I wouldn't like to count how many bananas I have had over my lifetime, but I like to think they have helped; I only saw the doctor for the first time in ten years recently!"



## 90th birthdays

In this edition of the banner we celebrate six 90th Birthdays.

Mr Jeffery Horner of Hetton le Hole was the first birthday of this edition on the 11th closely followed by Mrs Elizabeth Slack on the 16th.

February brought the next birthdays starting with Mrs Ruby Strong of Houghton le Spring on the 2nd followed by Mrs Margaret Gray of South Shields on the 16th.

April brought the final 2 birthdays of this edition. Starting with Mrs Katherine Miller of Rowlands Gill on the 28th, with the final birthday of this edition belonging to Mr William Melia of Ferryhill on the 30th.

**Congratulations one and all!**

# No One Alone

At the age of 48, Michael Gray was on holiday with his wife Judith sitting on rocks and looking out to sea.



Suddenly, and without warning, one of his eyes began, in his words to "fog up"

He was diagnosed with a cataract and had to have a hole in his eye drilled to enable a lens to be inserted.

Some years later, Michael was working in a factory where he made fishing rods and he noticed he could no longer see the clock on the wall.

This time he was diagnosed with macular degeneration, which is an age-related medical condition affecting the middle part of the vision.

It doesn't cause total blindness, but it can make everyday activities like reading and recognising faces difficult. This was further compounded when Michael suffered a detached retina and had to undergo laser treatment

This came as a big blow to Michael who, even in retirement, liked to keep busy doing DIY jobs, pottering in his greenhouse and reading lots of books.

From 1959 to 1970, Michael served in The Royal Navy as an electrical mechanic, so on one of his hospital visits, he was

asked if he knew of a charity called Blind Veterans UK.

Formerly known as St Dunstan's, it was originally set up in 1915 to provide training, rehabilitation and lifelong support to those blinded in the First World War

Since then it has supported veterans across the UK with services such as convalescent care and holiday breaks.

St Dunstan's was renamed Blind Veterans UK in 2012 to help more people understand who they are and what they do. They also launched their No

One Alone campaign, to reach out to new blind veterans in need of support.

In Michael's case, this has involved being given specialist equipment to help him around the home, such as a magnifier which enables him to read printed material, a boombox, which means he can listen to audiobooks, a talking watch, cane and dark glasses.

Michael, who lives in one of our homes in Hetton-le-Hole, says: "Before I encountered Blind Veterans UK I never had time for charities, but they have completely changed my life.

"As well as receiving equipment that can help me do everyday things, once a month they arrange for a carer to come around and I am taken out for the day to places like museums and the beach.

"This has all made a big difference and I am very grateful for their support."

Blind Veterans UK currently support 4,000 people, but the charity says there are tens of thousands more veterans they could be helping. If you, or anyone you know, would benefit from the free support provided by the charity, you can call free on 0800 389 7979 to start the application process.

# News from....

## ...Bulmer House Hayley cleans up

Hayley Patterson started working as a cleaner at Bulmer House and has now been appointed as its Concierge.

Hayley, 31, is responsible for the welfare of residents who live at Bulmer House, as well as ensuring the building is maintained to the correct standard.

After starting at Bulmer House as a part-time cleaner over ten years ago, it's a place she knows very well.

Hayley, who lives in South Shields, says: "Being here for so long has given me a great insight into the scheme and the residents who live here, so I am proud and delighted to have become Concierge."

Pauline York, DAMHA's Operations Director, said: "Hayley made a big impression on everyone when she was Acting Manager, so she fully deserved to be made the permanent Concierge at Bulmer House.



One of Hayley's first initiatives is to start a fish and chip club on the last Wednesday of every month. An order is placed with a local fish shop and one of the residents with a car kindly goes and collects them and everyone eats in the lounge together with a cuppa.

This is followed with a few games of bingo and has proved a big hit with residents.



## ...Rutherford House Barbara's serving up a treat

In the last edition of The Banner we told you about a monthly tea-time club set up by Rutherford House Concierge Barbara Smith.

The club continues to go from strength to strength with residents, their families and members of the community now regularly sitting down to a two-course meal for the crazy price of just £1.

Meals like spaghetti bolognese, shepherds pie and sausage and chips are prepared by Barbara and her fantastic team,

consisting of Julie Smith, Gail Smith and Susan Stout.

The meal is followed by bingo and bran tub with the money raised from these two activities effectively paying for the meals and adding money to the residents' fund, which at the time of writing stood at just over £600.

Some of this will be used to put on an Easter party and free bingo for the residents.

Barbara explained: "I introduced the tea-time club because I noticed we were getting more people coming to live at Rutherford House who were used to going out for

meals socially in addition to doing other activities."

"I couldn't do it without the help of Julie, Gail and Susan; they are fantastic."

As well as the tea-time club, the Thursday morning coffee mornings at Rutherford House are also well attended.





“We believe we can maintain the usual high quality service we currently provide without increasing the weekly charges this year.”

# Residents' forum

It was nice to see everyone at our spring residents' forum in March.

We opened the forum with an informative talk from Andrew Nesbitt, Housing Coordinator at the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB).

