

Review

The journal of
Blind Veterans UK

July 2020

Remembering

Brighton's tribute
to Vera Lynn

Inside:

Padre at work
- Clare's time
with our charity

Sleep hygiene -
what it means
for you



Rebuilding
lives after
sight loss

Thinking ahead

If you are in any way a social animal then I'm sure that you, like me, will have been heartened by the recent announcement from Government that there will be a general easing of lockdown restrictions, including pubs and other places to generally meet up.

All well and good, but after the initial euphoria that I can relax once again in the beer garden of my excellent local I thought about what it will mean for our veterans, and for those with visual impairment (VI) in general. I have no doubt that there will be effective social distancing measures in place, but just how VI friendly will these be? Many of you will know the inside of your local inn or place to eat back to front, but given the inevitable change when it re-opens, how much consideration will have been given to helping you adjust to a new layout? In many cases it will have to be a case of starting from scratch.

Which reminds me, we'd like to see your lockdown images and how you've been spending your time, so if you feel like sharing how this period has been for you then don't hesitate to e-mail me at revieweditor@blindveterans.org.uk or get in touch with your community

support worker to pass anything on.

On the cover this month you will see a truly wonderful and striking collage made by our Members of the late Vera Lynn, who died earlier this month. Look out for the full story of how it came to be in our August issue

Finally, and somewhat sadly, our wonderful chaplain Clare Callanan will be retiring very soon when her contract at our charity ends. She will be a great loss to us, and her wit, compassion and unstinting kindness will long be remembered. Padres (to use that archaic word) of the calibre of Clare are hard to come by at the best of times, and certainly her contributions to Review will be sorely missed. I wish Clare well in her future, and thank her for all the time, words and grace that she's freely given to both me personally, and all of you.

Until next month, stay safe. 🇬🇧

Chris Gilson
Editor



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On the cover

An amazing collage of Vera Lynn made by our Members - more details in our August issue



Balance and perspective

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

The Covid-19 rollercoaster continues, its track heading excruciatingly slowly towards a more normal world, yet with uncomfortable surprises en-route no doubt. As I write, it has been announced that, following agreement by the chief medical officers of our four nations, our national alert state has improved from Level 4 to Level 3, essentially meaning that the contagion is in decline.

The challenge across the country now is pondering how to respond; what is safe and what is not safe? Inevitably people are cautious and grateful for new areas of freedom, but also concerned to avoid this beast gaining traction and running out of control again. Inevitably, good companies are being challenged and some will close - this includes charities. We are blessed to have a solid reserve that has given us the strength and confidence to ride the turbulence and the agility

to square up to the challenges of this pandemic.

Caution remains the watchword from our perspective. We are focussed on making our remote support delivered through the National Support Service (NSS) as effective as possible, and are exploring ways to be innovative and imaginative. It's clear that Covid-19 has required us to think differently and, as is often the case in adversity, there will be tricks, ideas and new techniques that we have tried and tested through this pandemic that we will want to continue, as we return to normality. This is testament to the skill and initiative of our staff and volunteers as well as the support, understanding and encouragement of our Members. It's a great team.

Vital elements

One of the vital elements of the NSS has been the provision of moral support

over the telephone to those Members who are often isolated, worried, scared or just fed up. A call from a friend is like a good cuppa – comforting, reassuring and refreshing. It is important to share thoughts and concerns and to have the opportunity for a laugh together and I have really enjoyed hearing about the local networks that are springing up across our community structure as our veterans look out for each other.

I particularly enjoyed a call to our very own Jean Thelfall on her birthday. Jean had been looking forward to celebrating her big day at the Liverpool Reunion and instead had spent the day



NILFANION / WIKIMEDIA CREATIVE COMMONS

Caption: Baden-Powell sculpture on Poole Quay

on the phone talking to well-wishers, and opening her 46 birthday cards.

A powerful opportunity

As Chief Executive, I have seriously appreciated the support and friendship of my senior leadership team and of the trustees over the last three months. I have also benefited from a network of other Chief Executive Officers (CEO) that I belong to that meets weekly in cyberspace to consider themes, share issues, concerns and ideas and pool experience for our collective good, and this has been a powerful opportunity.

Much of our focus for the weekly chats has been Covid-19 related. This week however, the theme was 'Black Lives Matter' (BLM) which has dominated airwaves and screens since the dreadful incident in the US. It was interesting to discuss impact and response: the case or not for making personal statements; the relative significance of BLM alongside other areas of discrimination and so on. We will all have spent time considering the lessons and thinking about the best way to move forward.

During this CEO network discussion I found myself reflecting on an image that I had seen in the media of elderly scouts standing next to the statue of Baden-Powell on Poole quayside, protecting it against ill-wishers. I grew up in Poole, and feel that the →

Scouting movement is in my DNA. Baden-Powell has been an inspiration to millions across the globe and was a close friend of Sir Arthur Pearson, our charity having celebrated their relationship over the years. How could it come to this? One of the CEOs on the call is the CEO of the Scouts and he provided reassurance and balance, specifically through reference to a BBC article drawing on Baden-Powell's biographer Tim Jeal which provided proper perspective. Echoing his comments, there is a serious need today for balance and perspective. And a little more caring and kindness would go a long way.

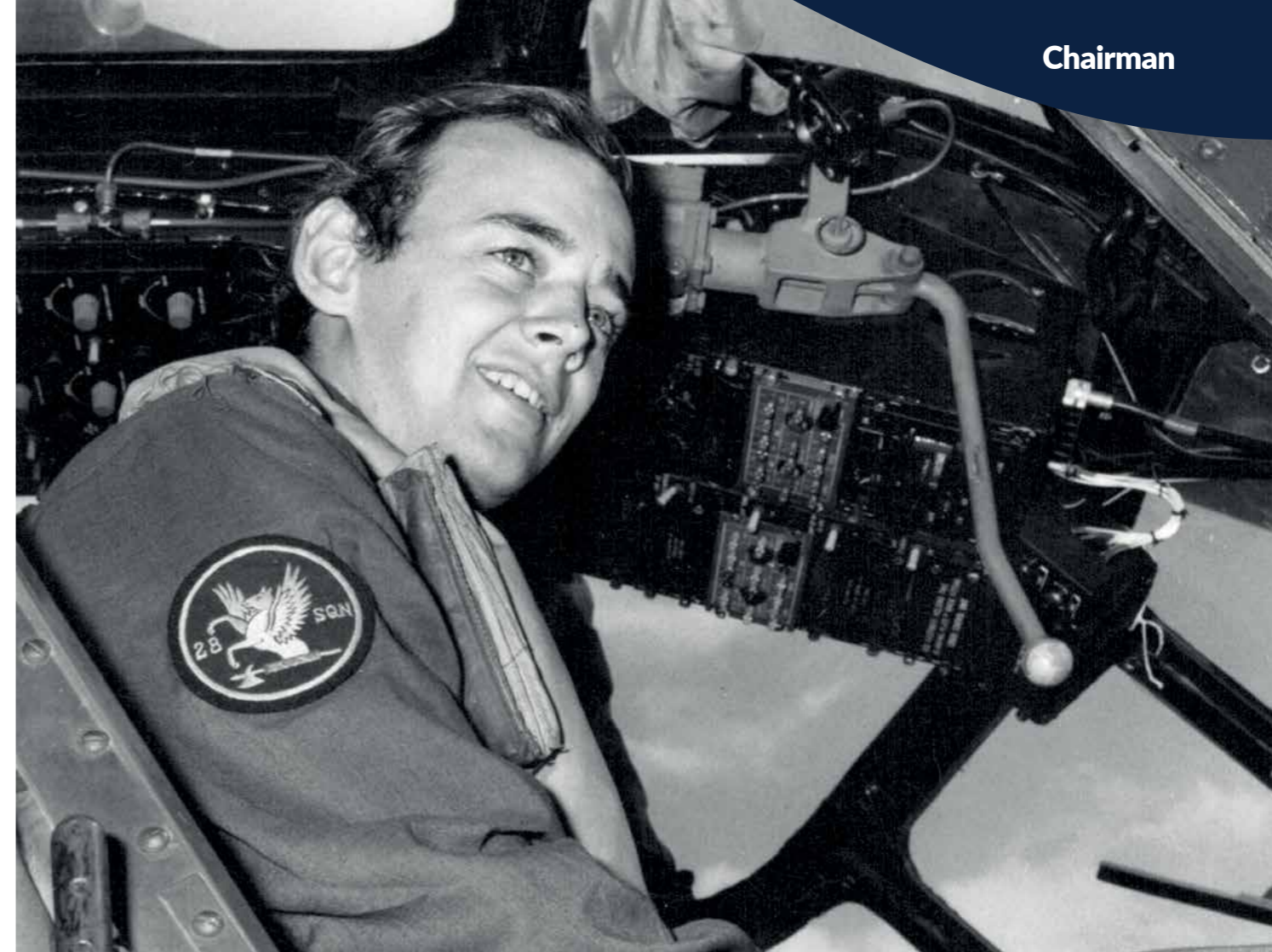


Caption: Nick Caplin

Thinking of statues and memorials, our minds have looked forward to Remembrance and we are in discussion with the Royal British Legion to get a feel for how Covid-19 might impact on Remembrance weekend. The short answer is it is too soon to know, but there is a strong feeling that any Cenotaph event will necessarily be on a much smaller scale this year than normal. We will continue to monitor this and will let you have better information as soon as this is available. Conscious that a reduced London event is a strong possibility or even probability, we are keen to promote a Blind Veterans UK presence at remembrance events across the country, reinforcing our community approach. These are early thoughts, and again we will be in touch as the thinking matures.

