



THE BANNER

September 2023 | Issue 95



6-7

Celebrating 125 years

Joseph Hopper Memorial Service

3



Garden Competition

Gardiner by name, Gardener by nature - meet this year's winners.

3



A 'Gimme' for Stephen

DAMHA Technical Inspector Stephen Hetherington raised over £1,400 for charity.

10



A Proud History

Residents recently came together to celebrate 100 years of Vesper House Cottages.

12



Gala Day

This year our banner was re-dedicated at the Miners Cathedral Service.

16



Recipe Corner

Sue hasn't disappointed again with these lovely, easy-to-make cherry cream pastries.

Lettings Policy update

In May our Lettings Policy was reviewed and discussed at Board to change the allocation of our 2-bedroom bungalows from pensionable age applicants to 60 years and over.

This was greatly received by our Area Housing Officers who hold waiting lists of those in need below the pensionable age. When future allocations are made you may be asked a few more financial questions from our officers, and this is to establish that the costs can be comfortably made.

Staying healthy this winter

With autumn/winter approaching, it's important to consider getting both the flu and latest COVID-19 booster.

Anyone aged 65 and over is eligible for a free flu jab and Covid booster, so we would recommend that all our residents take up this option. If you are under 65, whilst you can't pay for the Covid booster, we would recommend paying for the flu jab to give you as much protection as possible.

Further information is available by contacting your GP or by visiting <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/flu> and www.nhs.uk/conditions/covid-19/covid-19-vaccination



Public Health
England



Unoccupied properties

For insurance purposes, we must be informed if your property is to be unoccupied for a period of 60 consecutive days.

The property must be inspected weekly by a responsible adult once the home has been left unoccupied for periods exceeding 48 hours.

In an unoccupied property during the winter months (1st November – 31st March) the heating must be left on to operate 24 hours a day and the thermostat needs to be set at no less than 15 degrees centigrade, or the water supply is turned off and the system drained.

If a loss is suffered as a result of escape of water and the heating has not been left on or turned off and the system drained all insurances will be void.

Tenant Satisfaction Measures

The Government has introduced a new way to check if social landlords in England like DAMHA are doing their job right, and these are called Tenant Satisfaction Measures.

There are 22 different measures that get checked to make sure that everyone lives in a safe, comfortable place with a landlord who cares about them.

■ ■ We will soon be sending out surveys to around 350 of our homes so please take a little time to complete the form

Ten will be measured directly by DAMHA, such as how quickly we fix things, with the other 12 being measured through a survey we will be sending out to our residents.

We will soon be sending out surveys to around 350 of our homes, so please take a little time to complete the form and help us find out what is important to you!

Gardiner by name, gardener by nature!

Gardiner by name, gardener by nature – we couldn't have hoped for a better couple to win this year's competition!

Alma and Bob Gardiner's excellent use of a small space to show off their garden in Consett impressed a judging panel of over 20 people, which included DAMHA staff and board members.

The judging was done via an online poll with only the pictures of the gardens being displayed, so no-one would have recognised where the garden was or, in this case, the apt name of the eventual winners.

Alma and Bob receive a certificate and cash prize of £50 for winning the competition, and it has also provided a boost to Bob in particular.

Alma explains: "Bob has been in hospital so when I visited to let him know we had won, his face lit up.

"The garden is our pride and joy so to have it recognised in this way is wonderful."

Alma and Bob have lived in their current DAMHA bungalow for seven years and have worked hard to transform their outdoor space, including adding wooden planting boxes.

Alma adds: "We haven't got a massive space at the back of the house, but the boxes have made a big difference and Bob is very particular on what we plant and ensuring we have a nice mixture of colours."

Paul Mullis, DAMHA Chief Executive said: "Alma and Bob have used the very most of the space they have, and the judges were very impressed with how much they have been able to squeeze in and the obvious forward planning it took to get it looking just right.

"They were very worthy winners of a very competitive competition this year."

Alma has one particular gardening tip to share with people.

"If you have roses, water them with the soapy water you have left after washing up, because it keeps the green fly off them," she says.

Second prize went to Pauline Boll, of Pelton Fell, and third prize went to Trevor Bailey, of St Helen Auckland.



Condensation in your home

What is condensation?

