

August 2012

Review

Blind Veterans UK | St Dunstan's since 1915



**Call freephone
0800 389 7979**

membership@blindveterans.org.uk
www.blindveterans.org.uk/joinus



Supporting blind veterans **Can we help you or someone you know?**

No one who has served in the Armed Forces should have to battle blindness alone. Blind Veterans UK provides veterans with the practical, emotional and financial support they need to regain their independence.



Our charity helps veterans with sight loss as a result of age, illness, accident or conflict to lead more independent, fulfilling lives.

Contact Blind Veterans UK today

Life beyond sight loss
St Dunstan's since 1915

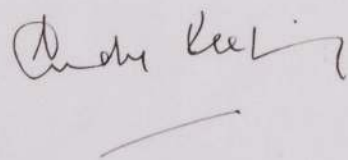
From the Chairman

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

As many of you are aware Simon Brown, an Iraq war veteran and a member himself, joined the Blind Veterans UK staff as Membership Officer in April this year. Working within the Membership Department he is tasked with recruiting new members to our charity. On behalf of Simon, and our wider goal of bringing those who need us to Blind Veterans UK, I am now asking if you would please display the enclosed poster in a very noticeable place in your community. It could, for instance, be displayed in your GP's surgery, village hall, or social club – or anywhere else that will mean it is seen by those who may need to know about us. If each of you does this, and we reach just one person who is eligible to join per poster, we could recruit more than 3,000 new members.

I have written about spreading awareness before, and have spoken of it often, and of course apart from doing this in our own communities and around the country as best we can we also need to work on the serving Armed Forces. So I recently invited General Sir David Richards, the current Chief of Defence Staff, to visit our Brighton centre. Robert Leader and I spent a most enjoyable and inspiring few hours there with him and Jackie Greer and a number of members and staff quite recently. Having been brought up in Eastbourne and having driven along the sea front into and through Brighton many times in his youth, he was aware of the building and, in general terms of its purpose, but he was most impressed with all he saw and extremely interested to learn about the Blind Veterans UK of today. He is now, I can assure you, an ardent fan!

By the time you read this we will, I suspect, all be consumed by the Olympics, and then the Paralympics. Let's hope that all the hard work and all the investment will be worth it, and that we are treated to a rare feast of amazing athletic achievement. It will certainly give us ample opportunity to salute the youth of today – something that probably doesn't happen as much as it could do in our often rather cynical world.



On the cover: Craig Lundberg carries the Torch on the Ferry to cross the Mersey. Photo: Simon Kirwan, Lightbox Photography. Tel: 01704 566066. Mob: 07751 621691. Web: www.the-light-box.com



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Review

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Patron: Her Majesty the Queen

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Blind Veterans UK Calendar

Key: B for Brighton centre - L for Llandudno centre - S for Sheffield centre

August		September	
Race Week B	5th - 11th	History Week L	16th - 22nd
Writer's Forum B	18th	Writer's Forum B	15th
Golf	18th - 19th	Golf	15th/16th
Archery Week B	24th - 1st		
October		November	
Widows Week B	14th - 20th	Cenotaph	10th - 11th
Computer Club L	17th - 18th		
Amateur Radio Club B	19th - 27th		
Bowling Weeks B	28th - 10th		

Noticeboard

Llandudno and Brighton Christmas accommodation information.

It's almost that time of year again, when we need to start thinking about accommodation bookings for the Christmas period. Both the Brighton and Llandudno centres are open for Christmas and New Year bookings, giving our members the choice of a festive stay at two different centres.

As per previous years, Christmas bookings must follow a different process from regular bookings. Bookings for this period can only be taken and accepted via your welfare officer. Bookings for individuals are assessed on a level of social and care needs. All bookings will be confirmed by the middle of November to allow for alternative arrangements to be made if applications are unsuccessful. We will start to take bookings from welfare officers on the 3rd September 2012, with applications closing on the 2nd October 2012.

Members who apply for accommodation during the festive season have the choice to stay for one or two weeks, depending upon availability and transport. Arrivals, which are dependent upon transport availability and regions, will begin from 20th to 22nd December. Departures will take place from 3rd to 4th January. These dates are just approximations and are subject to slight change as per transport schedules.