And finally, there was another important event this month with the sad loss of Dame Vera Lynn. Dame Vera has been a fabulous friend to our charity since the Second World War, and continued to support us throughout her life - even after she turned 100. Her music inspired generations, and her example will continue to inspire for generations to come.

Until next month, my very best wishes to you all. 🍷



Caption: Paul Luker in 1971

Us and They

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

'They'. If your household is anything like ours, I imagine the word 'they' will have featured more frequently in the past few months than hitherto. Probably while the news is on, as some omnipotent politician is holding forth about 'following the science' or, indeed,

while a notable scientist has been outlining his version of it.

I imagine that, following a theatrical "Tut", it might come out as "Well, you won't believe what they have done now!" 'They'. It is the catch-all →



Caption: Paul Luker

word to describe a remote higher authority: a body that is able to act with apparent indifference to one's own personal circumstances, with a power that is unchallengeable. Unless, that is, one lives in Tunbridge Wells and is a regular correspondent to the letters page of the Daily Telegraph. In last month's Review I promised to stop shouting at the TV and, to a greater degree than I imagined possible, I have done so. But I still find myself tutting and forming the word 'they' before I regain control.

As a much younger man 'they' were an everyday feature of my life. With the arrogant, know-it-all, confidence of young pilots in Northern Ireland

in the early 1970s, my chums and I were both astonished and outraged in equal measure by a distant set of headquarters back on the mainland. They had difficulty finding the place on a map whereas we were there. They were still obsessing with the Cold War; we were fighting the real one. They were engaged in inter-Service rivalry over the budget; we were trying to work jointly without much of a budget. They were focused on financial savings; we were focussed on saving lives. For us the bottom line was that if we needed help, best not ask because we imagined they weren't much inclined to listen. And so we tended to regard "them" in much the same way as we did the terrorists – 'they' were just another problem to be dealt with.

Permanently committed

Take this example. Back then Ulster was a news item for most of the RAF; for us and the RAF Regiment it was a constant part of our lives. My squadron, based in England, was permanently committed to the Province - as an experienced pilot I spent at least six in every 12 weeks there, with just four days off before being committed to other tasks in UK and Europe for the balance. As a newly married couple, this was not exactly what we imagined life was going to be like, but we quickly adjusted to the routine. Don't get me wrong. My mates and I relished the

action. We were in the thick of things, but time off became very precious.

Into the middle of this exciting but frenetic life, 'they' decided that RAF aircrew needed to be physically fitter, should we ever face the Soviet hordes. They introduced a new aircrew fitness test. To ensure that we took it seriously they underpinned it with the threat that we would be suspended from flying duties until we did. Never make a threat that you can't keep.

We were fit as fleas – our main relaxation in Northern Ireland was in the gym – so the test held no fear for any of us. Come the appointed day (one of our four days off) my half of the squadron paraded on the sports field and ran the requisite distance in massively under the required time. Less the last 10 yards. Rather than finish, we all smiled at the PTI, nodded and walked off barely out of breath. What were they going to do? They could hardly suspend us from flying because who then would be flying on operations next week...?

“To ensure that we took it seriously they underpinned it with the threat that we would be suspended from flying duties until we did”

Making judgements

Over time, with increased seniority and responsibility it dawned on me that I was becoming 'they'. Somebody does have to make judgements. Somebody does have to consider the conflicting facts. Somebody does have to make unpopular decisions. I have come to learn that very few people have a genuinely malign streak in them. Most people really do want to do the right thing for the right reason, albeit that everybody is a captive of their own long-term conditioning. It is therefore unsurprising that we rarely tread the perfect course – and this is particularly so when we are faced with a unique set of conditions (or unprecedented times, to use that overworked term of the pandemic). By contrast I find it rather sad that we seem to be growing generations of Brits who hold a view that every bad thing is avoidable and, if it is not avoided, somebody must be accountable. Most of us grew up in a society where risk was routinely managed rather than scrupulously avoided.

A week or so ago I listened to Sir John Timpson (the founder of the High Street locksmiths) being interviewed on Radio 4. The interviewer was straining to elicit his criticism of the Government. Timpson was balanced and objective, pointing out →

that we started from a position of ignorance and therefore made judgements which now needed to be refined as knowledge grew. Tellingly, to paraphrase very slightly, he said, "Thank God I don't have to make the decisions that they do". I agree.

Without being melodramatic, trusteeship at our charity can seem like a microcosm of government. The Government is trying to determine what a new normality will look like and how efficaciously they can establish that new normal with minimal damage to our well-being. They are trying to fight something that did not happen directly as a consequence of their actions. And they are dealing with all the multi-faceted aspects of society: health, education, social care, the economy and so forth. At Blind Veterans UK we have been trying and will continue to try to do the same. We made a massive step-change in setting up the National Support Service, at a time when some main-stream charities

"We made a massive step-change in setting up the National Support Service, at a time when some main-stream charities were closing down"

were closing down. I am immensely proud of how all of our staff stood up to that challenge but equally I have no doubt that we will have inadvertently made some mistakes.

Greater freedoms

We now need to adapt again as greater freedoms are restored once the pandemic comes under better control. We need to think extremely carefully about the future, about how we determine and adapt to our "new normal" providing the support that is needed post Covid-19 and how we find our sustainable financial footing in what will be a particularly challenging economic climate for our fundraising efforts. This is crucial, both to give you the support that you need and to ensure that the charity remains available to the generations that follow us. It will require careful consideration and inevitably the trustees have to be our 'they' but I am determined that we will do this from a well-informed position.

Meanwhile, on the domestic front, I worry that the current Mrs Luker is exhibiting Covid-19 signs. You will have heard that the range of symptoms is now more extensive than originally thought, including the loss of some of the senses. When I put my new coloured polo shirt in with her white wash, she definitely lost her sense of humour. 🍷

Exodus

The time has come for **Clare Callanan**, our wonderful Padre to retire, and for many of us, this will be emotive news. Our Brighton Centre manager Leslie Garven pays tribute to a remarkable chaplain who will be much missed

Clare has led a most interesting and full life - helping people, getting involved and having adventures at every stage of it. She initially trained as a primary teacher in Bristol and taught for over 25 years, then retrained as a minister in the United Reform Church and

was ordained in 2005, serving three churches in the Swindon and Oxford area. She also ministered part time as a hospital chaplain for three years.

Claire joined The Royal Army Chaplains' Department in 2009, serving in Germany twice then Cyprus and finally the UK. She took part in training exercises in Kenya and Jordan with a six-month operational tour in Afghanistan from 2011-12.

According to the *Oxford Mail*, Clare was only the fifth woman at that time to be a Padre.

Clare had to retire from the Army in July 2018 and took up post as first full-time chaplain to Blind Veterans UK, based in Brighton, in August 2018. She is also a loving mother to two children and a wife to husband Frank. How on earth does she fit all this in?

Clare has since been involved in many high-profile charity



Caption: Clare in a reflective mood





Caption, from top left: Cyprus 2014, our Victory Over Blindness statue and its blessing with our Patron HRH The Countess of Wessex, during a well-deserved break in Afghanistan

events, including speaking at the commemoration of our iconic 'Victory over Blindness' statue outside Manchester Piccadilly railway station, which portrays the sacrifice of soldiers who lost their sight during the First World War.

Clare attended many trips abroad

with our Veterans to areas such as Normandy, paying respects to fallen comrades. She remembers,

"The memorial services at the National Arboretum were special, recalling loved ones in such a powerful location.

"My two battlefield tours were

incredibly special as well, sharing intense moments of drama, emotions and commemoration with both Members and staff. The grandeur and solemnity of Thiepval, the silence of the cemeteries, the welcome of Normandy and the beaches. I will always recall the echo of the bugle playing last post on one occasion particularly. Kev Alderton will claim he played on far more occasions than I led services..."