There is always some moisture in the air, even if you cannot see it. If air gets cold, it cannot hold all the moisture produced by everyday activities and some of this moisture appears as tiny droplets of water, most noticeably on windows on a cold morning, this is condensation. It can also be seen on mirrors when you have a bath and on cold surfaces such as tiles.

Normal daily activities such as taking showers and baths, drying clothes and cooking produce warm air containing a large amount of water vapour. If the warm air cannot escape through an open window or air vent, it moves around until it finds a cold surface. This is where it cools and forms condensation.

It can be a problem in any property, no matter how old it is. It is often worse in homes that have been modernised. This is because natural ventilation and the circulation of air is reduced.

Contributing factors

There are four main factors that cause condensation: -

- **Too much moisture being produced at home**
- **Not enough ventilation**
- **Cold surfaces**
- **The temperature of your home**

You need to look at all of these factors to cure a condensation problem.



Problems which arise

Usually at its worst during the autumn and winter months, problems that can be caused by excessive condensation leads to mould growth on walls and furniture, mildew on clothes and other fabrics and the rotting of wooden window frames.

How is it produced?

Our everyday activities add extra moisture to the air inside our homes. Even our breathing adds moisture (remember breathing on cold windows and mirrors to fog them up?).

One person asleep adds half a pint of water to the air overnight and at twice that rate when active during the day. Reduce the potential for condensation by producing less moisture.

How to reduce it

Controlling water vapour levels is important. It is hard to prevent condensation in your home completely, but there are things we can all do to reduce it to a level so that it does not cause problems.

Ventilate

By ventilating this will help to reduce condensation by making the moist air escape outside.

Here are some simple steps to help you prevent condensation:

- Hang your washing outside to dry if possible or hang it in the bathroom with the door closed and a window slightly open or extractor fan on. Do not be tempted to put it on radiators or in front of a radiant heater.
- If you use a tumble dryer, make sure it is vented to the outside or that it is of the new condensing type.
- Always cook with pan lids on and turn the heat down once the water has boiled. Only use the minimum amount of water for cooking.



- When filling your bath, run the cold water first then add the hot – it will reduce the steam by 90% which leads to condensation.
- Keep kitchen and bathroom doors closed to prevent moisture escaping into the rest of the house.



- Ventilate your kitchen and bathroom for about 20 minutes after use by opening a window. Use an extractor fan if possible – they are cheap to run and very effective.
- Ventilate your bedroom by leaving a window slightly open at night, or use trickle ventilation if fitted (but again, remember your security).
- Where possible, put free-standing wardrobes and other furniture against internal walls, leaving a gap between the wall and the furniture so that air can circulate around the room.
- Never overfill wardrobes and cupboards, as it restricts air circulation.
- Cross ventilate your home for around 30 minutes a per day. This means opening two windows on either side of your home with the internal doors open to allow the property to ventilate.



Temperature of your home

Warm air holds more moisture than cooler air which is more likely to deposit droplets of condensation round your home. Air is like a sponge; the warmer it is, the more moisture it will hold. Heating one room to a high level and leaving the other rooms cold makes condensation worse in the unheated rooms. That means that it is better to have a medium to-low level of heat throughout the house. Keeping the heating on low, all day in cold weather will help control condensation.

Where possible, try to keep your room temperatures above 18 degrees during the day rather than having the heating turned off.

When your home is unoccupied during the day, make sure the timer is set so that your home is warm by the time you return. The temperature can be set a few degrees lower while you are out and turned up when you get back.

Never use bottled gas heaters; they produce about 8 pints of moisture from an average-sized gas cylinder. (Licence agreements may not allow the use of this type of heater). Do not use your gas cooker to heat your kitchen as it produces moisture when burning gas. (You might notice your windows misting over).

How to tackle mould in the home

You will need to take proper steps to deal with condensation, but meanwhile there are some simple things you should do straight away.

Dry your windows and windowsills every morning, as well as surfaces in the kitchen or bathroom that have become wet. Wring out the cloth rather than drying it on a radiator.

Steps against mould growth

First treat the mould already in your home, then deal with the basic problem of condensation to stop mould reappearing.

To kill and remove mould, wipe down or spray walls and window frames with a fungicidal wash that carries a Health and Safety Executive (HSE) 'approval number,' and ensure that you follow all the instructions for its safe use. These fungicidal washes are often available at local supermarkets.

Do not try to remove mould by using a brush or vacuum cleaner.

Do not use bleach or washing up liquid as this can make things worse.

