



THE BANNER

May 2022 | Issue 91



3

100 years young

Congratulations to our latest centenarian, Elsie Colwill

4



Goodbye Pauline

We recently bid farewell to Pauline York who has retired after 14 years working for DAMHA.

5



New album

DAMHA resident Jackie Davidson has been busy recording his latest album.

8



Wedding anniversaries

Meet two couples who recently celebrated very special milestones in their lives.

11



Una's story

In our latest resident life story, we speak to one of our much-loved residents Una Mack.

12



Recipe corner

Discover what our very own Star Baker has made for this edition of the Banner.

Programmed works

As part of improving the comfort of living in one of our properties, works such as new windows, doors, kitchens, and boilers are carried on a planned programme basis.

During the past couple of years, due to the pandemic, it has been difficult to obtain certain materials due to supply and demand and we have struggled to carry out these works. It has also had the 'knock on effect' of increasing the cost of the works. Inflation has recently reached a 30-year high, which in some cases has had an effect on our resources and the works that can be carried out.

We are currently experiencing some difficulties in obtaining external doors and gas boilers which may affect the programmed works we carry out. While certain programmes are underway, other programmes may be delayed due to the unavailability of materials. Please be assured that we are concentrating all our efforts to ensure the works go ahead, but it may be the case that due to circumstances beyond our control these works could be delayed.

We are currently intending to carry out works at the following addresses:

Windows:		Kitchens:	
New Lambton	6	Stockton Road	20
Sacriston	20	North Hylton	24
Burnopfiel	6	Chester Road	6
Carrside	16	Joicey Homes	12
External Doors:		Boilers:	
Stella	24	St Cuthberts Way	12
Stargate (front only)	12	Bell Burn	12
John Taylor	32	Dairy Lane	12
Hillrest	3	Dovecote	9
North Road	9	Cong Burn	7
Primrose Hill	12	Glenview	7
Coronation homes	40	Maude Terrace	4
Bell Burn	24	Murray Court	6
Park Lane	48	Blair Court	17
		Eshwood view (rad renewal only)	10

Grass cutting

Due to the problems we encountered last year with the grass cutting service provided by DAMHA, we have produced a quick check list so you know what to expect from our contractor as part of the service.

Grass cutting open spaces

All the grassed areas are cut on a 10-day working cycle. This will be weather dependant as while grass can still be cut in showery rain, it is difficult to cut grass in persistent rain. There will be between 14-16 cycles completed per year, usually between late March and early October.

Mowers are height adjustable, the aim being to remove the top third of the grass being cut, in line with good horticultural practice.

Please note there is no provision for a 'weed and feed' process to take place. DAMHA unfortunately does have some properties that suffer from excessive moss in the grassed areas but there no plans to address this problem in the foreseeable future.

Strimming

All strimming will be undertaken following good horticultural practice ensuring excessive grass cuttings do not cover footpaths. Care will be taken when cutting near to cars/windows. Herbicide treatment is recommended to areas which cannot be strimmed or areas which are not regularly addressed.

Footpaths

All footpaths will be checked for weed growth during blowing operations and all DAMHA owned footpaths will be maintained in a weed free condition.

Litter

All litter from areas where grass cutting is taking place will be removed before cutting commences.

Hedges

Twice a year, our contractor will close trim the hedges, removing the current season's growth to form a neatly trimmed hedge in accordance with the wildlife and countryside act. The contractor will check and avoid disturbing bird nests before starting work.

Maintenance and care of shrub beds and herbaceous borders

Each shrub will be pruned as appropriate to the species to produce a healthy and vigorous shrub with a strong framework. When pruning the shape and balance will be maintained ensuring the maximum amount of flowering wood is produced.

How you can help

While it is sometimes nice to create a feature in your garden it can, on occasion hamper the grass cutting service provided by DAMHA. This can include the planting of shrubs, creating borders, fitting solar lighting into the ground and poorly placed plant pots and garden furniture. All of the above can cause problems for the operatives cutting the grass and where possible these features should be avoided.

Something in the water

They say a picture paints a thousand words so we are sure you will agree that Elsie Colwill looks nowhere near 100-years-old in this photograph.