Clare presided over several Remembrance Ceremonies. This is where I learned what a "drum-head" ceremony was as we cobbled together some bits at Brighton to make the ceremony. Clare explained to me that in the field, when they had nothing, they would use a couple of oil drums as an altar and that became known as the 'drum-head' ceremony.

However, and I am sure to Clare's amusement, she will mostly be collectively remembered for the wedding of Brighton resident Members Peter and Nancy van Zeller last year, (I know Clare... not a wedding, but a blessing!). In Nancy's words,

"I have always found her very approachable. I have always been able to talk to her and unburden my heart to her. She encouraged me to talk about my problems and not bottle them up

within me. She conducted our wedding ceremony and brought everyone to tears. She will be sadly missed."

Fighting battles

Clare has even been fighting battles whilst working at Blind Veterans UK. Maybe not in the trenches, but certainly with the suppliers of chairs for the Brighton Centre chapel. I can imagine Clare's shoulders drooping at the very mention of that fact.

Clare would dismiss many of these big 'public' events, because the big picture stuff is only on one level. The other level is the daily chats, smiles, and encounters around the Centres while interacting on a privileged level with staff and Members.

She was often to be seen sitting in on the presentations of the Induction Courses, with her memories being that,

"They have been times of belonging and emotion. Staff training weeks bringing laughter and togetherness. Waiting quietly in the inner garden with someone as they speak...or not. Many trips to the Art and Craft workshop to absorb the creative and enabling energy, especially around tea and cake time. Lunchtime 'Goddy' conversations in Evie's canteen that ebbed and flowed on all subjects. The tireless energy and care of all staff and volunteers." →



Caption: Peter and Nancy's blessing

My most interesting moment with Clare was a discussion we had about how she was outrunning the cloud of radioactivity from [the] Chernobyl [disaster] many years ago and her memories of the event from a perspective of being in harm's way. I also appreciated her dry, quick and sometimes very blunt humour. She completely changed the way I view chaplains. As an example, one day there was a mix-up and some Bishops arrived at the Brighton Centre who were there both for a tour (given by Clare) of the Centre and to see the chapel.

Clare could not be found and these people were the equivalent of religious celebrities. I had to bluff my way through the whole meeting, talking

about diocese and other subjects I know nothing about. I came across terribly. All I can remember was how much my hands were sweating when I said goodbye to them. It turned out to be their error, but the next morning, when I came to work, there was a small origami bishop's hat on my desk. A gift from the humour of Clare and I still have it and treasure it. This is what Clare is especially good at; these small frequent moments that touch hearts.

In some of her final words to those she's ministered while being with our charity, Clare says, "Did you 'get' the role of the chaplain before? If not, I trust you might have an understanding now. Chaplaincy is often called a ministry of presence. Yet with a purpose. Of just 'being'... regardless of your faith or spirituality. Accompanying. Journeying. Thank you all for being part of my journey these last two years."

Enjoy this new chapter of your life Clare and we hope it's filled with good health, relaxation, and fun! It's been such a pleasure working with you, you've set such an example to us all with your dedication and commitment to caring for all and opening up conversations that matter. This is a sentiment that anyone who ever met Clare would share and I know I speak for so many and not just myself when I say that you will be sorely missed!

"I am going to miss her very much; her services have been very enjoyable!"

Win Amos

"...even though I'm not religious, I find something in you that gives me comfort..."

Unnamed, referring to Clare

"Clare, I was surprised and saddened to hear you are shortly to leave us. Although I have only known you for a comparatively short time, I have found your interpretation of the bible both interesting and informative and I am sure many of us will have received original interpretations of the text.

Also, we have been grateful for your attempts to keep the group focused and informed during the sad period we have been through. I am sure I speak for many of your congregation in saying that you will be missed. I wish you every possible success in the future in whatever you are going to do. God Bless."

Roger H

"I enjoyed her services she gave every month through pages in the review they always had a point and were interesting. I will miss them."

Jim H

"As a Commanding Officer in the Army, the Padre formed part of my

'Holy Trinity' along with myself and the Doctor and together we would monitor and safeguard the spiritual wellbeing of our people and the morale of the unit. Those who have served will well understand the importance of the unit chaplain or padre. They are the one who will always be there, no matter what is going on; the one who reassures, comforts, encourages. And they are the one who provides focus and perspective when life gets really tough, especially in the midst of adversity.

During her time with Blind Veterans UK, Clare has provided our padre support magnificently. Much as our members have understood the value of her support and comradeship around the charity, so our staff have valued Clare's support in their everyday lives. Nowhere has this been more apparent than during the Covid-19 crisis when Clare has provided invaluable support to us all. Life has been easier knowing that Clare has been there and we have been blessed to enjoy her service during these difficult days. As she moves on to her next chapter of life with her husband in the South West, I know that in Clare we have a friend for life. On behalf of all of us at Blind Veterans UK, I give our heartfelt thanks for all that she has done and wish her God speed and good fortune."

Nick Caplin

In Your Community

Bob gets on his bike

Corby-based Member Bob Inglis completed a marathon everyday on his exercise bike over the month of May to raise funds. Bob decided to take on the challenge to help support us during the lockdown period.

Each day Bob cycled for an average of 75 minutes until he reached the 42.2km mark. He says: "Some days took longer than others but on the last day I completed it in 63 minutes which was my fastest time".

Bob decided to do the challenge on his stationary exercise bike in his home gym as it was a lot safer due to his sight loss. He says: "Because of my sight,



Caption: A proud Bob and his bike

I struggle with balance on a regular bike and it's too dangerous with all the passing cars. My home gym is a great way to keep fit though and glad that I was able to do a challenge for the charity".

Bob cycled a total of 1,309km over the month of May. He was hoping to raise £1,302 but he has unfortunately not met that target yet. If you would like to support his fantastic efforts, please visit his justgiving page at [justgiving.com/fundraising/robert-inglis](https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/robert-inglis).

Taking a turn with the wood

Two of our Members have kept in contact during the lockdown period due to their mutual interest in woodturning.

Bill Whitworth, 76 from Nottingham, has been sharing tips and tricks with Derby's Gary Stevenson, 53, after realising that they both share an interest in woodturning - a craft which involves using a lathe and hand-held tools to cut wood into different objects.

Gary was introduced to woodturning at

the charity's training and rehabilitation centre in Llandudno. He says: "I really enjoyed it and found it very therapeutic. The charity have recently helped supply me with my own workshop so I can do it at home. I knew Bill from the charity and found out during lockdown that he has been doing the craft for 25 years. He's been helping me a lot over the phone with different tips and techniques".

Bill trained as an apprentice carpenter and started woodturning as a hobby about 25 years ago. Before his sight loss, he made toys which he then sold on a stall in his local town centre. He says: "I was into toy masonry and every year I used to make one big toy which I would auction off for a local charity. It's been great to meet someone like



Caption: Bill in his wonderful workshop



Caption: Gary Stevenson and his lathe

Gary with who I have a mutual interest. I've enjoyed helping him and it's kept us busy during lockdown".

The pair are hoping to attend a woodturning training week together at the charity's Llandudno centre once the lockdown is over. Gary says: "Bill is a fount of knowledge so it would be good to be able to get the chance to learn from him in person!"

Following Captain Tom

Member Bob Grocutt, 75 from Cannock, walked 100 laps around his garden to raise money for our charity when he heard about Captain Tom Moore's fundraising efforts. He →

says: "I decided to do the 100 laps because I was inspired by 'Captain Tom'. I thought he's doing well, maybe I could do that! I wanted to do something to help us as the charity has supported me for nearly five years. I can walk up and down my garden thanks to the white cane that they have given me".

Bob served in the Army for nine years in the Cheshire Regiment and was discharged as a corporal in 1972. He lost his sight, many years after his service, suddenly due to a tumour on his pituitary gland.

Bob started his challenge on the 20 April and has no plans to stop just yet. He says: "I will keep going 100 laps a day for as long people want me to keep doing it! It's important to me to raise



Caption: Bob goes for another lap

as much money as I can so I will keep going".

To support Bob and help him raise money for Blind Veterans UK, please visit [justgiving.com/fundraising/grandads-wall-in-the-garden](https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/grandads-wall-in-the-garden)

David hits 75 too

David Gant from Stowmarket, Suffolk has completed an amazing 75 laps of his garden as part of a '75 Miles for 75 years' VE-Day related fundraising challenge organised by community support worker Claire V.

The idea behind the challenge was that Members, volunteers, staff and friends and family would come together as a collective to cover 75 miles in distance between 8-10 May. In preparation David decorated his garden with bunting and flags and had his family and neighbours (socially distanced) to see him complete his final lap.

The total raised for the event was £1,874 with a large percentage of this achieved by David's walk, including a donation from the Oddfellows of £215.

