

April 2012

Review

Blind Veterans UK | St Dunstan's since 1915



Life beyond sight loss



From the Chairman.

Your message from Major General Andrew Keeling, CB, CBE, RM.

It gives me great pleasure to announce some very exciting news for the members, staff and volunteers at our Llandudno centre. After prolonged and protracted discussions with the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), Llandudno Town Council and the Conwy District Local Authority, permission has finally been granted to allow Blind Veterans UK to introduce our very own flock of sheep to graze the lawns and surrounding areas at our Llandudno estate.

The flock, which will contain a mixture of Black Welsh Mountain Sheep (Defaid Mynydd Duon) and a hardy breed of Portuguese Churro Sheep (Faro Lopil) have been especially selected as they adapt very well to our climate. These sheep are renowned to be a very resilient breed that will require the minimum of husbandry and more importantly, they are bred to withstand extreme weather conditions so our wet Welsh weather won't bother them in the slightest!

We expect that the introduction of this flock will have a very positive impact on our annual grass cutting costs and also we hope that by allowing this herd to graze at the centre this will bring an aesthetic rural value to the estate.

We envisage that none of the by-products of our flock will go to waste as we intend to introduce in the Financial Year 2014/15 a back-up solid fuel heating system for the main building where waste from the flock will be used to heat the boiler. Any wool produced will be sent to the craft workshop and discussions are currently underway with a local farmers consortium regarding the marketing of milk and cheese produce from the herd.

If anyone is interested in assisting with this project in whatever capacity, please contact Paul Sheard at our centre in Brighton, or Baary Porter at the London office at the earliest opportunity.

Andy

1st April 2012

On the cover: Good times at the Newcastle launch.

Colin Williamson introduces Jackie Slesenger, the Sheriff of Newcastle, to members at the Newcastle launch.



Review

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Contact: Catherine Goodier T 020 7616 8367 revieweditor@blindveterans.org.uk

Blind Veterans UK Calendar

April		June	
Widows Week	8th - 14th	Archery Week	1st - 11th
Ex PoW Reunion	13th - 15th	Music Week, Llandudno	3rd - 9th
Golf	14th - 15th	Writer's Forum	16th - 17th
Writer's Forum	21st	Golf	16th - 17th
Masonic Weekend	27th - 29th	Ladies Week	17th - 23rd
May		July	
Golf	12th to 13th	Gardening Week	1st - 7th
Snowdonia Weekend	14th to 16th	Writer's Weekend	5th - 7th
Writer's Forum	19th	History Week	15th - 21st
		Golf	18th - 19th
		Computer Club	29th - 31st

Patron: Her Majesty the Queen

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Noticeboard

Dates for your diary and useful information.

Floodlit Military Music Spectacular

The Household Division Beating Retreat will take place on Horse Guards Parade on 13th and 14th June 2012. Doors open at 7.30pm and the show starts at 9pm. The programme will feature:

The Massed Bands of the Footguards - The Household Cavalry Mounted Band
The Massed Pipes and Drums of the Household Division
The Massed Corps of Drums of the Household Division
The Royal Omani Mounted Band and Pipes and Drums
Wynne Evans from Phantom of the Opera 25th Anniversary
Kings Troops Royal Horse Artillery
The Muskets of the Moscow Militia
Fireworks Finale 1812 Overture

If you would like to book tickets please telephone Ticketmaster on 0844 844 2435, or go to website: www.ticketmaster.co.uk



Picture: The Band play at the Floodlit Music Spectacular in 2011.

Pensions Supplement

Details of the War Pension rates that will come into effect on 9th April 2012 can be obtained from Inderpal Kallah, Medical Clinic and Reunions Co-ordinator. You can contact him at Blind Veterans UK Headquarters on telephone: 020 7723 5021, or email: inderpal.kallah@blindveterans.org.uk - stating if you prefer print, Braille, tape, or electronic formats.

Trooping the Colour - Ticket Draw.

The Queen's Birthday Parade will be held on Saturday 16th June 2012 on Horse Guards Parade. The Colour will be trooped by 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards in the presence of Her Majesty.

As Blind Veterans UK has been allocated tickets members wishing to attend should send their name and address to Barbara Sweeney, Blind Veterans UK, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD by 15th April.

A draw will determine the final allocation of tickets, although tickets will be limited to two per applicant. Those who are selected from the draw will be responsible for arranging and paying for their travel and accommodation.

Learn to Kayak with the Llandudno team from 29th June to 2nd July 2012

This is a great opportunity for five members to learn to kayak. You will need to arrive at the Llandudno centre on 29th June, as the kayaking will take place on 30th June & 1st July, with departure from Llandudno on 2nd July. The aim of this course is to give you a safe and enjoyable introduction to paddlesport, with the emphasis on good coaching to develop your confidence and ability.

Plas Menai National Watersports Centre will run the two day course from a magnificent location on the Menai Strait, overlooking Anglesey. You will start with pool sessions to quickly gain confidence and learn the basic skills before you head off to a variety of locations to develop boat handling skills. There are only five places, which will be given on a first come first served basis.

To take part in this event please ring Paula Sartain or Nikki Green, Sports and Recreation Instructors at the Llandudno Centre on 01492 868740, or 01492 868741.

Kit and Clothing

Plas Menai will provide you with all of the necessary kit, equipment and personal protective clothing; including wetsuits, buoyancy aids, cagoules, helmets and spray decks. However you are very welcome to bring your own if you wish to do so.

Fishing with the Llandudno team from 9th-12th July 2012

The Llandudno Sports and Recreation team are offering a fantastic fishing opportunity to six members. You will need to arrive at the Llandudno centre on 9th July, as fishing will take place on 10th and 11th July, and you will depart from the Llandudno centre on 12th July. The two day fishing programme will comprise one day of sea fishing and pier or beach casting, with a possible visit to a trout farm. All of the necessary kit, rods and bait can be provided. Or if you prefer you can bring your own.

There are six places for members so to take part please phone Nikki Green, or Paula Sartain at Llandudno on 01492 868740, or 01492 868741. Once again bookings are on a first to phone, first booked in basis so don't miss out. You will need to pay for your accommodation during your stay at the Llandudno centre.

Calling all former picture framers!

Have you ever attended picture framing training and been issued with a kit that you no longer use? If the answer is yes, then we need your help! We are running very short of the pillar mitre clamps, which are blue in colour, and we are asking that if you have any at home to please get in touch. Sadly we can no longer get hold of these clamps, which means the number of kits we can make for budding picture framers is limited to how many clamps we have in stock, or can get hold of.

If you think you can help, please get in touch with either Esther Freeman, Art & Craft Manager on 01273 391464 or the Brighton Art & Craft team on 01273 391466.

First World War members

If your relative was a member, then St Dunstaner, blinded in World War I, we would be grateful if you could please get in touch with the Review. Particularly if they kept a diary, wrote their memoirs, or if you have any audio recordings. Please contact Catherine Goodier on 020 7616 8367 or email:

catherine.goodier@blindveterans.org.uk

It would be greatly appreciated if the daughter of Henry Perrett could get in touch, as we would dearly love to speak with you.

Thank you to the London International Orchestra.

Our most grateful thanks go to Sarah Aaronson OBE, Chair and Artistic Director of the London International Orchestra for hosting their annual fundraising concert in aid of Blind Veterans UK. This concert took place on Saturday 25th February at the wonderful Cadogan Hall, Conducted by Paul Wynne Griffiths, by kind permission of The Royal Opera House. The Concert was introduced by The Rt Hon the Baroness Boothroyd, OM, PC who also introduced our very own Ray Hazan, OBE who talked passionately about the Charity. Other members in attendance included Colin Williamson and Constance Halford Thompson. The evening was incredibly well received by everyone. Final figures have yet to be confirmed, but the evening has so far raised in excess of £3,000 for Blind Veterans UK.

