

## WELCOME TO OUR LATEST NEWSLETTER



We are pleased to announce that Samantha Small now has a baby girl Grace May Rose Small.

Samantha Small is currently on maternity leave but whilst she is away her work will be dealt with by our locum Gary Morgan, who is very experienced in family law work and by Charlotte Oldham who is one of our partners.

### **Land Registry releases its historic price paid data**

From 28 November 2013, all Land Registry's [historic price paid data](#) of over 18 million sales has been available to download for free as part of its open data programme, bringing even greater transparency to the UK residential property market.

Giving access to a dataset going back to 1995, containing in excess of 400 million data items, developers and businesses can now use one of the world's largest property datasets of residential sales in England and Wales for commercial and non commercial purposes. It is also used to calculate Land Registry's popular House Price Index.

The data being released today includes records of sales at full market value lodged for registration since January 1995. Collectively this represents almost 18 years worth of valuable information on the country's housing market. Since the first tranche of data was released in June last year, more than 114,000 files have been downloaded.

The data released shows that the cheapest property ranged from £5,200 in 1995 to £8,000 in 2013 and the most expensive from £3.75 million in 1995 to £29.35 million in 2013. In 1995 there were just over 105,000 new build sales; in 2013 the figure is around 45,700. The only 'property type' sales to have increased since 1995 are flats and maisonettes.

## DRIVING LICENCE CHANGES

Many photo card driving licence holders do not realise that the licence is only valid for a period of ten years. Section 4(b) on the rear of the photo card licence gives the expiry date.

Every ten years the licence has to be renewed, updating the photograph at that time. If you do not update your driving licence and you are pulled over by the police, producing an out of date licence can result in a fine of £1,000 for being unable to provide any valid driving licence.

### PROPOSED PENALTIES FOR PRIVATE LANDLORDS



There are now proposals in place for penalties to be imposed on private landlords who do not check prospective tenants' immigration status. There is a requirement to check a tenant's immigration status, not only at the outset of a Tenancy Agreement but also at the renewal of any Tenancy Agreement.

The Government is looking at ways to reduce the number of illegal immigrants who are unlikely to be paying tax within this country. One such approach is to require private landlords to check the tenant's immigration status. It is a proposal currently under consultation but the financial penalties should this come into force would be for up to £3,000 fine per adult illegal migrant.

Therefore to avoid falling foul of rules which may come into force, it would be good practice for landlords to do an identity check at the outset of a Tenancy Agreement or at the renewal of any Tenancy Agreement which would include a copy of passports, visas or residents permits. If documents are not available the landlord can check with the Home Office who will give guidance. If the individual tenant is an illegal migrant, it is likely that a call to the Home Office would result in the removal of the illegal migrant which would avoid the landlord having to undertake costly proceedings to evict those tenants.



## SOME REVENUE CHANGES

### **Personal Allowance, Rates of Tax, National Insurance Contributions for 2014 to 15**

As announced at Budget 2013, people born after 5 April 1948 will be entitled to a basic personal allowance of £10,000 for 2014 to 15. The 'higher rate threshold' (the sum of the basic personal allowance and the basic rate limit) will be £41,865. As the personal allowance will be £10,000 for 2014 to 15, this means that the basic rate limit will be £31,865 the rates of tax will be announced at Budget 2014.

For 2014 to 15, there are no changes to the percentage rate of contribution for Class 1, Class 1A, Class 1B and Class 4 National Insurance Contributions but there are changes to all of the thresholds and limits. The weekly rates for Class 2 and Class 3 NICs will be increased. The Class 1 Upper Earnings Limit and the Class 4 Upper Profits Limit for NICs will continue to be aligned with the point at which higher rate tax becomes payable £41,865.

### **Recognising marriage in the tax system**

From April 2015, a spouse or civil partner who is not liable to Income Tax or not liable above the basic rate for a tax year, will be entitled to transfer £1,000 of their personal allowance to their spouse or civil partner, provided that the recipient of the transfer is not liable to Income Tax above the basic rate. The transferor's personal allowance will be reduced by £1,000. The spouse or civil partner receiving the transferred allowance will be entitled to a reduced Income Tax liability of up to £200.

### **Capital Gains Tax Private Residence Relief – Final period rule**

The final period exemption applies to a property that has been a person's private residence at some time, even though they may not be living in the property at the time they dispose of it and they may be claiming private residence relief on another property at the same time. From 6 April 2014 the final period exemption will be reduced from 36 months to 18 months.

### **Capital Gains Tax: Annual Exempt Amount**

The annual exempt amount will be £11,000 for the year 2014 to 15 and £11,100 for 2015 to 16 and subsequent years. The exemption for most trustees will be £5,500 and £5,550 respectively.

### **Our 120<sup>th</sup> year!!!**

Originally Blackmore Shield and Mackarness of London and Alresford, the Petersfield office was opened in 1894 taking over the practice of Soames and Caparn. Arthur Mackarness used to travel between Alresford and Petersfield on horseback.

1903 Arthur Lunt joined Arthur Mackarness. In 1907 now known as Shield and Mackarness the firm moved from Number 15 to its current location Number 16. The two Arthurs met via Arthur Lunt's brother who was a Sergeant in the local Militia which Arthur Mackarness commanded.

1935 the old partnership was amicably dissolved and the Petersfield office became Mackarness and Lunt. Arthur Lunt's two sons Alan and Kenneth joined together with Arthur Mackarness' great-nephew



Peter followed by Alan's son John and Peter's son Simon. When John Lunt retired in 2006 the firm was without a Lunt for the first time in 103 years. On the retirement of Simon Mackarness in 2010 the firm was without a Mackarness for the first time in 115 years although Simon remains a non-practicing consultant.

Arthur Mackarness was very involved with the Scout Movement in Petersfield and for many years was Clerk to the Justices in Petersfield and Registrar of the local County Court. For that reason Mackarness and Lunt was unable to carry out any litigation until the early 1960s.

**CHARITY NEWS - Operation Christmas Child Shoe Box campaign.**

Charity News – Operation Christmas Child (OCC) update. We received 446 filled shoeboxes at the office as a Drop-Off Point for OCC. As a whole, the GU postal code area filled 19,708 shoeboxes. These and others were collected by our staff member Delia Cann, who is a volunteer for the charity and taken to the Guildford depot for checking and onward transportation to children in Krygagstan, Azerbaijan, Ukraine and Swaziland. Thank you to all those who took part.

For further details contact Delia by e-mail at [deliacann@macklunt.co.uk](mailto:deliacann@macklunt.co.uk) or visit [www.operationchristmaschild.org.uk](http://www.operationchristmaschild.org.uk)

**Disclaimer**

This newsletter has been prepared to highlight some key issues. It is intended to be for general guidance only and is not a substitute for specific advice. It is based upon our understanding of the legal position as at January 2014 and may be affected by subsequent changes in the law. Additional information and updates are available from time to time on our [website](#).

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If you do **NOT** wish to receive any further updates or communication from us, please notify Diane Anderson by [email](#) or phone on 01730 265111.