This lockdown period has been a challenge for David and his wife Jean and the participation and achievement in '75 for 75' has been a huge boost



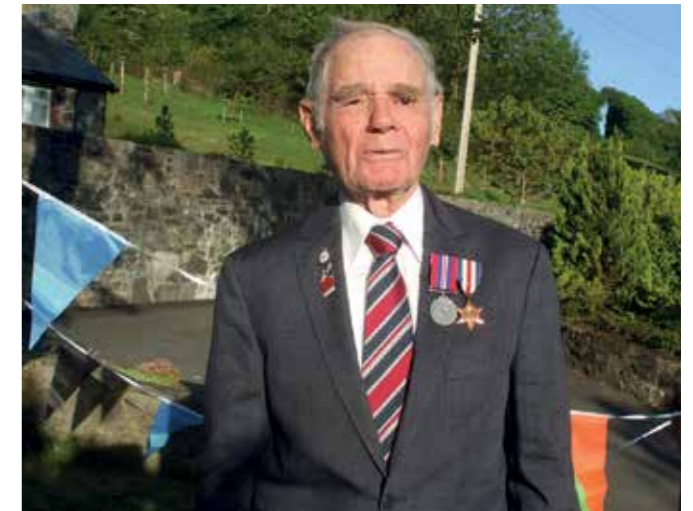
Caption: David Gant (right) and friends

for them both and meant their VE weekend was a celebration as well as a commemoration.

Getting it down on the page

Veteran Richard Jones, 93 from Llanwrst, Gwynedd has spent his time during lockdown writing his autobiography with the help of a magnifying keyboard that we have given him. Richard initially planned to just write about his service history but with all the spare time he now has due to lockdown, he has decided to continue writing about his life so that it will span from when he was five years old, up until the present day.

Richard says: "I bought a laptop a couple of years ago with the intention of writing about my time in the Army. I am normally a very busy person so the



Caption: Richard Jones

beginning of lockdown was a struggle but this autobiography has now given me something to do to pass the time".

Richard served in the General Service Corps in August 1944, then joined the Royal Army Service Corps in October the same year. He worked as a staff car driver from February 1945 until October 1946. He then transferred to Buller Barracks, Number 1 Training Barracks until he was demobbed in December 1947.

Richard says: "The charity has been great! Before lockdown, I went to computer courses at the Llandudno centre and took part in bowling and archery. I like to get out and about to do different things. It's been difficult to not be able to be so active during lockdown but it has given me the opportunity to write!" 🇬🇧



ADOBESTOCK / W PRODUCTION

Getting back into the kitchen

Karla Rogers details why cooking is good for your mind and health and gives us some food for thought

Cooking at home has many benefits for your mind and health, here are a few of the most important -

- It improves your quality of life - cooking is self-care at its most basic and nourishing
- It is a good stress reliever
- It can make you a happier person, it gives you a reward at the end
- It can boost your confidence
- It can focus the mind on something positive to relieve symptoms of stress, worries, depression and other mental issues
- It brings your family together, even if you live apart you can bake and share. Cooking as a group activity if you are living with other people can strengthen relationships
- It's fun to mess with different ingredients
- It makes you more creative, and that creativity makes us feel good

Why don't you try some of these easy microwave recipes?

Here is a step by step guide to making bread in the microwave, and you don't need to be any good at baking to do it

If you fancy some fresh bread but don't want to wait hours for it to bake, there's a way you can whip up enough for a quick snack - and cook it in just 90 seconds.

We recommend eating it straight away and toasting the bread once cooked for the best tasting results. And if you don't like baked beans, smother a toasted slice with butter and jam - it tastes like a crumpet.

Microwave bread recipe

Ingredients

40g self raising flour

1 egg white

25g margarine

Squeeze of lemon juice

1/3 tsp sugar

1/3 tsp baking powder

Method

- Get a large mug and whisk the egg until foamy
- Add baking powder and lemon juice then mix
- Add all of the other ingredients to the mug and mix until smooth and sticky
- Microwave for 90 seconds
- Slice and toast

Microwave banana pudding

This will be a hit with all the family - and it only takes 20 minutes to make →

Ingredients

100g butter, softened, plus extra for greasing

2 ripe bananas

100g light muscovado sugar

100g self-raising flour

2 tsp ground cinnamon

2 eggs

2 tbsp milk

Icing sugar, toffee sauce and ice cream, to serve, if you like

Method

- Put the butter in a 1-litre baking dish and microwave on High for 30 seconds-1 min until melted. Add 1½ bananas, mash into the melted butter, then add the sugar, flour, cinnamon, eggs and milk. Mix together well.
- Slice the remaining banana over the top, then return to the microwave and cook on High for eight minutes until cooked through and risen. Serve warm, dusted with icing sugar, if you like, with a drizzle of toffee sauce and a scoop of ice cream.

We hope you enjoy making these, please feel free to send in feedback,

comments and success stories. Take care and stay safe. 🇬🇧

Top tips:

- Remember preparation is key - get everything ready first before you start cooking.
- Don't worry if they don't turn out perfect first time, reflect on how it could be better and try again.
- We all learn from mistakes and most importantly have fun and enjoy eating and sharing the results



ADOBESTOCK / ZORYANCHIK



Caption: Clare (circled in the middle) at the Menin Gate with our veterans

Two year Review

In her final column for our magazine, retiring chaplain **Clare Callanan** shares some departing thoughts

My records show that I have written 23 articles for *Review* magazine in total. I enjoy writing them, and the monthly challenge of what to say and how to say it. But for once I am struggling to find a good opening line for this particular article. Why? Well, because it will be my last article for you all.

When I joined Blind Veterans UK as the first full time chaplain to the Charity in August 2018, my initial contract was for

two years. It is with sadness that family and personal circumstances have led me to believe that now may be the time to retire, to re-set, and use my time and gifts in other ways. I will therefore be leaving at the end of July 2020, at the end of my contract.

My journey with you, the Members and staff, during my ministry with the Charity, has been a challenging, fulfilling and blessed time. We have laughed →

together and cried together; we have asked questions, doubted answers, and thought of new ones. We have stood on the beaches of Normandy with tears, walked the hills of Wales with cameras, watched sunrises and sunsets from Brighton and Llandudno with awe, and hugged whenever we could.

Sometimes I have sat in my office with my head in my hands thinking "What shall I write about this month?" A short walk to the Arts and Crafts workshop via the picture windows of the corridor usually sorts that. Sometimes the words have flowed and flowed. A re-read and use of the delete button usually sorts that. Sometimes I have even been a month ahead of myself.



Caption: Clare Callanan

The Editor usually sorts that. Many of you have mentioned that you read or listen to them and have appreciated them. Thank you.

However, you need to know that my main inspirations have come from you. Not necessarily directly. Yet as I sit down to write I picture you in my mind, and hopefully write my words and feelings directly to you. I think of your friendship with me, with staff, with each other. I am reminded of your humour, your wisdom and your spirituality. I recall your conversations, laughter, frustrations and tears. Most of all I remember, and always will, your courage, your integrity and your openness.

Each of you has a unique story. Each of you are an important part of the whole narrative that is Blind Veterans UK. I will leave with many special memories of many special people. Thank you for gifting me your trust and friendship. Thank you for travelling this part of the journey with me.

And if I was wearing my RACHD headdress...I'd salute each and every one of you. God bless you.

And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:8 🍷

Joining in

Blind Veterans UK Member and Trustee **Chris Cardwell** describes the benefits of serving as a local policing volunteer

I've not been able to establish who first said "never volunteer for anything", but this was one piece of military advice I was offered some years ago. Many of us have gone through life cheerfully ignoring such wisdom and let's be thankful for that, since we would be a diminished organisation were it not for our hundreds of committed volunteers dedicated to supporting members in so many ways. I enjoy engaging with these contributors to the wider Blind Veterans UK family and we have certainly relied upon our volunteers very heavily, especially over the last few months.

Making a contribution and giving something back are often cited as reasons for volunteering, and such aspirations underpinned my decision to go beyond the comfortable boundaries of our organisation and become a Local Policing Volunteer (LPV) for Suffolk Constabulary.

Many may not appreciate that

uniformed police officers and civilian staff are supported by a cohort of volunteers undertaking a wide range of activities including monitoring CCTV footage and relocating →



Caption: Chris serving as an LPV

police vehicles. These examples are not activities particularly suitable for the visually impaired, but other roles - especially that of the recently created LPV, do fit the bill and it's a compliment to the Constabulary that it strives to offer volunteering opportunities to those commonly described as disabled.

Community links

The key LPV activity of developing firm links within my local community and reporting suspicious and criminal activity seemed as if it would merge seamlessly with my activities as a Town Councillor, and after a recruitment, vetting and induction process lasting six months I was let loose on an unsuspecting public. Being described as the "eyes and ears" of a population in a largely rural location was perhaps a bit ambitious, but how difficult could it be?

