



# Review

The journal of  
Blind Veterans UK  
July 2021



## Birds of a feather

Our Members' creative designs revealed

### Inside:

Centres update  
Growing your own vegetables



Rebuilding lives after sight loss

# A genuine honour

I am a huge fan of classic British comedy, and no more so than the 1960s show 'Not Only, But Also' which featured Peter Cook and Dudley Moore. Those of you who can remember it may recall one particular episode when at the end of the programme the intrepid pair, while playing the piano, are catapulted off the deck of HMS Ark Royal using the ship's steam catapult gear. Alas, I wish I could match such an impressive departure.

As you may have gathered from that, July's issue will be my last after nearly three years as your Editor. During that time, it's been a genuine pleasure to produce so many copies of our magazine and to have overseen its move from strength to strength for you, the Members of our charity.

There's been some great moments too, from interviewing some of our veterans for the *Unseen Stories* podcasts to assisting with the unveiling of our Victory Over Blindness sculpture outside Manchester Piccadilly station.

Most of all it's been a pleasure to help serve you in this small way. I have nothing but the utmost respect for

those who live with sight loss every day and how they live their lives to the full. You are all incredible people, and it's a genuine honour to have played a part in the history of this truly amazing charity.

I also hope that you find the magazine better than ever – especially after the refresh two years ago after issues were found with the original format. I know there are some who will disagree – one vociferous Member from the far South West certainly springs to mind – but in general I hope it provides a source of interest, whether that's the great tips from our Well-Connected Team, our Members' varied life stories or just simply the recipe section. There should be something there for everyone.

So from me, thank you for making my time with the charity so special, I wish you and your families the very best. For the last time... enjoy your magazine. 🍷

**Chris Gilson**  
Editor



## Contents

- 03** Editorial goodbye
- 04** Your welcome from our Chief Executive
- 07** Your welcome from our Chairman
- 11** In your community
- 14** In the know
- 16** Our Centres – an update
- 18** National Creative project gallery
- 24** Open doors – visiting galleries and museums
- 26** Growing up in Hull – Bill Skinner
- 29** Archive – RW Bowen
- 33** Well Connected – grow your own
- 35** Well Connected – The Olympics
- 37** Well Connected – berries
- 40** Family news
- 42** In memory
- 46** Papercraft
- 50** Caring
- 59** Contacts

### On the cover

Your tea towel designs for the National Creative Project



# Face to face

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

In the last few weeks, I have had the joy of meeting staff and Members face-to-face again. There was a reason for this, as I wanted to be with and alongside the Brighton family as we made the announcement about our plans for the move. Appropriately tested and screened, I was able to spend a few days in the Centre. Echoing Paul's comment in his column, I have been hugely impressed by the feedback and response.

Understandably, a lot of emotion has



**Caption: Nick Caplin**

surfaced given that so many priceless memories have been forged in and around the building. It is important to talk about these, to reflect and to celebrate everything that the Ian Fraser building has meant to us over its decades of support. You have also provided wonderful messages of support, together with reassurance that the logic behind the decision is sound. I'm also delighted to see the interest that there is in helping us both find the new Centre and develop it into something very special for our next chapter. This is excellent, and a real boost to the staff. Thank you all for this support which is seriously appreciated.

## Great fanfares

And now, to great fanfares, and rounds of applause, I am sure that you will join me in congratulating Blanche Back, our Brighton Care Manager, for her award of the British Empire Medal on the Queen's Birthday List that was announced last month.

This award is for her outstanding work leading the Brighton Care staff in



**Caption: Brighton Armed Forces Day 2018**

supporting our permanent Members through the beastly pandemic. It is wonderful recognition of the role that Blanche has played, of her leadership and compassion and of the example that she has set, day in, day out over the last 16 months. Blanche would be the first person to say, and believe, that it should be an award to all the Brighton staff who have stepped up to the plate magnificently. This is typical of Blanche and there is something in what she says.

I know that our staff were over the moon to hear of her award. It had been intended for the award to be made by the Lord Lieutenant at the Centre around 'Freedom Day' last month, but

we have postponed this until it is safe for us to collect a good number of people at the Centre for the occasion – it will be quite a celebration. Well done Blanche.

We find ourselves at an interesting juncture, sensing a return to more normal living as the nation's Covid protection builds. For approaching a year and a half we have got used to new ways of living and new ways of working to the extent that venturing out again can appear a little daunting. There is a sense of emerging from hibernation, of rediscovering people and places and remembering how to do things.



For the vision impaired, venturing outdoors and back into the community can appear especially daunting and we will be keen to help in any way that we can, not least through the support of our community teams and volunteers. As with most things, small steps are probably sensible rather than launching headlong into new-found freedom. I am conscious that for some, even those small steps will seem like a marathon or mountain and that it will take time to regain confidence and mobility.

### Opening both Centres

We are taking the steps now to open both Centres to Member stays. Currently the Llandudno Centre is providing critical rehabilitation and respite stays for those veterans assessed with an urgent priority need. The team has been working with Public Health Wales to open the Centre for a broader hospitality offer for our membership as only a small number of beds in the Llandudno Centre are regulated. This means the building will be viewed as an unregulated hospitality venue, making it more accessible to holiday makers.

Brighton continues to provide outstanding support to our permanent residents and is opening the doors to a small number of Members who require critical care and support. The community staff has been working to

identify those who require this. The Centre is taking a slightly different approach due to all beds being regulated and registered care beds. This means all stays in Brighton are subject to more stringent guidelines currently as the service is viewed as a care home rather than a hospitality or hotel venue.

### Successful and impactful

In the community, the National Support Service (NSS) and Health, Wellbeing and Rehabilitation (HWR) programme remain successful and impactful. We will continue this approach over the coming months, together with the impressive Operation Entertain, while we work with Members and staff on shaping our new post-Covid service.

Mentioning Operation Entertain, hats off to our President Colin Williamson and his team for making this such a success. At the last count, we have 79 national groups and 114 local groups throughout the regions, and we continue to expand, adding more groups on a daily basis.

And finally, during my recent visit to the Brighton Centre I was really taken by advice from Betty Tring, one of our Residents: "Don't say you can't. If you kick away the 't' you will find that you can". That is my new motto – thank you Betty! 🍷

# Passing on the baton

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

The early part of June has been a little busy. As you might expect, trying to manage the news about our plans for Brighton and its replacement in a coordinated way has been quite challenging. So too has been the

business of dealing with related queries and observations that we might not have foreseen. On balance though, the vast majority of you have been incredibly understanding about both our intentions and the underlying reasons that have called for change – and for that, thank you.

But I have been busy for other reasons as well.

First, I am absolutely determined to hand on the baton of the chairmanship of our charity in an ordered manner. I have written before about the importance of having a robust and committed group of trustees who can work consensually to drive the charity forward and maintain its relevance and effectiveness for the future. My guiding spirit here is Sir Arthur Pearson. I imagine that he would be horrified to think that what he set up, to deal with the dreadful consequences of the Great War, remains a



**Caption: Paul on his fundraising walk**

reality for our Service personnel over 100 years later. But his work, and the sustained commitment of his successor, Lord Fraser, ensured that we can still respond to that challenge a century later – and that we have broadened our scope as well. So, as I enter my final six months at the helm, I see it is my absolute priority to continue the legacy of good stewardship.

### **A highly committed group**

To be honest, that is not half as difficult as it might be on other trustee boards. You are served by both a highly committed group of individuals and an objectively consensual body who absolutely understand the demands of today and the possible challenges



**Caption: Paul Luker**

of the future. I have nothing but admiration for the way in which your trustees hold us to account; challenge any complacency; and drive for improvement. Most importantly, they see themselves as part of our family; rather than some detached authority that seeks to judge - they are widely qualified people who constantly make their experience, knowledge and skills work to help the team. All of our trustees have a myriad of other commitments – we wouldn't ask them to take on the job if they didn't (if you want something done, ask a busy person) – but they give of their time incredibly generously.

So, some of June has necessarily been spent looking at succession planning, to make sure we don't drop the governance baton. And you, the Members, have a vital role to play here; three of our trustees must come from the membership.

Second, a large part of June has been spent keeping the current Mrs Luker "on board". She hasn't said as much, but I suspect that she sees my walking targets as obsessive. From previous Reviews you will know that I set myself a couple of silly challenges. The first was quite simply to walk the equivalent of 70 marathons in my 70<sup>th</sup> year (I turn 70 in July). If you will excuse the pun, that turned out to

be a bit of a cake walk. I passed that target weeks ago and might well make 90 marathons before my birthday. As an unlikely military macho, I'm also slightly embarrassed to admit that she kept company with me and passed her target well before her birthday in May. Don't tell her but I think she is quite a lot tougher than me.

### **Slightly more daunting**

Anyway, at the time of writing I am just a week away from a slightly more daunting second personal challenge, when I try to walk 70 kilometres in a 24-hour period. To be clear, I'm not particularly worried about the distance – it's the tedium of the thing that bothers me. Mrs Luker, ever the realist, will be leaving this one to me. On the plus side, I have been quite buoyed up by the support I have had on my Just Giving page. I know that a lot of you fundraise in this way, and it is really heartening to know that we have a staunch band of supporters out there who keep the coffers topped up. What has been surprising, though, has been how many of my old Service colleagues knew very little about us but who have since been galvanised into donating when they discovered what we do. Some more engagement work to do here I suspect. In the meantime, if you want to keep track of how well we are doing, go to [justgiving.com/fundraising/PaulLuker](https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/PaulLuker)

Third, my youngest daughter put me on the spot. A couple of years ago she decided on a career change; she had spent 10 years as a pharmacist in the NHS and, having had two children, she unexpectedly opted to become a primary school teacher. For context, we have three daughters. Like most parents we are extremely dismissive of their attributes and attainments. Suffice to say that we merely think that they all fall marginally short of being nominated as Nobel Laureates.