Accommodation Charges at our Centres

As with previous years, part of our ongoing dedication of responding to and meeting our members needs, calls for the review of our accommodation charges at our Centres. This review ensures we are still achieving viable operating costs for the organisation, whilst allowing us to continually strive to provide and develop innovative services. It must be remembered that our accommodation charges are quite heavily subsidised by the Charity as the charges actually include the room, meals and transport costs rolled into one cost. Prices will be increased from 1st April 2012. Full Details will be printed in the May Review.

Did you read Irving Nuttal's article in the March Review?

If you did read Irving Nuttal's article in the March edition of the Review and you served in Tripoli, perhaps you can answer some questions. Do you know what happened to the 500lb bomb? And did you swim into the underwater cave by the Officers beach? If so please contact Catherine Goodier at:

catherine.goodier@blindveterans.org.uk or telephone: 020 7616 8367.

The National Service RAF Association Reunion and Parade

The annual National Service (RAF) Association Reunion and Parade will take place on Saturday 20th May 2012 at the RAF Museum, Cosford. It will also mark the 10th Anniversary of the formation of the Association. If you would like to take part please email David Forsyth, NS(RAF)A Committee Member at:

davidforsyth@btinternet.com Or telephone: 020 8505 2393.

Letters to the Editor

As we welcome your letters please do send them in to us. They could be in response to an article in the Review, or something you feel to be of interest.

You can send letters by post to Blind Veterans UK Review, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD. Please mark them Letter to the Editor. Or if you prefer please send an email to the Review at email: revieweditor@blindveterans.org.uk

Dear Editor

Although I am a recent member to St Dunstan's I have been aware of the charity since my schoolboy days when I would volunteer at one of the Centres.

Whilst I understand there may be a need for the name change, I feel that to lose the name St Dunstan's altogether would be very sad. With this in mind I would like to suggest that one of the lounges at St Dunstan's Ovingdean be renamed the St Dunstan's Lounge.

Yours faithfully

EGA Smith

Dear Editor

I have read on several occasions that some members are upset about the dropping of the name, St Dunstan's.

Have you thought about calling all the centres, ie Ovingdean, Llandudno and Sheffield, Blind Veterans UK St Dunstan's House?

This way the original name will never die.

Regards

Lyn Powell

Dear EGA Smith and Lyn Powell

Thank you for your suggestions of naming centres, or parts of our centres St Dunstan's. We may consider this as one of the many ways in which we can continue to honour our history and heritage.

This is very important to us and as you may be aware we are already using 'St Dunstan's since 1915' in most of our communication.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Jones
Director of Fundraising and Communications

Dear Editor

The fateful day has arrived and we are no longer known as members of St Dunstan's, but of Blind Veterans UK. It would appear that we members are the only ones who know of this change. If this is the case, why was it necessary?

I foolishly was expecting a fanfare announcing to the general public the change of name with an appeal to support us members. Without the publicity little will be known of the organisation.

The announcement to the general public was via the local media. My fellow, dare I say it St Dunstaners, from Sleaford thought it was rather a damp squib.

Yours faithfully

Ken Barrett MBE

Dear Ken Barrett MBE

We are proud to say that the launch of Blind Veterans UK was supported by the military and attracted wide media interest. Royal Marines abseiled down the building in Brighton to reveal the new sign. A Royal Air Force helicopter delivered the new flag to our centre in Llandudno. An Army bomb disposal robot unveiled the new logo in our Sheffield centre.

This resulted in coverage on TV and radio, in the press and on the internet with a total opportunity to reach more than 24 million people. In addition to the media publicity we have indeed made appeals to hundreds of thousands of potential supporters via various channels. In order to ensure we spend our money most effectively this is not always visible to the entire general public, because we tailor our communication to the people who are most likely to support charities like us.

The support and positive feedback that we received through the media during the launch has provided us with the platform we needed to now start to build wider awareness and engagement with new groups of people.

Just as Rome wasn't built in a day we now start to widen our appeal to become better known, attract more supporters and get more vision impaired ex-Service men and women to join the charity.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Jones
Director of Fundraising and Communications

Dear Editor

Blind Veterans UK

I write again to emphasise the sorrow I feel over the choice of the new name. Yes Veteran I am. I served in the WRNS from 1940 to 1955, and was in the very first draft of 20 WRNS to serve overseas in Singapore, until shortly before the Island fell to the Japanese.

I refer back to the name - BLIND I am not - yet this word is prominent on the logo. On no account do I want people to think I am blind, although I only retain some peripheral vision.

Once a St Dunstaner, always a St Dunstaner, and presumably we can still wear our badge and refer to ourselves by that name, but as members of BVUK? Member is the key word, yet drop the letters and it will become Blind Vets! Or just member on its own could refer to, say, The Macular Disease Society. Or the West Sussex Institute for the Blind (4 Sight), or any other Society of which I am a member.

Furthermore I believe the prominent word BLIND on the new logo might well discourage ex Service personnel - should they become visually impaired - from seeking help and advice when they most need it.

I understand there are some Commonwealth St Dunstaners - they cannot be expected to wear the new logo displaying UK and the Union Jack.

Finally I think it's truly regrettable that the new name has been introduced in this year. In a few years we could have celebrated its issue with the centenary of our founder, Sir Arthur Pearson's name and his first blind veterans, later to become St Dunstaners.

I do not intend to wear the new badge unless, or until, I become BLIND.

Yours faithfully

Mrs M E Rodgers

Dear Mrs M E Rodgers

Thank you for sharing your thoughts on the new name and badge.

You are more than welcome to wear the old St Dunstan's badge should you wish to do so. We hope you will also wear the Blind Veterans UK badge, but this is entirely your decision. You will still be a member of Blind Veterans UK.

In response to your concern around the word 'blind' on the badge, this was a difficult decision but all our research indicated that 'blind' was the most understood combined term for various degrees of vision impairment. Only a very small percentage of people who are registered blind are totally without any vision. We recognise this and part of our responsibility along with other similar organisations is to ensure the public better understands what it means to be 'blind' as well as what it means to be a 'veteran'.

Yours sincerely
Andrew Jones
Director of Fundraising and Communications

Dear Editor

On Sunday 26th February I attended a Service at Bolton Parish Church to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. I wore my Blind Veterans UK members badge on the opposite lapel to my St Dunstan's badge.

The Blind Veterans UK badge received many very positive comments, with people saying they had always wondered what St Dunstan's was, and now they need wonder no more, as the new time make its clear.

Yours faithfully

Arthur Carter

Dear Editor,

There has been enough comment on the change of name and as a fairly new member, just over a year, I will leave that discussion to others.

The reason for my mail is the seemingly lack of thought that has gone into the design of the new badge. The organisation is specifically for partially sighted or blind personnel, my category, yet the badge has no embossing on it which meant that when I received mine it was an oblong piece of metal with a sharp pin on one side which could have been attached to my coat in any direction – not a satisfactory outcome I would suggest.

Is it possible in future to have the badge embossed to help the members?

Yours respectively

Paul Palmer

Dear Mr Palmer

I am sorry to hear you are having difficulties with your new badge. It was carefully designed with the same long easy to use fastening as the original St Dunstan's badge, with the pin always pointing downwards. Other types of attachment such as magnetic and spring clips were considered but ultimately nothing seems to beat the good old safety pin for reliability.

Turning to the style, the new logo is boldly and clearly depicted on a simple, modern rectangular base, edged with gold. We hope members will wear this distinctive badge with pride.

Yours respectfully

David Habershon
Head of Membership and Reunions

Another great year for the slopes

Led by Gerry Jones the ski group have been hitting the slopes for years and showing everyone that despite their vision impairment, or blindness, they are a force to be reckoned with. Here we bring you reports of their ski holiday in Canazei, Canazei Val Fasse, Italy, from 21st to 28th January 2012.