Well - quite challenging if I am honest. Some tasks including arranging for foliage that obstructed CCTV cameras to be trimmed, testing out a short wave radio network for shopkeepers to post alerts about thefts or distributing guidance leaflets were easily accomplished and very satisfying. I found that other activities including issuing Advisory Notices about road traffic and parking infringements were not always warmly welcomed by the recipients and I have

"Some tasks including arranging for foliage that obstructed CCTV cameras to be trimmed"

been reintroduced to strong language the like of which I have not heard for many years.

That said, many members of the public took time to say how much they appreciated my contribution, indeed some urged me on with perhaps well-intentioned but misplaced calls of "Go on give him a ticket!". A level of risk could not be avoided and eventually it was Sue (my wife) who quite rightly reminded me that I could not expect everyone to be reasonable in their behaviour or be law abiding and that if a disaffected person decided to cause me physical harm, I literally wouldn't be able to see it coming. Wise advice which I have now acted upon, resulting in a decision to stand down from the role.

Nevertheless, this was an experience I would not have missed and perhaps a good example of how many members live by pushing at the boundaries, finding out where our personal limitations lie and not letting visual impairment be a barrier to being all we can be. 🍷

Arthur and Adeline - part two

Author **Dennis Claridge** continues the story of Arthur Cima, one of our veterans who forged a new life with the help of St Dunstan's



Caption: A heavily bandaged Arthur - the original image is a postcard

Back to England and into the Front Line 1916 -1917

Arthur kept a log of his eventful journey to the UK on the former P&O liner, now troopship HMAT30 Borda via Durban, Cape Town and Sierra Leone. He arrived in Plymouth on 9 January 1917 and marched to Tidworth camp but it was full. They went on to Parkhouse camp where Arthur found a hut and slept from 2-10am. *"Not much fun walking six miles or more after being on the water for 85 days!"* He left Parkhouse camp on 20 January and marched nine miles, "snowing all the way" through Slingo and Bulford camps to Larkhill - "very large camp holding a million men"!

The final entry in this first notebook says *"Home on leave 26/1/17"*. He was fortunate that his mother lived in Tottenham, unlike most of his Aussie mates whose homes were on the →

other side of the globe. However, his service record shows he stayed longer than he should, resulting in 21 days in a detention camp. He also went Absent Without Leave (AWOL) from 6–10 April and again from 5–8 May, costing him a total of 33 days' pay.

On 7 May 1917, while he was AWOL and the day before he left for France, Arthur wrote a will, which has survived. In this he appoints his mother as executrix and main beneficiary. He leaves £20 to "my dear and beloved friend" Adeline Guidotti, but he then added a codicil which says that, in the event of his mother pre-deceasing him, Adeline is appointed executrix. It is something of a puzzle as to how

Arthur could have formed this close relationship with Adeline since they would have had so little time together.

Arthur kept a record of his experiences in the trenches from May 1917 to September 1917. It was in a notebook that was even smaller than the one describing the journey to England. The image is reduced from the actual size which was 2½" x 4". That it has survived at all is something of a miracle.

In this diary, Arthur describes how he left Larkhill camp on 8 May 1917 and sailed via Folkestone to Boulogne, "a dirty hole". He marched 17 miles with a pack to Étaples, which is on the coast near Le Touquet. Here there



Caption: Vaire Wood map extract

was a large camp with "Tommys, Jocks [and] Canadians". The Étaples camp was notorious for the brutality of the instructors, who sought to toughen up the soldiers before combat. Wilfred Owen, the World War 1 poet, described the camp as "the Bull Ring" and this is just the phrase that Arthur uses in his notebook.

Arthur, who has by now been transferred to B Company, 13th Battalion A.I.F., is soon in the Front Line at the famous Battle of Messines Ridge. His diary describes the experience:

"7th Messines taken by British (Hill 63) all objectives. Messines one mass of ruins 8th Arrived near Black line - dug ourselves in - Fritz sending a few across 9th & 10th Sending a great number over our trenches 10pm to 12pm he kept up a great bombardment. Cemented dugouts with bunks in the German lines - thought they were here for good - white shirts etc. Number of postcards of French places taken from a Hun

11th 12th June 1917 In our front line which we dug in about 450yds from our old line. (Green Line) myself out on patrol in 'no mans land' about 80 yds from where the Germans had snipers".

Appalling conditions

Arthur spent most of the next two

and a half months in and around the Front Line near Messines and Ploegsteert ("Plug Street"). Conditions were appalling - horrendous mud, the impossibility of keeping water out of the trenches, almost continuous machine-gun fire and enemy airmen in armoured planes flying low over the trenches every morning to spy and occasionally use their machine guns. Arthur was clearly feeling the strain. He comments "going out for a rest of two months or more" but then adds a footnote "did not get it"!

They did eventually get a two-week break in Lisbourg but Arthur was soon in the thick of it again, at Broodseinde near Passchendaele. This is where he won the Military Medal. The recommendation reads as follows:

"Near BROODSEINDE, on the night 18th/19th October, the post occupied by Cpl. Cima's Section was almost entirely levelled by shell fire. Working with feverish energy and exhorting his men to even greater effort, he reestablished the post under intense shell fire. He then patrolled throughout the night to the posts on either flank, a duty of no mean danger and difficulty as the night was intensely dark, the enemy shell fire extremely heavy, and owing to the presence of gas, the box respirator had to be worn most of the time. He was twice buried by shells and severely shaken but begged →

to remain at his post. He set a splendid example throughout the tour.”

The 13th Battalion then had a relatively quiet time and Arthur even managed some home leave in February 1918, but by 23 February he was back in the Front Line near Ypres. He was again involved in action in April, in the counter-attack to regain Villers-Brettonneux. This was to attain special significance for Australia when the Villers-Brettonneux Memorial was unveiled in July 1938. This commemorates the 11,000 members of the Australian Imperial Force who fought in France and Flanders and have no known grave.

The Battle of Hamel and Arthur is blinded - 4 July 1918

The Australian War Memorial website describes the Battle of Hamel as a textbook victory. It was vitally important that the Allies gained control over the area to prevent the Germans disrupting movement between Villers-Brettonneux and the Somme and threatening the defence of nearby Amiens.

Under the command of Lieutenant Colonel John Monash (his first command), the assault began at 3.10am. Less than two hours later, all objectives had been achieved. Hamel village and Hamel and Vaire Woods

were under Allied control and the front line had advanced by over 2 kilometres.

In Arthur’s papers I found a map of the battle area entitled Vaire Wood. From the date 24-6-18, and from some ominous brown stains, comes the inevitable conclusion that Arthur would have been carrying this map when he was shot. It is miraculous that it survived in his possession.

The area in which the 13th Battalion was involved is shown on page 28 in this extract from the map.

The 13th battalion advanced through “Quarry Crossing” south of Vaire Wood on a limited front of just 400 yards before expanding the frontage to 1,250 yards, as far north as “Hun’s Walk”. By 6am the new front line was established running northeast across “Ration Row” close to Accroche Wood.

Arthur described to me how he came to be shot. He had been out to an enemy trench and found it unoccupied. He went out later that day not knowing that the Germans had returned. He was shot from below ground level with a dum-dum bullet that went in under the left side of his chin, through his jaw and his mouth, and out through his right cheek, near his right eye. Fortunately, it missed his brain. 🍌

ADOBESTOCK / NADEZHDA1906



Caption: It's easy to stay healthy despite restrictions

Keeping fit and carrying on

A short guide about how to stay fit and healthy despite the restrictions the country is currently under

If you're worried that you're not able to stay healthy during the lockdown period, then this short guide will help you make the most of things, despite the limitations that enforced isolation brings.

■ **Keep to your normal routines:** as much as you can within the isolation and social distancing protocols, try to keep to your normal routine. Try to get up and go to bed at similar times, eat regular meals and keep up →



Caption: Even opening a window is beneficial

with any hobbies or activities that you can safely do from home.

- **Keep active:** you are allowed unlimited exercise, walking, running or cycling outdoors per day. However for those who can't exercise in this way, you can still keep active at home by doing some basic exercises and keeping up with things like household chores and gardening if you are able. It's also a good idea to get up and move around your house at least every half an hour or so.
- **Get enough sleep:** make sure you stick to your routine and get as much sleep as you need. For most adults this is between six and eight hours per day.
- **Eat well:** try to eat regular meals that follow the healthy plate plan. You can have treats (in moderation!) But remember that sugary, salty or fatty food and drinks can contribute

to many health conditions, as can alcohol. Make sure you are drinking plenty of water as well, the recommendation is eight glasses, or around two litres of water per day for most adults.