There must be something in the water in Hetton-le-Hole as Elsie did celebrate becoming a centenarian in January and as well as getting a card from The Queen, she also received flowers hand delivered by our Chief Executive Paul Mullis.

On the day of her birthday, Elsie may as well have been royalty because people were queuing outside her aged miners' bungalow to pay their respects to this remarkable lady, who took it all her in stride.



I started as a telephonist and ended up working in the quartermasters' stores which was great because there was always something left which I could take home

Elsie has lived in the area all her life.

Married to Harrison for 46 years before his death in 2001, she has several grandchildren and great grandchildren, and even one great great-grandchild.

The couple were married immediately after the war, Harrison having served with bravery and distinction throughout almost the entire conflict, from Dunkirk through to D-Day.

Wounded by a shell which badly damaged his arm, Harrison returned to the Pit after the war and Elsie says they had a lovely life together, including going on foreign holidays to places like Benidorm which was just a small village at the time.

Elsie also did her service during war, although she jokes to have slightly having been press-ganged into it.

She explains: "My friends were trying to get me to play knocky 9 doors which involved knocking on people's doors and running away, and we were caught by the local policeman.

"He saw that we were not carrying our gas masks so we were in trouble so he said I can tell your parents or you can sign up to help the war effort, so I did. I started as a telephonist and ended up working in the quartermasters' stores which was great because there was always something left which I could take home."

When asked for the secret of the success of her longevity, Elsie jokes: "A bit of Baileys Irish Cream in my coffee each morning is just the tonic."

So, in Elsie's case, it not just be something in the water which is the key to her youthful appearance!

Goodbye Pauline

When Pauline York had her job interview with DAMHA, having heard she came from a mining family, our Chief Executive at the time, Gordon Gray, said: "Well Pauline, if you don't get the job, at least you will be eligible for one of our bungalows."

Needless to say, Pauline did get the job and like the fact that people no longer need to have a mining link to live in one of our homes, a lot has changed since that day in 2007. And after retiring in February, following 14 years working at DAMHA, we asked her to reflect on her time with us.

"Gordon Gray told me when I started that working for DAMHA was like being a family and I couldn't agree more.

"We're one of many housing associations who have something about residents being at the heart of everything in their values or mission statements, but at DAMHA that is certainly the case.

"We do go the extra mile and example is how we always give new residents up to 14 days rent free because we recognise that many need help moving in from their families or friends and this often has to be done at the weekends.

"When I first joined, I thought that was a crazy policy but it's actually an amazing thing and sums up everything which is great about DAMHA."

One of Pauline's many funny memories of her time at DAMHA came when she, in her own words, "blew myself up."

She explains: "I didn't realise the gas cooker was on so when I went to light it, it exploded, and I had burns to my hands and face.

A POEM FOR PAULINE by Geoffrey Gregg

Our favourite lady at DAMHA is sadly retiring this week

For us now the outlook is bleak

No more can we call her and ask for help and advice

She's one in a million and oh so very nice

Her friendly voice and help have always been there for us

She's always listened, never hurried us and never made a fuss

We've shared many jokes too, but hers have always been the best

Alas for now the jokes will have to rest

A welcome retirement awaits, the alarm clock is no more

No more early get ups and lie-ins galore

But who is this lady you most certainly ask

We'll tell you now before you take us to task

Her name is Pauline York, a charming lady of that there is no doubt

But we're sure by now you have probably worked that out

Here's raising a glass to you Pauline from Patch and myself

We sincerely wish you health, happiness and riches and wealth.



"The next day when I came to the office and told Gordon what had happened, he went out and bought me a gas lighter!"

Pauline is planning to spend her retirement enjoying walks and time with her partner David, spending time with their grandchildren, going on "Thelma and Louise" trips with her sister Pamela, looking after her elderly father and indulging her love of cricket. She's even bought herself a cricket scoring book to keep tally when she and David are watching Durham play this season.

She says: "I will miss the staff and residents at DAMHA, but I will definitely stay in touch; and I leave with many fond memories of my time here."

We know you will join us in wishing Pauline the very best in her retirement.

Divine inspiration

DAMHA resident songwriter has taken inspiration from the most important event in Christianity for his latest album.