Anyway, youngest daughter had been speaking to her class about the Chinook helicopter. Don't ask – I have no idea why. One of her young charges (they are all about six or seven years old) wrote a letter to me, through my daughter, saying that although their teacher was OK, would I speak to them about the Chinook, because I would be better than her. This raises a number of issues. Seven-year-olds in my day were never that precocious. Objective (and correct) though her assessment was, it surely isn't a boost to teacher self-confidence. And finally, the child who wrote the letter had clearly no idea about the level of waffling I had used to qualify as a Chinook pilot.

### **Come the appointed day**

Zoom also has much to answer for. Come the appointed day, with barely 20 minutes of preparation →



**Caption: I have been quite buoyed up by the support I have received so far**

and a couple of YouTube videos to fall back on, I faced the little darlings live on camera. It was the most harrowing and ultimately rewarding experience I have had this year. Notwithstanding all the legitimate concerns we have about lost education, these youngsters completely opened my eyes. They were polite.

They were involved. And, perhaps most amazingly, they asked some incredibly clever and inciteful questions. Put yourselves in my shoes when a charming young lad asks why the tip of a rotor blade travels so much faster than the root of the blade.

I had never imagined that I would end up explaining the relationship between angular and linear speed with the aid of the nearest thing that came to hand – a spinning ruler. Or when another young girl asked what the advantages were of a tandem rotor helicopter over a conventional helicopter. Suffice to say that I answered every question - and that they were left in absolutely no doubt that I was a consummate bluffer.

I think my last point is cogent for this moment. I had thought that our youngsters had become disengaged during the pandemic lockdowns. These hadn't. They are just as curious as we were - just as polite and just as challenging. They are interested in us and our past. They want to talk to us and - more amazingly - they want us to tell them about ourselves and what we have done. I think that is important. I avidly read all our archives. I have become a habitual reader of military histories. And, without becoming mawkish, I love a good military obituary. But I think our next generations need us to open up to them more about our lived experience. You all have fascinating lives. Don't hold back on making sure we can record them for our successors, especially now we seem to be on the threshold of having our freedoms restored. 🇬🇧

# In Your Community

## Ron walks from Brighton to Llandudno for our veterans

Member Ron Russell from Hampshire will be walking a virtual 270 miles to raise funds for us.

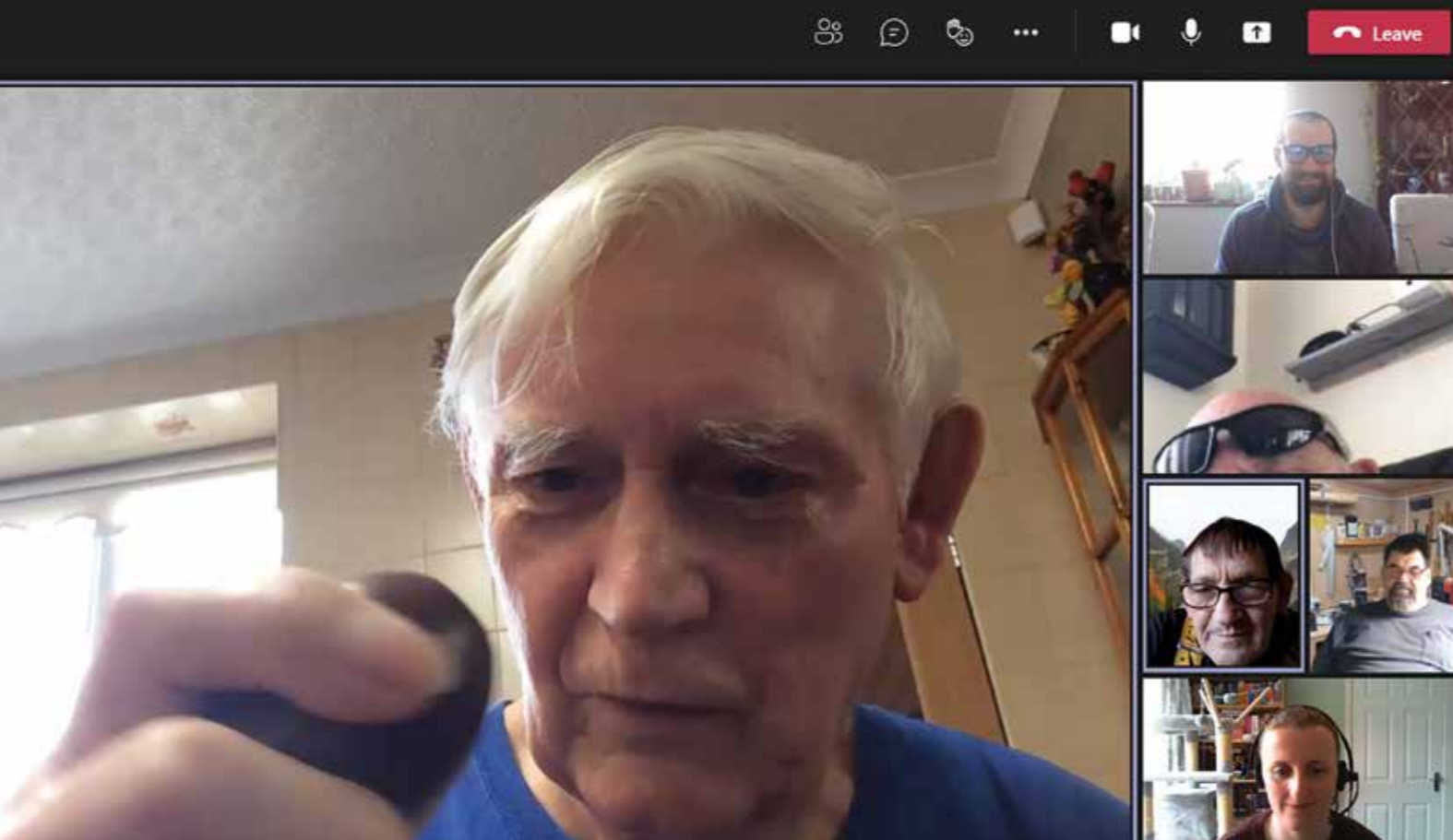
Ron, 80 and from Waterlooville, will be completing the challenge from 12-19 July. Ron says, "My local gym has allowed me to use one of their treadmills for free so that I can do the challenge. I have been supported by the charity since 2016, so I decided to do something to pay it back for all that they have done for me. I walk everyday anyway so I thought it would be a good idea to do a walking challenge from their training and rehabilitation centre in Brighton to their one in Llandudno. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I will be doing this virtually".

In order to track the 270-mile challenge, Blind Veterans UK has provided Ron with a pedometer. Ron says: "This will allow me to track my



**Caption: Ron Russell**

distance as well as my steps. The charity has been very good to me over the years and has really looked after me. They have provided me with lots of equipment such as a white cane and a Synaptic mobile phone. I want to raise as much funds as I can to say thank you". →



**Caption: Bill Mooney getting to grips with his woodturning class**

## County Durham Member teaches others woodturning

Bill Mooney from County Durham has been virtually joining other veterans to get involved with woodturning during the lockdown period thanks to our ongoing National Creative Project.

Bill, 78 and from Stanley, has been involved in the project since it was launched in September. He says: "I have been woodturning since 1959 I'm a joiner by trade and I was



**Caption: An example of one of Bill's woodturned apples**

introduced to woodturning during my apprenticeship. During lockdown, I was asked to help the woodturning group get off the ground. I get a

**"You learn ways to adapt though and it's great to be able to pass those skills now onto others"**

lot of satisfaction from seeing the veterans smile when they have made something new."

Bill stopped woodturning for 14 months when he first lost his sight. However, he attended the charity's training and rehabilitation centre in Llandudno for a woodturning week and started to take up the craft again. He says: "I struggled to continue with woodturning because I couldn't measure things anymore for example.

You learn ways to adapt though and it's great to be able to pass those skills now onto others. It's a great form of escapism, especially in lockdown. While you're creating something new you can just focus on that and not have to think about anything else. I have made all sorts from bowls to apples".

Bill has been making pens to fundraise for the charity and he has received pen kits and ready-made pens from all over the world in order to help with his fundraising. He says: "I've received donations from as far away

as Australia and New Zealand. My wife Evelyn has also made cards which have been sold with all proceeds going to the charity. I am so grateful for everyone's generosity!"

## Paul steps out

Our intrepid Chairman Paul Luker continues his 70km challenge in Hampshire, with support from three generations of his family. 🇬🇧

■ You can support Paul by donating to his walk at [justgiving.com/fundraising/PaulLuker](https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/PaulLuker)



**Caption: Three generations of Lukers on the move**



# In the know

Our Operations team keeps you abreast of the latest changes within our charity

Due to the ever-changing situation across the UK, we are having to operate differently in many areas due to the changing restrictions in place. We can keep you informed about how we've been supporting you recently, and 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 29 March 2021, Blind Veterans UK can safely provide the following services to Members in the community:

- Remote telephone support through the National Support Service, including remote rehabilitation and telephone social groups.
- Staff and volunteers can meet members face to face where there is

an assessed need. An assessed need must be approved by a Community Team Leader.

- Maintenance and delivery of equipment to priority Member cases

We have provided many of you with the opportunity to receive rehabilitation support remotely as part of our National Remote Rehab Service. This includes a range of services to help with independence and safety at home - for example, assistance with technology, low vision assessments and support with health and wellbeing. If you would like to access this service, please speak to your case support worker.