- **Keep in contact:** even though we cannot spend time with people outside our own homes in person, you can still call, email, skype and use many more methods of communication. Remember, it's not just for you, the person you call might need someone to talk to as well!
- **Spend time in nature:** even if the best option for you is just to open a window and let the breeze in for a while. Looking after gardens and houseplants is also a good way to keep connected.
- **Have fun:** if there are things you enjoy that you can do safely within the protocols, then keep doing them... Listen to music and have a little dance to it, even if you do it sitting down. Put your favourite films on, read or listen to books, carry on with a hobby, or even pick up a new one. It's important to keep yourself entertained and mentally stimulated.
- **Set small goals for yourself.** Think about one thing you want to achieve each day and make sure it's something manageable. Achieving a goal a day helps stop you feeling like you're stuck in a rut, even though you're stuck in the house! 🍷

Clean living

Advice from the National Sleep Foundation adapted by **Kate Pierce** on how to gain the most from your sleep and stay healthy

Sleep hygiene is the term used to describe what is necessary to have good night time sleep quality and full daytime alertness. During this period of lockdown when many of our normal routine and activities have been turned upside down, this could be a good time to focus on how well we take care of our sleep habits.

Obtaining healthy sleep is important for both physical health and mental wellbeing. It can also improve our overall feeling of quality of life. Everyone, from children to older adults, can benefit from practicing good sleep habits so here are some top tips.

How can I improve my sleep hygiene?

One of the most important sleep hygiene practices is to spend an appropriate amount of time asleep in bed, not too little or too excessive. Sleep needs vary across ages. However, the guidance for adults aged 65+ is between 7-8 hours a night, and for those of us lucky enough to be under the age of 65 between 7-9 hours a night is the aim. Other good tips include:

Limiting daytime naps to 30 minutes. Napping does not make up for inadequate night time sleep. However, a short nap of 20-30 minutes can help to improve mood and alertness during the day. →



Caption: Get the most from your sleep

“Heavy or rich foods, fatty or fried meals, spicy dishes, citrus fruits, and carbonated drinks can trigger indigestion for some people”

Avoiding stimulants such as caffeine and nicotine close to bedtime. And when it comes to alcohol, moderation is key.

Exercising to promote good quality sleep. As little as 10 minutes of exercise, such as walking, can drastically improve night time sleep quality. This could be a few laps of the garden or the driveway. Failing that during lockdown a few sit to stands from the arm chair could work to get your heart rate increased a little.

Steering clear of food that can be disruptive right before sleep. Heavy or rich foods, fatty or fried meals, spicy dishes, citrus fruits, and carbonated drinks can trigger indigestion for some people. When this occurs close to bedtime, it can lead to painful heartburn that disrupts sleep, so if you enjoy these foods maybe stick to having them for lunch!

Ensuring adequate exposure to natural light. This is particularly important

for individuals who may not venture outside frequently. Exposure to sunlight during the day, as well as darkness at night, helps to maintain a healthy sleep-wake cycle. Sitting by an open window is a way to achieve this during lockdown, maybe make this part of your daily routine with your morning coffee or afternoon cuppa.

Establishing a regular relaxing bedtime routine. A regular nightly routine helps the body recognize that it is bedtime. I'm sure many of us remember how important it was to get the children in to a good bedtime routine (well us grown-ups are no different no matter what our age...)

Making sure that the sleep environment is pleasant. Mattress and pillows should be comfortable. The bedroom should be cool for optimal sleep. Consider adjusting lighting and trying to block out unwanted noise.

What are signs of poor sleep hygiene?

Frequent sleep disturbances and daytime sleepiness are the most telling signs of poor sleep hygiene. In addition, if you're taking too long to fall asleep, you should have a think about your sleep routine and making positive changes to your bedtime habits. Just a few simple changes can make the difference for a good night's sleep. 🍷

Scrubs

Ever wondered how to make a body scrub? **Kate Pierce** from our Llandudno Centre shows you how

To start

Not all body scrubs are good for you or the environment. Some body scrubs contain harmful chemicals, and even use small plastic beads as the exfoliating agent. You want a natural

body scrub that won't harm you and that is eco-friendly. Body scrubs are washed off, go down the drain and end up in the environment so be conscious of the footprint you leave behind.

The way to get the best benefits from a good body scrub is to avoid applying too much pressure when using it. After all, the exfoliating medium in the body scrub should be sufficient to provide the abrasive action needed. So don't be too aggressive about it and be sure to use a body scrub that is gentle but effective. To give your skin a simultaneous boost, make sure that the body scrub is all natural (no chemicals) and one that has a moisturizing component as well. First of all though...

What is a body scrub?

Put simply, a body scrub is a skin care product whose primary function is to remove dead skin cells through exfoliation as well as cleanse the skin and increase the body's blood circulation. Sometimes a body scrub is referred to as a body exfoliant, body gloss or body polish. The exfoliating



ADOBESTOCK / PIXEL-SHOT

Caption: Making a body scrub is easy and fun

component needs to be abrasive enough to achieve this but not too strong so as not to damage healthy skin.

Benefits of body scrubs

If you're not using a body scrub then you're missing out on a number of benefits that other skin care products don't provide. So just what are the benefits of a body scrub?

Makes skin look fresh and rejuvenated

Essentially the benefits of using a body scrub are the removal of dead skin cells from the body and impurities, leaving you feeling fresh and your skin looking rejuvenated and revitalized

Makes skin look more youthful

Exfoliating dead skin cells tends to remove the dull and lacklustre appearance of the skin. Humans shed skin cells daily (anywhere from 11,000-23,000 skin cells an hour) and it usually takes about 27 to 30 days before new skin cells reach the top layer of the skin (stratum corneum). Using a body scrub regularly will help make your skin look more vibrant and youthful

Moisturising benefits

Benefits of body scrubs through the removal of dead skin cells as a result of exfoliation with a mild body scrub extend to moisturising. This allows

for the easy absorption of a skin moisturiser into the healthy skin and ideally, the best body scrub is one that not only acts as a gentle exfoliant but moisturises at the same time

Body scrubs are wonderful for exfoliating dead skin. They're on your body for just minutes before washing away down your drain, so there's no need to spend a lot of money on them. You can simplify your life and reduce your beauty budget by making your own all-natural body scrubs at home. The recipes are easy and often use ingredients that may already be in your home.

A basic homemade body scrub can be made with either sugar or salt and a little body oil. Whether you choose almond, jojoba, avocado, or grapeseed oil, is up to you. Any of them are great for hydrating dry skin.

There are many things you can add to this simple recipe as well. Your favourite essential oils can give it a lovely fragrance while lemon zest is an astringent that also tones. If you want a little extra exfoliation, add some coffee grounds, or go with honey for added moisturising properties.

■ **Next issue Kate will give you recipes for more scrubs... watch this space** 🍷



ADOBESTOCK / JOANNA WNUK

How to make your own body scrubs

Sea salts body scrub for glowing skin

You will need:

- 130g sea salt
- 115ml olive oil
- 5-15 drops of an essential oil of your choice.

Preparation time

Five minutes.

Treatment time

15 minutes

Method

- Combine all the ingredients until you get a coarse paste
- Cleanse your skin and apply this paste onto it
- Use your fingers to gently massage and exfoliate in circular motions on your skin
- Wash the mixture off your body using lukewarm water

How it works

Sea salt is rich in minerals and exfoliating agents that help keep you skin looking young and



healthy. It helps improve blood circulation while also reducing issues such as scarring.

Coconut oil body scrub for glowing skin

You will need

- 65g granulated sugar
- 115ml coconut oil

Preparation time Two minutes

Treatment time

15 minutes

Method

- Combine all the ingredients until you get a coarse paste.
- Cleanse your skin and apply this paste onto it.
- Use your fingers to gently massage and exfoliate in circular motions on your skin spending 1-2 minutes on each part.
- Wash the mixture off your body using lukewarm water.

How it works

This scrub is not only an excellent exfoliating agent, but it also helps cleanse your face, remove makeup, and moisturise.

Olive oil, peppermint and sugar scrub for glowing skin

You will need

- 57g olive oil
- 130g brown sugar
- 15 drops peppermint essential oil

Preparation time

Five minutes

Treatment time

15 Minutes

Method

- Combine all the ingredients until you get a coarse paste.
- Cleanse your skin and apply this paste onto it.
- Use your fingers to gently massage and exfoliate in circular motions on your skin spending 1-2 minutes on each part.
- Wash the mixture off your body using lukewarm water.