As a follow up to his debut album 'Northumbrian and Proud', which paid tribute to his local roots, Jackie has now used the crucifixion of Jesus as the theme for his new record.

Entitled 'Testaments', Jackie, who lives in a DAMHA home in Greenside, Ryton, has written nine songs with the help of various local artists, with six of the songs telling the stories of those who were connected with Jesus and the crucifixion.

The other three songs also still have a link to the 'greatest story ever told', including a track called 'The Return' imagining how Jesus would feel if he came back to modern day earth.

This was originally written as a poem by Jackie in 1991 and he acts a narrator on this particular track.

Jackie says: "I would describe myself as a Christian, but I am not a particularly religious person; it just all started with writing the words for The Return over 20 years ago.

"I just write songs which come into my head and in this case one became nine and led to the new album, which took 12 months to come into fruition."

I just write songs which come into my head and in this case one became nine and led to the new album

Jackie says although the making of an album comes at a substantial cost, it's not about the money and he is not even selling copies of Testaments, but has been giving them away to local churches and other local groups.

He adds: "I enjoy making music with the help of my friends and if the new album gives pleasure to those who have copies, then that's good enough for me."

People who would like to listen to songs from Testaments can visit Jackie's YouTube by searching 'Jackie Davidson - Topic'; You can also find it on Spotify.



DAMHA needs you

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 quarterly Resident Representatives Forums 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.
- Advise residents and other local people how to contact the Association if they require information e.g. how to apply for accommodation.
- Report repairs to the office, only where residents are unable or unwilling to do so themselves.
- 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.

Here are short profile on some of our current Resident Representatives...



Lynn Deacon

Lynn is the Residents' Representative for 14 people who live in our flats in Londonderry Court, Seaham.

"Some people may not have lived in a flat before so it's about helping them to get settled in and being someone they can turn to if they have a problem," she says.

"Everyone gets on well. We tend to be on the elderly side, so we aren't rebels!"

Lynn, 73, enjoys living in Seaham and as well as being a Residents' Representative, she is also a member of the nearby branch of the University of the Third Age, enjoying wine tasting, art and crafts, walking group, quizzes and a host of other activities.

"I am definitely far more active now than I was ten years ago, so it's been a very good move for me," she says.

Michael Faulkner

Michael is the Residents' Representative for the group of 20 DAMHA bungalows in Seaham.

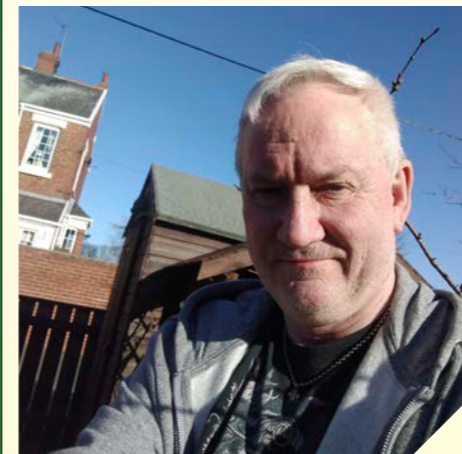
"Residents like their privacy so they don't want me knocking on their doors every day, but they know I'm here if there's a problem and that I will then raise it with head office," he says.

"I have to say DAMHA are excellent landlords. If any issue is raised, it is dealt with immediately, and all the homes are all well maintained."

Michael, 65, studied to be a priest when he was a teenager but left, he says, through teenage rebellion. He then qualified as a nurse and specialised in psychiatric nursing for the elderly. Though he's recently retired, he still works part-time with dementia sufferers in a local care home.

Aside from his gardening, he spends time visiting his sister Kathleen and enjoys reading books on history or philosophy, and trips to the cinema.

He adds: "Ever since I was a child, I had looked at those bungalows with their gardens and thought how nice it would be to live there. Now I am it's wonderful."



Bill Dodds

Bill is the Residents' Representative for six DAMHA bungalows in Burnopfield.

He says: I keep in touch with residents and raise any concerns they might have. I am also regularly updated with details of any scheduled upgrades or maintenance work which affect our homes so I can pass this information on.

"This summer all the windows and frames are being replaced with double glazing.

