

# Review

The journal of  
Blind Veterans UK

August 2021

## On the home straight

Taking steps  
to open up again



### Inside:

Centres update  
Creative hobbies  
Saving money  
on your bills



Rebuilding  
lives after  
sight loss

# New beginnings

Welcome to your August issue of *Review*. I'm delighted to be your new editor of the magazine and look forward to getting to know many of you and hearing your experiences.

As you will know from the last issue, my predecessor, Chris, has moved on after almost three years at the helm. Chris has taken the magazine from strength to strength and I know I have big boots to fill. I will do my best to continue to make the content engaging and, over the coming months, would love to know your thoughts on which articles you enjoy the most and if there's anything else you might like to see in the magazine.

After a decade in publishing, I've spent the last few years working mainly for charities tackling loneliness and isolation in later life. Sadly, the lockdown has seen loneliness in all ages soar, particularly among people living alone. It's incredibly heartening to see that we are now taking our first tentative steps to opening up the centres in Brighton and Llandudno once again, albeit with crucial guidelines in place to keep everyone as safe as possible.

**“Chris has taken the magazine from strength to strength and I know I have big boots to fill”**

I hope to be able to visit soon to see what goes on in these remarkable places. During the lockdown, I made the big move from the city to the countryside and, while I absolutely love the big skies and long dog walks, I do sometimes find myself missing the buzz of being around more people. I'm sure most of you have felt this to some degree over the past 18 months, wherever you live. It will be wonderful to be able to meet and enjoy a cuppa and chat together.

In the meantime, I hope you enjoy the stories in this issue, as well as the fantastic creative work by some of our Members. Please do get in touch if you have an experience to share. 🍷

**Liz Millar**  
Editor



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### On the cover

**Nancy Bowstead, 99, completing her 100-lap fundraising challenge, inspired by Sir Captain Tom. Back cover: Peter King: 'First day of spring.'**



# Remembering Sir Arthur

Your message from your Chief Executive,  
Major General (rtd) **Nick Caplin** CB

One hundred years ago, and two years after he had written his book 'Victory over Blindness' that has been a constant reference for us, Sir Arthur Pearson founded the Greater London Fund for the Blind. That charity has



**Caption: Nick Caplin**

worked tirelessly to transform the lives of people suffering from sight loss in London and we have travelled close and similar paths throughout our history. They are entering their second century rebranded as the Vision Foundation and will make wonderful partners for our London-based Members and community team going forward.

Tragically, just months later, Sir Arthur had a fatal accident. The ceremony in Hampstead Cemetery to mark his burial attracted a large crowd and this was mirrored by remembrance events held in a number of countries across the globe, such was his influence and impact. Traditionally, we hold a graveside ceremony to remember Sir Arthur and to reflect on his work and inspiration. In recent years we have held this ceremony on the Saturday of Remembrance Weekend and as part of our Cenotaph programme



**Caption: Sir Arthur Pearson's grave before and after a tidy up**

where a group of members, families and supporters perform a short and poignant service.

This year, we will honour the passing of Sir Arthur on a different day. This is partly because our presence at the Cenotaph will be smaller, reflecting the continuing challenges of planning group events in Covid times, and we will not be meeting together for the



**Caption: The plaque to Lord Fraser**

weekend at the St John's Wood hotel. And partly because, being the 100th anniversary, the event has particular significance and we will want to mark it accordingly. We will provide further details in the near future. I am grateful to Lynette Denzey and her fellow volunteers for ensuring that Sir Arthur's grave is being kept clean and trim in this important year and in spite of the constraints of Covid!

Conscious of our increasing community presence as a charity, we are working up plans to provide a Blind Veterans UK contingent this year at a number of community Remembrance parades across the country. A Member working group led by Colin Williamson has started to scope this and further →



**Caption: Volunteer Andrew Cooper enjoying a rest on the bench**

details will be provided in due course. It's an exciting thought that we will have the opportunity to fly our flag and pay our respects in numerous locations across the country on Remembrance Sunday.

As an aside, Lynette has mentioned to me a wonderful find in Regents Park. Sited in a glorious rose garden, there is a bench dedicated to Sir Arthur's successor Lord Fraser of Lonsdale who was our Chairman for over 50 years and to his wife Lady Fraser. The bench has a plaque to the Frasers recording this history. It also has a Braille plaque with a

difference. It is placed in such a way that you need to stand behind the bench with your hand reaching over to read it.

The gentleman sitting on the bench in this photograph of the bench is Lynette's co-recorder of *Review*, volunteer Andrew Cooper. He has been doing the recording for over 10 years, having been recruited originally by our former President, Ray Hazan. Lynette hasn't revealed to me the grid reference of the bench - and that's a lovely excuse to spend a couple of hours in one of London's finest parks to track it down! 🗺️

# Looking to the future

Your message from your Chairman, Air Vice-Marshal **Paul Luker** CB OBE AFC DL (rtd)

I always seem to be drafting my piece for the *Review* on the cusp of some big announcement: anticipating an outcome whilst I sit at the keyboard, frustrated by the fact that you will all probably know it by the time of

publication. This has obviously been particularly true of the last 16 months as we have tried to forecast what the Ministry of Fun might have up its sleeve for the next iteration of controlling us during the Covid-19 pandemic. But it has also been true of how we have approached making announcements about the future of our charity.



**Caption: Paul Luker**

I have always held the view that we need to be as open and transparent as we can be, not just in what we do but, arguably more sensitively, in how we evolve our future strategy. That, of course, comes with challenges. As trustees we need to demand of ourselves a rigour in how we address our charity's viability and what the future holds. This boils down to constantly asking ourselves and the charity's professional leadership searching questions. What is working and what is not? How are our →

finances holding up – and, more cogently, how will they hold up in the future? What will our regulatory bodies be looking at next and how might that affect us? Is the service we offer relevant, meaningful and equitable? How can we do things better (now, there’s an interesting word to define)? Do the people we work with understand what we are trying to achieve – and, just as importantly, do we understand what they expect of us? What has changed and what have we learnt from those changes? And, fundamentally, will our wider Blind Veterans UK family be assured by our actions?

Inevitably this can lead to a degree of difficulty. Nevertheless, we must routinely ask ourselves these questions; regulatory bodies such as the Charity Commission would be astonished if we did not. But in the very asking of the question, we risk setting hares running in anticipation of the answers, let alone the deductions we might draw. Thus, there is always a degree of lead/lag in conducting the analysis and then reaching and announcing the conclusions.

I make this point mainly for one reason. In the course of the last couple of months, as we have reached conclusions on how we must run our charity in the coming years, we have

## “We had anticipated questions about the reasoning behind moving on from Brighton”

made every effort to ensure that we have communicated our decisions as quickly and comprehensively as we could. I know that these decisions will not have landed easily with everyone, but from the considerable feedback that I and other trustees have received, I think there is an acceptance of the factors that have led to our deliberations and the underlying reasons why we have concluded that that we must find an alternative to Ovingdean. For that alone I owe the staff enormous thanks in getting our thinking across to the whole Blind Veterans UK family. We still have unresolved issues – not least the where and when of the move from Brighton - but I am equally clear that we will continue to communicate any news in the same way.

Indeed, I would go further. It would be fair to say that we had anticipated questions about the reasoning behind moving on from Brighton and much of our communication obviously addressed that. But what has been surprising – in a good way - has been the largely positive acceptance of that logic and a rapid shift by Members to



**Caption: Paul taking on his 70x70 challenge, supported by his family**

offer views on what the future might look like. Rest assured that these opinions are both welcome and will provide balance in how we proceed.

My service history in command is peppered with examples of how I got this wrong in the past, so perhaps I have learnt along the way. In my final year commanding RAF Odiham, I had the unenviable task of dealing with a major RAF downsizing which affected all my personnel but acutely impacted on the catering staff. It quickly became clear that, because the new system introduced civilian catering for most RAF stations but my station was to remain in RAF Catering hands, the

turbulence meant I would have a 75% changeover of catering personnel and for possibly six months would not be able to run on the traditional messing system. I wasn’t too fussed. In the field, the RAF helicopter force is well used to mucking in and I was confident that I could fudge enough to make the lads and lasses understand that it would come good in the end.

So, at 1700 hours on the day the decision had been made, I called a mess meeting to make sure the officers understood the situation and the plan first, then left it to them to cascade the news down. By 1730 I had a report back from Bosnia →

that our detachment there had been briefed that the Old Man had taken leave of his senses and had decided to give McDonald's a concession to run the Officers Mess. As an afternote, I suspect some of the young officers were slightly miffed to discover that this wasn't the plan.