The RNIB is willing to put on a course specifically for DAMHA residents so if you, or anyone you know, is interested, please initially contact the office to enable us to monitor the demand.

Following Andrew's talk, our Senior Technical Inspector Jonathan Milne

took everybody through our planned maintenance programme for 2019/20 (see page 4).

Chief Executive Paul Mullis then discussed weekly charges and announced that for the second year running Trustees have held the weekly maintenance charges at a standstill level – there will be no inflationary increase this year.”

Paul said those who pay their water charges through DAMHA will notice a small increase in respect of the water rates. Similarly for those that pay by

monthly Direct Debit will have seen an increase due to the 2019/20 financial year covering a 53 week period instead of the usual 52 weeks.

Paul was by Operations Director Pauline York who spoke about resident involvement (see separate article opposite) and the National Housing Federation's proposed new Tenants' Charter.

We then held a raffle before residents enjoyed a buffet lunch.

# Being Representative

A Resident Representative is someone who speaks on behalf of the other residents and acts as a link between them and the Association by:-

- Attending Resident Representatives Forums (three times a year) and asking their neighbours what they think about the issues raised.
- Reporting back to us on what people think.
- Raising with the Association issues of importance to people in their area.

A Resident Representative is also expected to assist with local housing management issues such as:

- Holding keys for empty properties, when necessary, to allow contractors and prospective residents access as required.
- Notify staff when a resident dies, is taken into hospital/residential care.
- Report repairs to the office, only where residents are unable or unwilling to do so themselves.

- Advise residents and other local people how to contact the Association if they require information e.g. how to apply for accommodation.
- Distribute circular letters to residents on behalf of the Association.
- Encourage/facilitate social activities by accessing the Association's Social Welfare Fund for subsidy towards the cost of transport etc.

In recognition of this role, Resident Representatives will receive an annual Honorarium payment. The amount of this payment depends upon the number of properties at the scheme.

**Below is a list of all areas current without a Resident Representative. If you would like to become one, please contact Helen Sinden at head office in 0191 3881111.**

## Join Scrutiny Panel

We are also looking for residents to join our Scrutiny Panel.

By joining, you will have a direct input into the services we provide. There's a maximum of five meetings meeting a year, which usually last no longer than an hour, and we will pay all your travel expenses.

**If you would like to join the Panel, or require more information, please contact Helen Sinden on 0191 3881111.**

Dove Coat Drive	Fines park	Russell Close	Redesdale Court	Kibblesworth
Congburn View	Bearpark	Burns Close	School Court	Stella
Tanhills,	Mackintosh Court	Grange Way	Leech Court	High Spen
Gair Court,	Meadowfield	Flemming Field	St Mary's Court	Galbraith Terrace
Fellway	Brandon	Redwood	Shotton Road	Metal Bridge
South pelaw	Church Square	Elmtree Court	Edward Cain Court	Philadelphia
Glenview Close	Robert Moor	Derek Armstrong Court	Cann, Hebburn, Hopper & Jude St	North Hylton Road
New Lambton	Whitwell Court	Coquet Close	Marley Hill	Blue House Lane
Pelton Lane Ends	Westlea	Stockton Road	Basildon Court	Joicey Homes
Axford Terrace	Coronation Homes	North Road	Stargate Lane	Waterside Court
Vindamora Road	Magnolia Court	Orchid Court	Greenside	St Cuthberts Way
Ullswater Court,	Blair Court	Coast Road	Adair Terrace	Holberry Terrace
Harvey Court,	Kelloe	Murton	Brandon gardens	Ascot Way
Clark Terrace	Eshwood View	Gardner Court		Maude Terrace

# Gala Day

If you haven't already experienced the Durham Miners' Gala, we hope you will be able to join us for this year's event.



Our contingent will set off from the Market Place in Durham at 9am and you are more than welcome to accompany us as our banner is paraded through the city.

The focal point of the Gala is the County Hotel at Old Elvet where the two legs of the procession converge. Here, the union leaders, invited guests and local dignitaries greet the march from the hotel balcony and the bands pause to play their "party piece"

before marching the short distance to the Racecourse where there is a platform for the speakers.

We then go to the Racecourse to listen to the speakers.

On the Racecourse, the banners are strapped to the surrounding fences creating a colourful tapestry of working class history. On the riverside, there are rides for the children and stalls selling everything from books to fast food.

In the marquees, there are many exhibitions and a place where tea and sandwiches can be bought run by the Durham Labour Party. And, on a field overlooking the racecourse, there is a fun fair with some scary rides for the more adventurous.



The 135th 'Big Meeting' will take place on **Saturday 13th July 2019**  
Market Place, Durham

# Pot plant competition

Along with Gala Day, another highlight of our year is our pot plant competition.



We never cease to be amazed by the efforts people go to make their gardens look lovely and by the amount of entries we receive.

Last year's winner was Leda Gibbins, from East Rainton. Her garden was chosen for the outstanding display of flowers, which include petunias, sweet peas, begonias, dahlias, fuschias, sunflowers and much more.

If you think your garden is better than Leda's, why not enter this year's competition?