How it works

This is a perfect bath scrub for the days that just don't seem to be happening. Enriched with peppermint essential oil, this bath scrub wakes and livens you up with energy

Family News

Birthdays

Ronald Hill who celebrates his 100th birthday on 1 July

Raymond Lawes who celebrates his 100th birthday on 10 July

Thomas Twort who celebrates his 100th birthday on 10 July

Ronald Hill who celebrates his 100th birthday on 13 July

Thomas Conington who celebrates his 100th birthday on 23 July

Ruby Stubbs who celebrates her 101st birthday on 5 July

Schera Masters who celebrates his 101st birthday on 7 July

Condolences

It is with deep regret that we record the deaths of the following, and we offer our heartfelt condolences

Margaret Eddy of Penzance, who died on 15 June. She was the wife of Francis Eddy

Margaret Lobley of Lincoln who died on 6 June. She was the wife of Vincent Lobley





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

Donald George Herbert Allen of Worthing, West Sussex died on 1 June, 2020. He served as a leading aircraftsman in the Royal Air Force

Eric Andrews of Coleraine, County Londonderry died on 3 June, 2020. He served as a chief radio officer in the Royal Navy

Denis Arthur Ayres of Solihull, West Midlands died on 22 May, 2020. He served as leading aircraftsman in the Royal Air Force

Alexander Paul Bickerstaff of Lytham St. Annes, Lancashire died on 16 June, 2020. He served as a private in the Queen's Regiment

Ronald Birch of St. Helens, Merseyside died on 24 May, 2020. He served as a private in the Royal Pioneer Corps

John Ronald Bird of Shaftesbury, Dorset died on 30 May, 2020. He served as a gunner in the Royal Artillery

Kathleen Carroll of Wimborne, Dorset died on 17 May, 2020. She served as a private in the Auxiliary Territorial Service

Derek Ernest Chamberlain of Street, Somerset died on 1 June, 2020. He served as a gunner in the Royal Artillery

Harry Coates of Sheffield, South Yorkshire died on 15 June, 2020. He served as a corporal in the Army

Charles Searle Day of Heckmondwike, West Yorkshire died on 1 June, 2020. He served as a warrant officer in the Royal Air Force

Roger Fareham Dean of Nottingham, Nottinghamshire died on 13 June, 2020. He served as a private in the Sherwood Foresters

Philip Thomas Dickinson of Matlock, Derbyshire died on 2 June, 2020. He served as a driver in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers

Alan Richard Dodd of Llanrwst, Gwynedd died on 31 May, 2020. He served as an aircraftsman in the Royal Air Force

Gordon Richard Evans of Stockton-on-Tees, County Durham died on 16 June, 2020. He served as a signalman in the Royal Signals

Brian Gardner of Reigate, Surrey died on 1 June, 2020. He served as a senior aircraftsman in the Royal Air Force

William Gillespie of Dunbar, East Lothian died on 1 June, 2020. He served as a private in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders (Princess Louise's)

Christopher James Godfrey of Totnes, Devon died on 13 May 2020. He served as a second lieutenant in the Royal Artillery

Richard Goss of Bournemouth, Dorset died on 3 June, 2020. He served as a private in the Royal Engineers

Michael Garrett Graham of Tonbridge, Kent died on 9 June, 2020. He served as a lieutenant in the Royal Armoured Corps

Dorothy Gladys Groh of Newton Abbot, Devon died on 2 June, 2020. She served as a private in the Women's Royal Army Corps

Gerald Hackett of Leigh, Lancashire died on 19 May, 2020. He served as a gunner in the Royal Artillery

Reginald Hallwood of Bangor, Gwynedd died on 24 May, 2020. He served as a leading aircraftsman in the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve



Robert Arthur Hewitt of Baldock, Hertfordshire died on 8 May, 2020. He served as a sapper in the Royal Engineers

Henry James Hodges of Devizes, Wiltshire died on 24 May, 2020. He served as a corporal in the King's Royal Hussars

Brian Henry Howard of Biggleswade, Bedfordshire died on 25 May, 2020. He served as a signalman in the Royal Signals

Kenneth Huckerby of Doncaster, South Yorkshire died on 20 June, 2020. He served as a sapper in the Royal Engineers

Donald Hurst of Barnsley, South Yorkshire died on 31 May, 2020. He served as a driver in the Royal Army Service Corps

Godfrey Jefferies-Beckley of Wadhurst, East Sussex died on 1 June, 2020. He served as a marine in the Royal Marines

Lily Jepson of Blackpool, Lancashire died on 24 May 2020. She served as a leading aircraftswoman in the Women's Royal Air Force

Herbert Johnson of Northwich, Cheshire died on 15 June, 2020. He served as a driver in the Royal Army Service Corps

Kenneth Jones of Llandudno Junction, Gwynedd died on 14 June, 2020. He served as a signalman in the Royal Navy

John Jones of Colwyn Bay, Clwyd died on 8 June, 2020. He served in the Royal Air Force

Henry Kellaway of Bristol, Avon died on 25 May, 2020. He served as a gunner in the Royal Artillery

William Gerald Latus of Preston, Lancashire died on 18 June, 2020. He served as a leading engineering mechanic in the Royal Navy

Maurice Stanley Leighton of Stafford, Staffordshire died on 14 May, 2020. He served as a private in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers

Gordon Leighton of Boston, Lincolnshire died on 25 May, 2020. He served as a third engineer in the Merchant Navy

Dennis Harry Lewis of Wolverhampton, West Midlands died on 18 May, 2020. He served as a stoker mechanic in the Royal Navy

Patrick Mahony of Liverpool, Lancashire died on 28 May, 2020. He served as a leading aircraftsman in the Royal Air Force

Jozef Manski of Preston, Lancashire died on 1 May, 2020. He served as a lance corporal in the Polish Army

Thomas McVeigh of Warrington, Cheshire died on 27 May, 2020. He served as a junior technician in the Royal Air Force

James Alexander Mitchell of Cramlington, Northumberland died on 26 May, 2020. He served as a staff sergeant in the Northumberland Hussars

William John Nelson of Bristol, Avon died on 1 May, 2020. He served as a craftsman in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers

Bernard Thomas Nolan of Southport, Merseyside died on 18 June, 2020. He served as a staff sergeant in the Royal Army Service Corps

Stuart John Raymond Pascoe of Salisbury, Wiltshire died on 4 June, 2020. He served as a leading aircraftsman in the Royal Air Force

Royston John Payne of Bristol, Avon died on 1 May, 2020. He served as a chief engine room artificer in the Royal Navy

Alfred Payton of Honiton, Devon died on 4 June, 2020. He served as a sergeant in the Royal Air Force

David Pendry of Thetford, Norfolk died on 3 June, 2020. He served as a junior bandsman in the Queen's Regiment

David Kingsley Philpott of Luton, Bedfordshire died on 1 June, 2020. He served as a driver in the Royal Army Service Corps

Constance Lilian Pusey of High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire died on 12 June, 2020. She served as a private in the Auxiliary Territorial Service

William Horace Rapley of Farnham, Surrey died on 25 May, 2020. He served as a trooper in the Royal Tank Regiment



Alan Rebbeck of Gloucester, Gloucestershire died on 3 June, 2020. He served as a lance corporal in the Royal Army Pay Corps

David Roberts of Prestatyn, Clwyd died on 4 June, 2020. He served as a bandsman in the Royal Welch Fusiliers

Jack Rouse of Bradford, West Yorkshire died on 9 June, 2020. He served as a temporary corporal in the Royal Air Force

Clifford Shaw of Crowborough, East Sussex died on 1 June, 2020. He served as a sergeant in the Royal Army Medical Corps

Harry Short of Bognor Regis, West Sussex died on 1 June, 2020. He served as a private in the Home Guard

William Stanley of Nottingham, Nottinghamshire died on 7 June, 2020. He served as a stoker first class in the Royal Navy

John Stephens of Lichfield, Staffordshire died on 25 April, 2020. He served in the Border Regiment

Christopher James Stronge of Wantage, Oxfordshire died on 1 June, 2020. He served as a lieutenant in the Royal Artillery

Thomas James Sutton of Liverpool, Lancashire died on 21 May, 2020. He served as a corporal in the King's Regiment

Jack Tawn of Prescot, Merseyside died on 30 May, 2020. He served as a corporal in the Royal Signals

Michael Wadley of Plymouth, Devon died on 1 June, 2020. He served as a leading cook in the Royal Navy

John Andrew Edmund Walbrugh of Chichester, West Sussex died on 26 May, 2020. He served as a gunner in the South African Artillery

Raymond Warner of Mitcham, Surrey died on 18 June, 2020. He served as a stoker mechanic in the Royal Navy

Peter Allan Warren of Bristol, Avon died on 1 June, 2020. He served as a sick berth attendant in the Royal Navy

Roy Welding of Wigan, Lancashire died on 7 June, 2020. He served as a corporal in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps

Thomas Williamson of Corbridge, Northumberland died on 1 June, 2020. He served as a leading aircraftsman in the Royal Air Force

Attention all chefs...

**Do you have a favourite recipe or just love cooking?
We would love to hear from you!**

We are looking for the future Jamie Oliver's and Mary Berry's who want to share their passion for cooking with our amazing supporters.