But in all this current uncertainty there is one piece of news that will be welcome to you. As I have already announced, I will stand down as Chairman at the end of this year. That will mark almost 10 years as a trustee, of which some five will have been spent as Vice-Chairman and four as Chairman. Charity Commission best practice tells us we should move on as trustees. I don't need them to tell me that. I passionately want Blind Veterans UK to evolve in the best form it can. Hence, well before we had decided on a strategic shift for the charity, I had already concluded that we needed new blood.

Last month I invited the trustees to consider who should lead the charity on my departure at the end of the year. I am delighted to announce that they have selected Barry Coupe to do so. Barry has been a trustee since 2017 and his history with the charity stretches back long before that. His father was a St Dunstaner from the last years of WWII and Barry grew up in the context

of his father's relationship with the charity. His commitment to us is well established in the enormous lengths he has gone to support Blind Veterans UK over a protracted period prior to becoming a trustee, not least in setting up the Victory over Blindness memorial in Manchester. He also brings a wealth of expertise from other charitable roles. He will serve us well, I am certain, but I will leave it to him to set out his vision for when he takes up the reins.

And finally, I did complete my 70x70 challenge. A small step for mankind but a hell of a lot of steps for my poor feet. For the record, I managed to cover just over 73 kilometres in 24-hours during the weekend of 19/20 June. I am sure that I would have done it with far less good grace had it not been for my family, who took it in turns to keep me company on 23 of my 24 sorties. I note with pride that all three generations made the effort to accompany me on the 24<sup>th</sup> foray, which was to the pub – the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. And I actually covered just over 93 marathon equivalents in my annual challenge. A more detailed record of my misplaced optimism is at: [www.justgiving.com/fundraising/paulluker](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/paulluker)

Thank you to all of you who supported me and to your families who did so as well. Rest assured I am not aiming for an 80x80. 🍏

# In Your Community

WIKIPEDIA / IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUMS



**Caption: Two Members have discovered they served on the same ship at the same time**

## HMS Campania

Members Arnold Wilkinson and Alec Penstone recently discovered that they both served on the HMS Campania at the same time during the Second World War. Arnold was in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve and Alec was in the Royal Navy.

Arnold says: "I was contacted by a member of staff at the charity who told me that there was another veteran who she thought I would have a lot in common with. The charity arranged a phone call and it was then that we found out we were both on the same ship at the same time. We were both very surprised!"



**Caption: Nancy Bowstead was inspired by Sir Captain Tom**

Alec says: "There would have only been about 600 crew members on HMS Campania so what a coincidence! We have both now exchanged numbers and will keep in contact. We both would have served in the same battles during that time, so I have so many questions to ask! In the early days, I went to reunions and met with other veterans from the ship, but this is the first person in a long time who I have reconnected with."

## Nancy's walk

Nancy Bowstead recently walked 100 laps around the garden at the Brighton centre to raise money for →

the charity ahead of her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in September. Nancy was inspired by Sir Captain Tom's fundraising efforts and decided to do a similar challenge herself. Nancy says: "I have been a resident at the Brighton Centre for nearly five years. I've lived here during lockdown and haven't been able to see my family. It's so important to keep supporting charities, especially at the moment, and I want to do my bit to get the country back on its feet again!"

Nancy completed the challenge on Wednesday 7 July, cheered on by staff, Members and other residents who had made posters. The garden was decorated with bunting and music was played to encourage her on her way round.



**Caption: Evelyn De Morgan 'The Worship of Mammon', 1909**

## Evelyn De Morgan exhibition

A number of our veterans have told their stories of 'war and hope' which are now being displayed alongside an art exhibition arranged by the De Morgan Foundation.

Evelyn De Morgan was an artist who produced work that depicted hope during the First World War. She was a supporter of Blind Veterans UK and kindly left artwork to our charity.

Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB, says: "Arts and crafts have played such an important role in the rehabilitation of our veterans from the First World War to the present day so we are delighted to be involved with the exhibition. After the last year and a half I am sure people will be inspired by the hope represented not only in the magnificent art but also our veterans' stories."

The exhibition can be visited in person at Towneley Hall in Burnley. Alternatively, there is a virtual tour available at the following web address: [smartify.org/tours/artist-of-hope](https://smartify.org/tours/artist-of-hope)

The Members involved in the exhibition are: Maurice Bell, Alf Sandiford, Ernie McDade, Basil Jewitt, Ted Baines and the late Eve Burlington. 🇬🇧

# In the know about our services

As lockdown restrictions are lifted, our Operations team keeps you abreast of the latest changes to our services

Due to the ever-changing situation across the UK, we are having to operate differently in each area across the UK according to their specific restrictions. But we can keep you informed about how we've been supporting Members recently. We'll do this by providing you with a 'status update' every month about what's been happening in our communities and centres.

### Our communities

As of 19 July 2021 all legal restrictions in England were lifted by the UK Government. Some legal restrictions still remain in other parts of the UK. Taking this into account, we can now safely provide the following services to Members in the community:

- A blended service of face-to-face and remote telephone support.
- Staff and volunteers can visit members face-to-face where support cannot be provided over the telephone.

### Maintenance and delivery of equipment

We will also continue running a growing number of telephone and online social and 'special interest' groups so that Members can meet each other regularly, catch up and share experiences. If you are a passionate football fan, interested in IT, crafts or just fancy a chat, get in touch with your caseworker and they will let you know what's on. If you fancy starting a group yourself, let us know!

General face-to-face social groups will remain on hold whilst we review our services over the summer. However, we are currently planning to establish some face-to-face groups where there is an identified need to support small groups of Members, but these will be temporary and serve a purpose. Members will be identified as part of their assessment or review and invited to join a face-to-face group.

It is important to be aware that →



**Caption: Our Llandudno Centre is opening up once more**

cases of Covid-19 are still high across the country so we continue to take a cautious approach to protect staff, Members and volunteers. We will still call Members prior to any face-to-face visit and continue wearing masks when in close proximity.

### Member Support Hub

Our Member Support Hub continues to run as usual and our recycling team are back out on the road, delivering and collecting equipment. Although we are still providing support remotely wherever possible, face to face support can now be provided where there is

“It is important to be aware that we are still living with Covid-19 as cases are still high across the country”

an essential need and it is safe to do so. Of course, members can always get in touch with us on **01273 391 447**, Monday to Friday 9am-4pm.

### Our centres

Our Llandudno Centre is now open for residential, nursing and independent holiday and respite stays, with all prevailing Covid-19 restrictions being adhered to.

The Brighton Centre is currently open to Members for nursing and residential respite stay, a 14-day isolation period and testing measures continue to be necessary in order to make sure we adhere to government guidelines. The centre is still able to offer a positive experience even during this period with activities and engagement safely managed.

The centres have been closely monitoring government and local guidance. In the next article, we let you know what services are available at our centres to Members during the summer months. 🍷

# Our Centres – an update

The latest news about staying at our Brighton and Llandudno Centres

### Brighton and Llandudno centres holiday/respite bookings

Our staff at the centres continue to manage the complexities of the regulations around hospitality and being a registered care provider to the best of their abilities. As we know, these are often open to regular amendments and the opening of the centres are subject to changes that we are not able to control. **Any updates will be provided via caseworkers and the centre booking departments.**

### Llandudno

The booking lines at the Llandudno Centre opened on the 21 June. When a booking is made it is essential that all health, mobility and care information is up to date as this will ensure that the correct level of support is available for your stay.

All Members/escorts will be asked to undertake a Covid-19 PCR test 72

hours prior to arrival. If you are unable to facilitate this yourself, assistance may be available from your community team to identify local support.

**Members/escorts must follow the advice issued by the NHS on receipt of your test result.** Please contact the booking line, if you are required to cancel your stay.

The booking staff at Llandudno will need to determine the dates for a requested stay based on your individual stay requirements. **We may not be able to offer your preferred date or month to stay but will be able to provide you with details of the next availability.** Due to anticipated demand, we are limiting stays independent holiday/respite stays to one week per member.

To comply with guidelines, residential and nursing stays currently include a 14-day isolation period. Any →



changes to these guidelines will be provided via the booking line.

The Llandudno booking office is open 8.30am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday, and is able to answer any queries or make bookings.

■ **Llandudno Booking Office 01492 868700**

## Brighton

As the Brighton Centre has permanent residents, we need to ensure continued compliance with regulations in place for care homes. The centre has been open for residential and nursing holiday/respice bookings since 22



**Caption: Brighton Centre**

June, with a 14-day isolation period. Any changes to our guidelines will be provided via the Brighton bookings phone line.