One new member of the ski group was Ken Facal, a 25 year old soldier serving with the 1st Battalion Royal Anglian Regiment. Speaking of his ski adventure, Ken said: "I started off on the nursery slopes and it was great when I was teamed with Shep as my sighted guide. Each day he set me targets to achieve and I was determined to meet them. He didn't rush me as he was concerned about my injuries and took them into consideration. After I was wounded by an IED explosion in Afghan in 2010 I had to relearn to walk. I'm a very determined person and I did it despite having sustained 40% muscle loss to my legs. At first Shep was worried about the fact I would be standing for long periods of time, but once he figured out how long I could ski for we were fine. I didn't let my injuries become an issue, and with Shep's guidance everything came together and I was soon skiing with confidence. One day we set out to do two runs, but it was going so well that we ended up doing eight. It was a fantastic holiday and I'm now a ski convert. Without Shep's patience, guidance and great sense of humour I wouldn't have learnt to ski so quickly. Thank you Shep, you are my Jedi Ski Master!"



Picture: Mick (Shep) Shepley, left, and Ken Facal right prepare to set off.

Mick (Shep) Shepley said: "I was fortunate enough to become involved as a ski guide 17 years ago, whilst still serving in the Army and I still continue to support the annual ski trip. On my first trip we numbered just 10, now the ski party numbers nearly 50. This year I acted as a guide for Ken Facal. Skiing is always a challenge to learn, but despite the fact Ken is still undergoing reconstructive surgery to his legs following injury in an IED explosion he made great progress. Within the week Ken was off the nursery slopes and taking on much more challenging runs. I'm not sure who got more out of the week, me or Ken. His positive outlook, determination, and strength of character, are all values we recognise. It was a privilege to spend the week with Ken and all the other members, their optimism and great spirit never fail to inspire me."



Picture: And they're off, as Ken, front, and Shep, rear, head down the slopes.



Picture: Time out at the end of a great day.

Chris Francis, another first time member to hit the slopes with with the ski group, writes of his experience.

Whilst using the gym at the centre in Brighton I was approached by Louise Timms, the Sports and Recreation Manager, who let slip there may be a place for me on the ski trip. Inspired by the prospect of fresh mountain air and exercise, and tactically ignoring the pathetic state of my bank balance, (or lack of it!), I duly committed and found myself in the company of members, St Dunstaners. Some of whom, like me, were armed with rather more confidence than competence!

Being of relatively sound mind if not body, I decided to return to Brighton for some pre trip physical preparation. I should have known from the constant amused shaking of heads by the gym staff, and their mutterings of: 'That will never be enough', that I was in for a physical challenge. But hey I had skied before! On reflection a mere quarter of a century ago and blessed with an altogether different physicality.

I shall not dwell on the travel to Italy, the superb welcome, home cooked food and general excellence of the hotel, but will endeavour to concentrate on the matter in hand, the skiing! In the true style of an ex RAF PTI, and ignoring the obvious probability of pain to come, I found myself fitted out with a pair of slippery planks. My sighted guide was Captain Rebecca (Poggy) Pogson-Hughes-Emanuel, REME. Not only was I treated to the company of a lovely person, but she was a gifted coach and fiercely protective guide. Poggy created a military no go area within a five metre radius and anyone foolish enough to attempt to enter that zone was soon aware of the enormity of their mistake. One snow boarder in particular was treated to a lesson that his bruises will doubtless not let him forget. Entirely justifiably I hasten to add!

Despite my protestations, Poggy very wisely insisted that I begin my week on gentle slopes and practise technique, or what passed for technique. After the first day, begrudgingly, and not without the odd painful grimace, I conceded to the wisdom of one who knew better, and accepted a gentle but very progressive learning curve. With the application of patience, empathy and inspirational coaching, Poggy dragged me ever higher up the mountains and ever faster down them! Having lost my sight a little over two years ago, the whole experience was a reaffirmation of self. It reminded me that I can achieve

a lot, albeit with a little help. I loved the sense of freedom, movement and sheer exuberance of spirit that skiing, the mountains and the entire experience provided.

There are many to who thanks are owed, suffice to say you know who you are and you have my thanks in spades. Would I once again test myself on slippery planks? Suffer the need for copious hot baths and the odd ice pack? You bet I will! See you all in Canazei next year!



Picture: Chris and Poggy get ready to launch from the top of the slopes.

Another first time member to join the ski group was Brian Head from Oxfordshire. Brian writes. I did cross country skiing 35 years ago, but this was my first attempt at downhill. The first shock came as soon as I put the boots on. My instructor Robin Cockershaw, who is a Captain in the Air Corps, only stepped in two weeks prior to the trip. He said he didn't have any coaching experience and was told not to worry, as he would be paired with someone who had some sight and was already a proficient skier. When he told me he laughed kindly and said 'And I got you, totally blind and never been on skies.' From that first morning we did parallels and snow ploughs, by the second day I was doing turns and by the third day making full S shapes across the traverse. He was very pleased with me and as long as he was pleased with me I was pleased.

My heart says I should go next year, as it was the most exhilarating experience of my life and I can now ski downhill! But my head reminds me I will be 79!



Picture: Brian shares a joke on the slopes.

We finish with a tribute from Carl Williams, Mark Brewin and Jamie Weller to Gerry Jones, who has retired from organising the annual ski trip.

Gracias, Merci, Grazie, Danke, Thank You.

Approximately 25 years ago in a smoke filled bar, there were two gents chewing the fat. One an ex-para, the other an ex-Scout helicopter pilot. After a few jars and pushing more cigar smoke into the room, the talk turned to the good old days and the things that they most missed. The para said how he missed the rush of the wind in his ears when he jumped from a plane. The pilot replied, 'Yup know what you mean. I miss the buzz of turning those G's when you throw the chopper into a tight turn.' Sitting at the next table was a Yuppie, talking about a ski trip they had recently returned from. The pilot turned to the para and said: 'Charlie, do you fancy giving that a go!?' The Para responded: 'G, what a cracking idea, how will we manage to pull that gig off?' 'Charles my boy, just you leave that to me!' And that is how the ski club was born.

From the days of inception Gerry 'G' Jones, nurtured and built the club from a membership of two members, then St Dunstaners, himself and Charlie Daley. Still supported by the original guides he has nurtured it to the 40 plus strong club that it is today. It's an admin nightmare to sort out all the logistics involved, but G has built up an independent club where's there's a strong camaraderie that has naturally evolved.

The club goes from strength to strength and thanks to Gerry's tireless efforts everyone who has attended the annual ski fest, has returned with a huge smile and a sense of achievement. Now after 25 years long service to the club, G has decided to hang up his ski admin boots, and become a ski punter instead.

We, who have attended the ski week over the years, would like to say a big thank you to Gerry for all his efforts over the years. As the new organisers of the ski club we hope we can take his legacy and build the club further to give new Blind Veterans UK members the same sense of achievement and thrill on an annual basis as Gerry did for us.

In recognition of his loyalty and unconditional love to the sport of blind skiing Gerry was presented with a priceless gift. It was an immaculate tactile 'avatar' copy, of the silhouette pair of skiers from the ski club, a T-shirt back print, designed & engineered from nuts & bolts. In true Army style it was crafted by the skilled hands of a young REME welder. More relevant it was mounted on a recovered free power turbine from a nimbus engine fitted to a Scout AH Mk1 helicopter. If you would like to see it I'm afraid you will have to visit St Agnes in Cornwall and buy Gerry a retirement beer! Salute, to Gerry and his long serving trusted ski guide Martin Blank.

If you would like to register your interest for Italy Ski Trip 2013 please use the new general mailbox: BVUK_SkiClub@Yahoo.co.uk

Warm Regards,..... Carl, Mark and Jamie.

Photos by Paul (Jacko) Jackson.