We are running a growing number of telephone and online social and 'special interest' groups so that you 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 us and we will let you know what's on. If you fancy starting a group yourself, let us know.

Face-to-face social groups will remain on hold whilst we review our services and gain a better understanding of the effects of the vaccination programme. However, there may be a need to establish some face-to-face social groups from July to address extreme

social isolation, but these will be temporary and serve a purpose.

## Member Support Hub

Our Member Support Hub continues to run as usual and our recycling team is 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 an essential need and it is safe to do so. Of course, you can always get in touch with us on **01273 391 447**, Monday-Friday 9am-4pm.

## Our centres

Our Centres opened their doors via the Critical Care Pathway in May 2021 at a reduced capacity to those of you most affected by the pandemic. Isolation and testing measures continue to be necessary in order to make sure we adhere to government guidelines, but the Centres are still able to offer a positive experience during this period, with activities and engagement safely managed. The pathway for this service will be through a conversation with your case support worker.

Both Centres have been closely monitoring government and local guidance. In the next article, the Centres update you about the services available to you during the summer months. 🍷



# Our Centres – an update

The latest news about staying at our Brighton and Llandudno Centres

## Brighton and Llandudno Centres - holiday/respice bookings

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.



**Caption: Llandudno Cycling Week**

**All information is correct at the time of writing and any updates will be provided via case support workers and the Centre booking departments.**

## Llandudno

The booking lines at the Llandudno Centre opened on 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. You 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.

**You 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 the Llandudno Centre 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/respice stays to one week per Member. To comply with guidelines residential and nursing stays currently would 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-4.30pm Monday-Friday to answer any queries or make bookings.

■ **Llandudno Booking Office**  
**01492 868 700**

## Brighton

Due to having permanent residents in place, the Brighton Centre needs to ensure continued compliance with regulations in place for care homes.

The Brighton Centre have been open for residential and nursing holiday/respice bookings since 22 June. To comply with guidelines this has included a 14-day isolation period, and

any changes to these 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 from 20 July for holidays commencing from 9 August 2021. This will, of course, depend on restrictions for care homes being eased. You 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.

**You 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 391 500**

Booking Office hours 8.30am-4.00pm Monday-Friday to answer any queries and assist with bookings. 📞

# On parade

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

**Captions: 1. Jack Carter - Autumn Landscape 2. Alan Warren - Red, White and Blue 3. Brian Heather - Dolphin 4. Bill Ridgewell - Perspective Study 5. Katheleen Hall - Sunset 6. Peter King - Tiger**



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# National Creative Project programme -Your guide to July's activities

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

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

Call NCP Bookings on **01273 391 455** for more information or to request an activity pack for the **CREATIVE ACTIVITIES** below. Kits and instructions will be posted out to you with the opportunity to take part in a telephone or video chat with other Members.

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



**Caption: Your tea towels**

## Gardening Summer herbs

A windowsill pot with aromatic basil, chives, oregano and parsley. Enjoy watching them grow and the lovely smell of their leaves. Your kit will include everything you need. We'll also include a set of Second World War-inspired recipe cards with some cooking ideas for your herbs.

During the project there will be the opportunity to join a phone chat group with other Members and our project team to discuss how your herbs are growing and all other things garden related.

## Art and craft

### Summer flowers tea towel

Join us in a collaborative tea towel project inspired by flowers and celebrating summer colour in the garden. We will send out packs containing collage materials for you to design a flower, and you are also welcome to use materials you have at home.

Send back your flower in the pre- paid envelope and it will be photographed and form part of our tea towel design. We'll send you a tea towel including your flower at the end of the project.

There is 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 – a June-August project.

The themes include cityscape skyline, on the Home Front, summer landscape and still life.

These are pastel challenges - with support - for you to learn to use pastels or improve your skills. With your permission your work may appear in our online project gallery.

We will send a pastels project kit and you may use your own materials too.



**Caption: Your tea towel designs are now a piece of our long history, thank you**

There will be the chance to meet other Members and our Art and Craft Instructors for chat and tips by phone or video call.

## Craft

### Bird Box – a woodwork project

A bird box or bird feeder kit from [ritohobby.co.uk](http://ritohobby.co.uk) for you to assemble at home.

The pack includes our own adapted set of instructions, all the necessary softwood pieces for one bird box or feeder, wood glue, nails (for optional hammering) and a roll of masking tape to hold your creation together while you plan the construction. It is desirable but not crucial that you have access to a hammer. →

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 and craft

### Collaboration in colour - Blue and Purple

A project from now until midsummer to create a large art piece made by the Blind Veterans UK family. Decorate 15x15cm squares with a wide variety of materials while celebrating new beginnings, spring and summer and our colourful Blind Veterans UK community. Once completed we plan to take this piece 'on tour' to a variety of locations.

Your pack includes three wooden squares as bases for your work, collage materials and glue. We encourage you to use recycled materials and/or art materials from home too.

With the opportunity to take part in a group telephone chat with other Members to exchange ideas and for support and encouragement.

■ **Please call NCP Bookings on 01273 391 455 for more information or to request an activity pack for the CREATIVE ACTIVITIES above.**

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

**CREATIVE BOOK - open for contributions.** An opportunity for Members, volunteers and staff to contribute their Covid-19 experiences through creative writing, art, craft, photography and spoken word. Something for now and something to be treasured in the Charity archive.

Needing inspiration to create a piece for our Creative book? **The theme for**



SERGIJ MOSTOVYI / ADOBE STOCK

**Caption: The Papercraft Hobby Circle is go!**

**July is 'So what's new'...** As we have been released from lockdown and see the constraints imposed on us slip away, we'd love to hear your thoughts and how things for you have changed.

Feel free to look back at previous themes to inspire you to create a contribution:

- What has kept me going
- Hopes and dreams
- Spot the difference
- Roses – marking the Rose Memorial Ceremony at the Brighton Centre

These are just some helpful starting points and you are welcome to create a piece using your own starting point if you prefer.

■ **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 617 920**.

## CREATIVE HOBBY CIRCLES

We would love to hear from you on **01273 391 455** if you are interested in joining a monthly telephone or video call chat group in one of the subjects 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.**

## Coming soon: Papercraft Hobby Circle

If you are interested in crafts using paper - handmade card making, collage, decoupage, quilling to name a few, and would like to join a Papercraft Hobby Circle please give us a call! 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)

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 Sue on our NCP bookings line or e mail [nationalcreativeproject@blindveterans.org.uk](mailto:nationalcreativeproject@blindveterans.org.uk)

**Lou Kirk-Partridge and the National Creative Project Team.**

# Opening the doors

With restrictions easing, many art galleries and museums are opening their doors again. **Nadia Wazera** explains how you can make your visit a safe one

Great news! Art galleries and museums are back open again after the Covid-19 restrictions that were in place to keep everyone safe. We can now welcome back the experiences that enrich our wellbeing through culture. You can expect to see some changes to the 'look' of the venues as they place safety at the heart of their delivery, for example, a one-way system and more space between exhibits.

Galleries and museums are increasingly



ADOBE STOCK / EUGENI\_FOTO

more accessible and for all to benefit. Whether you've been frequently, sometimes or never at all, these venues offer so many opportunities for all ages and backgrounds. They inspire us, whet our appetite for knowledge and offer learning experiences that can be fun and bespoke. Research has now proven that galleries and museums are great for our health too. These visits can boost our memory function, they can relax us through mindful activity and support our cognition whilst making connections and processing our own thoughts.

## An invitation to be curious

Cultural venues invite us to be curious, have independent thoughts and not always have the answers. Indeed, Surrealism and artists like Dali wanted to evoke mystery in their works with the view that the work may offer something new with each viewing. Art reflects life and life reflects art - experiences are given a voice through artists' commitment to telling stories, this includes the importance of

mystery, we don't need to know the answers, moreover, that's the point, just as in life, it is all about the journey of discovering. We all need to feel valued and within a gallery setting all voices are equal, it is an open invitation with no expectations.

Being visually impaired may seem like a barrier but most museums and galleries have developed their audience engagement significantly over the last two decades.

If staff can engage with the public on a conversational level it can bring the work to life. Talking to the public is often something gallery staff really enjoy, so don't hold back and say 'hello' to them.

If you wanted to gain something specific from your visit, do not hesitate to call the venue direct and introduce yourself. Researching your venue beforehand is not essential but may help manage your expectations of what to expect. 🎨

## Helpful information and top tips

- To keep everyone safe, many venues have established time slots, so consider booking in advance
- There will be hand sanitiser dispensers in place, but it is always a good idea to have your own pocket-sized sanitiser for peace of mind
- The entrance and exit are likely to be different to create a 'one-way system'. There may also be floor markings to remind everyone of the safe distance between different people
- Some areas may be blocked off for now
- On arrival they may ask some questions about Covid symptoms.
- This is a recommendation and there is a requirement to refuse entry to anyone with symptoms
- There is likely to be signs which state they refuse entry to people who aren't wearing a face mask, so always remember to keep a mask on you.
- All venues differ, so research the facilities in advance, is there a cafe and bathroom facilities, for example? Also, are there seats around the venue to break up the walk, just in case you need them?
- On arrival, introduce yourself and say 'hello'
- Afterwards, give feedback, venues often encourage this to keep improving their offer

# Where the bomb dropped

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

In school, Miss Upshaw soon sorted my problem of the smudges in my exercise book by giving me a piece of blotting paper and allowing me to write left-handed. Despite the persistent nightly air raids, I enjoyed my new school. Beyond the playground we had an area of six small allotments and we were split up into groups of about four - each group was responsible for keeping their plot clean and tidy. Each pupil on their plot grew a product and on our plot I grew the peas. One day there was a quite nasty accident, when one of the boys on another plot asked a boy on their plot to lend him the garden fork he was using and he threw it into the ground. Unfortunately, it went right through the other boy's foot! It took a while for us to get over it.