It is hoped that the bookings line will be able to take your independent holiday bookings at the time of reading this, but this will, of course, depend on restrictions for care homes being eased. Please call bookings to confirm.

All Members/escorts will be asked to undertake a Covid-19 PCR test 72 hours prior to arrival. If you are unable to facilitate this yourself, assistance may be available from your community team to identify local support.

**Members/escorts must follow the advice issued by the NHS on receipt of your test result.** Please contact the booking line if you are required to cancel your stay.

When a booking is made, it is essential that all health, mobility and care information is up to date as this will ensure that the correct level of support is available for your stay. **We may not be able to offer your preferred date or month to stay but will be able to provide you with details of the next availability.**

■ **Brighton Booking Office 01273 391500, 8.30am to 4pm, Monday to Friday.**

# Lest we forget

Military history group releases a book of powerful personal accounts of war, all in support of Blind Veterans UK



**Caption: Terry Bullingham, contributor to 'Glimpses of War'**

A military history group has penned a book of war stories, with the royalty proceeds coming to Blind Veterans UK. Entitled 'Glimpses of War', the book is made up of the war experiences of members and associates of the British Modern Military History Society

(BMMHS) and their families. It includes accounts from the Boer War, First World War, Second World War and more recent conflicts in the Falklands and Afghanistan.

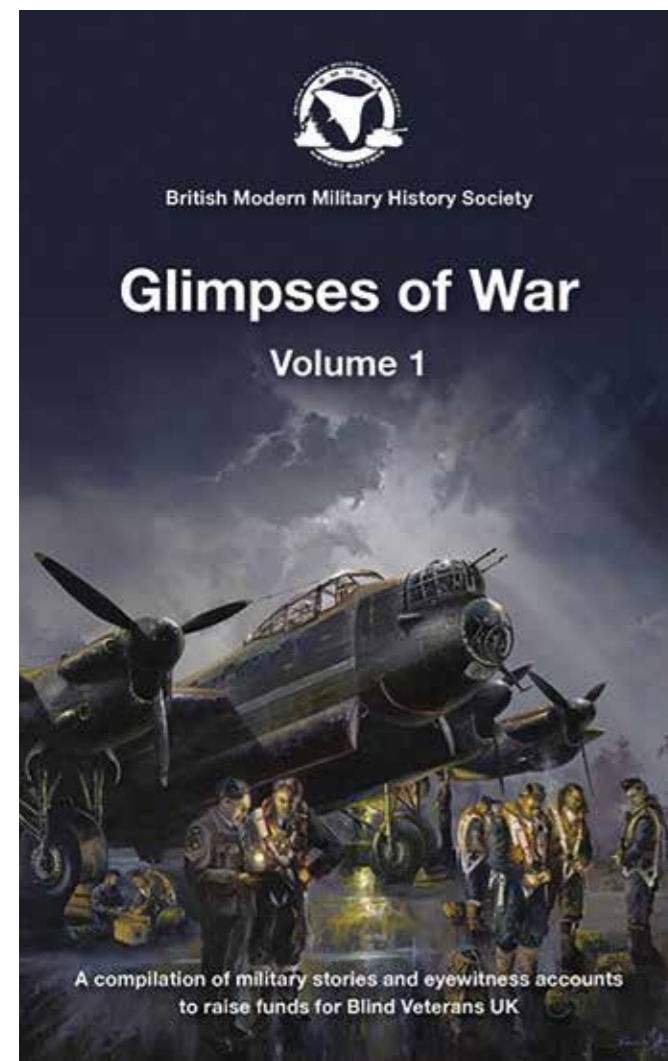
Member Terry Bullingham is one of those to recount his experiences in the book. He vividly describes his time in the Falklands, as well as the day he lost his sight and how we got him back on his feet.

He says: "I was inspired by the blind First and Second World War veterans I met at Blind Veterans UK. I thought, if you can crack it, I'm certainly going to! They had overcome such challenges in their lives, and yet not one of them felt any self-pity. The camaraderie together with the encouragement and support from Blind Veterans UK kept me positive and I found I was able to achieve more each day."

Another member featured in the book is 98-year-old Jim Wright. →

Jim trained as a navigator for the RAF and flew in 42 daring raids during the Second World War. The book describes those treacherous night flights and his incredible experience during the war before moving onto his dedicated fight to get proper recognition for Bomber Command.

Jim lost his sight later in life due to age-related macular degeneration and has been supported by us since 2014. We arranged for a volunteer to visit Jim



**Caption: 'Glimpses of War Volume 1'**

**“With the support of the charity, blind veterans are given every assistance to lead a full and active life”**

once a week in his home before the pandemic hit.

Jim says: “The charity organised a wonderful person to help me write my memoirs. It’s something I simply couldn’t have done without his help, and I feel very grateful that he was so dedicated to the task!”

Andy Cockeram, Chairman of BMMHS says: “We are delighted to support Blind Veterans UK, a well-respected and nationwide charity which does amazing work for its beneficiaries. It is hard for any of us to imagine how difficult life must be without sight, and with the support of the charity, blind veterans are given every assistance to lead a full and active life.”

The book is available to purchase in paperback on **Amazon**.

■ **The BMMHS is already planning future volumes of the book and is accepting materials from post Second World War conflicts to be used. Please send your or your loved ones’ stories to [info@bmmhs.org](mailto:info@bmmhs.org), keeping under 2,000 words.** 🇬🇧



**Caption: National Service recruitment poster from WW2**

## Defending the Isle of Wight: Half-time

From being shouted at by Sergeant Majors to reading a book a day, Member **John Cockcroft** remembers his National Service days

Some people hanker after the return of National Service, especially those who were never involved in it. Most young men between 1945 and 1963 were conscripted into one of the forces, mainly the Army. A few joined the Navy and were taught Russian in the context of the Cold War.

It was a cumbersome way to defend this country and our NATO allies. Throughout its existence, too many people were called up to defend this country. The regular soldiers, sailors and airmen were not keen on having to train young men just out of school or university, including some officers, →

## “I found it difficult to decide whether to go into the army straight after school or to go to Cambridge”

aged only 19. However, some form of expansion of our defence capability was necessary, particularly in certain colonies experiencing transition to independence, such as Kenya. The Korean war in the early 1950s was particularly bloody, with many British casualties, including conscripts. I was very glad not to have been involved there, or indeed anywhere in our rapidly diminishing empire.

I found it difficult to decide whether to go into the army straight after school or to go to Cambridge and then do my National Service. Alternatively, it would have been easy not to do it at all, because I had some acne over some parts of my body, which were considered detrimental to service. It was to delay university, which I did, but it was a gamble because it proved to be difficult to take up studies after two years away from libraries, teachers, lecturers, and so on. On the other hand, one was more mature and would probably enjoy the social side of university life more than if one had been two years younger.

I did my basic training in Oswestry for ten weeks. There I mixed with other young men who had never been away from home before. I had, of course, but the difference made it all the more interesting. It was quite a shock to be shouted at by Sergeant Majors and to be regimented for all of one's waking hours, but of course that is why some people think it was a good experience.

After Oswestry I went to Mons Officer Training Camp at Aldershot. Recruits there were selected on the basis of their so-called 'potential officer qualities', but of course, class was very much a factor. I was not a distinguished soldier and failed WOSB (the War Office Selection Board) the first time, with the designation, 'Failed - Watch - Come again'. The second time, I passed.

I was deemed not to be extrovert enough in leading a platoon of men on a plank across a stream. I should have been in front, but being cautious, I tried to lead them from behind, which was not considered very officer-like. Mons had the famous, or indeed arguably notorious, Sergeant Major Brittan, who was rumoured to have one of the loudest voices in the Army. He shouted at potential officers, with quotes like, "Pull yourself together", "I've never seen rubbish piled so high", and expletives worse than that.

Years after I left the army, I went to see Sergeant Major Brittan at his home in Aldershot and asked if I could write his biography. He said he was already doing that himself, but he was very touched that I had been to see him. He had assumed almost everyone who had been under his care hated him and I said, "Well, of course that's not true and it was an interesting experience being on the receiving end of your staccato orders". Anyway, he was touched that I had made the effort.

### Benign and kind

By delaying my WOSB eventual success, I'd lost four months of my two years National Service and it was therefore deemed appropriate that I was sent to the Isle of Wight. When I asked to go overseas, it was, of course, taking my request literally. I was stationed at Parkhurst barracks near Newport. The site is now a high security prison. There was very little to do there. I inspected my platoon at 9 o'clock in the morning, on parade, when uniform was compulsory. After that, we were left to our own devices. I liked the regular officers who were in charge of me and the other young men. Major Hiliard was benign and kind, with a glamorous daughter. Below him was Captain Brian Mahafey, and below him, Lt. Irvin Sybald. They were all very good officers.