Picture: Carl Williams, left, with guide Stewart Graham. Photo by Poggy.

An unforgettable day with Land Rover Experience

Driving downhill through three feet of icy water, at a 75 degree angle might not be everyone's idea of fun. But on Saturday 11th February it was exactly what Terry Bullingham, Colin Williamson, Steve (Sparky) Sparkes, Billy Black, Roger Williams, Ken Facal, Rob Long, Shaun Stocker and John Robinson signed up for. The group were guests of Land Rover Experience, Eastnor, and Graham Raphael of Motorsport Endeavour. After a hearty breakfast they were set loose for the day to drive through the 5,000 acres of woodland in a top of the range Land Rover Evogue or Defender.

Under the guidance of one of Land Rover's top drivers they took their vehicles along winding tracks, where one mistake could take them skidding downhill into the fields below. There were no accidents and they showed their great driving skills.

We would like to thank Graham Raphael of Motorsport Endeavour. And for Land Rover Mark Frost, Paulo Cattini, Dave Gillard, Derek Moore, John Domalik, Nick Storey, Sarah Batten, Steph Turner, Derek Swan, Paul Tredwell Chris Bartlett, Mike Gould. Thanks go to Stephanie Hardy for co-ordinating the day and Faye Brown for their superb help and to Kall Kwik of Chiswick.



Picture: Getting ready to head out in the Land Rovers: From left to right for Blind Veterans UK: George de la Billière, John Robinson, Rob Long, Billy Black, Steve (Sparky) Sparkes, Colin Williamson - Centre Graham Raphael in tweed - and to his left Shaun Stocker. Far right: Ken Facal, Roger Williams, Terry Bullingham, Paul Burrows and General Sir Peter de la Billière KCB, KBE, DSO, MC,DL.

Thank you Miss Alice, by Penny Growcoat, Llandudno Fundraiser

In the March edition of the Review we brought you an article about Little Ruby, who as a six year old child in 1918 raised 18/3 for the veterans at St Dunstan's. Some 94 years later we still receive money from young supporters. One is Nicol Thompson, aka Miss Alice, who in September 2011 presented Chief Executive, Robert Leader and Centre Manager Mark Lovatt, with her pocket money at the Llandudno Centre.

A 'Miss Alice' competition takes place annually in Llandudno when one young girl is chosen as Alice, the main character from Lewis Carroll's timeless classic, Alice in Wonderland. I first met this year's Miss Alice with her dad at a Sandcastle competition in the summer. I told them about Blind Veterans UK, then St Dunstan's and they said they wanted to support us. Miss Alice and her parents Debbie and Colin came to a reception at the centre in September, where she so generously presented Robert Leader with her pocket money, which was very touching. She continues to support Blind Veterans UK, as do her parents Debbie and Colin, who run a local guest house. They attended the recent Burns Night supper where Billy Baxter presided and showed his superb acting skills when he addressed the haggis.



Picture: Miss Alice, centre, presents her pocket money to Robert Leader and Centre Manager Mark Lovatt.

Harry Beevers 10 questions on the subject of... wives

1. Since the year 1890, how many wives may a Mormon have?
2. What is the Christian name of Barney Rubble's wife in the television series The Flintstones?
3. Which actor, and original member of the Goon Show, who died in 1980, married Anne Hayes, Britt Ekland, Miranda Quarry and Lynne Frederick?
4. Associated with the city of Coventry, who was the wife of Leofric, Earl of Mercia?
5. Flo was the long-suffering wife of which Daily Mirror cartoon character created by Reg Smythe?
6. Dora Spenslow and Agnes Wickfield were the two wives of which Charles Dickens's character?
7. Raquel, Cassandra and Marlene were the wives of three of the principal characters in which popular television comedy series?
8. Frances Nisbett was the wife of which 18/19th century famous Englishman?
9. In 1950, the BBC announcer Jean Metcalfe married which television presenter whom she met when she introduced "Two Way Family Favourites" in London while he was presenting the programme from Hamburg?
10. How many of King Henry VIII's six wives were English?

Ray Hazan OBE

Ray Hazan, President of Blind Veterans UK, writes of the day he became an Officer of The Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

On Wednesday 22nd February I attended my investiture at Buckingham Palace. I was accompanied by my wife, Roberta and sons Jonathan and Giles. After an initial wait, I was standing in line at the entrance to the Ballroom, waiting to be called forward by the Lord Chamberlain. I was escorted by Mark a Palace official. Suddenly I found myself before our Patron, Her Majesty The Queen. I was able to tell her Majesty about our name change the day before and then offered congratulations on behalf of all blind veterans on the occasion of this, her special year.

It was all over in a blink of an eye - a once in a lifetime experience of pomp, ceremony and circumstance, but which will be repeated many times in my memory.



Ray Hazan receives his OBE from Her Majesty The Queen at Buckingham Palace.

Archery Week, 4th - 10th February by Peter Hammond

On Saturday 4th February, 15 archers gathered at Brighton for our first Archery Week of 2012. They were: Marjorie Scott, Eileen Thompson, Carole Sharpe, Leslie George, Peter Price, Kelvin Platt, Michael Forman, Bert Nelson, Paul Palmer, David Poyner, Clive Jones, Doug Rogers, John Bower, Norman Perry and Dennis Cooke. There were two other members of the club present who would not be taking part in any of the competitions, myself and Nigel Whiteley. Unfortunately Patrick Sidnell could not join us this time as he is not very well and awaiting hospital appointments. Get well soon Pat.

Sunday was competition day when the round shot was a Portsmouth. The first match was against Hellingly; unfortunately they could only send two archers because of the snow. We won the match, well done Peter Price and Doug Rogers. In the afternoon it was a three way match with St Dunstan's shooting against teams from Havant/Hayling and Southampton University. Havant/Hayling won the match, Southampton University came second and St Dunstan's third. Well done Havant/Hayling.

Monday's match was a Bray 1. We were joined today by Hazel Hockley from Australia, as she and her brother are trying to start a VI Archery club there. We have been helping them with plans for foot markers etc and Hazel came over to see visually impaired archers at work. Clive Jones came 3rd, Doug Rogers 2nd, and 1st place went to John Bower.

On Monday afternoon we held our AGM when we were joined by our Club President, Major (rtd) Wendy Le Gassick who had travelled down from Yorkshire in the snow, a good job she came by train. During the AGM the elections for the committee were held. As I had to retire due to ill health, Peter Price was voted in by all members of the club.

The club committee is formed of: Chairman, David Poyner, Vice Chairman, Clive Jones. John Bower, Marjorie Scott, Peter Price and Keith Lanchester-Harding.

The round on Tuesday was a Portsmouth. Phil Varden, our Records Officer, announced the results as: Leslie George 3rd, Doug Rogers 2nd, and the winner Peter Price.

The round on Wednesday was a Worcester, the trophy for this round is the Laurie Austin Cup. Kelvin Platt finished in 3rd place, Paul Palmer in 2nd, and the winner of the trophy for this year was Peter Price. In the afternoon we were joined by eight members of The Worshipful Company of Fletchers. They spoke with the archers and spent the afternoon watching the competition.

Thursday's round was a FITA 25, which was shot against a local team from Ditchling. As there were so many archers taking part, half of our archers shot in the afternoon. The results from the afternoon session were: In 3rd place Clive Jones, 2nd place Bert Nelson and Michael Foreman was the winner. In the evening the other half of the club shot against Ditchling, but only four dozen arrows were shot as it had started snowing and people wanted to get home. We won the match and the winning team comprised Marjorie Scott, Norman Perry, Kelvin Platt and Peter Price. Well done one and all.

Friday's shoot was a FITA 18 for the Longhill Trophy. During the shoot, Clive had a bit of a shock as one of his arrows hit the pin, which holds the target to the boss and rebounded to within two meters of him. Third place went to Kelvin Platt, second to Bert Nelson, and the winner of the Longhill Trophy was Peter Price.