It wasn't long after this that my aunt Alice returned to her former address in Cumberland Street. About this time, during one of the nightly raids, a bomb

was dropped in Tate's field right behind our house (Tate was the name of the farmer who owned the field).

When me and [my brother] Brian got up the next morning, we were surprised to see this massive hole in the ground. It was the first bomb crater we had seen (we were soon to see a few more). I don't think our mam knew the bomb had dropped into the field, otherwise she wouldn't have let us out of her sight. As there was no school that morning due to the duration of the air raid, the intrepid explorers were on their way to the hole in the field, me holding Brian's hand, and him carrying the seaside spade. I think he was probably thinking we would fill it in. (I think he would still feel the same today even though he is now 73).

## Seeing where the bomb dropped

As we walked on, we passed Mrs



**Caption: Queen's Dock, Hull in 1922**

Green talking to another of our neighbours. "Don't you go to near with your brother, Billy," she said. Mrs Green was a nice woman who had the shakes. The neighbour she was talking to had told my mam she had only been like that since the start of the bombing.

My mam used to tell me to see if she wanted any errands running. Mrs Green would always give me a penny or sometimes tuppence. Suddenly a man shouted, "Where do you two think you're going?" "To see where the bomb dropped," I replied. "Oh no you are not," he said. "You're the new people at 65. I'm coming to see your mother in a few minutes. Tell her to get the kettle on... I'm the air raid warden." We had quite a lot of children living in Kathleen

ADOBE STOCK / EUGENI\_FOTO

Road and Woodhall Street and we soon made friends with most of them. In Woodhall Street there was a fair-sized playground with swings, a shamrock, a see-saw, a rocking horse and a slide. We just hoped that Mr Hitler didn't bomb our playground.

It wasn't long before the lads were showing me how to go bird-nesting, catching sticklebacks and newts, and not forgetting the frogs and toads. There was also an abundance of various butterflies and caterpillars. I was very soon a big game hunter with my trusty sidekick, Brian, by my side.

## First gas masks

By the time our little sister was about two months old, we had



been issued with our gas masks. Mine and my mam's were the same type, while Brian's was a Mickey Mouse type.

It was red and blue, with two round eyepieces. Brian was not too keen on it at first, but once he put it on, he didn't want to take it off. Marie's was like an incubator that completely covered her and was then fastened with strapping. It was also at this time that our mam told us she was going to Sheffield and would be taking Marie with her for the weekend to see our dad. He had not seen Marie. We didn't want to be left alone, but my mam said we would be staying with our granny Elsie. Well, that was all right then - they had a little dog named after me, Billie, (but with an 'ie', because it was a bitch).

The Saturday morning our mam was going to Sheffield, my granny Elsie brought my mother a fox fur to wear and a little hat. My gran said, "They will think you are a film star." The only film stars me and Brian liked were Gene Autry and Roy Rogers, so we weren't impressed.

"Come on you two," my gran said, "your grandad has a special surprise for you. Get a few of your toys to take with you and we can leave your mam to get ready and go to see your dad." We were quite happy to go with our grandma Elsie. Her and grandad Jack's

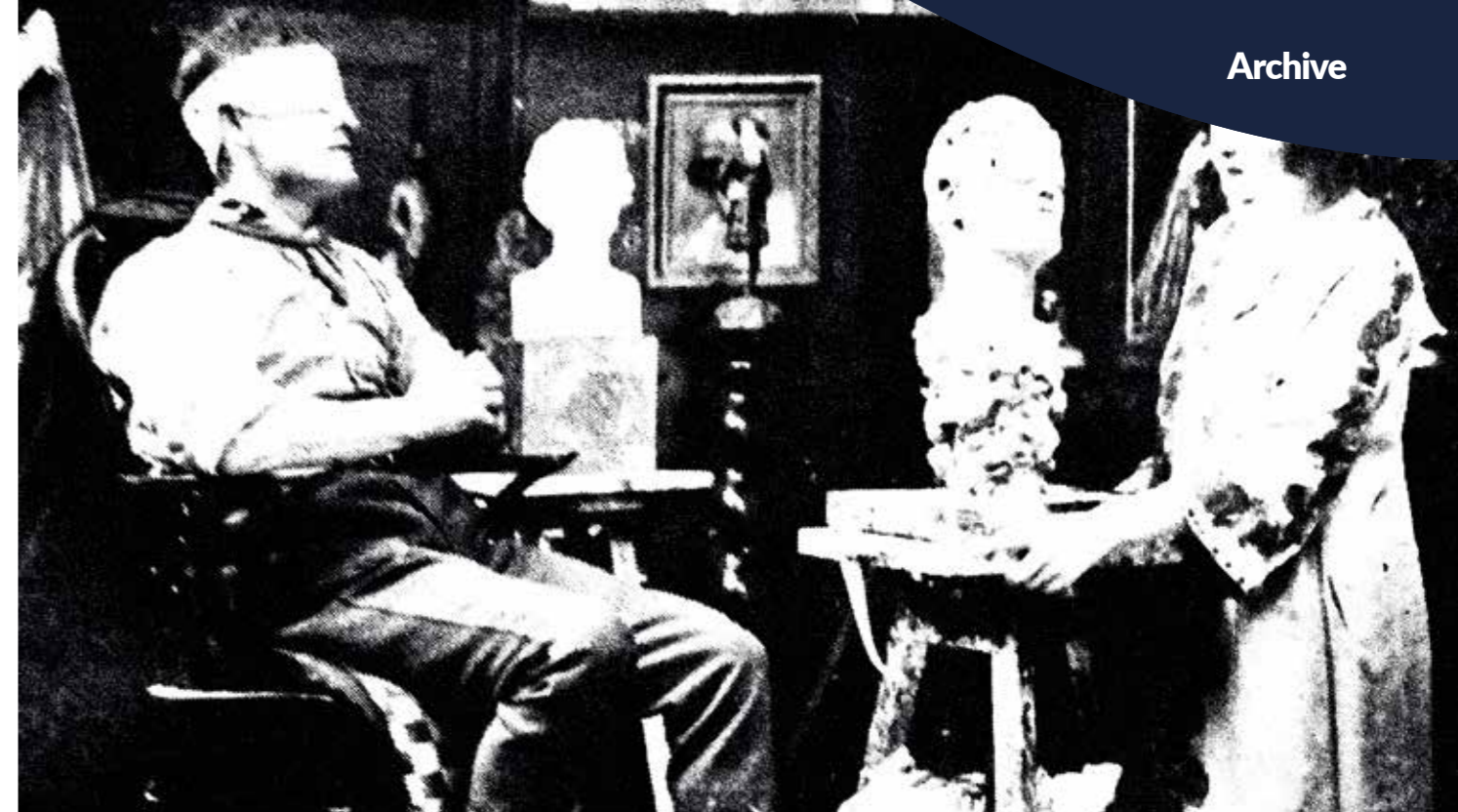
house in Mayville Avenue was a nice house with all polished furniture. She had a big, round table that you could see your face in and a polished, black piano with gold inlays. Grandad Jack, being a Cockney, was an out-and-out royalist. He had a flagpole secured to the wall outside of the bedroom window and used to fly the Union Jack after every air raid as his way of showing his defiance.

Grandad Jack could be seen most evenings in the spring and early summer, walking along Stoneferry Road, dressed in pin-stripe trousers and black jacket, with a carnation in his buttonhole and a homburg on his head. With his Pomeranian bitch Billie on her lead, he used to tip his hat to everybody he would pass (quite a character, my grandad Jack).

### Toy soldiers and trucks

When we got to grandma Elsie's, she gave us some dinner and told us grandad was going to take us out. Grandad not only worked on the docks, he was also a member of the Auxiliary Fire Service, on call when an air raid was in progress.

When he arrived home, he changed his clothes and told us we were going to the pub. We gathered up a few of our toy soldiers and a couple of trucks and off we went to our destination, The Ship Inn, Anne Watson Street... 🍷



**Caption: Sheridan and Bowen from Blaxall 'Blindness His Servant'**

## Advocate RW Bowen - the 'St Dunstan's effect'

Author **Hilary Barlow** tells the story of Robert 'Mike' Bowen, a St Dunstaner who overcame his blindness to move to greater heights →

### An introduction by Blind Veterans UK Archives & Information Officer Rob Baker

A new book, 'Blindness and the Story of Power', tells the story of one of our First World War blind veterans, Robert Walter Bowen, known as Mike. Its author, Hilary Marlow, had met Mike Bowen as a boy. Hilary has kindly written this article for us outlining Mike's remarkable life. 'Blindness and the Power of Inner Vision' is published by Footprint Press and available through Pettaugh History Society (enquiries to [pettaughhistory@btinternet.com](mailto:pettaughhistory@btinternet.com)) and an audio version is also to be produced.

What did it take to transform a disfigured and blinded war veteran, Mike Bowen, into a persuasive defence advocate and politician, renowned for his powerful condemnation of racial discrimination and the promotion of the rights of disabled people? There are several factors which brought about this transformation of which the rehabilitation facilities for blinded soldiers provided by St Dunstan's, as Blind Veterans UK was then known, played the pivotal role. Other factors include the support of Eleanor Gillies, medical skills on the battlefield and in reconstructive surgery and the legal education he received at Cambridge University and the London law society of Gray's Inn. This is his story of transformation as told in the biography of Advocate RW Bowen, 'Blindness and the Power of Inner Vision'.