I would walk down the hill to Newport Library and borrow roughly a book every day. I read *Mein Kampf* by Hitler, *Das Capitol* by Marx, *Meditations* by Confucius, *The Koran* by the Prophet Mohammad.

That training camp was deemed to be superfluous and was closed. I was therefore, for the last ten weeks of my National Service, sent to another training camp near Newquay, in the early Summer of 1955. I thoroughly enjoyed the Cornish experience and, with a little car, saw a great deal of that beautiful county.

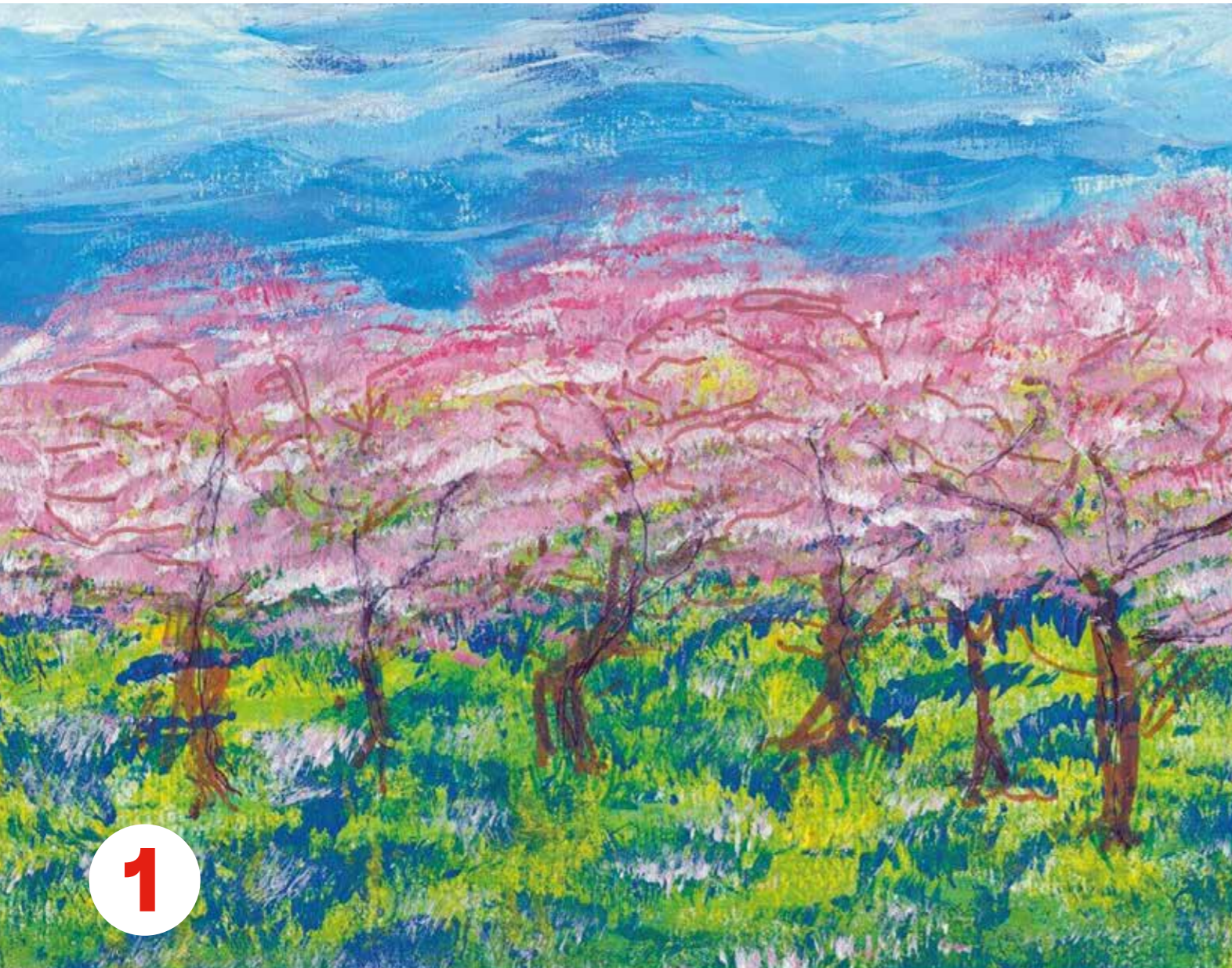
My interest in politics, by then, was considerable, so I timed my release from the Army to pass through London to see Churchill's last dinner party, as he received the young Queen at Downing Street, just before he retired. On balance, I don't regret the experience of National Service, though quite a lot of people who were called up did, because they regarded it as a waste of time. I was fortunate in being able to utilise the time to supplement my academic studies by reading so much and also to see some attractive parts of this country.

It would be interesting to compare notes with other people who did National Service. Thank you for publishing this article. 🍷

# Artistic Flair

We are pleased to present more artwork by our Members for the National Creative Project

Captions: **1. Michael Godley - Springtime** **2. Jack Carter - I Saw Three Ships** **3. Matthew McGowan - Fishing Trip** **4. Dennis Barker - View From My Window** **5. Michael Kaye - Dog** **6. Rita Scarratt - Norfolk Broads**



# Carers Review

## August 2021

This is a place to find out about the latest opportunities available to the family, partners and carers of our Members, and a space to share experiences with each other. You can also find useful information about relevant organisations to support you in your caring role

**Ann is a carer for her husband, Jack, who's a blind veteran. She says:**

"I've worked in a caring profession all my life whilst I was bringing up four boys. Now I care for Jack who's aged

97. He's been a blind veteran for 10 or 11 years. He is also deaf and has now got dementia. My day revolves around Jack. Being a carer means that I'm always on duty.

My role as a carer is important as my

### Some top tips from Ann for anyone new to caring:

**Tip One: remain calm.** If you lose your temper that inflames the whole situation.

**Tip Two: Take part in outside activities.** Involve yourself with outside activities to keep your brain ticking.

**Tip Three: Nurture outside friendships.** It's been difficult with lockdown, but I've managed it and we can talk on the phone, so this is

enormously helpful.

**Tip Four: Be thankful for help.** Be immensely thankful for all who help, especially to the close family.

**Tip Five: Make time for yourself.** I usually manage to have some quiet time over breakfast, which is when Jack is still asleep. I have my breakfast and do a crossword and just gently relax before the day kicks off.



**Caption: Ann, who cares for her husband, Jack**

husband could not cope without me. He would need full time carers which, financially, would cause us many problems. I don't think he would be so happy and contented away from his home with strangers. As it is, I cope as best I can. I'm happy to be able to continue to care for him for as long as possible.

I would say the biggest challenge of being a carer is that you have no time off. You are always alert. I have found that music is wonderful for him. Music is a great joy from that point of view. He's always liked Bing Crosby. I've got a bit fed up that it's just always Bing Crosby but anyway, we have it on and he's happy."



**Caption: Rebecca Jones, National Energy Action**

**Rebecca Jones, from the charity National Energy Action, offers advice on how to cut energy bills.**

For many people, rising energy and water costs while coping on low incomes or benefits are a big struggle. Many try to get by or go without when they don't need to because they don't know where to turn for help.

You can always start by contacting your energy supplier directly if you are struggling to pay your bills, but there are also other agencies to contact to get help with tariff switching, income maximisation, debt relief, as well as energy efficiency advice to help →

you lower your bills. Here are just a few options to start with.

### Priority Services Register

**You can sign up to a Priority Services Register to receive extra help from your energy or water supplier, as well as from your distribution network operators (the companies that operate and maintain your gas and electricity supplies). You can receive the services available if you:**

- Are of pensionable age
- Are disabled or chronically sick
- Have a long-term medical condition
- Have a hearing or visual impairment or additional communication needs
- Are in a vulnerable situation including certain mental health conditions, physical injury and temporary situations of vulnerability
- Have a child under five living with you

Each energy, water and network operator maintains its own register.

**A wide range of support is available including:**

- Information provided in accessible formats
- Advance notice of planned power cuts
- Identification scheme, password protection and nominee scheme for a family member or carer on behalf of the customer



ONRA MOROPENOBA / ADOBE STOCK

### Caption: Take meter readings

- Priority support in an emergency
- Arrangements to ensure that it is safe and practical for the customer to use a prepayment meter
- Meter reading services

Contact your gas/energy supplier, water company and distribution network operator by phone or go to their website to register. Details of your distribution network operator can be found on your energy bill.