As in previous years, a surcharge will be applied to those who come into Brighton and Llandudno over the Christmas and new year period, which reflects the significant cost of the extra food, drink and activities which we provide. The surcharge for 2012/13 will be £40 for the Christmas and new year period.

We look forward to seeing many of you for Christmas and New Year.

Tell us your stories of meeting the Queen for a Commemorative Review.

To celebrate our Patron, Her Majesty The Queen, we may produce a special edition of the Review in January 2013.

But we need your help to do this. If you have met the Queen we would like to interview you and include your story and photographs of meeting the Queen in the commemorative edition.

Please get in touch with Catherine Goodier on telephone: 020 7616 8367, or email: revieweditor@blindveterans.org.uk

We look forward to hearing from you.

We want your ideas to help plan our Centenary Celebration

As you are all aware in 2015 we will celebrate 100 years of proud Service. We want you to help us plan our centenary celebrations. Let us know your ideas - no idea is too big, too small, or too fanciful. Should we hold a concert, a garden party, or commission a play? Or should a member pilot a plane, a powerboat, and a supercar to travel from the former WWI battlefields of France, or Gallipoli, to London's Regent's Park, our first home? Or perhaps we could amass a single line of people from Scotland to London with their eyes bandaged and their hand on the shoulder of the person in front, in homage to the painting, Gassed, by John Singer Sargent, to show how many people we have helped in 100 years of Service. Please contact the Review editor with your ideas by phone or email by the end of September.

Sign up for a holiday week at the Sheffield centre from 3rd September

The proposed itinerary, which may be subject to change, is:

Monday 3rd September.

10.30 to 12 noon: Arrive at the Sheffield centre

12:30 Lunch

13:30 Introductions and check in

15:30 Talk on the history of the Sheffield House

17:30 Evening meal

19:00 Activities in the trainees lounge

Tuesday 8:00 Breakfast
9:00 Visit to Western Park museum for a talk on the Sheffield steel industry (free)
11:00 A Visit to Kalham Island Industrial museum (cost £4.50 each)
12:30 Packed lunch at the museum
15:00 Return to centre for coffee before free time to go out and enjoy Sheffield's shopping area.
17:30 Regroup at Sheffield centre.
18:00 Out for an evening meal and brewery tour, meals cost approx £6 per head, entry to the brewery tour is included.

Wednesday 8:00 Breakfast
9:00 Visit to local castle ruins
12:30 Packed lunch
13:30 Visit to Air museum
17:30 Evening meal at the centre

Thursday 8:00 Breakfast
9:00 A visit to Chatsworth House (cost £18)
12:30 Fish dinner and a relaxing afternoon in Bakewell or at Matlock Bath.
17:30 Evening meal at the centre

Friday 8:00 Breakfast
9:30 Summary of the week
10:30 Coffee
11:30 Leave for home

If you would like to join us for this, the first and exciting holiday week in Sheffield, please contact the Sheffield centre on 0114 267 2550. Places will be allocated on a first come first served basis. The cost for the five days is £160, which includes accommodation, food and travel. Entry charges to museums and other destinations are extra. Please note that the Sheffield centre does not provide care.

Brighton job opportunity Rehabilitation & training support worker.

To ensure that our members get the most from every visit to our Brighton centre we are looking for a:

Rehabilitation & Training (R&T) Support Worker
£19,128 per annum plus unsocial hours allowance
Full Time

Sunday to Thursday inclusive (2pm to 7pm on Sunday, 9am to 5pm Monday to Wednesday, and 9am to 7pm on Thursday)

Brighton

To be a point of contact for members visiting the centre, ensuring they receive the appropriate level of assistance and support to make their stay as comfortable and rewarding as possible.

As R&T Support Worker you will provide initial orientation and emotional and practical support to our members. You will also co-ordinate and deliver activities on an individual and group basis as well as present group sessions and arrange and host informal dinners for trainees 20-30 times per year.

The ideal candidate will use their excellent communication and interpersonal skills to ensure trainees feel welcomed and comfortable during their stay at the centre and enjoy a positive social experience.

Closing date: 5pm on 16th August 2012

Interview date: 28th or 29th August 2012

For an informal conversation about any aspect of the role please ring Vanessa Young, Rehabilitation & Training Manager, on 01273 391475.

To apply please visit our website www.blindveterans.org.uk/jobs
Applications from members are particularly welcome.