Make sure mildewed clothes are washed, and any affected carpets cleaned.

After treatment, redecorate using good-quality fungicidal paint and a fungicidal resistant wallpaper paste to help prevent mould recurring. The effect of fungicidal or anti-condensation paint is destroyed if covered with ordinary paint or wallpaper.

Keep checking the affected area for at least a week. If Mould reappears, wash it down again with fungicidal wash to make sure the area is thoroughly sterilised.

What next?

If there are clearly no leaks and any condensation or mould growth is not severe, follow this advice for 4-6 weeks. You should notice an improvement.

If the problem persists, it may be due to another cause of damp or a leak. Report this as soon as possible to our Customer Services team on 0800 043 2642 and we will arrange someone to come and fix this for you.

125 years young

We recently marked our 125th anniversary year with a fitting tribute to the man who vision led to the founding of Durham Aged Mineworkers' Homes Association – Joseph Hopper.

In August, we held a memorial service at St Alban's Church in Windy Hook, Gateshead.

Staff and Board members from DAMHA were joined by local residents, including 97-year-old Mary Fullwood (pictured in yellow on the opposite page), and representatives from other organisations at the service conducted by the Reverend Danie Lindley.

Rev Lindley led prayers and hymns, and there were also readings and a speech given by DAMHA Chief Executive Paul Mullis, who also laid flowers at Joseph Hopper's graveside memorial.

Rev Lindley said: "The success of the Association is just not the legacy of Joseph Hopper, or the hard work of all who have taken part in its history, but in the people who live in their houses, the people who support those who live in the houses and the people who continue to look outwards for more opportunities to provide affordable solutions to housing that provide community and support."



■ ■ DAMHA has given people shelter, hope, support and strength and our prayer is that this will continue for many more years to come. ■ ■

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In his speech, Paul Mullis reflected on the impact DAMHA has had on people's lives over the last 125 years, saying:

"A recent piece of research concluded that on average an almshouse resident could expect to live 2.4 years longer than the norm. This is due to various reasons including loneliness and the stress of maintaining your home as you become vulnerable with age.

"All these things are addressed by almshouse living in the community of homes that Joseph Hopper began and DAMHA maintains and develops.

"So, we give thanks hugely for the inspiration of Joseph Hopper and building on the shoulder of giants, the Association has grown to great things. 125 years on, we are needed more than ever and as caretakers of a great idea, the baton will continue to be handed down to future generation to continue Joseph's legacy."



Supporting you

We understand that the autumn and winter periods bring difficult choices for some and DAMHA are committed to assisting our residents to maximise the help available to reduce the risk of fuel poverty.

We have already referred many residents in 2022 for assistance and we will continue to do this in 2023. We have used three different schemes below and if you find yourself in need the details are below.

In South Tyneside and Durham District we sign post and use Age Concern a lot and they have been instrumental in lowering fuel bills.

In our sheltered schemes they visit on request and can do the same in your own home.

Age UK Advice Line: 0800 678 1602 - lines are open 8am-7pm, 365 days a year.

There is additional support available through Durham County Council. If you face debts or just struggle to put the heating on take away the worry and speak to an advisor.

To access Fuel Bill assistance please call: 03000 260000.

If eligible you will automatically receive winter fuel payments. If you were born on or before 5 April 1954 you could get between £100-£300 to help pay your heating bills.

You usually get a winter fuel payment automatically if you are eligible and you get the state pension or another social security benefit.

If not, you can still make a claim by phone.

Telephone: 0800 731 0160. Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm.

90th birthdays

In this edition of The Banner we celebrate eleven 90th Birthdays.

May brought us the first four birthday's starting with Mr Ronald Ritchie, of Easington, on the 1st. The next celebration was Mrs Margaret Maughan, of Greenside, on the 7th; followed by Mrs Hazel Hickman, of Consett, on the 18th and Mr Thomas Polson, of Shotton, on the 24th.

June birthdays belonged to Mrs Barbara Harle, of Easington, on the 8th and Mr Denis Hart, of Blackhall, on the 14th.

The sole July birthday belonged to Mrs Mary Kilty, of Consett, on the 5th.

August brought 3 birthdays, the first being Mr Reginald Gleason, of Gilesgate, on the 5th; followed by Mrs Ethel Pickering, of Gilesgate, on the 25th and Mr Whitfield Walling, of Coundon, also the 25th.