### Warm Home Discount Scheme

Contact your energy supplier to see if you are entitled to a Warm Home Discount. You could get £140 off your electricity bill for winter 2021 to 2022 under the Warm Home Discount Scheme. The scheme officially opens on 18 October 2021 but many suppliers

will open a little earlier for registration. The money is not paid to you - it's a one-off discount on your electricity bill, between October and March. You may be able to get the discount on your gas bill instead if your supplier provides you with both gas and electricity. Contact your supplier to find out.

Those who receive the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit should get the discount automatically. Many larger energy suppliers may offer the discount to other low income and vulnerable households who meet the qualifying criteria (usually means-tested benefits or an income less than £16,190 and of pensionable age or with a disability).

You can still qualify for the discount if you use a pre-pay or pay-as-you-go electricity meter. Your electricity supplier can tell you how you'll get the discount, for example a voucher you can use to top up your meter.

### When was the last time your meters were read?

The best way to avoid debt is to stay on top of what you're paying by making sure you're paying the right amount every time you get your bill. Take regular meter readings and submit them to your energy supplier as this will help you keep an eye on your energy use and make sure your bill is accurate.

If your bill has an "E" marked against the meter reading, then this means it is estimated by your supplier and you may not be paying the right amount for the energy you have used. Having several estimated readings can lead to large, unexpected bills once your meter has been read or, alternatively, you could be paying unnecessarily high amounts to your supplier.

Additionally, if you want to look for a better energy tariff, you can base your comparison on how much energy you actually use, rather than an estimate, which will give you a much more accurate comparison, and help you choose a cheaper tariff and/or supplier. It's easy to supply your meter readings either online or by telephone. Meters are read from left to right and don't include any numbers that are after the decimal point, red or in a red box.

### Save energy around the home

Gas central heating? It is a common misconception that it is cheaper to use a small electric (or gas) portable room heater in rooms that you use the most than to run your full central heating system. They can be handy for a quick blast of heat into a room but if used over a longer period of time are likely to be much more expensive than running your central heating if controlled properly. A small electric room-heater which is left on all day →

can cost in excess of £10 per day to run depending on the setting used. Other appliances that use a lot of electricity are tumble dryers, kettles, electric hobs, an older fridge, TV and computers, dishwashers, washing machines and lights. **Top tips for reducing the energy consumption of these appliances are listed in the box below.**

### Using your central heating system to best effect

To help keep fuel costs down, it is important that you know how to control your central heating system

well. You should make sure that you have heat when you need it and the best way to do this is to use a programmer to set up the system to match your heating and hot water needs. Your heating pattern should match your lifestyle so if, for example, you are out during the day, you should set your heating to come on half an hour before you get up in the morning, switch off again before you leave, and then come on again half an hour before you normally return in the evening.

It should then be set to turn off again

## Top tips for reducing the energy consumption

**Tip One:** Dry your clothes outdoors when the weather permits or indoors on a clothes airer, making sure you ventilate the room sufficiently to avoid excess moisture.

**Tip Two:** Only fill your kettle with the water you need to make your hot drinks.

**Tip Three:** Use slow cookers, microwaves or other energy-efficient appliances when you cook your food.

**Tip Four:** Buy an A+++-rated fridge/freezer when it's time to replace an older appliance.

**Tip Five:** Turn off televisions, computers and any other electrical equipment when not in use – don't

forget that standby mode still uses electricity.

**Tip Six:** Only run your dishwasher when full. If you rinse your dishes before loading your dishwasher it won't smell.

**Tip Seven:** Lower the temperature on your washing machine; a lower-temperature wash uses less electricity. Unless your clothes are heavily soiled, it is worth considering turning down your temperature to 30°C or even 20°C where sufficient.

**Tip Eight:** Change standard light bulbs to low-energy and LED lighting; both types use considerably less energy.

ONRA MOROPENOBA / ADOBE STOCK



**Caption: Use a room thermostat**

around half an hour before you go to bed. If you are spending most of your time in your home, adapt your heating settings to suit your needs.

Use a room thermostat to control the temperature in your home. Ideally this should be set between 18°C and 21°C in cold weather but the elderly, disabled and families with young children need to take extra care in keeping warm in winter. The bedroom temperature should be around 18°C whereas main living areas are more comfortable at 21°C. Remember that turning your thermostat down by only one degree centigrade can cut the cost of your heating by 10 per cent.

If you have an electric hot water immersion heater, remember not to leave it on for longer than you need as this wastes electricity.

Some homes have night storage heaters. These store heat overnight when electricity is cheaper, which is then released throughout the next day. Homes with storage heaters should be on an Economy 7 or Economy 10 tariff (note that this tariff is not available in all areas). Make sure to check this with your energy provider if you do have storage heaters because if you are not using them correctly (and on the wrong tariff) you could be faced with a large bill unnecessarily. [www.nea.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/ECONOMY-7.pdf](http://www.nea.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/ECONOMY-7.pdf)

Preventing draughts can be a cheap way of making your home warmer. Draught-proofing products are available at DIY stores. Close your curtains at dusk to keep the heat in, do not cover your radiators and use thermal underlay beneath carpets to minimise heat-loss.

■ **For impartial, free advice, please do get in touch with the friendly team at National Energy Action's Warm and Safe Homes (WASH) Advice service. Tel: 0800 304 7159 [www.nea.org.uk/advice/wash-advice/](http://www.nea.org.uk/advice/wash-advice/)**

■ **What would you like to see on our page for carers? Contact Stacey Barham on 01273 391483 or at [Stacey.barham@blindveterans.org.uk](mailto:Stacey.barham@blindveterans.org.uk) for more information and to share your ideas.** 🗣️



**Caption: Summer herb gardening**

# National Creative Project Programme for August

## Creative Activities. Creative Book. Creative Hobby Circles.

Welcome to your August programme of friendly activities to get involved with from home.

Call NCP Bookings **01273 391455** for more information or to request an activity pack for the creative activities listed here.. Kits and instructions will be posted out to you with the opportunity to take part in a telephone or video chat with other Members if you would like.

For more information about the projects and groups, please visit our web page: **[blindveterans.org.uk/ncp](http://blindveterans.org.uk/ncp)**

SHOCK / ADOBESTOCK

### **Gardening:**

#### **Summer herbs**

A wicker basket for indoors or out, with aromatic basil, chives, oregano and parsley. Watch them grow and enjoy the lovely smell of the leaves. Your kit will include everything you need. We'll also include a set of WW2 inspired recipe cards with some cooking ideas for your herbs.

During the project there will be the opportunity to join a phone chat with other members and our project team to discuss your herbs and other things garden related.

### **Art & Craft:**

#### **Summer flowers tea towel**

Thank you to all of you who returned your beautiful, bright flowers for the tea-towel project. They look amazing! For anyone else who would like to get involved and be inspired by the colours of a summer garden, there's still time!

You will be sent a pack of materials with everything you need to create your collaged flower, or you can use your own materials like magazine cuttings, paints and pastels.

When you have finished, pop your flower in the prepaid envelope to return. It will then be photographed and included on the tea towel design. We'll send you back a tea towel, which

includes your flower in the design.

You also have the opportunity to take part in a group telephone chat with other Members to exchange ideas, support and encouragement.

### **Art:**

#### **Pastels for beginners and improvers. June, July, August Project.**

This activity gives you the chance to learn how to use pastels or improve your skills. With your permission, your work may appear in our online project gallery. Themes include city scape skyline, on the Home Front and summer landscape.

We will send a pastels project kit and you may use your own materials too. There will be the chance to meet other Members and our Art & Craft Instructors for chat and tips by phone or video call if you would like.

### **Craft:**

#### **Racing cars - a woodwork project**

We'll send you everything you need to sand and paint these two easy-to-assemble model racing cars from Baker Ross, plus our friendly instructions. These are very simple kits with pre-cut wooden pieces and the assembled cars are about 6 ½ inches long. Once complete, have fun racing them! Suitable for children from five years old or keep them for yourself. →





**Caption: Pastels for beginners**

The project comes with a group-call opportunity where you can join up to six other members and our Craft Instructors for a chat about your project, tips and advice.

### **Art & Craft:**

#### **Christmas bauble cards - design for printed Christmas cards**

We know it's hard to think about Christmas in the middle of summer, but we are thinking ahead and invite you to join us in crafting a bauble design for our collaborative printed Christmas cards project.

We will send you a pack containing all you need to create a flat image of a Christmas tree bauble. Once complete, send back your bauble in the prepaid

envelope. We will send you a pack of cards back which include your bauble in the design that you can send out to family and friends.