It is always nice to receive entries from people who haven't been in the competition before and all you need to do is send a couple of pictures of your garden/display, along with your name, address and contact details, before the closing date of 22nd July. This can be done by emailing [hsindin@damha.org.uk](mailto:hsindin@damha.org.uk) or by post to our head office.

The winner receives £50 and there also cash prizes for the runners-up too.

# New mining heritage book

A new book is to be published later this spring which throws the spotlight on the physical heritage of coal mining in County Durham and Northumberland.

Illustrated with numerous colour photographs, the book, entitled Echoes of the North-East Miners, is to include a selection of Aged Mineworkers' Homes, union banners, memorial pulley wheels and tubs and some of the colliery buildings which have survived the closures.

Echoes of the North-East Miners is to be published by Tyne Bridge Publishing (Newcastle City Libraries) and will also feature pit disaster memorials, including New Hartley, West Stanley, Seaham, Haswell, Trimdon Grange, Felling, St Hilda and Easington Colliery.

The authors, Ken Smith and Dr Tom Yellowley, have extensively toured the Durham and Northumberland coalfield over several years to bring together the many photographs for this book.

It is hoped Echoes of the North-East Miners will be published sometime in May. For more details email: [tyneship@btinternet.com](mailto:tyneship@btinternet.com)



## Our performance 1st October to 31st December 2018

These tables outlines our performance for the period from 1st October to 31st December 2018. A green shaded box indicates we met our target, amber means we were close to target and red means we failed to meet our target.

Service Area	Target	Result
Arrears	0.75%	0.61%
<b>REPAIRS &amp; MAINTENANCE</b>		
Satisfaction with repairs	90%	90.7%
Repair Appointments kept where made	100%	99.9%
<b>LETTINGS</b>		
Satisfaction with lettings service	92%	91%
Re-let times (days)	32	39
Complaints resolved at 1st stage	80%	71%

Service Area	Target	Result
<b>TELEPHONE CALLS</b>		
% answered within 7 seconds	96%	99%
% of calls dealt with at first point of contact	65%	72%
Percentage of letters responded to within 5 working days	90%	94.7%

# Word Search English Counties

N	D	D	R	Y	W	I	L	T	S	H	I	R	E
B	O	E	O	E	E	C	O	R	N	W	A	L	L
K	E	R	V	R	E	R	I	H	S	K	R	O	Y
K	L	D	T	O	S	L	R	H	P	S	S	I	D
E	N	O	F	H	N	E	O	U	C	E	W	L	E
R	R	S	F	O	U	M	T	O	S	K	E	N	T
I	T	T	S	R	R	M	N	E	R	F	E	M	D
H	K	E	H	E	O	D	B	E	H	A	S	A	I
S	R	S	L	E	R	N	S	E	H	O	T	H	O
P	B	R	D	W	K	L	K	H	R	R	O	R	H
O	O	E	Y	N	U	R	R	E	I	L	R	U	S
R	R	M	E	S	E	L	S	I	R	R	A	D	I
H	E	O	B	E	R	K	S	H	I	R	E	N	O
S	R	S	L	A	N	C	A	S	H	I	R	E	D

- NORTHUMBERLAND
- NORFOLK
- SURREY
- KENT
- SOMERSET
- BEDFORDSHIRE
- DORSET
- CORNWALL
- YORKSHIRE
- BERKSHIRE
- SHROPSHIRE
- DEVON
- WILTSHIRE
- DURHAM
- LANCASHIRE



## Recipe Corner

### Chocolate Caramel Shortbread

#### Method:

Heat oven to 180C/160C fan/Gas 4 and lightly grease an 8 inch foil plate.

To make the shortbread:

Mix plain flour and caster sugar together in a bowl, rub in the butter until it resembles fine breadcrumbs. Press the mix into the foil tin pressing it up the sides of the plate to form a lip.

Bake in a pre-heated oven for 20 minutes. Lift out of the oven and allow to cool completely.

To make the caramel:

Place the butter, sugar and condensed milk into a pan and heat very gently until the sugar has dissolved.

Turn the heat up slightly, stirring all the time, the mixture will bubble, keep stirring for about 5 more minutes, if you stop stirring it will burn.

The caramel should be thick. Leave it in the pan to cool slightly, then pour it over the shortbread base, leave to cool completely, the caramel should set. Melt the chocolate and pour over the caramel shortbread and leave to set. (at least 2/3 hours) it will set quicker in the refrigerator.

#### Ingredients:

For the shortbread:

130g plain flour  
35g caster sugar  
90g butter

For the Caramel:

50g butter,  
50g muscovado sugar  
1 x 397g can of condensed milk.

For the topping:

100g melted chocolate.



#### Durham Aged Mineworkers' Homes Association

PO Box 31, The Grove, 168 Front Street,  
Chester le Street, County Durham, DH3 3YH

Freephone: 08000 432642

Fax: 0191 3882838

Calls welcome via Text Relay Service

Email: [info@damha.org.uk](mailto:info@damha.org.uk)

Website: [www.damha.org.uk](http://www.damha.org.uk)

Twitter: [www.twitter.com/durhamAMHA](http://www.twitter.com/durhamAMHA)