We held our club presentation on Friday evening in the Blue Room at the Brighton centre. Rose Nelson was our Lady P for the evening and she presented the medals and trophies for the week. In addition she presented the GNAS medal to the archer who had most reduced their handicap over the year. I was awarded it this year. She then awarded The Gaygan trophy to the archer who won the most golds over the year; it went to Keith Lanchester-Harding. The final award was a Gaygan trophy for the archer who achieved the most golds using a tactile sight. I had the honour to win it.

After the awards presentation David Poyner thanked the coaches, spotters and helpers for all their hard work throughout the week, and the archers for making it such a good week. It was the end of another great archery week.

What a Difference a Year Makes, by David Poyner.

It's more than a year since my partner Jane donated one of her kidneys to me. Life has changed. Dramatically changed. No more dialysis, no more being connected to a whirring and bleeping machine for 12 hours each week. No more spending an additional 16 hours relying on hospital transport to get to and from Manchester Royal Infirmary to get my blood cleaned. I was diagnosed with a rare kidney disease 15 years ago, and told that my kidneys would probably continue to function for another 10 to 15 years. That's not so bad I thought, lots of people are diagnosed with kidney disease, have dialysis and have a transplant. So it wasn't too much of a blow and my life carried on at full tilt. Working hard, playing hard.

In 1998 I opened my eyes to find I couldn't see. I'd been in a coma for 30 days, an amazing experience because while my body was inactive my brain certainly wasn't. I was exhausted after my mind had put me through so many challenges and adventures - all of which I am convinced were the key to whether I lived or died. It took three months before I was allowed home. I was diagnosed with yet another rare disease, a genetic metabolic one where my body doesn't make energy effectively. If you want to have a look on the internet it's MELAS: Mitochondrial Encephalomyopathy Lactic Acidosis with Stroke-like episodes. During the coma my optic nerves were terminally damaged, hence my blindness and why I get told regularly, 'You don't look blind'.

Still, having no sight, kidneys that are progressively packing up, and freaky DNA that means every single cell in my body doesn't function properly just means life is more challenging. It certainly didn't stop me joining, the then St Dunstan's Archery Club. And then I did the coma thing all over again 2001, losing my hearing for a while and developing epilepsy.

While away with some other St Dunstan's archers in 2009 I went into chronic renal failure, and the whole dialysis and hospital cycle began. A four month stay in hospital saw me miss Christmas and the incredible snow fall that plagued most of the UK that winter.

I thought my partner Jane was joking when she said the car was completely buried and she walked the five miles to hospital to visit me!

Jane, then my partner of two years, got a call in July 2010 from the hospital. This time it was a brain haemorrhage caused by the chemical they use to stop blood clotting as it gets washed by the dialysis machine. I lost the use of one arm and my speech. But of course this meant that they could no longer use chemical means to prevent clotting during dialysis. I had to cope with the machine clotting regularly which of course brings its own dangers.

'Enough!' said Jane once I was over the worst of the haemorrhage adventure. Determined that I should come off dialysis and not be at risk any longer she took herself off to have a simple blood test to see if she could be a living kidney donor. That was a positive result and after several long and painful tests (she said they were actually very interesting, she's seen some amazing pictures of her insides and glows in the dark having had 2 doses of radioactivity) we got the go-ahead.

On 16th December 2010, with Jane's daughter Rozi and her very good friend Rose, we waved Jane off to surgery. They removed her left kidney in a very long operation and then proceeded to insert it in my lower right abdomen. The surgery lasted for around nine hours. Sidney the Kidney, as she's become known, worked as soon as she was plumbed in and has continued to do so. I've had the occasional infection as the anti-rejection drugs stop me fighting germs, so there's been the odd hiccup.

A year on I have my appetite back (yes, for those who know me I did lose my gargantuan appetite while on dialysis). I'm no longer limited to a pint of fluid each day and can have as much as I want. I can also eat what I want as renal patients have a restricted diet; I didn't eat a banana for six years.

More important than all of that, Jane is now really well after a slow recovery; it's no fun going into hospital as a perfectly healthy and fit person and coming out a physical wreck! We've bought a touring caravan, I'm doing archery again and we're both living life to the full. No more dialysis! While Jane managed to kick the kidney disease into touch, she can't fix the life-threatening genetic metabolic coma-inducing MELAS. Who knows what's around the corner? Who cares? Live life and enjoy it.

Blind Veterans UK launches

It was a historic day, when on 21st February 2012, St Dunstan's became Blind Veterans UK, St Dunstan's since 1915. Events took place up and down the country, gaining prime time coverage on TV and radio, in newspapers and on websites countrywide. Events were held at the Brighton, Sheffield and Llandudno centres, at welfare offices, in Newcastle and in the London HQ. We bring you a selection of stories and photographs of the memorable day.

Congratulations must go to Jason Scott, Welfare Support Officer, who was the first person to send in photographs from a Blind Veterans UK launch party in Liverpool.



Picture: Maggie Walton with members at the launch in Liverpool.



Picture: Embracing change. Billy Griffiths who joined in 1946, with his wife Alice and WO John Elson at their home in Lancashire.

It was a daring launch at the Brighton Centre as Royal Marines abseiled down the front of the building to unveil the Blind Veterans UK signage. They were cheered on by members and staff, including Billy Orr, Paul Findlay, Derek O'Rourke, Chairman Major General Andrew Keeling CB, CBE, RM, Chief Executive Robert Leader and President Ray Hazan OBE. Their daring deed was reported on by the local TV, radio and newspaper crews in attendance.



Picture: Royal Marine Commandos make their descent to unveil the new name.



Picture: Cheering on the Royal Marines - members, staff and supporters outside the Brighton centre.

It was very exciting at the Llandudno centre as a massive Sea King Helicopter from RAF Valley in Anglesey swooped in to deliver the Blind Veterans UK flag. The helicopter hovered over the middle lawns as an airman was lowered to the ground. He was met by Centre Manager, Mark Lovatt, a former Squadron Leader, who escorted him to Billy Baxter, R&T Support Worker. Billy received the flag, lowered St Dunstan's flag and replaced it with the Blind Veterans UK flag, which he raised to applause and cheers. The helicopter circled the building before landing to collect the airman. It was declared a great success by all, including the TV crews, radio and newspaper reporters in attendance.



Picture: Billy Baxter receives the Blind Veterans UK flag as TV, radio and newspaper crews record the historic events of the day.



Picture: The Sea King hovers over the Llandudno centre grounds

There was more excitement at the Sheffield centre when the Blind Veterans UK plaque was unveiled by Wheelbarrow, a remote controlled robot, which is operated by members of the 521 Explosives Ordnance Disposal Squadron. Centre Manager Terry Heaton, members and staff were joined by Barry Porter, Director of Welfare Services. TV and radio crews and newspapers turned out to report.



Picture: From left to right: Harry Beevers, Ron Skidmoor, Colin Green, Wheelbarrow, Rudy Wessely and Sheffield Centre Manager Terry Heaton.



Picture: Terry Heaton compares as Margaret cuts the Blind Veterans UK cake.

Elizabeth Dodds and Colin Williamson hosted an event in Newcastle, which had a great turnout of members, staff and Trustees. It was reported on by BBC Look North, on the radio stations and in the local newspapers.



Picture: Good times at the launch in Newcastle: Welfare Officer Elizabeth Dodds, Trustee Major General David Jolliffe CB FRCP and members.



Picture: Former Leading Wren Pamela Woodford (left) at the Newcastle launch.



Picture: Early start in Llandudno - Andy was out at 6am putting up the new signs.

In London staff decorated cupcakes and here we bring you a photograph of Barbara Sweeney, PA to Welfare Services.



Picture: Barbara Sweeney gets icing at the London HQ.