Bill, 74, comes from a mining family but his dad didn't want him following him down the pit so he trained as a joiner, then a policeman and then for 30 years worked as a salesman.

"There aren't as many former miners about these days, so the list is open to others and I was only on a few weeks when a bungalow came up in Burnopfield which was perfect for me as I was living there.

"The bungalows aren't very big but are ideal for a single person. It's a nice residential area, a bit of greenery and away from the main road."

▶▶ In my experience DAMHA are good landlords who carry out regular repair and maintenance. ◀◀

George Alderson

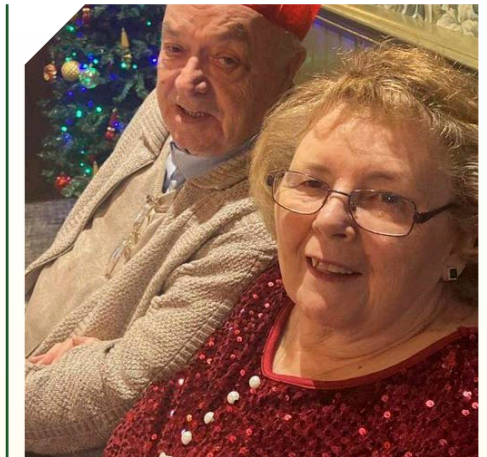
George is the Residents' Representative for 16 bungalows at George Parkinson Court in Sherburn.

"I am there to offer help and advice to tenants and let head office know of any issues of concern," he says.

"For new people moving in, I am able to advise on the essentials - like where the electric water switch is and when the bins go out.

"In my experience DAMHA are good landlords who carry out regular repair and maintenance. If anything gets raised you a letter indicating when the work will be done by and nine times out of ten it happens before that date."

George, 73, is a retired steel worker who enjoys the many activities on offer at the village hall in Sherburn, including coffee mornings and line dancing.



Sue Clark

Sue is the Residents' Representatives for ten homes in Birtley.

She says: "It's a nice quite street. We aren't on top of each other, we say hello at the garden gate and look out for each other.

"I can go to the Association with any issue that residents might have, and I have found they are pretty good at resolving any problems."

Sue's grandfather had a sister who lived in the same home she now shares with her husband Ernie, so they are very much tied up in DAMHA's history.

If you are interested in becoming a Resident Representative, or require more information, please contact Helen Sinden on 0191 3881111.

Fairground fairy tale

Morpeth coalminer Leslie Foster had a sideline working on the waltzer – but it was his head that was spinning when he first set eyes on the love of his life, Christina.

Within days of plucking up the courage to ask her out, Leslie told friends she was the girl he was going to marry and now they've just celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary.

"I was a miner at East Hartford Colliery but when the fair was in town I used to work on the rides," said Leslie. "I was on the waltzer and spotted this lovely girl walking across the Market Place and thought I'd go over and say hello."

Christina also remembers an instant attraction.

"I just saw this blond wavy hair, blue eyes and lovely smile," she recalls.

The couple were married in Morpeth in 1962. Leslie left the pit for work as a roadbuilder and truck driver before becoming a council bus driver and then working for National Express.



Christina worked at an opticians and later an estate agent. They have two daughters, Sandra and Suzanne, one granddaughter, three grandsons and two great grandchildren.

They have moved around the North-East over the years but returned to Morpeth. Leslie

retired 20 years ago and the couple have lived in their DAMHA home for the past 17 years.

Asked for the secret of a long marriage Christina, 78, says, with a twinkle in her eye: "never have a wrong word – just one continuous argument!"

Lost romance

One of Horden's best-known couples have just celebrated 65 years of marriage – but things could have worked out very differently when they lost each other after their first meeting.

Peter Noble and Joan Wilding were teenagers when they met at a local dance. When it finished, they arranged to meet each other outside to sort out a second date.

"We lost each other in the crowds so that was that – but by chance we bumped into each other a few weeks later and arranged to meet up again," said Joan, 84.

They married on 30th March 1957, and have three daughters, Theresa,

Karen and Deborah, three granddaughters and two great grandchildren.

The couple have lived in one of our properties in Horden for 15 years.