Signpost

Signpost is to keep you up to date with other organisations working for veterans.

Veteran Graham Snell, of The Masonic Fishing Company in Devon, would like to invite members to contact him for a day's fly fishing in Devon. You must make your own travel arrangements to Devon.

The Masonic Fishing Company provides:

If necessary a fisherman or helper will assist the participant, usually on a one to one basis. You can get involved in all aspects of fishing, have a go at casting, retrieving, hooking and landing the fish. All fishermen and helpers will have been required to complete a CRB disclosure with the Masonic Fishing Company.

Lunch is provided for all participants, helpers and fishermen, and usually consists of barbecued burgers, sausages and maybe some fresh trout at fly fishing events! Soft, non-fizzy drinks, sandwiches, fruit and snacks, tea and coffee. A vegetarian option is available on request.

A 'Certificate of Achievement' is given to all participants.

Medals for Biggest Fish, Best Caster, Best Retriever etc, are also often awarded.

Participating organisations or individuals are provided with risk assessments and Health & Safety instructions. Health and safety instruction is given to all helpers and fishermen. Some game fish caught may be kept by the participants.

A typical day's itinerary is as follows:

- 10.00am Participants arrive and are introduced to their fishermen
- 10.15am Fishing starts
- 12.30pm Lunch break
- 1.15pm Fishing resumes
- 2.15pm Presentation time
- 2.45pm Participants depart

To find out more you can contact Graham Snell on 07900 220390. The website is at: www.mtsfc.co.uk

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 to your fellow members. 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

We had a wonderful day at Trooping the Colour on 16th June when we also met with members Peter and Freda Phillips. Thank you to Blind Veterans UK for organising this for us and giving us such a lovely day. It was great to arrive and discover we were to be seated in the front row. Thank you.

Yours faithfully

Florence and Dennis Oliver.

Dear Florence and Dennis

I'm so pleased you had a wonderful day.

Legendary submariner and WWII charioteer Tony Eldridge, DSC, was also there and here's a photo of Blind Veterans UK member Tony with Sergeant in the Coldstream Guard's.

Yours sincerely

Editor.



Picture: Submariner Tony Eldridge DSC.

A great day at Lords

When cricket fan Steve Parnell went to Lord's to enjoy the Inter Service cricket match, he was hoping for a relaxing day of great cricket, preferably a sunny one, as he soaked up the atmosphere and listened to Nick Headley's commentary, and the sound of leather on willow. What he didn't anticipate was that Nick would invite him into the space age media centre to do a live interview during the match.

"As a former member of the RAF I obviously wanted them to win, and to my delight they did. It was the best result as they creamed the other teams. Although it was a close match in the final between the Navy and the Royal Air Force." The Review did ask Steve if that was a technical term he picked up from Nick. It would appear not.

"We wore headphones throughout the matches to listen to Nick's commentary, which was brilliant as he described everything so well. I could picture the play and knew exactly what was going on. Thankfully we knew when to duck a couple of times, as the ball cannoned towards our stand! Nick came down to see us throughout the day. He also spoke with Kayla Hammond, sports and recreation instructor, and Louise Timms, sports and recreation manager, who organised the trip. He asked if I'd do an interview at the start of the third match. I agreed and I walked with my guide dog Travis, Kayla and Louise into the media centre. We went up to the commentator's box by lift and windy staircase. I understand the view from the commentator's box is incredible. Nick asked me a few questions about my career, my vision and my love of cricket. It's one of my favourite sports and I enjoy listening to live commentary, as the commentators are so good at explaining where the players are standing and the shots played. The interview was an unexpected, but hugely enjoyable surprise. When we returned to the stands a marching band was playing, which Travis greatly enjoyed.

"I really want to thank Kayla and Louise for arranging the day. I also want to thank them for looking after Travis. They give of their time so freely and go above and beyond their roles, so we can do these things. Without them I wouldn't have been able to go to Lords and enjoy a great day."



Picture: Steve Parnell speaks into the microphone as Nick Headley interviews him in the Lord's media centre.

Colin Williamson's Beer of the Month.

Badger Hopping Hare.