Colin Williamson's Beer of the Month

Blandford Flyer

A delicious spicy beer from Hall & Woodhouse brewers based in glorious Dorset. This beer is a lovely light golden brown colour with a distinctive toffee and ginger nose. It is a surprisingly 'strong' beer with a 5.2% ABV which makes you treat it with respect. It's also a very drinkable ale and has delightful ginger undertones which may not suit everyone's tastes, but this beer has a strong following amongst beer aficionados. Ginger was supposed to relieve the sting from the infamous Blandford Fly.

It is well worth tracking down and can be found in most large supermarkets and larger beer outlets.



Answers to Ten questions on...

The subject... **Wives** from page 22

1. One only, but in that year husbands who already had more than one wife were allowed to remain married to their wives.
2. Betty.
3. Peter Sellers.
4. Lady Godiva.
5. Andy Capp.
6. David Copperfield.
7. "Only Fools and Horses", those of Derek Dell Boy Trotter, Rodney and Boycie.
8. Horatio Nelson.
9. Cliff Michelmore.
10. Four, Anne Boleyn, Jane Seymour, Catherine Howard and Catherine Parr.

Family News

Congratulations to:

Birthdays:

Bernard Holden of Uckfield on his 104th birthday on 15th March.

Frances Raine of Darlington on her 103rd birthday on 24th March.

Anniversaries:

Diamond (60th):

Ernest and Kathleen Bignell of Lancing, West Sussex on 1st March.

Arnold and Doris Cooke of Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire on 1st March.

Brian and Saville Turner of Goole, East Yorkshire on 8th March.

Brian and Nancy Giles of Exeter, Devon on 8th March.

Reg and Doris Coates of Sevenoaks, Kent on 27th March.

Paul and Patricia Shioleftou of Sutton, Surrey on 28th March.

Golden (50th):

Terence and Avril Ottewell of Brecon, Powys on 3rd March.

John and Elizabeth Hunt of Walbottle, Newcastle Upon Tyne on 10th March.

Geordie and Ann Gates of Washington, Tyne and Wear on 31st March.

Gerry and Gladys Rogan of Hexham, Northumberland on 31st March.

Ruby (40th):

Ernie and Diane Adamson of Haverhill, Suffolk on 18th March.

Andrew and Eileen Adamson of Rednal, Birmingham on 24th March.

We regret to announce to death of:

Leonard Barber who died on 1st February 2012, he was the husband of Violet Barber.

Dorothy Butler who died on 1st January 2012, she was the wife of Alfred Butler.

Andrea Carter who died on 29th February 2012, she was the wife of Alan Carter.

Mary Gregson who died on 13th December 2011, she was the wife of George Gregson.

Olive Hulse who died on 11th February 2012, she was the wife of Michael Hulse.

Norma Lanser who died on 1st November 2011, she was an overseas affiliate in Australia.

Jane MacDonald who died on 10th November 2011, she was the wife of Alistair MacDonald.

Gerald Norris who died on 29th February 2011, he was the husband of Anne Norris.

Walter Poulter who died on 3rd February 2012, he was an Overseas Affiliate in Australia.

Nancey Taylor who died on 18th February 2012, she was the wife of the late Tom Taylor.

Winifred Wood who died on 1st December 2011, she was the wife of Derek Wood.

We offer our heartfelt condolences to their widows, widowers, family and friends.

Welcome to Blind Veterans UK

Edward Ansell of Stevenage, Hertfordshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1943 to 1946.

Brian Barlow of Wigan, Lancashire served in the Royal Air Force from 1951 to 1953.

Douglas Bishop of Fairmilehead, Edinburgh served in the Royal Artillery from 1943 to 1953.

Geoffrey Bishop of Norwich served in the Royal Navy from 1948 to 1955.

Derrick Brickwood of Lewes, East Sussex served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1946.

Nelson Brown of Ebbw Vale, Gwent served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1943 to 1947.

Brenda Bryon of Peacehaven, East Sussex served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1943 to 1944.

Amos Burley of Cirencester, Gloucestershire served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Artillery from 1944 to 1953.

Myra Cater of New Milton, Hampshire served in the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Nursing Service from 1942 to 1946.

Ada Cockings of Hornchurch, Essex served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1945 to 1949.

Joseph Davies of Blackpool, Lancashire served in the Royal Artillery from 1931 to 1941.

William Davies of Porthcawl, Mid Glamorgan served in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1947.

Allwyn Evans of Southam, Warwickshire served in the Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters from 1964 to 1974.

Derek Final of Chelmsford, Essex served in the Royal Navy from 1945 to 1948.

Tirtha Ghale of Farnborough, Hampshire served in the Royal Gurkha Rifles from 1991 to 2006.

William Gibbs of Thetford, Norfolk served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Army Service Corps from 1944 to 1948.

John Griffiths of Chichester, West Sussex served in the Royal Air Force from 1952 to 1964.

Barry Hanson of Halifax, West Yorkshire served in the Royal Armoured Corps and the Royal Engineers from 1960 to 1962.

Eric Harbour of Brighton served in the Royal Air Force from 1952 to 1961.

Harry Hayes of Burgess Hill, West Sussex served in the Royal Marines from 1940 to 1946.

James Humphreys of Huddersfield served in the General Service Corps, the Lancashire Fusiliers and the South Staffordshire Regiment from 1944 to 1954.

William Inchley of Swindon, Wilts served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1952 to 1957.

Douglas Jones of Luton, Bedfordshire served in the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1950 to 1953.

Thomas Jones of Liverpool served in the Royal Navy from 1945 to 1947.

Harry Laxton of Chelsea, London served in the Royal Armoured Corps and the Royal Engineers from 1942 to 1966.

Edward Lincoln of Devizes, Wiltshire served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1948 to 1950.

Ronald Lord of Eastbourne, East Sussex served in the Coldstream Guards from 1946 to 1952.

Ivan Maguire of Craigavon, County Armagh served in the Ulster Defence Regiment from 1964 to 1992.

Ronald Morris of Solihull, West Midlands served in the Royal Air Force from 1943 to 1947.

Arthur Palmer of Merstham, Surrey served in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1953.

Keith Plummer of Abingdon, Oxfordshire served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1940 to 1946.

John Pulling of Gwynedd, Wales served in the Royal Welsh Fusiliers from 1973 to 1981.

Andrew Ramsay of Penicuik, Midlothian served in the Royal Navy from 1942 to 1946.

Elwyn Roberts of Cumnock, Ayrshire served in the Royal Signals from 1952 to 1958.

Veronica Simpson of North Hykeham, Lincoln served in the Women's Royal Army Corps from 1986 to 1991.

Maureen Steenmeijer of Eastbourne, East Sussex served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1947 to 1950.

William Stening of Hove, East Sussex served in the Royal Engineers from 1939 to 1946.

Jack Thompson of Urmston, Manchester served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

Barbara Whitehouse of Plymouth served in the Royal Air Force from 1948 to 1952.

Robert Woof of Carnforth Lancashire served in the Royal Armoured Corps from 1958 to 1959.

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, family and friends.

