

# A Home Fit for Heroes

The £750,000 Royal British Legion Housing Association complex at Stafford Court, Dornoch.



One of the most practical ways in which the people of Scotland can thank the men and women of the armed forces who have served their country so selflessly over the years, is to ensure that they endure no hardship when they reach retirement age.

It was with this in mind that the Royal British Legion set up their own Housing Association to provide modern accommodation with warden and communal facilities which allow former serving men and women to keep their independence, but to also enjoy the company of friends; and be able to summon direct help if they need it.

The latest of Scotland's 21 schemes to be completed is that at Stafford Court, Dornoch, where 13 two-apartment and 12 one-apartment units have been built by Morrisons of Tain to the strict standards of the British Legion Housing Association to ensure top quality accommodation.

Part of the £750,000 scheme includes a three-apartment warden's house, a communal lounge and kitchen area, guest suites and a laundry room.

Situated to the East of the town near the new Elizabeth Crescent housing, many of the units have views to the sea and all face onto the cul-de-sac entrance area which has been neatly landscaped.

Nine of the houses are single-storey bungalows, others are arranged in two-storey blocks of four.

Apart from the extra bedroom and slightly larger kitchen area in the two-bedroomed units, facilities and fittings are the same throughout the scheme.

All the houses are centrally heated throughout and have plenty of television and

'fridge and large, plain windows with ventilation.

Windows throughout the complex are the swing-over type which allow the outside to be cleaned from the inside — but this is not really necessary as an outside window cleaning service has been put out to contract.

Each unit has a bathroom with wash-basin and WC. There is a steady pole next to the bath and hand-rails either side to aid entry into the bath.

The bedrooms are all of a good size and have more than ample cupboard space — some have walk-in cupboard areas. Lighting is attractive and, again, there are plenty of power points dotted around the rooms.

There is a special vocal alarm system in each flat or house whereby the tenant can summon the warden. They just press a switch and they are connected through to the warden at her office — or if she is in one of the other houses or the community room, she is alerted by bleeper and she can plug in and talk to anyone in distress from any of the alarm boxes. There are also direct alarm pulls in most rooms which summon help.

Safety is all important and smoke-detectors in most rooms help alleviate fire-risk. A complex fire-alarm system is controlled from the warden's office and the site of a fire is quickly identified. Each unit also has its own fire extinguisher.

The houses are all beautifully finished to an extremely high standard and because this kind of

scheme is getting away from the traditional British Legion housing of flats within one block, it is seen as something of a showcase.

The communal area is comparative to a top-class hotel, built to an extremely attractive design. The sloping roof and vast window area allow space inside and a peaceful view outside. The local committee are raising funds to provide furnishings, although carpeting is already laid.

A kitchen area means that teas and snacks can be made easily and there is also a 'fridge.

There are two guest bedroom

available to talk to any of the residents if they need advice or a chat — just being a "good neighbour."

It is hoped that a deputy warden can be appointed from among one of the younger, more agile, tenants to give Mrs Jones opportunity to take time off if she wishes.

A part-time gardener is to be employed to cope with the communal flower beds and a part-time cleaner will also be taken on.

All but four of the units are already allocated and as there is a reserve waiting list it is likely that the remainder will be taken up soon.

Rents have not yet been fixed as they are calculated by the rents officer, but the usual housing benefits are available to those who are entitled to them.

The Royal British Legion Housing Association complex at Stafford Court would appear to be a quiet haven for ex-servicemen and women, with much thought having gone into its planning. The Association's experience with other schemes has enabled them to understand what senior citizens need in the way of facilities and comfort.

## Open Day

An "Open Day" will be held tomorrow (Saturday) between 10 am and 3 pm, when the public are cordially invited to see over the development. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

suites for visitors which cost £2 per night. These have a shower and toilet en suite and bedlinen is provided. They are ideal for relatives or friends coming to visit.

There is also a laundry with two large washing machines and tumble dryers and a drying area leading directly off.

It is emphasised that, of course, no-one has to use the communal lounge, but it is hoped that residents will enjoy a chat over a cup of tea and in future there may be bingo or card sessions organised in there. But again it is stressed that this is up to the residents themselves to organise if they wish — not part of the warden's job.

Appointed as warden is Mrs Elizabeth Jones of Achfary who, with her husband William, moved into their house earlier this week. Their daughter, Betty Donaldson, already lives in Dornoch. Mrs Jones' main duty will involve being



Mr Hugh Steele, president of the Dornoch and District branch of the Royal British Legion (Scotland), has acted as co-ordinator throughout the planning and building of Stafford Court. He also heads the hard-working committee who are raising funds for furnishing the communal rooms.

# Unique Heating System

A special heating system called HYBRID has been used within all the British Legion housing units at Stafford Court.

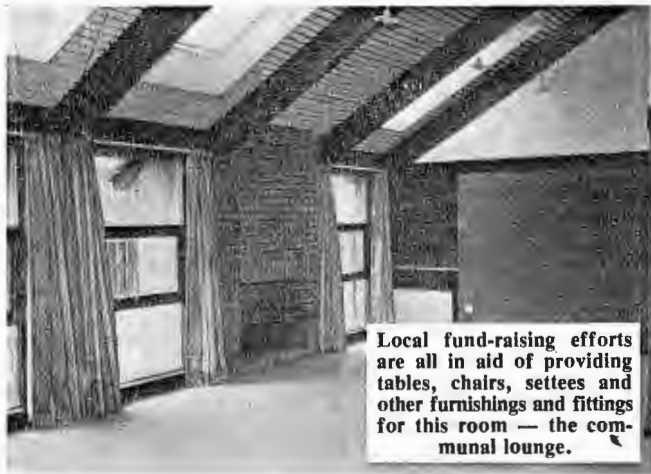
It is specifically designed for older people and it is the first time this system has been installed in the North of Scotland — the work has been carried out by Dornoch electrician James Campbell.

Many elderly people get confused by switches and temperature gauges, but with HYBRID, all the work is done for them.

The Pactrol "Weather Watcher" automatically adjusts the amount of heat stored in an off-peak heating installation in response to changes in weather.

The system will automatically heat up if it's cold outside, but as the weather gets warmer, then it will begin to cool down again. It can change from hour to hour to insure an even temperature.

During cold weather, for instance, day-time temperature is kept at a constant 21°C and at 16°C during the night.



Local fund-raising efforts are all in aid of providing tables, chairs, settees and other furnishings and fittings for this room — the communal lounge.