"One of my granddaughters is a district nurse and says everyone she visits knows me, it's probably because we've both lived here so long," said Peter.

Peter is also well known locally for another reason.

A keen footballer in his youth, he also played darts for the county and made the headlines when he appeared on Bullseye with his late brother Frank, and they won through to the prize board. They scooped seven prizes including a TV, trouser press

and a cooker and decided not to gamble.

"We had a good haul which we split. The prizes have all needed replacing by now, but I still have the tankard and Bully", said Peter.



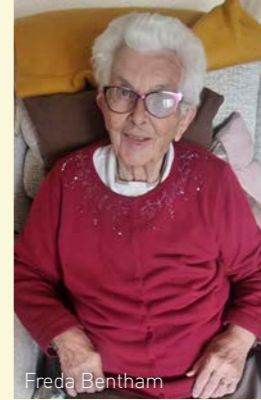
90th birthdays

In this edition of the Banner we celebrate ten 90th Birthdays.

January brought us the first birthday of this edition, Mrs Rose Russell, of Whickham, celebrated on the 21st.

February brought no fewer than four birthdays starting with Mr David Cummings, of Broomhill, on the 4th; followed by Mr Henry Hall, of North Hylton, on the 15th; Mr George Iveson, of Bishop Auckland, on the 16th; and Mr John Spraggon, of Marley Hill, on the 21st.

Five further birthdays were celebrated in March starting with Mrs Marjory Wilson, of Gilesgate, on the 3rd; Mrs Freda Bentham, of Blackhall, on the 5th; Mrs Edna Templeton, of Southwick, on the 9th; Mrs Joyce Morgan, of Crookhill, on the 19th; and Mrs Norma Burn, of Birtley, on the 21st.



Freda Bentham



David Cummings

Congratulations to one and all!

Pot plant competition

Along with Gala Day (see page 11) another highlight of our year is our pot plant/gardening 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 Trevor Bailey (pictured right), from St Helen Auckland. If you think your garden is better than Trevor'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 on 22nd July. This can be done by emailing hsinden@damha.org.uk or by post to our head office.

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



Supporting Ukraine

Generous residents in Ferryhill have donated over £1,000 to the Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal.

Like millions across the world, Patricia Howard and Shirley Read were shocked by the images of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

They delivered envelopes to fellow residents of the DAMHA properties in Joseph Patterson Crescent and William Keers Crescent, Ferryhill, offering them the chance to donate.

"When we collected the envelopes in the total donated came to £1,165, which I thought was a very good amount," said Mrs Read.

▶▶ We have all been shocked at the images, perhaps we thought we would never see times like that again in Europe.

She added: "Many of the residents were born around the time of the second world war or had relatives who served. We have all been shocked at the images, perhaps we thought we would never see times like that again in Europe."

The money has now been sent to the Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal being run by the UK Disasters Emergency Committee.

Thank you to everyone who contributed.

Una's story

Born (and definitely bred) in Sacriston on 8th August 1939, less than a month before the start of the Second World War, Una Mack was a war baby.

Whilst that part of County Durham wasn't a strategic target, the proximity to Hartlepool, which was, meant Una and her family (Una is one of five siblings) often had to run to their air raid shelter when the German bombers were above, but they didn't always have time.

Una explains: "Once we had to take shelter under the stairs and my uncle John's bike was in there and my mother sat one of the spokes.

"After, she said 'I didn't know whether Hitler would get us or John's bike, but that was her way of shedding a bit of light on the situation because we were all very frightened."



When she was older, Una started working as a dental nurse, something she would do most of her working life.

She met a local lad call Bobby at a cricket match and before long they were courting and were married. They went on to have two children, Elizabeth, and Joanne, and enjoyed going on holidays to places like Lytham St Annes and Scarborough.

Bobby always dreamed of running his own pub and he did this in 1974 when they took over the lease of the Uplands Hotel in Crook, Sadly, just 6 months later and Bobby was diagnosed with terminal lung cancer and he passed away at the far-to-young age of 42. It's one of the reasons why she volunteered at the Willowburn Hospice in Lanchester for so many years, because there was nothing like that when Bobby was dying.

Widowed young, Una didn't qualify for a widow's pension due to her age at the time (she was 39), so she had to take several jobs in order to keep a roof over the family's head.