Bernard Barker, Royal Air Force

Bernard Barker of Irchester, Northamptonshire died on 27th February 2012, aged 89. He enlisted in the RAF in 1941 and was based at airfields around the UK, qualified as an armourer; he loaded bombs and serviced the equipment. Later in the war he went to Bengal for eight months with the South East Asia Command. He was discharged early in 1946. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

William Bateson, Royal Norfolk Regiment

William Bateson of King's Lynn, Norfolk died on 1st September 2011, aged 90. He was in the TA with the Royal Norfolk Regiment and was mobilised in May 1939. He spent some time in Dersingham and was then deployed to France with the British Expeditionary Force. He was captured in St Valery and was made a PoW. He was held at Stalag 8b in Germany and ended up in Prague before being repatriated by the US Forces. He returned to the UK and was discharged in July 1946. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

John Bentley, Polish Army, the Armoured Corps

John Bentley of Stockton on Tees, Cleveland died on 18th February 2012, aged 86. After the 1939 September campaign he was deported to Siberia in 1940 with his family to do hard labour. He consequently lost a brother and a sister there due to cold and malnutrition. He was released to join the Polish Armed Forces. In 1942 he was liberated by the Polish government in London. He left, travelling down the river on a raft and hitchhiked to Azbakhistan. In 1943 he joined the Polish Army in Azbakhistan and then moved into Palestine via Iran and Iraq. He was drafted into the Armoured Corps in Egypt and fought with the British Forces in North Africa before crossing into Sicily and Italy. At the battle of Monte Cassino, where he was twice recommended for a VC, he was captured with his Corps. He fought through to the Adriatic to Rimini and when the war ended, he returned to England. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Thomas Bishop, Royal Signals

Thomas Bishop of Hove, East Sussex died on 15th December 2011, aged 96. He joined the Royal Signals in 1940 and served in the North African campaign. He was sent back to Catterick when his eyesight started to fail and was discharged in 1944. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Archibald John (Jack) Brown, Royal Fusiliers

Archibald 'Jack' Brown of Poole, Dorset died on 18th January 2012, aged 92. He served in the Royal Fusiliers from 1940 to 1946, serving in the UK, North Africa and Germany. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Timothy 'Tim' Bunting, Royal Air Force

Timothy 'Tim' Bunting of Hove, East Sussex died on 18th February 2012, aged 75. Called up for National Service in 1955, Mr Bunting was commissioned in the RAF. He served in the UK with RAF Technical Training Command and was discharged as a Pilot Officer in 1957. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

John Carrell, Royal Navy

John Carrell of Lytham St Annes, Lancashire died on 25th January 2012, aged 91. He joined the Royal Navy in 1939 as a gunnery specialist and was drafted to HMS Banoch and HMS Oribi, serving in the North Atlantic, Mediterranean and with the Russian Convoy. He was discharged in January 1946. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Frances 'Eve' Casey, Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service

Frances 'Eve' Casey of Cromer, Norfolk died on 19th January 2012, aged 92. She was commissioned in the Q.A.I.M.N.S in 1943. Her service began in Abergele in Kimnel Hall. She was then posted to Oxford, before serving in Bombay and Poona in India. She then embarked on H.M.H.S. Karoa and moved along the coast to Burma, picking up ex FEPOW's, for which she awarded the Burma Star. She left India in 1946 as a Lieutenant. Our sympathy goes to all members of her family.

Ronald Clayton, Royal Navy

Ronald Clayton of Hayling Island, Hampshire died on 21st February 2012, aged 88. He joined the Royal Navy in 1939, qualifying as a gunnery instructor. He was involved in the action to sink the Bismarck while serving in the battleship

HMS Rodney. Following this he served on HMS Troubridge, HMS Teaser, HMS Tartar and HMS Opossum. He was discharged in 1963. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Steven Coates, Parachute Regiment, Royal Artillery

Steven Coates of Aylesford, Kent died on 1st March 2012, aged 45. He joined the Parachute Regiment in 1983, later transferring to the Royal Artillery and qualifying as a PTI. He was later posted to Germany, Canada and Belize. He was in the Combined Services Judo Team and played rugby for the Army before leaving in 1988. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Glyn Davies, Royal Artillery

Glyn Davies of Holywell, Clwyd died on 23rd February 2012, aged 81. He served in the Royal Artillery from 1949 to 1951 in a number of locations in the UK. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Francis Dickinson, General Service Corps, the Royal Engineers

Francis Dickinson of Lytham St. Annes, Lancashire died on 24th December 2011, aged 96. He enlisted in the Army in 1945 and transferred to the Royal Engineers. He served in Egypt & Palestine in bomb disposal before leaving as a Sapper in 1947. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Robert Driver, Royal Air Force

Robert Driver of Whitchurch, Shropshire died on 8th December 2011, aged 87. He joined the RAF in Cairo in 1942 and trained at Bulawayo in Rhodesia. On completion of his training he converted to Hurricane fighter aircraft before being posted to Bhopal in India, where he completed a gunnery course. He flew with 73 Squadron and was involved in the Burma Campaign. Demobilised in 1947 he rejoined in 1949 and converted to Vampire jet aircraft, being posted to Malta. He became an instructor in Vampire and Meteor jet aircraft before becoming a test pilot at Boscombe Down. He left the RAF in 1982 as a Flight Lieutenant. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Leonard Fisher, Royal Army Ordnance Corps and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

Leonard Fisher of Sutton in Ashfield, Nottinghamshire died on 24th February 2012, aged 95. He joined the RAOC in 1941. He specialised in wireless and radio equipment and transferred to the REME in 1942, when he spent time preparing

and fitting radios for the D-Day landings. He was discharged in 1945. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Kathleen Ford, Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service

Kathleen Ford of Dawlish, Devon died on 22nd December 2011, aged 96. At 18 she trained at the Whitechapel hospital in London as a nurse. She joined QAIMNS in 1939 in Woolwich, London and stayed there during the Blitz. Two years later she travelled to India and set up a hospital. As her Colonel had kept the same group of doctors and nurses together they were a well integrated team and they all subsequently moved to the Chindits hospital in Burma. She was discharged in 1946 as a Lieutenant. Our sympathy goes to all members of her family.

William Foulsham, Royal Air Force

William Foulsham of Winchester, Hampshire died on 15th February 2012, aged 97. Following a flying accident he served with the RAF armoured cars squadron in Aden, Iraq and Palestine. He also served in Belgium, France, Holland and Germany. He was discharged in 1946 as a Wing Commander. Following service he joined the Colonial Service and went to Malaya until 1957 when independence was granted. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Betty Gale, Auxiliary Territorial Service

Betty Gale of Romford, Essex died on 14th January 2012, aged 90. She joined the ATS in 1942. She served in Lancaster and Lewisham and was discharged in 1946. Our sympathy goes to all members of her family.

Charles Gautrey, Royal Army Pay Corps

Charles Gautrey of Guildford, Surrey died on 23rd February 2012, aged 91. He was called up in 1941 and joined the Royal Army Pay Corps. He trained with the 28th Battalion at Bournemouth where he remained for the duration of his service. He was discharged in 1946 as a Sergeant. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Ronald Goode, Royal Air Force

Ronald Goode of Histon, Cambridge died on 22nd December 2011, aged 90. He joined the RAF in 1941 and after training, served in a motor unit in Cambridge for nine months before he was posted to India, where he retrained as a vehicle fitter. He served in India until he was embarked to Singapore at the end of

the war. He was discharged in 1946. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Douglas Grant, Royal Naval Air Service

Douglas Grant of Preston, Lancashire died on 28th February 2012, aged 88. He served in the Royal Naval Air Service between 1941 and 1946, leaving as a Leading Air Mechanic. He served in Gibraltar, Australia and Orkney at Scapa Flow. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Denis Green, General Service Corps and the Royal Artillery

Denis Green of South West London died on London 7th January 2012, aged 91. He was called up for National Service in 1946 and joined the General Service Corps. He completed his training and was transferred to the Royal Artillery a month later. He was posted to Italy, Egypt and then Palestine before discharge in 1948. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Bryan Harris, Royal Signals

Bryan Harris of Coleford, Gloucestershire died on 22nd February 2012, aged 82. He joined the Royal Signals in 1951 and served with BAOR at Munster, Germany. He was discharged as a Lance Corporal in 1953 but remained on part time National Service, finally leaving the Army in 1956. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Brian Hinchliffe, Royal Air Force

Brian Hinchliffe of Sheffield, South Yorkshire died on 14th February 2012, aged 84. He joined the RAF in 1945 and served in North Wales. He was discharged as an AC2 in 1947. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Alan Hirst, Royal Army Service Corps