### Diamond prospecting

Mike was born in Durban and after leaving school began employment in administration but, finding this rather boring, decided to try his hand at diamond prospecting in the alluvial diggings near Kimberley. When war broke out in 1914, Mike volunteered for service in the South African army which had joined the British Empire forces. After seeing action against forces loyal to the Kaiser in German South West Africa and in North Africa, he found himself in trenches in the Somme

## “Mike Bowen’s new life and his integration back into society really began at St Dunstan’s”

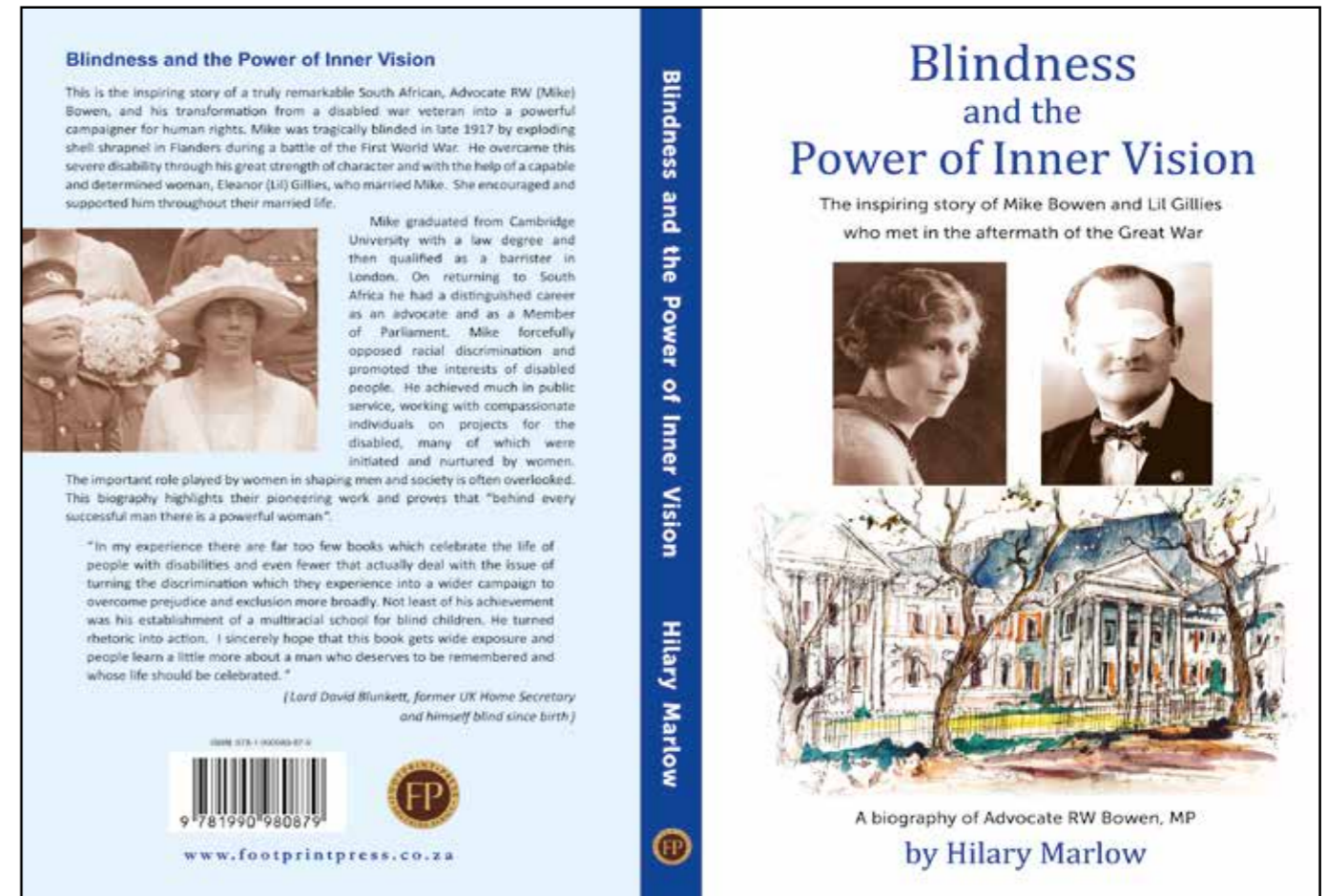
battlefield, Vimy Ridge, Flers and Arras before being ordered to Flanders in 1917 for the Battle of Passchendaele.

As Mike and his platoon were in the front line, ready to attack the German force, a high explosive shell detonated close to the soldiers. A piece of flying shrapnel shot across Mike's head, slicing off the bone structures beneath his eyebrows, orbital cavities and upper nose. He was grievously wounded and blinded.

First aid was administered in the muddy first aid posts and base hospital before Mike was transported by ship to Dover and then London. He eventually came under the care of surgeons trained by Dr Harold Gillies to reconstruct his facial structures.

### Reintegration at St Dunstan's

Mike Bowen's new life and his integration back into society really began at St Dunstan's where he met his tutor of Braille. Mike had the good fortune to have Eleanor Gillies assigned as his Braille tutor. She was the sister of Harold and the



**Caption: 'Blindness and the Power of Inner Vision', by Hilary Marlowe**

relationship between tutor and blind pupil blossomed into love. Mike and Eleanor, known to friends as Lil, were married in Cambridge in March 1919. It was Harold and Lil who recognised that Mike was an intelligent character with great cognitive abilities. They persuaded him to apply for a place at Cambridge to study law in 1919 and his tutor, Arnold McNair, a barrister of Gray's Inn, supervised Mike's law studies. Eleanor acted as Mike's 'eyes' taking notes in lectures and tutorials which he transcribed into Braille. Mike graduated from Cambridge in 1921 and

qualified as a barrister in London.

Mike and Lil returned to South Africa in 1922, settling in Cape Town where he set up his chambers. He soon became known as a formidable defence advocate and often acted in a pro bono capacity for poor people especially for those of the underprivileged mixed-race community who were known as the 'Cape Coloured' people. Using the example of her father, Robert Gillies, who had become a Member of the New Zealand parliament, Eleanor influenced Mike Bowen





to enter politics. He was elected by an overwhelming majority in 1929 to represent a Cape Town constituency under the banner of the South African Party led by General Jan Smuts.

### Rights for the disabled

His parliamentary career was noteworthy for his interventions on two issues, racial discrimination and rights for disabled people, especially the blind. Discrimination against those who were not classified as 'White European' blighted South African society. Since the signing of the Treaty of Vereeniging following the defeat of the Afrikaner republics of the Transvaal and Orange Free State and the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910, the Afrikaner population took an increasingly dominant role and diminished the influence of the English-speaking South Africans. Much of Bowen's parliamentary career was spent in opposition to the ruling Afrikaner National Party which was laying the foundations of the infamous post-war apartheid legislation. As legislation ensuring the suppression of the black and mixed-race population was introduced, Mike Bowen was forthright in condemning the proposals in the most trenchant language.

Mike was also responsible for drafting legislation to safeguard the rights of

blind people and steered the 1936 Blind Act through the parliamentary processes. Working with others, he was instrumental in founding the first school in South Africa for blind mixed-race and black children in 1927.

The Athlone School for the Blind started with only six pupils but is still educating blind children today with a roll exceeding four hundred. Mike's legal knowledge was also used in the efforts to establish the first national body to work on behalf of blind people in South Africa and his contribution was recognised in him being appointed as the first Chairman of the South African National Council for the Blind (SANCB) in 1929. Mike recognised the unstinting support provided by Eleanor throughout their married life and in parliamentary debates spoke up for women's rights. Mike was a keen supporter of the South African branch of St Dunstan's.

### Elected unopposed

Mike Bowen was elected unopposed in the May 1948 General Election but his death two months later deprived the parliament of one of its most able members. His achievements live on in the school for blind children, the Blind Act and the continuing work of the SANCB. St Dunstan's can be proud of the transformation which it produced in Mike Bowen's life. 🇿🇦



**Caption: Growing your own vegetables is both tasty and satisfying**

# Grow your own

Growing your own vegetables can be very satisfying – and healthy too. Our Well-Connected team shows you how to get green fingers this month

There are many tasty vegetables you can sow in July, when you can rely on the sun to create warm temperatures for quick crops.

### Lettuce

Lettuce and other salad leaves are quick and easy. Sow from March to September to enjoy fresh salad for most of the year. Another option is cut

and come again lettuce- varieties such as "salad bowl" can be picked a few leaves at a time as they are needed, leaving the rest of the plant to keep growing. Salad leaves can be grown in a container.

### Carrots

July is generally the last month to sow carrots for an autumn crop. →

**Space saving vegetables:****Chillies**

Chillies can be grown in a large pot or tub.

**Potatoes**

Potatoes are surprisingly easy to grow in large pots, or even a large bag such as an old compost bag. Simply add a few seed potatoes to a layer of compost, cover with more compost and leave to grow.

**Strawberries**

Strawberry can be planted in pots. Once planted, plants should crop well for three to four years.

**Spring onion**

Spring onions are easy to grow and give high yields in a small space.