The 5th September brought our final celebration. belonging to Mrs Catherine Mann, of Horden.

Congratulations to one and all!

Top Right: Reginald Gleason, Right: Denis Hart



New staff

DAMHA's three newest members of staff are Dave Nelson – Technical Inspector, Michael Wright – Operations Director, and Jason Fielding – Management Accountant.

We know you will join us in wishing them the very best in their roles.



A 'Gimme' for Stephen

DAMHA Technical Inspector Stephen Hetherington proved it was par for the course when he successfully completed four rounds in aid of a much-loved local charity.

Stephen took exactly 14 hours to play 72 holes at Bedlingtonshire Golf Club, where he is a member.

And this marathon effort has so far raised over £1,400, with more money still to come in, for the Sir Bobby Robson Foundation, a charity set up in the name of the popular football manager to help find more effective ways to detect and treat cancer.

What makes the achievement even more impressive is that Stephen, only took up golfing six years ago. He did the same challenge five years ago and raised £850 then, so says he is delighted to have smashed this total second time around.

Stephen said: "I was 50 when I first did it, so this is probably going to be my final time, therefore I am delighted to be on course to nearly doubling the amount raised.

"The Sir Bobby Robson Foundation is a cause close to my heart because I lost my mum to cancer when she was just 51, as well as several friends over the years.

"To be able to raise more money for such a worthwhile local charity is fantastic and I would like to thank everyone who supported me."



A proud history

People living in homes managed by DAMHA recently came together to celebrate 100 years since the properties were built.

Residents at Vesper House Cottages in Seaton Carew, near Hartlepool, marked the centenary with a street party.

Among those who attended were the descendants of Lieutenant Colonel William Thomlinson, who built the cottages in 1923 and gifted them to the "aged women" of Seaton Carew.

His great grand-daughter, Rosemary May, and his great great grand-daughters, Jules Gill and Louise Alcock, travelled all the way from Somerset to take part in the celebrations.

The family said afterwards: "The day was amazing and quite overwhelming. It was lovely to meet all the ladies that currently live there and share this special occasion.

"Everyone made us so very welcome, and we all had such an amazing day. What a wonderful thing he did and great to see and hear more stories of our family's history."

Gillian Lee, who organised the event, said: "It was a lovely day and having traced the relatives of Colonel William Thomlinson, it was lovely that they came to celebrate with us."



Courtesy of the Hartlepool Mail

■ The Vesper House cottages, which comprise five separate properties, are marked as listed buildings and are still occupied by women from the area.

The history of Vesper Homes

Colonel Thomlinson was born in Houghton-le-Spring and moved to work in the iron industry in Tennessee before settling down in Seaton Carew in 1882.

Known for his service and generosity to the public, including the large donations he made to Holy Trinity Church, in Seaton Carew, and the Sir William Gray House, in Clarence Road, Colonel Thomlinson was given a knighthood by King George VI in June 1936.

He made a gift of the Vesper Houses he had built in Queen Street. These consisted of five cottages of Tudor design to be used for the accommodation of aged women from Seaton Carew.

The Vesper House cottages, which comprise five separate properties, are marked as listed buildings and are still occupied by women from the area.

DAMHA is proud to manage the homes on behalf of the Vesper House Trust.



Gala Day

This year's Gala Day was extra special as we got to see the DAMHA banner re-dedicated (to mark our 125th anniversary year) at the Miners Festival Service in Durham Cathedral.

We were one of only three organisations – the others being Coxhoe and Hetton Lyons – admitted into the Cathedral following the traditional march through the streets of Durham.

■ We were proud to march with the banner in front of the 200,000 people.

Accompanied by the Stanhope Silver Band (see article on opposite page), which is celebrating its 200 anniversary this year, our contingent watched as our banner was blessed by the Bishop of Durham.



Earlier, we were proud to march with the banner in front of the 200,000 people who attended this year's Durham Miners' Gala.

Before the Festival service, we ended our parade at Durham Racecourse where everyone enjoyed food and drinks, a fun fair, stalls and sideshows before the traditional speeches began.

Our 'stand' was well attended as usual, and it was a truly amazing day for everyone connected with DAMHA.



Banding together

We are proud of our long-standing association with the Stanhope Silver Band and with our 125th anniversary in 2023 coming the same year as their 200th anniversary, it was fitting that we shared the rededication of our banner at this year's Cathedral service.