Simply film your cooking tutorial, making sure to show off equipment and ingredients and send it in to Connie Foy or Kate Hall.

Try to keep it under 30 minutes, and make sure you have fun...
it's time to put on that apron and chef's hat and get filming

For further information or support, please contact Connie Foy or Kate Hall at
Connie.Foy@blindveterans.org.uk or **Kate.Hall@blindveterans.org.uk**





Adapting Alexa

In our second part of our Alexa series, the Alexa Team shows you how to improve your skills and learn more helpful tips

Hello and welcome to the second edition of our new feature on helping you to get the most out of your Amazon Alexa smart speaker. If you've already got one set-up or are just interested in what it can do and what all the fuss is about, then this is the place for you.

We are keen to hear from our

Members, about their experiences using one, what you find great, what you don't find so great and share those here with other veterans, in our "Alexa Backchat" section.

Some of our Members who are fully blind, regularly use them every day, both for daily living tasks, communication and just for fun!

Every month we will bring you a few things you may want to try and explain how some of the slightly trickier skills work.

For those of you who missed last month's article and you're not sure what we are going on about, an Alexa device or Amazon Echo, as they are also known, is a standalone speaker that will interpret normal everyday speech into an intelligent response or action. So for instance, if you say "Alexa, what's the time", the device will tell you the time! Obvious, but it is actually very clever, as it is making sense of normal human speech.

This means that for a blind or partially sighted person, there are no on-screen buttons to fiddle around with and no visual presentation of the information to deal with. Having said all of that, it is not perfect and will not always understand what you have said, occasionally misinterpret you, or is just not able to give you the information you want. But it is getting better all the time.

In this regular section, we will help you get the most out of Alexa and bring you tips and tricks that are not only interesting, possibly amusing, but practical as well. Some of the contributors to this feature are also blind or partially sighted, and we bring

you their own experiences and practical applications.

Alexa Skills, Tips and Tricks

Note, most of the following list is free, but there are some paid services such as personalised music and audio books, that incur a charge, but only if you agree.

If you're new to Alexa then try some of these commands and questions, to get used to your device -

"Alexa, what time is it"

"Alexa, what's the time in New York"

"Alexa, what's the weather like today".
"Alexa, what's the temperature"

"Alexa, is it going to rain today"

"Alexa, what's the weather like on Saturday"

"Alexa, set a timer for 10 minutes"

Just ask how long you want it set for. You can also set multiple timers and even give them a name, for example,

"Alexa, Set a potato timer for 20 minutes"

"Alexa, how old is Clint Eastwood"

"Alexa, what's on TV tonight"



“Alexa, what are the symptoms of COVID-19”

“Alexa, tell me a joke about cats”

Playing radio stations and music through your Alexa

You can play a wide range of music for free through your Alexa, but you cannot play specific songs or artists, you can only play a selection of songs of a similar genre to the artist you would like to listen to.

So for instance, if you asked to play songs by Andy Williams, it would play some songs by him, but also by artists in the same genre. You will also occasionally hear adverts, but not as often as a commercial radio station.

If you want access to over 50 million songs you will need to have subscribed to a music streaming service, such as Amazon, Spotify, Apple or Deezer. When you ask her for some music, she may suggest signing up to the Amazon Unlimited music service. For one Alexa device, this will be £3.99 per month, for more than one device, it is £7.99. If you do not wish to sign-up, just say “no” when she asks you. You will have needed to register a debit or credit card on your Amazon account, before agreeing to it.

The majority of radio stations around

the world, now stream their live broadcasts over the Internet and this means that Alexa can play them, just say;

“Alexa, play ABC radio in Sydney”, or any other station you can think of.

The BBC have developed a skill which not only allows you access to all its live radio broadcasts, but also access to all its old audio archives. To access these, do the following;

- 01** Say “Alexa, open BBC sounds”.
- 02** Once she has told you what you can do, ask for the program you want, for instance “The Goon show”.
- 03** To go to another episode, say “Alexa, previous episode” or “Alexa, next episode”.
- 04** General commands such as “Alexa, stop or pause” will stop the program and “Alexa play or resume” will restart it.
- 05** You can pretty much find any old archived audio program by asking for it by name. Perhaps you can remember shows like Hancock’s Half Hour, The Goon Show, Round the Horne, Give Me A Clue, Just A Minute, The Archers and Desert Island Discs and so many more!

Once you have opened BBC Sounds for the first time, usually just asking for any live BBC station, will play it, without first

having to open BBC Sounds again.

Alexa Backchat

Following the first article in last month’s Review, we heard from one of our members already using an Alexa, John Hortop, who said,

“You won’t be surprised to hear that I usually find technical articles the most interesting part of the Review. I already get masses of assistance from Alexa, but read your article with interest. The Blind Veterans UK Review skill, attracted my attention as it is something I’ve always meant to do. However, this was not a success”.

John says that the command “Alexa, enable Blind Veterans UK Review” did not work correctly and offered some other Blind Veterans UK skills.

Once he was able to successfully enable the Review skill, he found that there wasn’t any content.

John is also concerned that some Members may be put off by having to use the Alexa smart app to enable certain skills, if they cannot be enabled or activated just by using your voice.

Alexa Team responds;

Thank you John, for your helpful comments. We are aware that the charity has a number of skills on Alexa.

Our new “Alexa Task Force team” has recognised that they currently may be confusing to Members and we have now set out plans to review all of the existing skills and remove some of them for the time being.

This will allow us to take a more measured approach and start building the skills that our veterans want from the ground up, but in the meantime, we need to “clear out the garage” and see what we have, what we want to keep and what can we get rid of.

So over the next few weeks, we will rationalise the skills available on Alexa and make it easier to both enable and use those skills, hopefully just by using your voice and avoiding unnecessary trips to the Alexa app.

If you have any questions or suggestions yourself or would like to know more about them, please contact the Alexa Team by email alexa.chat@blindveterans.org.uk

You can also call the Members Support Helpline on **01273 391 447**, who will be happy to help with any issues you may have.

Please also remember to send your own tips, tricks, ideas, uses and any other comments using the above contact details. 🗣️

Don't be a scam victim!

Staying safe during lockdown isn't just about being healthy, make sure you don't fall prey to a lockdown-related scam

Scammers will use any opportunity to take advantage of the vulnerable and this has included the Covid-19 pandemic.

Please be aware there are reports that fraudsters are exploiting the new Test and Trace system in order to get people to click on links or pass over information they shouldn't. It is important you make sure you are in contact with the right people. Here are some tips:

Genuine contact tracers will initially contact you by sending a text message from 'NHS' or calling you from **0300 013 5000**.

They will ask:

- That you sign into the NHS test and trace contact-tracing website, **contact-tracing.phe.gov.uk**
- Your full name and date of birth to confirm your identity, and postcode to offer support while self-isolating
- About any coronavirus symptoms you have been experiencing
- You to provide the name, telephone number and/or email address of anyone you have had close contact

with in the two days prior to your symptoms starting

- If anyone you have been in contact with is under 18 or lives outside of the country

They will never:

- Try and get you to dial a premium rate (09 or 087) number to speak to them
- Ask you to make any form of payment or purchase a product or any kind
- Try and get you to download any software to your PC or ask you to hand over control of your PC, smartphone or tablet
- Ask you to access any website other than **contact-tracing.phe.gov.uk**
- Ask any details about your bank account
- Ask you for any passwords or a Personal Information Number (PIN)
- Try and get you to set up any passwords or PIN over the phone
- Ask for your social media identities or login details, or those of your contacts
- Offer any medical advice on the treatment of any potential coronavirus symptoms 🦠

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.

The Booking Office for the Brighton Centre: To book accommodation at the Brighton Centre please telephone **01273 391 500**. If you have care needs please first contact your Team Leader or Community Support Worker (CSW).

The Booking Office for the Llandudno Centre: To book accommodation at the Llandudno Centre please telephone **01492 868 700** for bookings and ask for the Booking office. If you have care needs please first contact your Team Leader or CSW.

Review Editor: You can telephone Chris Gilson on **020 7616 8367** or email him at **revieweditor@blindveterans.org.uk**



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A different format?

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Victory Over Blindness

24ct Gold coin

Blind Veterans UK has struck this beautiful commemorative coin to capture the driving ethos behind our organisation - 'Victory over Blindness'.

Made in the UK and designed by the former Chief Artist at the Royal Mint, these coins are plated in 24 Ct gold and feature 'Victory over Blindness' in Braille. Each one sold goes directly to supporting our crucial work, which is never more vital than at this time.



- Struck in the UK and plated in 24ct gold
- Each coin includes a Braille inscription reading 'Victory over Blindness'
- Packaged in a beautifully designed commemorative display booklet and sleeve

 Made in the UK

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Rebuilding
lives after
sight loss