**If you are interested in gardening please get in touch with us to get involved with the National Creative Project (NCP) activities:**

Call our new NCP Bookings number **01273 391 455** for more information or to request an activity pack – 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 [blindveterans.org.uk/ncp](https://blindveterans.org.uk/ncp)**

**Tumbling Tomatoes**

**Your last chance to sign up for the Tumbling Tomatoes project. Enjoy watching your plant grow, the smell of the leaves and delicious and colourful fruits, all on your windowsill to enjoy over the summer. Your kit will include everything you need.**

**During the project there will be the opportunity to join a phone chat group with other members and our project team to discuss how your tomatoes are growing and all other things garden related.**



# Little known facts about the Olympics

After a year's delay, the 2021 Tokyo Olympic Games will be starting on 23 July. Here's some unusual facts for you about the Olympics of the past

**01** The first Olympic Games took place in the 8th century B.C. in Olympia, Greece and was a religious festival that lasted for five to six months. They were held every four years for 12 centuries with only male competitors (females weren't even allowed to watch).

**02** In Greece, the athletes competed naked, so they could show off their strength and prowess. The winners received an olive branch wreath.

**03** In the 4th century A.D, Emperor Theodosius I banned all pagan festivals, so the Olympics were no more. There was a gap of 1500 years before the Olympics was resurrected in 1896, with the first modern Olympics held in Greece.

**04** The Olympic games run every four years - except for four

times when World Wars or a global pandemic has cancelled the modern Olympics, these were in 1916, 1940, 1944 and 2020.

**05** The five Olympic rings are symbolic of the five →



continents, and the colours were chosen because they all appear on the flags of all the competing nations around the world.

**06** The 1912 Olympics was the last time that gold medals were solid gold. Ever since, they've been silver with gold plating.

**07** There was a period between 1912-1948 where artists participated in the Olympics, these included painters, sculptors, architects, writers and musicians, all competing for their respective medals. However, these were abandoned as artists were professionals, whereas Olympic athletes are required to be amateurs.

**08** The Olympic motto is "Citius, Altius, Fortius" which is Latin for "faster, higher, stronger"

**09** During the 1936 Berlin Games, two Japanese pole-vaulters tied for second place. Instead of competing again, they cut the silver and bronze medals in half and fused the two different halves together so that each of them had a half-silver and half-bronze medal. Nothing like this has happened since.

**10** The Olympic torch relay is a modern event which started in 1936 and always starts in Greece. It's

usually carried by runners; however, it's found various other methods of transportation including steamboat, canoe, airplane, horse, camel, transmitted as radio signals, dived in the great barrier reef and even been in outer space!

**11** In 1968 the first athlete was suspended from the Olympics because he tested positive for a banned substance. The substance? - alcohol. He had drunk several beers before the pentathlon

**12** The London 2012 Olympics was the first time every nation sent a female competitor.

**13** The longest remaining record in the modern Olympics is over 50 years old, this is for the long jump and was set in 1968 by Bob Beamon in Mexico.

**14** Great Britain is the only country to have one at least 1 gold medal at every Summer Olympics

**15** In the opening ceremony of the Olympics, Greece always goes first and leads the parade of athletes. This is to honour its status as the birthplace of the Olympics. The other teams follow in alphabetical order according to the language of the host country. 🇬🇷

# The power of berries

They may be small, but berries can offer us much in the way of nutrition. Our Well-Connected team presents this short guide

This time of year, berries are plentiful, whether at the supermarket or on the hedge rows near your house - they are great to add to your main meals or just

to eat as a snack throughout the day.

Berries are among some of the healthiest foods on earth. Just a few servings a week goes a long way in maintaining better health.

Berries contain some of the highest amounts of antioxidants. Antioxidants are chemicals that interact with and neutralise free radicals, thus preventing them from causing damage to your body. Berries are also high in fibre which is important for healthy digestion.

Berries are good for everyone, and adding berries into your daily diet will help you build strength, sustain energy, and recover faster. The antioxidants in berries such as vitamins A, C, and E help protect against oxidative stress that builds up in the body during strenuous exercise and workouts. →



ADOBE STOCK / STONE36

**Caption: Blueberries**



**Caption: Strawberries**

## Choose your berries

What berries are worth purchasing from a shop, growing at home, or picking from hedge rows when out walking and what benefits do they give to you?

Here are some great berries to grow, pick or buy.

### Blueberries

The deep blue of these berries does more than make a pretty pie. The colour comes from potent compounds called anthocyanins. Scientists think these antioxidants may help protect

you from cancer, heart disease, and dementia, and boost your immune system. Eat these juicy gems fresh or frozen. They have water and fibre, which fill you up without wrecking your diet. A half-cup has about 40 calories.

### Blackberries

Blackberries have a lot of polyphenols, chemicals that may cut inflammation that leads to heart disease and cancer. The berries may also help your small intestine break down sugar better, which could lower your odds of type 2 diabetes. Eat them fresh or frozen if you can. A cup of plain blackberries has 7 grams of sugar. Boysenberries and marionberries are types of blackberries.

### Strawberries

These sweet, heart-shaped fruits are full of vitamin C, folic acid, fibre, and antioxidants. They may help lower high blood pressure and cholesterol, help you manage blood sugar, and fight the effects of aging on your brain. Since strawberries spoil quickly, buy them often. To reap the most health benefits, don't wash or hull them until you're ready to eat and enjoy.

### Red Raspberries

Raspberries pack a lot of nutrition into a small space. They provide potassium, essential to heart function,

and proven to lower blood pressure. The omega-3 fatty acids in raspberries can help prevent stroke and heart disease. They also contain a mineral called manganese, which is necessary for healthy bones and skin and helps regulate blood sugar.

**Now let's look at some other berries you can hopefully buy at your local super store or health store.**

### Ginseng Berries

Studies showed that ginseng berries may be able to lower cholesterol, fight cancer, and lower gut inflammation.



**Caption: Wild ginseng with berries**

If you have diabetes, there's some evidence that ginseng berry juice could help you control your blood sugar and weight. Look for ginseng berry extract in skin products, too. It may help fight skin damage and the effects of aging.

### Avocado

Surprise! Avocados are single-seeded berries. Their soft green flesh is loaded with vitamins, minerals, and healthy fats. Avocados can help your heart, support weight loss, and may keep you healthy as you get older. Slice and add to salads, blend into smoothies, or spread onto sandwiches instead of mayonnaise. But don't overdo it. One serving is 1/5 of an avocado.

### Goji Berries

Sometimes called wolfberries, they've been part of Chinese medicine for thousands of years. They have vitamins (C, B2, and A), iron, and antioxidants. Scientists have looked for proof that they boost immunity, fight heart disease, help the brain, aid digestion, and prevent cancer, but so far, they don't know for sure. Only eat them ripe. Unripe ones can be toxic. And don't eat them if you're pregnant, nursing, or taking blood thinners.

### Cranberries

If you tend to get urinary tract infections, you may have downed cranberry juice. It won't treat UTIs, →

but cranberry supplements may cut your odds of getting them later. The berries may make it less likely bacteria will stay in your stomach and cause infections. Scientists are studying if they can prevent cancer and boost heart health. Watch how much of the juice you drink: Too much may upset your stomach and lead to kidney stones.

### Cloudberries

A 2/3-cup serving of these peach-coloured berries has twice the vitamin C of a glass of orange juice. They're also rich in antioxidants, which is one



**Caption: Cloudberry**

reason you'll find them as an ingredient in some skin care products. It's best to eat the berries the same day they're picked, but you can also freeze them for up to 2 years.

### Kiwi berries

You probably know their fuzzy, egg-shaped cousin, the kiwi fruit. These grape-sized berries are about the same in taste and nutrition. They have lutein, which helps protect your eyes; zinc for healthy skin, hair and nails; and potassium, which helps you get a better workout. Since their skin is fuzz-free, they're easy to pop into your mouth for a quick, sweet snack.

### Bilberries (Huckleberries)

These berries have long been thought to improve vision. (Second World War pilots ate bilberry jam in hopes of making their night vision better.) While their extract may help prevent eye problems like macular degeneration and cataracts, we need more research to know for sure. Ask your doctor before you take bilberry extracts or supplements. But enjoy the sweet-tart flavour of fresh ones in late summer and early autumn.

To summarise berries are a super food giving you some of your needed vitamins, antioxidants and fibre to stay healthy, so don't be shy, go out and get some. 🍓

# Family News

## Birthdays

**Sylvia Conington** who celebrates her 101st birthday on 23 July

**Muriel Feltham** who celebrates her 100th birthday on 14 July

**Patricia Grosse** who celebrates her 100th birthday on 27 July

**Sheila Lawrence** who celebrates her 100th birthday on 28 July

**May Marshall** who celebrates her 100th birthday on 10 July

**William Morris** who celebrates his 100th birthday on 19 July

**Pauline Moy** who celebrates her 100th birthday on 27 July

**Pamela-Mary Pye** who celebrates her 100th birthday on 24 July

**Valerie Stubbs** who celebrates her 102nd birthday on 5 July

**Sheila Twort** who celebrates her 101st birthday on 10 July

*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**

**Pamela Arnold**, who died on 19 May 2021. She was the wife of Edward Arnold

**Betty Doyle**, who died on 1 April 2021. She was the wife of Frederick Doyle

**Sylvia Thompson**, who died on 17 June 2021. She was the wife of David Thompson

**Ann Sampson**, who died on 1 June 2021. She was the wife of Ernest Sampson

**Patty Wise**, who died on 1 June 2021. She was the wife of Joseph Wise

**Hazel Curl**, who died on 1 June 2021. She was the wife of Anthony Curl

# 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

**Derek Ashforth** of Sheffield died on 13 June 2021 aged 80. He served as a Lance Corporal in the Army Catering Corps.

**James Dennis Atkinson** of Church Stretton, Shropshire died on 16 May 2021 aged 96. He served as a Commander in the Royal Navy.