The band marked their bicentennial by playing to a packed-out audience in Consett's Empire Theatre in May.

The band, which currently consisting of 45 members, is one of the oldest in the country. In 1823, they were named 'The Band of Hope' that played at Stanhope Methodist Church.

■ The band, which currently consisting of 45 members, is one of the oldest in the country.

Their old band room burned down in 1987, so the band practiced in a variety of places including the old morgue in the community hospital and the town hall until they bought the old Co-op building in the 1990's where they still practice now.

In 1934 the band won at the prestigious Crystal Palace Brass Band Championships and during the Second World War, they were joined by Italian Prisoners of War, who played with the band at a church service in Stanhope.

The band continues to thrive to this day and can be seen at shows across the region. For more information visit their Facebook page: @StanhopeSilverBand.



A Coronation to remember

It's not often you get to see the Coronation of a monarch, so it was lovely to see so many of our residents marking this special occasion with events.

The photographs here were taken at the Crosby Homes we manage in Hartlepool where residents had a Coronation afternoon tea, complete with a Royal quiz and bingo. They had also been given a given a new flagpole so that was installed in time for the celebrations.



Summer fayres

Summer fayres at our Rutherford House and Bulmer House sheltered housing schemes in Easington and South Shields respectively were both well attended.

At both events, there were reciprocal visits from residents at both schemes, as well as plenty members of the local communities in Easington and South Shields.

There was a variety of stalls, including included a tombola, raffle, name the bear and bottle bag game. We also had food and refreshments.

We are now planning our Christmas Fayre, which will be held on Saturday 2nd December at Bulmer House and on XXXXX at Rutherford House.

SUMMER 2023 QUIZ

1. Which teams contested the FA Cup Final on 3rd June?
2. Which senior member of the British royal family gave evidence in a court case on 6th June?
3. Who was the former political party leader arrested by police in Scotland on 11th June?
4. Which two mobile telephone companies announced merger plans on 14th June?
5. Who played the final UK concert of his farewell tour at Glastonbury 2023 on 25th June?
6. Which social media platform was is launched by Meta as a direct competitor to Twitter on 6th July?
7. Which BBC news presenter was cleared by police of any wrongdoing following allegations made against him in the press on 12th July?
8. Which two films combined to make it most successful weekend for UK cinema-going since 2019 on 22nd and 23rd July?
9. Which homeware retailer went into administration on 3rd August?
10. Who beat England women 1-0 in the World Cup Final on 20th August?

ANSWERS: 1. Man City and Man United | 2. Prince Harry | 3. Nicole Sturgeon | 4. Vodafone and 3 | 5. Elton John | 6. Threads | 7. Huw Edwards | 8. Barbie and Openheimer | 9. Wilko | 10. Spain

Our performance

This table outlines our performance over a three-month period. 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.

1st January 2023 to 30th June 2023		
Service Area	Target	Result
Arrears	75%	80%
REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE		
Satisfaction with repairs	90%	81%
LETTINGS		
Satisfaction with lettings service	92%	90%
Re-let times (days)	32	98
Complaints resolved at 1st stage	80%	100%
TELEPHONE CALLS		
% answered within 7 seconds	96%	96%
% of calls dealt with at first point of contact	90%	92%

Recipe Corner

Cherry cream pastries - By Susan Lewis



Ingredients:

- 1 large sheet of ready made puff pastry.
- 8 ounces of cream cheese.
- 2 tbs of sugar.
- 1 tsp of almond extract.
- 1 can of cherry pie filling.
- 1 egg and 1 tbs water mixed.
- Icing sugar for dusting.

Method:

Preheat oven to 200 degrees.

Have ready 2 large baking sheets and lay out the sheet of puff pastry. Cut it into 10 or 12 rectangles about 4 by 3 inches.

Arrange pastries onto baking sheets leaving an inch gap between them. Use a fork to prick holes into the middle of the rectangles to about a half inch from the edges. This allows the edges to puff up.

In a bowl mix the cream cheese, sugar and almond extract together.

Spread 1 tablespoon of the mixture into the centre of each pastry. Then add 2 tablespoons of the cherry pie filling onto the top. Brush around the edges of the pastry with the egg and water mixture.

Bake for 18 minutes until golden brown.

Dust with icing sugar and allow to cool slightly before enjoying them.



Durham Aged Mineworkers' Homes Association


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