This is another fabulous seasonal beer by Hall and Woodhouse. It's a very refreshing ale, packed with lemon zest and a hint of summer flowers and it pours a delightful golden colour with a foamy head which stays to the end. You can detect a slightly sweet toffee taste and those who like their ale with a touch of 'bitterness' will not be disappointed. This beer is 'thrice' hopped, which means that three different types of hops have been used in the brewing process and it makes this beer a real winner! It's a great ale to sit and sip sitting in the garden on a warm, sunny day waiting for the BBQ to start! It has an ABV of 4.4% and is a great accompaniment to spicy food. This beer is available in most supermarkets, or direct from Hall and Woodhouse online.

The Pilgrimage to Lords or On Your Knees at the Station of The Wood of St John, by G M Boreham.

The Summer's almost here
and the sad and wretched hordes
Begin their preparation
for the Pilgrimage to Lords

It's a curious affliction
That comes on with the sun
The bug is caught in childhood
but the malady..... lingers on

A sympathetic doctor
Sees the need for 3 days' rest
And signs the precious ticket
In the run up to The Test

A hat, and a transistor
and one most important task
Six cans of Holy Water,
Or some spirit in a flask

Prayers are said for sunshine
Blasphemies for rain
While non-believers watch and sigh
"Oh God, here we go again"

Then the cheery beery pilgrims
Meet their brethren on the way
At the Wood of St John Station
On this most auspicious day

Their hearts are filled with wonder
When they see the sacred place
Where men become immortal
After His Most Hallowed Grace

Then hours of inertia
And transcendental prayer
Give way to yells of rapture
Or groans of deep despair

Here Miracles have happened
Great battles fought and won
While the ardent and the faithful
Sit dozing in the sun.

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

1. Which metallic element has the shortest name?
2. Of which metal is the George Cross made?
3. The name of which colourless gas appeared in the name of a television series testing the all-round ability of competitors and presented by Gordon Burns?
4. Which element has the atomic number 17 and is commonly used to sterilise or disinfect water?
5. Which metal can be beaten into the thinnest film?
6. Which American state, the third largest in area, gives its name to that of an element?
7. Which metallic element was described by the author Jules Verne as possessing the whiteness of silver, the indestructibility of gold, the tenacity of iron, the fusibility of copper and the lightness of glass?
8. About four grams of which metallic element is present in a male adult, half of it in the haemoglobin of the blood?
9. Which woman in 1898 discovered the element polonium, naming it after the country of her birth?
10. Which Commonwealth country is the world's largest producer of uranium?

Please turn to page 34 for the answers to this month's brainteaser.

VIP - Luke Holroyd's photographic documentary and book by Catherine Goodier

During my heady days as a public relations consultant I was fortunate to do PR for a great photographer. One who had photographed such icons of stage and screen as Lord Olivier, Bette Davis, John Gielgud, Alec Guinness, Oliver Reed, Helen Mirren, Anthony Hopkins, Tom Cruise, Emma Thompson, Kenneth Branagh, Kate Winslet, Ralph Fiennes, Bruce Willis, Jude Law, and Catherine Zeta Jones. He persuaded Felicity Kendal to pose naked for a feature in Esquire magazine, her modesty shielded only by the blue dancer's pole she stood behind and the floor around her adorned with her beloved Manolo Blahniks. He also photographed captains of industry, capturing Richard Branson in the bath, and he made former Prime Minister Baroness Thatcher a yummy mummy.

I like to think I have an eye for recognising powerful photography that tells a story, and talented photographers. And if I'm not mistaken, Luke Holroyd, who recently graduated from Derby University, is one very talented photographer to watch out for. Luke photographed Iraq veteran Simon Brown for his documentary exhibition and book - VIP. I went with Simon to the exhibition at the Menier Gallery in London and Simon agreed that Luke had fulfilled his aim to produce a body of work that managed to capture and encapsulate perfectly the life he leads. It shows the public figure he has become as he heads up military parades, but also a relaxed and reflective Simon as he enjoys a curry with fellow Blind Veterans UK members. Here Luke talks about VIP. The full interview with Luke and Simon can be heard on the Talking Review.