- **Please call NCP Bookings on 01273 391455 for more information or to request an activity pack for any of these creative activities.**
- **For more information about the projects and groups, please visit our web page: [blindveterans.org.uk/ncp](http://blindveterans.org.uk/ncp)**

#### **A message for Flags Of Hope participants**

Thank you to everyone who created Flags of Hope and returned them to us. We are so impressed by the creativity and imagination that has been used. As this *Review* goes to print, we will be sewing up the bunting ready for your uplifting messages of hope, love and joy to fly in the summer sunshine outside our Llandudno and Brighton Centres, spreading your wishes far and wide. Thank you again for taking the time and trouble. We hope to share some photos of the flags with you in this magazine later in the summer.

#### **CREATIVE BOOK:**

##### **Putting hope on the page**

We are now eight months into our Creative Book project, which gives Members, volunteers and staff the opportunity to document their

experiences of the pandemic through creative writing, art, craft, photography and spoken word.

#### **The theme for August**

This month's theme is **How are you?** - a familiar greeting that's been used over the centuries and appeared in print as early as 1666 in Sir William Killigrew's book 'Four New Playes: Viz; The Seege of Urbin. Selindra. Love and Friendship. Pandora.' It's a phrase we often ask of new acquaintances, of friends, colleagues and of our dearly loved ones. But do we ask it of ourselves? Do we take the time to stop, to check in with ourselves and to ask how we are?

Living through a pandemic is challenging. It asks us to find our inner resolve, to be supportive of each other, to live in ways that we may not have done so before. Our social and work routines stopped immediately, and together we have fought through and are now looking forward to more opportunity to go about our daily lives as before.

We'd love to see or hear about your responses to **How are you?** Your contribution could be a photograph you have taken, a painting, drawing or doodle, poetry or spoken word. It could be a letter, a list, a diagram or a photo of a memento of Covid times. Things

ordinary to us might be interesting to someone in 100 years time and your contribution does not need to be a creative endeavour; it can be small and it can be practical.

- **Feel free to use the theme for August or simply create to your own theme and be a part of Blind Veterans history. Entries via email to [creativebook@blindveterans.org.uk](mailto:creativebook@blindveterans.org.uk) or post to: Creative Book Entries. Blind Veterans UK, Greenways, Ovingdean, Brighton. BN2 7BS. To submit a spoken word piece, telephone 01454 617920 or contact your community Support Worker.** →



**Caption: "How are you, Sir William?"**

## CREATIVE HOBBY CIRCLES

We would love to hear from you on **01273 391455** if you are interested in joining a monthly telephone or video call chat group on one of the topics below. Chat groups have up to six fellow members with a shared interest plus two of our staff.

**Creative Writing. Gardening. Knitting. Woodturning. Mosaic. Painting. Woodwork.**

### New: Papercraft Hobby Circle

For those interested in crafts using paper such as handmade card making, collage, decoupage, quilling etc.

### New: Clay Work Hobby Circle

For those interested in working with clay, kiln, oven or air drying, making pots, sculptures, jewellery, tiles etc.

For our Photographers we have a Facebook page (Blind Veterans UK Photography); and a weekly Photography chat group. Anyone with an interest in photography is welcome. It's a chance for a chat and there are also regular guest speakers.

You can see more information about the projects above, stories and quotes from members participating, and see galleries of work from some of the projects at [blindveterans.org.uk/ncp](http://blindveterans.org.uk/ncp)



ADOBE STOCK / HIGHWAYSTARZ

### Caption: Join our new Clay Work Hobby Circle

We love hearing what you've been up to so if you have any comments, photos or quotes you'd like to share about the projects or creative circles you've taken part in please contact our NCP Bookings Line or email: [nationalcreativeproject@blindveterans.org.uk](mailto:nationalcreativeproject@blindveterans.org.uk)

Enjoy the summer sunshine and a bit more freedom as we come out of lockdown. Best wishes to you all, **Lou Kirk-Partridge and the National Creative Project Team.** 🇬🇧



Caption: A paralympian gets ready to run

# On your marks, get set...

With the Tokyo Paralympics kicking off on 24 August, we thought we'd share a few little-known facts about the games

■ The name 'Paralympics' doesn't come from merging the words 'paralysis' and 'Olympics' together. It marks the deep connection to the Olympic games and comes from the Greek preposition 'para',

which means 'alongside' – meaning the event is running alongside the Olympics.

■ The precursor to the Paralympic Games was the Stoke Mandeville Games, also known as the →

ADOBE STOCK / DROBOT DEAN



ADOBE STOCK / CORONA BOREALIS

### Caption: The Paralympics starts this month after a year's delay

Wheelchair Games. Created by Dr. Ludwig Guttman who realised the importance of sport for disabled Second World War Veterans, he started the competition on the Stoke Mandeville hospital grounds to aid soldiers in their rehabilitation. Sixteen veterans took part in an archery competition on the same day as the opening of the Summer Olympics in London in 1948.

The Games got an international dimension in 1952 when the Dutch joined. The 2012 British drama 'The Best of Men' tells the remarkable story of how the Paralympics began.

- The tournament continued to grow and in 1960, what is now considered the first Paralympic Games was held in Rome, Italy, with 400 athletes from 23 countries. All athletes had spinal cord injuries and competed in eight sports.

- However, it wasn't until 1976 that athletes with different disabilities were allowed to compete in the Paralympics. Prior to this, only sportspeople in wheelchairs were allowed to compete.
- At the Seoul games in 1988, the Paralympics were held in the same city and venues as the Summer Olympics for the first time and from then on.
- Blind Veterans UK has its own long history of sporting activity and two of our blind veterans competed in the 1976 Toronto Paralympics. Tony Parkinson took part in the javelin, discus and shot put, while Ray Peart took on the pentathlon.
- The symbols of the Paralympic games have a special meaning: While the Olympics have the Olympic rings, the Paralympics has three symbols – three Agitos consisting of red, blue and green. Agitos means 'I move' in Latin and it symbolises the Paralympics motto 'spirit in motion'.
- There are four Paralympic values at the heart of the Paralympic Movement: courage, determination, inspiration and equality.
- The Paralympic mascot for Tokyo 2020 is called Someity, which comes from someiyoshino, a popular cherry blossom variety, and echoes the English phrase "so mighty".
- Athletes are divided into classifications "to minimise the

impact of impairment on the outcome of competition". A panel of international classifiers determines where athletes should be placed, most events are divided into vision, sitting, and standing categories. Those who are deaf cannot participate in the Paralympics, a separate sports event called the Deaflympics is held to cater to them.

- Boccia and goalball are the only two sports in the Paralympic programme that do not have an Olympic counterpart. Boccia is a sport for wheelchair-based players, while Goalball is designed for those with

visual impairments.

- In order to play Goalball athletes must wear an eyeshade, so even those with partial sight have to rely solely on their tactile and auditory sense to score goals. This means spectators need to stay silent as players rely on the balls sounds, this is the same in five-a-side football.
- While it's well known that sighted guides are needed to compete with blind athletes, they only received recognition for the first time in 2012 when they were also awarded medals on the podium at the Paralympics. 🏆



ADOBE STOCK / SHARIFF CHE'LAH

Caption: A blind runner helped by his sighted guide

# Summer berry recipes

Last month we mentioned how fantastic berries are for our health. So now we've convinced you to eat more berries, here's a couple of recipes to try



**Caption: Berry lemonade ice lollies**

## Berry lemonade ice lollies (serves 8)

You will need ice lolly moulds and wooden sticks for the handles.

### Ingredients

Juice of 1 lemon

1 ½ cups strawberries

1 ½ cups blueberries

1 ½ cups raspberries

¼ cup water

¼ cup honey

### Method

- Combine all the ingredients in a blender or food processor and combine until smooth.
- Pour the mixture into your ice lolly



ADOBE STOCK / ANNA\_SHEPULOVA

**Caption: Low fat eton mess**

moulds. Insert the sticks in the moulds for your handles.

- Freeze overnight or until firm.

## Low fat eton mess (serves 3)

### Ingredients

300g light fromage frais or fat-free Greek yoghurt (you could also use a plain dairy-free yoghurt)

6 tsp icing sugar

1 tsp vanilla extract

15 strawberries

45g meringue (about 3 small meringue nests)

### Method

- Put the yoghurt in a bowl, add the icing sugar and vanilla essence. Mix until smooth.
- Cut the strawberries into quarters and add to the bowl.
- Break the meringues into bite-sized chunks and add to the bowl.
- Mix everything together and spoon the mixture into sundae dishes. Serve immediately. 🍓

**Tip - You can change the fruit; perhaps add some raspberries, blueberries or blackberries? You could also swap the icing sugar for honey if you prefer a Greek take on the dessert.**

# Did Vincent Van Gogh have sight loss?

**Nadia Wazera**, from our Health and Wellbeing team, explores long-held speculation that poor vision may have contributed to the richness of the artist's paintings

There is much speculation questioning if the well-known painter Van Gogh had sight loss. The truth is it is difficult to be sure, as the facts are variable. First and foremost, his use of the colour yellow may indicate a 'yellow vision', or a sensitivity to yellow, common in those with sight loss. He uses yellow in ways no other painter has done, to symbolise stars and lights in restaurants, for example. He gives the lights the look of a halo, moving outwards with slight variations of yellow dots, that melt into the hues of the atmosphere.