**John George Alan Bainbridge** of Hexham, Northumberland died on 28 February 2021 aged 96. He served as a Flight Sergeant in the Royal Air Force.

**David Bate** of Sunderland died on 1 May 2021 aged 90. He served as a Private in the Army Catering Corps.

**William Leslie Baynam** of Pontefract, West Yorkshire died on 27 May 2021 aged 73. He served as a Lance Corporal in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

**Howard Charles Bennett** of Birmingham died on 20 May 2021 aged 87. He served as an S.A.C. in the Royal Air Force.

**Ernest George Boynes** of Tarporley, Cheshire died on 27 May 2021 aged 92. He served as a Warrant Officer in the Royal Navy.

**Joan Braybrooke** of Wilmslow, Cheshire died on 2 June 2021 aged 84. She served as a Sick Berth Attendant in the Women's Royal Naval Service.

**Ivan Byng** of Llandrindod Wells, Powys died on 1 June 2021 aged 82. He served as a Corporal in the Royal Armoured Corps (20th Armoured Brigade Group).

**Francis William Byrne** of Ellesmere Port died on 25 May 2021 aged 87. He served as a Private in the Royal Signals.

**Kenneth Child** of Harpenden, Hertfordshire died on 1 June 2021 aged 99. He served as a Private in the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment.

**Derek Cholerton** of Wigan, Lancashire died on 20 May 2021 aged 88. He served as a Sergeant in the Royal Engineers.

**Thomas Tom Conington** of Colchester died on 9 June 2021 aged 100. He served as an A.C. 2 in the Royal Air Force.

**Hazel Cresser** of St. Ives, Cornwall died on 17 April 2021 aged 96. She served as a Corporal in the Auxiliary Territorial Service.

**David George Francis Crocker** of Walton-On-Thames, Surrey died on 13 May 2021 aged 92. He served as a Private in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps.

**Anthony Eric Dean** of London died on 29 May 2021 aged 88. He served as a Lance Corporal in the Royal Armoured Corps.

**Michael Field** of Barnsley, South Yorkshire died on 8 June 2021 aged 86. He served as a Sapper in the Royal Engineers.

**Thomas Finn** of Wigan, Lancashire died on 14 May 2021 aged 87. He served as a Private in the Royal Artillery.

**Patricia May Gibson** of Ludlow, Shropshire died on 1 May 2021 aged 94. She served as a Wren in the Royal Navy.

**Peter John Glover** of Plymouth died on 23 May 2021 aged 82. He served as a Sergeant in the Royal Air Force.

**Gerard Ralph Grant** of Blackpool, Lancashire died on 28 May 2021 aged 97. He served as a Telegraphist in the Royal Navy.

**Eric Handy** of Birmingham, West Midlands died on 20 May 2021 aged 90. He served in the Royal Navy.

**Michael Hansen** of Lancaster, Lancashire died on 1 April 2021 aged 98. He served as a Lieutenant in the Royal Armoured Corps. →

**Anthony Hayward** of Peterborough died on 29 May 2021 aged 96. He served as a Corporal in the Royal Army Service Corps.

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**Derek Hoper** of Folkestone, Kent died on 30 May 2021 aged 93. He served as an A.C.1 in the Royal Air Force.

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**David Peter Hughes** of Rotherham, South Yorkshire died on 14 June 2021 aged 96. He served as a Lieutenant Commander in the Royal Navy.

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**Edmund Jackson** of Lytham St. Annes, Lancashire died on 6 May 2021 aged 88. He served as an L.A.C. in the Royal Air Force.

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**Frederick Sydney Johnson** of Brighton, East Sussex died on 6 June 2021 aged 98. He served as a Private in the Royal Leicestershire Regiment.

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**Douglas James Jones** of Bath died on 8 June 2021 aged 89. He served as a Lance Corporal in the North Somerset Yeomanry.

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**Ceri Alun Jones** of Bridgend, Mid Glamorgan died on 7 June 2021 aged 47. He served as a Gunner in the Royal Artillery.

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**Gwynfor Jones** of Llanberis, Gwynedd died on 27 May 2021 aged 83. He served as a Private in the Royal Artillery.

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**Wilfred Frank King** of Seaford, East Sussex died on 8 June 2021 aged 97. He served as a Gunner in the General Service Corps.

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**Doreen Lowery** of Barnsley, South Yorkshire died on 1 June 2021 aged 93. She served as a Private in the Auxiliary Territorial Service.

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**Alan William Luff** of New Romney, Kent died on 20 May 2021 aged 94. He served as a Supply Assistant in the Royal Navy.

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**Peter James Mallett** of Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire died on 25 May 2021 aged 84. He served as a Senior Aircraftsman in the Royal Air Force.

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**Robert Mansell** of Guildford, Surrey died on 1 May 2021 aged 92. He served as a Lance Corporal in the Royal Engineers.

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**James Markie** of Lauder, Berwickshire died on 4 June 2021 aged 74. He served as a Private in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps.

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**Alan Malcolm Mc Farland** of Staines-Upon-Thames, Middlesex died on 1 June 2021 aged 97. He served as a Sub Lieutenant in the Fleet Air Arm.

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**Lewis Mendoza** of Brighton, East Sussex died on 5 June 2021 aged 94. He served as an A.C.2 in the Royal Air Force.

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**Clifford Murray** of Crowthorne, Berkshire died on 1 May 2021 aged 99. He served as a Trooper in the Royal Tank Regiment (Royal Armoured Corps).

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**Thomas Nightingale** of Accrington, Lancashire died on 27 May 2021 aged 96. He served as a Corporal in the Royal Army Service Corps.

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**James Orford** of St. Helens, Merseyside died on 11 June 2021 aged 94. He served in the Royal Army Service Corps.

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**Walter Frederick Poole** of Solihull, West Midlands died on 27 May 2021 aged 84. He served as an S.A.C. in the Royal Air Force.

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**Frederick Howell Porter** of Thornton-Cleveleys, Lancashire died on 7 June 2021 aged 91. He served as a Sergeant in the Royal Army Service Corps.

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**Arthur Reuben Powell** of Flint, Clwyd died on 6 June 2021 aged 93. He served as a Corporal in the Welch Regiment.

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**John Philip Sullivan** of Maidenhead, Berkshire died on 26 May 2021 aged 81. He served as an Acting Corporal in the Royal Air Force Police.

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**Malcolm Hay Thompson** of Glossop, Derbyshire died on 1 June 2021 aged 88. He served as a Corporal in the Royal Engineers.

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**Harold Peter Tokins** of Lincoln died on 26 May 2021 aged 89. He served as a Petty Officer in the Royal Navy Air Service.

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**Peter John Tyler** of Polegate, East Sussex died on 1 June 2021 aged 85. He served as an Officer in the Royal Air Force.

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**Frederick David Williamson** of Southampton died on 7 June 2021 aged 96. He served as a Craftsman in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

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**William Albert Wrighton** of Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire died on 7 May 2021 aged 94. He served as an Air Mechanic in the Royal Navy.

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# Not just for letters

Paper can be used for so many different creative methods, as our Brighton Centre's **Lou Kirk-Partridge** explains



**Caption: Closeup of pink quilling paper flowers based on postcard**

Paper is an unexpectedly versatile material. Not only is it available in dozens of variations to be drawn, printed or painted on, but there are a never-ending array of ways it can be used to make beautiful objects. Over the centuries an array of paper working

traditions have been developed all around the world each reflecting the culture from which they were originated.

People have recognised the value of paper as a creative medium, be it to make an object or as a decorative feature, devising numerous ways of decorating with paper. The Far East and Europe especially have strong traditions of using paper as a raw material and for recognising its true decorative potential. Artists and crafts people have adapted and borrowed techniques to influence their own creative practice – be it as tool for designing in the preliminary stages of an idea or for creating their final piece.

Papier mache, collage, decoupage, quilling and card making are just a few of the techniques that involve the use of paper.

## Chewed and glued

Papier mache (French for chewed paper) is essentially pulped or paper strips mixed with glue or paste. It can be moulded into any number of shapes to create sturdy or delicate items, which can then be decorated in a variety of imaginative ways. Centuries before being introduced to Europe, the craft was raised to an art form in the Far East where carefully made items were exquisitely decorated and lacquered.

Collage comes from the French word *coller* which means “to glue” or “to stick together”. It is a form of artwork that is made by assembling different pieces to create a new finished work of art. A collage may sometimes include magazine and newspaper clippings, ribbons, paint, bits of coloured or handmade papers, portions of other artwork or texts, photographs and other found objects, glued to a piece of paper or canvas. The origins of collage can be traced back hundreds of years, but this technique made a dramatic reappearance in the early 20th century and became a distinctive part of modern art thanks to the endorsement of Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque. The final collage image can be very abstract or very pictorial.

Decoupage comes from the French verb *decouper*, meaning ‘to cut

Below are examples of birds made by our Members for our collage tea towel project all wonderful and all using the collage techniques in different ways. All the images of the birds were created using paper be it plain paper, magazines, wrapping paper or sweet wrappers - torn or cut with scissors. They were photographed and reproduced on our tea towel. Thanks to Cameron Kennedy, Michael, Uzzel, Mavis Linfoot, Ronald Josselyn and Stella Baines. These are just a small selection of the wonderful birds that were created using a large template of a bird to stick papers onto.





out'. The craft of decoupage involves cutting and pasting black- and - white or coloured cut - outs on to a surface to create a picture or a pattern. It surfaced in seventeenth century France as a form of furniture decoration and a century later was a well-established pastime though out Europe. There has been a resurgence of interest of late as a way of enlivening household objects such as wastepaper baskets, trays and boxes

Quilling - or paper filigree - is an art form that involves the use of strips of paper that are rolled, looped, curled, twisted, shaped, and glued together to create decorative designs. It starts with rolling a strip of paper into a coil and then pinching the coil into shapes that can be glued together. Like many forms of craft, paper quilling can trace its origins back hundreds of years to at least the 15th century (maybe earlier). It is believed to have been created by French and Italian nuns and used to decorate religious objects in an effort to save money. Traditional quilling involves using very thin strips of paper however you can use different widths of paper and adapt the technique to create larger abstract art, flowers, and portraits among other things.