"I've spent the last three years doing a commercial photography degree. During the last year I made the decision to become a documentary photographer. For our final year we had to produce a body of work to go on exhibition. I wanted to do something different that had a strong theme to make a good documentary. My parents live two streets away from Simon's family in Morley and although I had never met him I knew of him and thought he would be a very strong subject for the documentary. I contacted him and we met to discuss my ideas. Simon was really helpful and as I was a student he wanted to help as much as he could. We decided to do a long body of work over six months, as I would capture his life in the lead up to his time as an Olympic Torchbearer. I wanted it to be a true reflection of his life to show Simon as he is at work and

at home. I didn't want it to be staged. He does so much through his work with Blind Veterans UK, his motivational talks, and the guidance he gives to others. He has become a spokesperson and a role model, yet he remains unaffected by the interest in him. I got the title VIP on one of the first shoots we went to in Sheffield when the taxi driver called Simon a VIP. Simon didn't tell the taxi driver until the end that it didn't mean very important person. He said 'It actually means vision impaired person, Sir'. I chose VIP as it has the two acronyms. He is a very important person with all the work he does for others, and he is also a vision impaired person. One shot that didn't include Simon, but it captured his life, was of the noticeboard in his kitchen. It really stood out as it listed all his appointments. I wanted to show how busy his life is and how diverse his day. I was on the list, along with interviews with radio stations and newspapers, meetings with well known people and an eye appointment. As it was my final year project I had the freedom to shadow Simon at events and follow his life. It was great to work with Simon and get to know him. My next plan is to exhibit VIP in Leeds and Morley and as I've graduated I'm getting my work out to people."

Luke's website is at: www.lukeholroyd.com



Picture: Luke Holroyd and Simon Brown at the London exhibition of VIP.

Project Gemini 2, by Colin Williamson, Cadet Challenge Project Officer.

When President Obama visited the UK in May 2011, he signed an agreement with Prime Minister David Cameron to create a Task Force for the UK and USA to share best practice in supporting Veterans, Service personnel and their families. The taskforce is jointly led by the Minister for Defence Personnel, Welfare and Veterans, Andrew Robathan MP, and in the US by the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, Dr Clifford Stanley.

That same week Blind Veterans UK established its own transatlantic taskforce, Project Gemini, a partnership with our sister organisation based in the US, the Blinded Veterans Association (BVA). Through peer support the British and American veterans meet to share knowledge, insights and friendship. It gives veterans who have recently lost their sight the opportunity to meet and take part in activities with men and women who have led happy and prosperous lives, despite their blindness, and who can serve as role models and mentors.

On Saturday 19th May members of Blind Veterans UK met up at Port Hall, close to our Brighton centre, to participate in Project Gemini 2, the annual week long get together. The four members included Billy Drinkwater and Ken Facal, who were both injured in the same IED incident whilst serving in Afghanistan in 2010, and Iraq veteran Darren Blanks. They were joined by members of staff Simon Brown, himself an Iraq veteran, Billy Baxter, who lost his sight in Bosnia during the conflict in the Balkans back in the nineties, Colin Williamson, who saw active service in Northern Ireland and Sports and Recreation manager Louise Timms. Colin says: "We were pleased to be joined by Arts and Crafts manager Esther Freeman and volunteer Marika Kato. After a briefing about the week ahead the group settled down to await the arrival of the American group the following morning."

Simon and I were up early on Sunday morning and set off from Port Hall at 04:30, with transport driver Ray Walters to get to Heathrow in time for our first arrival of the day from the US, former Green Beret Steve Baskis, who was injured in a roadside bomb incident whilst serving in Iraq in 2008. Not long afterwards, the main party arrived and included former Army Captain Tim Hornik, blinded in an IED blast in 2004, former Staff Sergeant Dexter Durrante, who saw active

service in Iraq, Somalia and Afghanistan and lost his sight in 2007, and former tank crewman Sergeant Mark Schrand who was involved in a roadside bomb incident whilst serving in Iraq in 2004.

The other guests included old friend and Director of Government Relations with the BVA Dr Tom Zampieri, who was making his second visit to the UK with Project Gemini. Welcome additions to the group were the BVA's Operation Peer Support manager Christina Hitchcock, and Professor Jim Joraksy, the Executive Director of the National Alliance of Eye and Vision Research. Representing the Department of Veterans Affairs was Bobbi Hillen. We were to be joined the following day by US Army General, Don Gagliano and his wife Rosalind. Don is credited as being the top military eye surgeon in the US Army.