The sight loss community have commented that Van Gogh may have been overtreated with a medication called digitalis, known to

**“Expression through art is unique to the individual and connects people where words cannot”**

cause xanthopsia, commonly known as 'yellow vision'. Historically this medication was prescribed during this time to treat headaches, mental illness, nausea and inflammation of the eyes, all of which are documented to be ailments Van Gogh suffered from.

Another theory is that excessively drinking the potent spirit absinthe could have affected the artist's sight. The drink was very popular at this time and bars hosted a 'happy hour', known as 'the hour of absinthe'. We know from his work, he often captured bars and cafes at night and enjoyed meeting the local characters who became the subject of portraits.

Van Gogh's famous swirling technique is often the identifiable characteristic of the artist's work, across his whole career, whether it's a star, a flower, a face or even a chair, the artist uses paint in a way that almost flutters and moves with every glance. Another theory is

WIKIPEDIA COMMONS / MUSEUM OF MODERN ART



**Caption: Starry Night by Vincent Van Gogh, June 1889**

that the lead-based paints could have poisoned the artist and one symptom would be a swelling of the retina. Then another theory thinks that maybe even glaucoma could have influenced him to paint the 'halo effect'. In his self-portraits, his eye colour varied and often hinted at different colours so he may have been colour blind.

All of these various theories are interesting and indicate Van Gogh was a painter who was likely to be vision impaired. Yes, the two, paint and sight loss, can marry together to

produce extraordinary outcomes. Art transcends notions of perfection and celebrates our differences. Expression through art is unique to the individual and connects people where words cannot; it is a global language that speaks to every generation throughout history. We are often not told about Van Gogh's sight loss, and rightly so, the focus is on his splendid paintings.

There is, however, a lesson to extract, that art is inclusive to all and sight loss should not be a barrier to picking up a brush and seeing what happens. 🎨

# Family News

## Birthdays

**Marjorie Wakeford** who celebrates her 105th birthday on 4 August

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**Leonard Burritt** who celebrates his 103rd birthday on 28 August

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**Gladys Hodgson** who celebrates her 101st birthday on 29 August

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**John Morton** who celebrates his 101st birthday on 30 August

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**Nora Reynolds** who celebrates her 101st birthday on 31 August

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**Clifford Adams** who celebrates his 100th birthday on 5 August

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**Elizabeth Bide** who celebrates her 100th birthday on 16 August

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**Elsie Chapman** who celebrates her 100th birthday on 4 August

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**Josephine Donaldson** who celebrates her 100th birthday on 5 August

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**Kathleen Birchall** who celebrates her 100th birthday on 13 August

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**Michael Jones** who celebrates his 100th birthday on 22 August

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*All information was correct at the time of going to press*

## Condolences

**It is with deep regret we announce the deaths of the following and offer our sincere condolences.**

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**Barbara Massam** who died on 1 January 2021. She was the wife of Alan Massam

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**Marjorie Shanks** who died on 4 May 2021. She was the wife of Henry Shanks

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**Pauline Margaret Sawers** who died on 6 July 2021. She was the wife of Colin Sawers 🇬🇧

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# In Memory

It is with deep regret that we record the deaths of the following members and we offer our heartfelt condolences to their widows, widowers, families and friends

**Stanley James Ballard** of Camberley, Surrey died on 28 June 2021 aged 98. He served as a Leading Seaman in the Royal Navy.

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**Arnold Broad** of Sandbach, Cheshire died on 13 July 2021 aged 98. He served as an Engineer Mechanic in the Royal Navy.

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**Robert William Barnard** of Chester Le Street, County Durham died on 15 June 2021 aged 97. He served as a Corporal in the Durham Light Infantry.

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**William Meirion Burrell** of Newtown, Powys died on 16 July 2021 aged 90. He served as a Corporal in the Royal Army Medical Corps.

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**Norman Bell** of Nottingham died on 12 July 2021 aged 92. He served as a Warrant Officer 1st Class in the Royal Army Pay Corps.

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**Ronald Carter** of Chorley, Lancashire died on 12 June 2021 aged 96. He served as a Private in the Lincolnshire Regiment.

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**George Henry Booy** of East Molesey, Surrey died on 5 July 2021 aged 94. He served as a Private in the Duke Of Cornwall's Light Infantry.

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**Alan Lee Close** of Stockton-On-Tees, Cleveland died on 5 July 2021 aged 90. He served as a Signaller in the Royal Signals.

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**Mary Jane Clouston** of Llandrindod Wells, Powys died on 26 March 2021 aged 101. She served as a Corporal in the Auxiliary Territorial Service.

**Kenneth Ernest Collins** of Wallasey, Merseyside died on 1 July 2021 aged 94. He served as a Private in the Royal Armoured Corps.

**Olive Lucy Cowley** of Kent died on 8 June 2021 aged 98. She served as a Corporal in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force.

**Thomas Elfed Davies** of Welshpool, Powys died on 28 June 2021 aged 104. He served as a Private in the Oxfordshire And Buckinghamshire Light Infantry.

**Peter John Dyer** of Plymouth died on 5 July 2021 aged 86. He served as a Private in the Royal Electrical And Mechanical Engineers.

**Metford Elsworth** of Burnham-On-Sea, Somerset died on 10 June 2021 aged 94. He served as a Private in the Dorset Regiment.

**Keith Ronald Faulkner** of Northampton died on 5 July 2021 aged 86. He served as a Sergeant in the Northamptonshire Regiment.

**Lindon Fiddler** of Preston died on 1 April 2021 aged 92. He served as a Private in the Loyal Regiment (North Lancashire).

**William Gibbs** of Norfolk died on 20 June 2021 aged 95. He served as a Corporal in the Royal Army Service Corps.

**Norman Green** of Nottingham died on 14 July 2021 aged 91. He served as an S.A.C. in the Royal Air Force.

**William Henry Greer** of Widnes, Cheshire died on 27 June 2021 aged 90. He served as a Gunner in the Royal Artillery.

**Ronald Hack** of Woking, Surrey died on 17 July 2021 aged 91. He served as a Gunner in the Royal Artillery.

**Horace Howkins** of Birmingham died on 15 June 2021 aged 98. He served as a Private in the South Staffordshire Regiment.

**Stanley Hunt** of Darlington, County Durham died on 1 June 2021 aged 91. He served as a Private in the Royal Engineers.

**George Jackson** of Skegness, Lincolnshire died on 16 July 2021 aged 86. He served as an S.A.C. in the Royal Air Force.

**Kenneth Jones** of Bexhill-On-Sea, East Sussex died on 27 May 2021 aged 90. He served as a Corporal in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps.

**Brian Jones** of Birmingham died on 18 June 2021 aged 81. He served as a Sapper in the Royal Engineers.

**John William Luther** of Chepstow, Gwent died on 25 June 2021 aged 86. He served as an S.A.C. in the Royal Air Force.

**Ronald Mannall** of Tunbridge Wells, Kent died on 20 June 2021 aged 88. He served as a Rifleman in the Rifle Brigade.

**John Alexander Mason** of Southampton, Hampshire died on 1 June 2021 aged 88. He served in the Corps Of Royal Military Police.

**Joseph Mattocks** of Edinburgh died on 3 July 2021 aged 92. He served as a Private in the Royal Scots Fusiliers.

**David Ian McClelland** of Neston, Cheshire died on 28 June 2021 aged 72. He served as a Sapper in the Royal Engineers.

**James Merritt** of Bordon, Hampshire died on 1 May 2021 aged 93. He served as a Corporal in the Royal Air Force.

**Anthony Alfred Edward Mullins** of Abingdon, Oxfordshire died on 1 July 2021 aged 92. He served as an A.C. 1 in the Royal Air Force.

**Denis Harold Newman** of Taunton, Somerset died on 30 June 2021 aged 92. He served as a Corporal in the Royal Army Medical Corps.

**Malcolm Orrell** of Nottingham died on 11 July 2021 aged 85. He served as an A.C. 1 in the Royal Air Force.

**Zbigniew Andrzej Pelczynski** of Moreton-In-Marsh, Gloucestershire died on 22 June 2021 aged 95. He served as a Corporal in the Polish Army Resettlement Corps.