### Helping you to get creative

To help you get creative there is a huge array of papers and card

on the market today - from those that are textured with glittery fronts to corrugated cardboard and sandpapers. There are smooth card and papers of different thicknesses in a huge array of colours, tissue papers that can be layered up to create new colours or scrunched up and rolled into balls to create texture. Magazines and wrapping paper provide a wealth of colour and imagery that can be incorporated into your designs. There are devices that enable you to repeat a shape, tools to punch out cut shapes from hearts to flowers so no fiddly cutting out of shapes.

As well as all the papers you can buy and collect, you can also create your own papers to work with, have fun decorating papers using printing and painting techniques or simply paint washes of paint or ink over the papers you have collected to make them tone into your design. Once dry they can all be torn and cut and used in your artwork.

For many of the techniques using paper you certainly don't have to be good with scissors, tearing paper is often the best technique to employ, not only because of the delicate edge that can be achieved but it is the best technique for layering up paper and visually often can't be beaten. 🍷

## Top Tips for creating using the paper collage technique



A raised outline can be helpful to work against. Glue down pipe cleaners or use blu tac to define a line to work against.



Use paper you can feel. Thin papers can be hard to feel sometimes so go for thin card. If you do use a thin paper you

can always scrunch it up and open it out again so it has a bit of texture to feel. Tissue paper can be rolled into neat balls that can be glued in place, the finished effect is that of rug work. The design above has been created in this way by a Member.

Use papers with different textures so you can feel them more easily, sand papers can be used together with papers with glittery fronts etc. On the right a fish made by a

member using different sandpapers within the workshop at Brighton.

Don't work too small if you have the space work big. Nowadays you can take a photograph easily on a phone so that the image can be printed to the size you want. So work the size that's easy for you to handle then reduce it at the printing stage if you want to reproduce it.

Use a glue stick to stick down your papers rather than runny glue, it's a little less messy.

For more chat and sharing of ideas using paper join our Creative Hobby Chat group to hear all about the wonders of paper



# Caring for you

This page will be 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. Not only that, we will share useful information about relevant organisations to support you in your caring role

## Am I a Carer?

In the first place, you may ask yourself, "Am I a carer?"

Because it is natural and expected to care for a partner or family member, it can be difficult to notice the change in status. An 'unpaid caring' role is when the person you look after needs help because of an illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction and cannot cope without support.

We find that our carers are typically family members of our veterans and taking on that role can be a sudden process, or it can slowly happen over time. If this is something you can identify with, then it is worth reading on to make sure you are getting all the support available to you.

## Where to Start?

One of the first things to do if you are caring for someone is to tell your GP.

Let them know that you are a carer and ask if this could be registered on your medical record. All practices will have a carer registration form and additionally, you are entitled to a free flu vaccination. Your surgery may also offer the following:

- some flexibility with appointment times, for both yourself and/or the person you care for to accommodate your caring situation
- agreement to share information about the condition of the person you care for (with their consent)

It is well worth doing and can be a gateway to further support. Next is to make sure to get a carer's assessment through your local council, where specific help may be available to you.

## What is a carer's assessment?

All carers have the right to an

assessment of their needs, although what sort of assessment, who does it and your associated rights to support, depend on the type of carer you are.

A carer's assessment determines whether you qualify for council support in your role as unpaid carer. It's a chance for you to talk about how your caring responsibilities affect you. It will look at:

- whether you're willing and able to carry on providing care
- whether your caring responsibilities

- have any impact on your wellbeing
- whether you need any support
- what you'd like to achieve in your day-to-day life. For example, you might want more time to take part in activities you enjoy
- whether you qualify for any help from the council.

Carer's assessments can be carried out face-to-face, over the phone or online.

To arrange an assessment, contact the adult social services department of your local council. If you live in a →



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**Caption: You may have asked yourself 'am I a carer?'**

different area to the person you care for, you'll need to contact the local council for the area they live in. Their details should be in the phone book or search online at [gov.uk/find-local-council](http://gov.uk/find-local-council)

### Carer's Card

The Carer's Card is a free card issued to people that care for children, young people and adults. It gives carers access to discounts for local activities that improve health and wellbeing. Different cards are available for

different areas, so you would need to go through your local carer's centre to find out which one is available to you.

As a carer for a Member of Blind Veterans UK you have access to:

- Tailored advice and support from Blind Veterans UK's experienced and qualified community support workers
- Addressing the emotional and practical aspects of caring through sessions virtually and at our centres

- Respite for veterans to give family members and carers a well-earned break
  - Signposting to other support services
  - Opportunities to attend social events, carer sessions and meet other carers who are in the same boat
- **For more information about what we can do to support you as carers, please visit our Family and Carers page on our website: [blindveterans.org.uk](http://blindveterans.org.uk)**

[org.uk/how-we-can-help/family-and-carers/](http://blindveterans.org.uk/how-we-can-help/family-and-carers/)

**Other useful organisations to get in contact with are:**

### Carers UK

It offers expert telephone advice and support service if you want to talk about caring. If you're looking for answers, its online information and support is the best place to start. It will also make sure you are getting the right support available to you. →

## Caring for a Loved One - a message by our Chaplain, George Butterworth



"In Sickness and in health, to love and to cherish" Familiar words from the wedding service. How often have we been guests at a

wedding and witnessed the couple make these promises to each other?

The other 'bit' is "for better for worse, for richer for poorer". Of course, it goes without saying that folks who have committed themselves to each other without the formal wedding

are just as much 'married' as those who have. The reason being that the two people making the vows are themselves the ministers of the ceremony, minister and registrar are merely there to legally record the union. These promises come into their own and are really tested when one of the union falls ill, or develops a debilitating condition, or in the case of our Blind Veterans UK carers a partner develops sight loss, or blindness.

Being there 24/7 as we say today, caring for a loved one is love in action.

Our carers are not superhuman and can feel the strain of being there in sickness and in health for our partner. A lot of what we do goes unrecognised, unpaid and out of sight. But I'm sure the one we care for is most grateful to you for all you do. They may not say it, or show it every day, but deep down you know they couldn't be without you.

When I've spoken to those who care for a partner, they often say they get a lot in return for the work they do. The satisfaction that what they do is appreciated, together with the feeling that if their loved one was not there they would truly hurt.

We at Blind Veterans UK wish to

acknowledge the sterling work you do for your loved one, who is also one of our Members. Carers days and opportunities for you to get away with people who understand what caring for a blind person really involves. We are here for you too.

June and July, is a busy time for weddings - the next time you hear the couple say the words "in sickness and in health", spare a thought, or better still a prayer, for them that they may be given the strength to keep that promise, to their loved one. We do not know what lies in the future for all of us, but for the newlyweds and newly committed especially, may their love remain as strong as the day they made their promises.

Its telephone helpline is available on **0808 808 7777** from Monday to Friday, 9am–6pm or you can contact it by email at [advice@carersuk.org](mailto:advice@carersuk.org) while its website is at [carersuk.org](http://carersuk.org).

### NHS and Carers Direct

If you, or someone you know needs help with day-to-day living because of illness or disability, this NHS affiliated website explains your options and where you can get support.

Carers Direct provides information, advice and support on carers' issues but is not able to provide on-going casework. It can put you in touch with specialist national or local sources of



**Caption: Find out more from your CSW**

help, including carers' centres, social care and self-help networks. You can call it on **0300 123 1053**, while the helpline and webchat is open Monday to Friday, 9am-8pm and weekends 11am-4pm

The website can be found at [nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide](http://nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide).

### Turn2us

If you are a carer for someone who has an illness or disability, there may be benefits, grants or other financial support available to you. You can find out more general information on this website: [turn2us.org.uk/Your-Situation/Carers](http://turn2us.org.uk/Your-Situation/Carers). Its website advisor search tool is useful to find someone who you can talk to about your individual situation: [advicefinder.turn2us.org.uk](http://advicefinder.turn2us.org.uk)

You can speak with your Community Support Worker if you would like support in finding Carers organisations in your local area. 📍

**What would you like to see on a Carers page? Contact Stacey Barham on 07514 120 392 or at [Stacey.barham@blindveterans.org.uk](mailto:Stacey.barham@blindveterans.org.uk) for more information and to share your ideas.**



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## Contact details

**Contact address** Blind Veterans UK, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London, W1H 4HD, **0300 111 22 33**

**Member Support Hub: 01273 391 447**

**New Members:** If you know someone who could be eligible to join Blind Veterans UK, they can phone our Membership Department on freephone **0800 389 7979**.

**The Brighton Centre 01273 307 811.**

**The Llandudno Centre 01492 868 700.**

**Review Editor:** You can telephone the editor on **020 7616 8367** or email him at [revieweditor@blindveterans.org.uk](mailto:revieweditor@blindveterans.org.uk).

We value your feedback and use it to improve and develop the services we provide. If you would like to provide feedback on the magazine or any aspect of our services then please email us at [feedback@blindveterans.org.uk](mailto:feedback@blindveterans.org.uk) or call **0300 111 22 33**

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