After welcoming everyone to Port Hall and a brief introduction we all set off for a delicious traditional Sunday lunch at the Smugglers Rest in Peacehaven and an introduction to the delights of British beer! We were joined for lunch by welcome guests Ray and Robbie Hazan. The rest of the day was spent in and around Port Hall and generally getting to know one another. That evening, we gathered in the lounge where we swung the lamp, joked, laughed and generally enjoyed each others' company.

Monday was an early start and we all trooped off to Brighton station where we were met by Chris White from Southern Rail, whose company had generously provided us with free rail and underground travel for the day's visit to London. Our first activity in London would be a Duck tour.



Picture: The group after a great outing on the Duck. **Photos:** Esther Freeman

We were met by Colonel Gagliano and his lady wife at the departure point for the tour of London landmarks with the London Duck Tour Company. The 'Duck' (actually DUKW) is a familiar sight in London and is a bright yellow six wheel drive amphibious vehicle designed to transport men and equipment over land and water during World War II. The tour lasts for around seventy minutes and culminates in a launch onto the Thames and a 'cruise' down to the Houses of Parliament. It was a marvellous experience for all, made special by a tremendous running commentary by our guide. By coincidence, the vehicle was named 'Rosalind', much to the delight of General Gagliano's wife of the same name!

That afternoon we were guests of Professor Peng Tee Khaw at Moorfields Eye Hospital. Professor Khaw has just been elected the UK's first ever president of the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO) and is the director of research and development at Moorfields, one of the world's top eye hospitals. Professor Khaw had managed to get together the country's top eye surgeons and ophthalmologists, including Wing Commander Robert Scott and Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Jacks, both senior British medical military personnel. The afternoon was interspersed with lectures, presentations, a question and answer session, a tour of the facilities and a briefing by our very own David Habershon, Head of Membership & Reunions. Everyone agreed that the visit was a tremendous success and a real insight into recent groundbreaking research work into the treatment, aftercare and ongoing pioneering work for our eye trauma casualties. We also heard of the exciting development into the regeneration of damaged nerve cells and stem cell research.

One speaker from the Project Gemini group was Professor James Jorkasky, Executive Director of the National Alliance for Eye and Vision Research (NAEVR). This is an organisation which lobbies in the United States to increase funding for vision research. James gave a very informative and entertaining account of his role in supporting vision research in the United States and gave useful insights into how to lobby politicians to increase awareness of the need for vision research. He was careful to point out that there were significant cultural and other differences between Europe and North America, but there is much to be learnt from his experience in the United States. Just prior to the trip, NAEVR released to Capitol Hill its study entitled, Costs of Military Eye Injury, Vision Impairment and Related Blindness and Vision Dysfunction Associated

with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) without Eye Injury. Based on published data from 2000-2010, the total incident cost of eye injury each year has been \$2.282 billion, yielding a total cost to the economy over this timeframe of \$25.107 billion. James said that, "Project Gemini was a remarkable and life-affirming experience that enabled me to reflect on the very reason why NAEVR exists to ensure funding for vision research that brings hope to patients."

That evening we were guests of the Union Jack Club at Waterloo for dinner and a brief presentation on the history of the club.

Tuesday was a full day spent at our Brighton centre meeting various heads of departments and touring our very impressive facilities. This is always a highlight for our American guests and they never fail to come away totally amazed at the professionalism, dedication and commitment of our members of staff at the centre. After a superb lunch in the Winter Gardens, courtesy of PBK, the afternoon was spent taking part in archery and acoustic rifle shooting in the sports hall. That evening we walked along to the Marina and had a game of ten pin bowling. Our American cousins having the upper hand!

Wednesday was another early start and a visit to the Tower of London which was really interesting and enjoyable. We are so fortunate to live in a country so rich in history and beautiful architecture. The evening was spent at the bar at our Brighton centre where a traditional meal of fish and chips was liberally washed down with pints of good old British ale!



Picture: The group listen to a talk given by a Beefeater at the Tower of London.

Thursday we were up early to catch our transport to take us to Portsmouth Historic Dockyards to visit the Royal Naval Museum, take a tour of Queen Victoria's flagship and Britain's first iron clad warship HMS Warrior. Also included was a harbour tour onboard one of the excursion vessels which saw us cruise close by the aircraft carriers HMS Ark Royal and HMS Illustrious. One of our American guests was heard to comment: "Is that a couple of tug boats for our US aircraft carriers?" Obviously, he was referring to the immense size of the US ships USS George HW Bush and USS Theodore Roosevelt. Our American friend was last seen floating towards the Isle of Wight.