I spoke to my girls, and they told me to do it and it's the best decision I could have made.

One of Una's lifelong loves is singing (as you will know if you have attended one of our residents' forums) and this helped her through all the ups and downs she has experienced in life.

She says: "I was in a group called The Bowers Singers and in 1959 Tyne Tees television were looking for a group of singing girls, so we auditioned and got to the final of a talent show.

"Unfortunately, we chose the wrong song, and we didn't win but it was a wonderful experience and I have ended up singing all my life."



At her friend's suggestion, Una put her name down for one of our homes, thinking it would be when she was much older and when she was less mobile. But it came much sooner when we opened our scheme in Witton Gilbert in 1997.

Una says: "I spoke to my girls, and they told me to do it and it's the best decision I could have made.

As well as being a Residents' Representative, Una also served on our housing sub-committee and became our first-ever resident board member, only recently standing down as part of the governance changes made at DAMHA.

"It's an organisation steeped in history, so I am proud of the part I played, and still play now.

"I have always been of the opinion there's no point in complaining to yourself so if you get involved at DAMHA, you can help to change things or get things done. They do listen and take on board your views, and you feel valued."

Gala Day

We're pleased to announce The Durham Miners Gala will return this year after the 2020 and 2021 events were cancelled due to the pandemic.

The Big Meeting will return on Saturday 9th July 2022 and key workers such as nurses, shop staff, carers and anyone else who worked throughout the pandemic to keep society going will be celebrated.

In addition, there will be usual procession of banners through the city (our contingent will set off from the market place at 9am), speeches from invited guests and various events on the riverside, including exhibitions, food and drink and a funfair.



Contents insurance

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 our more please contact us on freephone **0800 0432642**

Our performance

This table outlines our performance over the last six months. A green shaded box indicated we met our target, amber means we were close to target and red means we failed to meet our target.

30th September to 31st December 2021

Service Area	Target	Result
Arrears	0.75%	0.76%
REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE		
Satisfaction with repairs	90%	94%
LETTINGS		
Satisfaction with lettings service	92%	91%
Re-let times (days)	32	61
Complaints resolved at 1st stage	80%	80%
TELEPHONE CALLS		
% answered within 7 seconds	96%	97%
% of calls dealt with at first point of contact	65%	66%
Percentage of letters responded to within 5 working days	95%	94%

Recipe Corner

Lime and Blackberry Cheesecake - By Susan Lewis



Method:

Grease a 20cm cake tin and line with grease proof paper.

Melt the butter in a saucepan on low heat, add the crushed biscuits and mix well. Press the mixture into the prepared tin and press it in with the back of a metal spoon.

Put the soft cheese, Greek yoghurt, 3 tablespoons of sweetener and the lime zest into a bowl, beat until smooth.

Drop the gelatine sheets into a bowl of cold water and leave them to soak for 5 minutes.

Meanwhile put the lime juice into a small saucepan over a low heat and warm it through gently. Scoop out the gelatine sheets and squeeze out the excess water, drop the gelatine into the warm lime juice and stir until completely dissolved. Set the mixture aside and let it cool till it shows signs of setting.

Put the blackberries/ raspberries and the remaining sweetener into a food processor and blend until smooth, then press it through a sieve to remove the seeds.

Beat the lime juice mixture into the cheese mixture and pour it onto the biscuit crumb base.

Drizzle the blackberry purée over the top of the cheesecake and marble the top with a cocktail stick.

Chill it for at least 4 hours.

Ingredients:

- 50g Butter
- 12 Digestive Biscuits (crushed)
- 250g Soft Cream Cheese
- 500g Greek Yoghurt
- 3 and half tbs Sweetener Granules
- Finely grated zest of 2 limes and juice of 4 limes
- 4 small leaf gelatine sheets
- 50g Blackberries or Raspberries



Durham Aged Mineworkers' Homes Association

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

Freephone: 08000 432642

Calls welcome via Text Relay Service

Email: info@damha.org.uk

Website: www.damha.org.uk

 @durhamAMHA

 DurhamAgedMineworkersHomesAssociation

 durham-aged-mineworkers-homes-association