**Stanley Dennis Phillips** of Swansea died on 21 May 2021 aged 87. He served as a Sergeant in the Royal Corps Of Transport.

**Alan Potter** of Boston, Lincolnshire died on 30 June 2021 aged 89. He served as a Squadron Leader in the Royal Air Force.

**Robert Evan Richards** of Wrexham, died on 29 June 2021 aged 85. He served as a Staff Sergeant in the Royal Electrical And Mechanical Engineers.

**Dorothy Isabel Runnicles** of Gloucester died on 22 June 2021 aged 96. She served as a Petty Officer in the Women's Royal Naval Service.

**George Scillitoe** of Norwich died on 2 July 2021 aged 84. He served as a Private in the Royal Signals.

**Reginald Sloan** of Newcastle Upon Tyne died on 22 June 2021 aged 99. He served as an Engine Room Artificer in the Royal Navy.

**David Smith** of Hexham, Northumberland died on 5 July 2021 aged 87. He served as a Private in the Lowland Brigade.

**Roger Smith** of Slough died on 19 June 2021 aged 78. He served as an Able Seaman in the Royal Navy.

**Dennis John Taylor** of Sunderland, Tyne And Wear died on 10 July 2021 aged 95. He served as a Leading Telegraphist in the Royal Navy.

**Donald Ian Wallace** of Stockport, Cheshire died on 1 July 2021 aged 90. He served as a Private in the Royal Army Service Corps.

**James Wareing** of Preston died on 13 June 2021 aged 87. He served as a Lance Corporal in the Army Catering Corps.

**Frank Watmuff** of Bradford, West Yorkshire died on 15 July 2021 aged 96. He served as a Signaller in the Royal Navy.

**Paul Edward Watson** of St. Leonards-On-Sea, East Sussex died on 25 June 2021 aged 72. He served as a Marine in the Royal Marines.

**Kenneth Roland Whiteside** of Dalton-In-Furness, Cumbria died on 8 July 2021 aged 92. He served as a Trooper in the Royal Armoured Corps.

**Donald Wilkinson** of Bradford, West Yorkshire died on 30 May 2021 aged 83. He served as an Aircraftman 1st Class in the Royal Air Force.

**Carl Williamson** of Plymouth, Devon died on 3 July 2021 aged 90. He served as a Leading Radio Electrical Mechanic in the Royal Navy.

**John William Woodham** of Westbury, Wiltshire died on 6 July 2021 aged 92. He served as a Gunner in the Royal Artillery.

**Michael Wrenn** of Reading died on 11 July 2021 aged 86. He served as a Junior Technician in the Royal Air Force.



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**Caption: A couple sleeping in a Morrison shelter during WW2**

# A new start

We continue our story of Member **Bill Skinner's** memories from wartime Hull

I remember my first school holidays at Stoneferry School. It must have been about June, or July. One afternoon, the rent man called and told my mam that another one of his houses in Kathleen Road had become vacant and 'would she like to take a look at it?' Marie was left with a neighbour while Brian and I went for a look. It was No.8 Kathleen

Road. When our mam saw it, she nearly had a fit. It was filthy, with rubbish in every room (what had happened to the people who had lived there I don't know). The back garden was a tip. Whoever had lived there had kept ducks. There was a broken-down shed at the bottom of a fairly long, narrow garden, which was full of droppings →



and feathers. There was a small tin bath sunk in the ground for the ducks to swim in. Our mam asked the landlord if she could think about it. He said “I need to know by tomorrow. People are being bombed out every night.”

That night, as we went through the nightly ritual of the small-tooth comb delousing session, our mam decided to take it. This was followed by yet another air raid, which really made her mind up. We began moving our stuff the next afternoon. Brian and I began exploring our new domain. Mam spoke



**Caption: Children waiting outside the wreckage of their home**

to the woman next door and her son, who was older than me, came into our garden and helped us to clean it up. While we were taking rubbish out of the shed, he found a cardboard box full of assorted birds eggs packed on top of hay. I told him they were ours. He asked our mam if he could have them and she said, “Yes.” I was disgusted; this was treasure!

I remember we had no raid that night. We didn’t get to try out our new shelter, which was a Morrison and much nicer than our previous one. It had two bunks, one above the other. Next morning, we began the big clean up. I remember it was raining, because Brian and I wanted to carry on cleaning up the garden and sorting out the shed. Our mam told us to clean out the cupboard under the stairs. It was full of bits of old carpets and canvas (lino). As we began to move it, out swarmed a mass of cockroaches and spiders. We pretended that they were German tanks and began standing on them.

Our mam was becoming more and more upset with the state of the house. The wallpaper was dirty and only covering part of the walls, and behind it were more creepy crawlies. “That’s it,” she said. She sent me across to Mrs. Hodgeson’s to see if she would look after Brian and Marie while we went to Charles Street for some distemper

“After spending most of the night in the shelter we weren’t too keen to get up the next morning”

(you couldn’t get wallpaper in those days), DDT and flypapers. We had to walk all the way to Charles Street, with my mam pushing Marie’s pram to carry the things she wanted back home. After having something to eat, Brian and I helped her strip the rest of the wallpaper. She then began to put sticky tape on the windows (this was to help prevent glass from flying all over in the event of an explosion). The flypapers were hung from the ceiling and were soon being covered with flies. “We will have to get some more,” said our mam. That night, with Brian and Marie in bed, out came the small toothcomb again. “I have no nits, mam,” I said. “I’m making sure,” she said. “See what pictures you can see in the fire,” she said, as I knelt with my head on her lap.

Just as we were about to go to our beds, the air raid warning sounded. Mam said, “Give me a hand with the blackout curtain.” We didn’t have it secured properly and the whole thing came down. As we struggled with it there was a shout of, “Put that flaming light out” As we carried on struggling there came a pounding on the door.

It was the air raid warden. “Don’t you realise there is a raid on?” He said. I saw my mam begin to shake. Oh no, Mam, I thought, don’t get like Mrs Green. “I’ve just moved in,” my mam said. “We have a house like a tip. I’ve been working on it all day and I have three bairns to see to as well, I don’t need you screaming at me.” “I’m sorry love,” he said, “but I have people’s lives to think about.” “Now come on,” he said, “let’s get you and the children in the shelter and this light turned out. I’ll see if I can get some of the neighbours to give you a hand in the morning. I live in Kirkstead Avenue, just across the way, I know them all round here.” “They’re are a decent bunch,” he said.

### **Pram wheels**

After spending most of the night in the shelter we weren’t too keen to get up the next morning, but our mam told Brian and me that we could tidy up the rubbish in the garden. “Come on Brian,” I said. “Let’s see what’s in the shed before that lad next door gets here.” I found out his name was George and that he was three years older than me. Before he turned up, we found four pram wheels. We put them at the side of the air raid shelter and the fence. Then we put some of the loose planks of the shed on top of them. “Don’t tell that kid, or our mam,” I said to Brian. “Or he will want them. It’s like treasure, Brian,” I told him. →

When George eventually turned up, he dismantled most of the bigger planks and me and Brian piled them on top of the wheels (George never knew they were there). Mrs. Hodgeson and another woman came and helped our mam. I think the other woman was the air raid warden's wife, because she was old like him, but nice: she didn't shout, just smiled. When they had distempered the living room and the two bedrooms, our mam gave us all some sandwiches and told me, "when the distemper dries, you can help me stipple it." To stipple it, she got a piece of old net curtain and made it into a

ball. After tying a piece of string around it you then dipped it into a different colour, or a different shade to the original wall covering. You then began to dab it onto the wall in a pattern.

### The fly problem

For the bedrooms, she cut a potato in half, then etched a symbol on one of the halves and then we used it to stipple with. When we had finished it looked quite nice. I don't know if our mam was pleased or not, she just said, "I suppose it will do. Let's get rid of these fly papers." They were a mass of flies. The fly problem, we found out, was because we were so close to Humber Fish Meal Co and every house was swarming with them. "You'll get used to them love," said Mrs Leak to our mam.

"It's a nightmare," our mam said and began to cry. Please don't let her get the shakes, I thought. "Shall me and Brian pull the rest of the shed down?" I asked her. "Only if George is with you," she said. I don't know why we need him, I thought, but I did as I was told and went next door for him. It didn't take us much longer to complete the job. While Marie and Brian were given a bath, I went out to explore the area we had moved to. There seemed to be far more kids around my age at this end of the road, and I was soon making new friends. 🍷



**Caption: Inspecting bomb damage, WW2**

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