Alan Hirst of Darlington, County Durham died on 5th February 2012, aged 93. He served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1940 to 1946. He became an instructor at Bulford and was then posted to the Gold Coast (Ghana) and based in Takoradi. He travelled the length of the West Coast of Africa dealing with supplies and troop movements. He transferred to the West African Frontier Force and left the RASC as a Sergeant. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Robert Horrocks, Royal Signals

Robert Horrocks of Ponteland, Newcastle upon Tyne died on 2nd February 2012, aged 91. He joined the Royal Signals in 1941. On completion of training he was sent to Lebanon in the 9th Army Headquarters and then to Cairo. He landed in Taranto and then went on to Yugoslavia. He returned to England in late 1945 and was then posted to Germany with the BAOR as the occupying force. He was demobilised in November 1946. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Carl Jaeger, Royal Air Force

Carl Jaeger of Leigh on Sea, Essex died on 10th February 2012, aged 85. He served with the RAF from 1947 to 1955. He trained at RAF St Athan, served initially in Suffolk and later at RAF Gutersloh, Germany with a mobile repair salvage unit and at RAF Eindhoven in Holland. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Robert Kennedy MM, General Service Corps, Army Air Corps, Royal Army Service Corps

Robert Kennedy of Preston, Lancashire died on 19th February 2012, aged 87. He joined the General Service Corps in 1943 and transferred to the RASC a few months later. Following basic training he transferred to the AAC and was briefly posted to Larkhill before landing at Pegasus Bridge on D-Day. He moved through France to the Seine where he was wounded and awarded the Military Medal. He was discharged in 1947. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Margaret Kitchin, Voluntary Aid Detachment

Margaret Kitchen of Crowborough, East Sussex died on 27th February 2012, aged 89. She joined the Voluntary Aid Detachment in 1943 and served with the Royal Navy at Haslow, HMS Gosling in Warrington and HMS Seaforth in Liverpool. She was discharged in 1946 as a Senior Nursing Member. Our sympathy goes to all members of her family.

Edwin Knowles, Royal Marines

Edwin Knowles of Wythenshawe, Manchester died on 2nd February 2012, aged 91. He served with the Royal Marines from 1941 to 1945, serving in the UK. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Ian Marks, Royal Military Police

Ian Marks of Solihull, West Midlands died on 23rd February 2012, aged 54. He served with the Royal Military Police in the UK. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Francis Marsh, Royal Air Force

Francis Marsh of Eccles, Manchester died on 12th August 2011, aged 87. He joined the RAF in 1943. On completion of basic training he was sent to Rhodesia to complete his aircrew training as an air gunner. He served in Beirut, Palestine, Egypt and the UK. He was discharged as a Sergeant in 1947. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Hazel Mosforth, Auxiliary Territorial Service

Hazel Mosforth of Hove, East Sussex died on 25th December 2011, aged 92. She enlisted in the ATS in 1940 and trained at Durham. She initially worked in the Officers' Mess at Watlington, Co. Durham before being posted to Seaton Barracks in Plymouth to work as a PTI. She also served in Didcot and Donington, before she was discharged in 1945. Our sympathy goes to all members of her family.

Willis Oakton, Royal Navy

Willis Oakton of Fareham, Hampshire died on 21st February 2012, aged 84. He joined the Royal Navy in 1946 as a stoker and initially served in the battleship HMS Duke of York. He then served in destroyers, landing craft and minesweepers, qualifying as a mechanic. He was discharged as a Chief Petty Officer in 1962. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Thomas 'Tom' Page, Parachute Regiment

Thomas 'Tom' Page of Morecambe, Lancashire died on 17th February 2012, aged 85. He served in the Parachute Regiment from 1944 to 1946. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Walter Parker, Royal Air Force

Walter Parker of Doncaster, South Yorkshire died on 27th February 2012, aged 92. He enlisted in the RAF in 1936 and completed a three year apprenticeship as a fitter in engines and airframes. He was then posted to a Hurricane Squadron at Debden, Essex in 1939.

Deployed to France he returned just prior to Dunkirk and was stationed in the UK until 1942, when he was posted to India, spending time in Karachi. In 1945 he was posted back to the UK, arriving on VJ day. He later served at RAF Witten on Lancaster and Super Fortress bombers. He was posted to 14 countries during his service, which included RAF Habbaniya, Iraq, RAF Amman in Jordan and RAF Boscombe Down. He became a Chief Technician and joined the V-Bomber fleet at RAF Finningley where he remained from 1961-1966. He moved to Detmold to train the Army to use helicopters. He was discharged in 1973, leaving as a Sergeant. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

John Prescott, Royal Navy

John Prescott of Washington, Tyne and Wear died on 24th December 2010, aged 93. He served in the Royal Navy from 1944 to 1946, serving in Africa. He was discharged as a Shipwright. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

David Rathband, Royal Armoured Corps, the Northumberland Police Force

David Rathband of Blyth, Northumberland died on 29th February 2012, aged 44. He served in the Royal Armoured Corps from 1986 to 1989, before joining the Police Force in 2000. On 4th July 2010 Raoul Moat, a local gunman on the loose, approached his parked police car and shot him twice in the face, blinding him. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Reginald Smith, Royal Air Force

Reginald Smith of Bath, Avon died on 4th February 2012, aged 91. He joined the RAF in 1941. Completing his basic training at RAF Penarth, Melksham and then Halton where he specialised as a medical assistant. He was sent overseas to India and then to Burma where he was involved with a Mobile Field Hospital at Ramri Island. He returned to the UK and discharged from RAF Wroughton in 1946. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Stanley Taylor, Royal Army Pay Corps

Stanley Taylor of Ashford, Kent died on 16th December 2011, aged 96. He served in the Royal Army Pay Corps from 1942 to 1947 in London and Hampshire. He was discharged as a Staff Sergeant. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Jessie Tearle, Women's Auxiliary Air Force

Jessie Tearle of Rushden, Northamptonshire died on 7th November 2011, aged 88. She joined the WAAF in 1942, completing her training at Morecambe. She served at a variety of locations around the UK as a General Duty Aircraftswoman, belting ammunition and working in the cookhouse. She was discharged in 1945. Our sympathy goes to all members of her family.

George Todd, Royal Air Force

George Todd of Newark, Nottinghamshire died on 22nd February 2012, aged 90. He joined the RAF in 1941. On completion of his apprenticeship he was posted to Egypt, via South Africa until his return to the UK in 1945. He was discharged in 1946. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Herbert Wilson, Royal Navy

Herbert Wilson of Preston, Lancashire died on the 8th February 2012, aged 87. He joined the Royal Navy in 1943 and trained at HMS Victory where he specialised as a Motor Mechanic and spent most of his time on Landing Craft. He took part in the D-Day landings at Normandy and was then sent to the Far East, spending time in Burma, Rangoon and Singapore. When the war ended he was involved with chart making and was demobilised as a Petty Officer Motor Mechanic in 1946. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Wilfred Yates, South Staffordshire Regiment and the Reconnaissance Corps

Wilfred Yates of Stafford, Staffordshire died on 21st February 2012, aged 92. He joined the South Staffordshire Regiment in 1940 and was transferred to the Reconnaissance Corps, training as a wireless operator. He was posted to the Far East with the 18th Division and was onboard the Empress of Asia when it was sunk in Singapore Bay. He was taken prisoner and spent 3 ½ years on the Burma Railway in Thailand. Repatriated by US forces, returning to the UK via Rangoon, he was discharged in June 1946. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Michael Zajkowski, Polish Navy

Michael Zajkowski of Newton Abbot, Devon died on 11th February 2012, aged 92. He served in the Polish Forces Army under British Command from 1941 and in the Polish Forces Navy under British Command from 1942. He was discharged as a Mate 1945. He served in Burma and was on the ship O.R.P. Burza. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.