Picture: At Portsmouth on deck with a canon in the sunshine.

Friday was another 'day of culture' and we visited the beautiful Arundel Castle, ancestral home of the Duke of Norfolk. For those who have never visited the castle it is probably one of the most magnificent stately homes in the country. Set in beautiful landscaped gardens and overlooking the River Arun, the castle is a breathtaking sight and a superb piece of English heritage.

On the Friday evening we all gathered in the bar at the Brighton centre to celebrate the success of Project Gemini 2. It had been a fantastic week and members of both organisations came away with some very positive and happy memories of the week spent together. One of the main objectives of Project Gemini is to provide blinded veterans from both sides of the pond an opportunity to interact with other former Service men and women who have suffered similar experiences and who are going through, or have already made, the journey to independence. This was achieved. Another objective is to discuss

and experience advances in treatments and adaptive technologies for the blind and vision impaired; again, this was achieved.

The veterans grew closer as the week progressed and each shared helpful hints about coping with blindness and the 'war stories' that are part of the adjustment process for each one. They joked and laughed about some things and grew quiet when speaking of lost battle buddies who will never return. "Project Gemini left a profound impact on me," said Tim Hornik. "For starters, it enabled me a lot of time to sit back and discuss with our veteran peers what it is like to be vision impaired and then to be constantly amazed at how, regardless of where one might live in the world, our trials and tribulations end up being very similar." According to Tim, the exchange helped him put his challenges in perspective and know that others had experienced some of the same feelings and emotions. "Being able to share what we have done to overcome our trials, and receiving the true empathy that came from doing so, legitimised many of the feelings I possess." Tim also credited the travel itself with helping him feel more independent. "This confidence derived from the fact that we were constantly on the go, using multiple forms of public and private transport, and implementing the skills learned through rehab and peer support groups," he said.

Other participants from both the UK and the US voiced similar opinions about their week together. "I hope this program will continue long into the future," said Steve Baskis. "It was truly amazing and memorable, allowing veterans from both countries who have sustained life changing injuries to learn what is available to them and what can be done to recover and heal."

We have a lot of people to thank for making this week a success. Firstly, all the companies and individuals who gave us free or generously discounted tickets, for visits, travel and attractions. Secondly, thanks to the members of staff from both organisations for making the week possible and for their help and support before, during and after the event. And last but not least, the members of Blind Veterans UK and the Blinded Veterans Association of America, who took part in the week. You were all fantastic ambassadors for both organisations and a great help and support to one another. I enjoyed your company and camaraderie and I could even be persuaded, provided I had the necessary medication, to spend more time with Billy Baxter and his American side kick Dexter Durrante; think 'Chuckle Brothers' on valium and you'll get an idea of what I'm talking about!

Armed Forces Day 2012

On Saturday 30th June, members of the public came out in their thousands across the country to more than 200 events held to celebrate the men and women of the Armed Forces, past and present, at the fourth annual Armed Forces Day.

At the national event in Plymouth, His Royal Highness The Earl of Wessex, representing The Queen and the Royal Family, took the salute as a parade of more than 1,200 Service personnel, veterans and cadets marched through the city streets and on to the historic Plymouth Hoe. Also in attendance were the Prime Minister, the Lord Mayor of Plymouth Councillor Michael Wright, Minister for Defence Personnel, Welfare and Veterans Andrew Robathan, and the First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope.

Standard Bearer Nigel Whiteley represented us in the parade and in the public tents the Blind Veterans UK stand was manned by Simon Brown Iraq veteran and Membership Officer, Andrew Jones, Director of Fundraising and Communications, and Rebecca Watson, Events Assistant.

Nigel Whiteley, who served with the Fleet Air Arm, Naval Air Commando Squadron, part of 3 Commando Brigade, said: "I have been extremely proud to represent Blind Veterans UK as a Standard Bearer. I was delighted to take part in the national Armed Forces Day celebrations in Plymouth and march with the Standard in the parade. There were about 80 Standard Bearers from various military organisations and as we marched through the streets the applause and cheers from the crowds was fantastic. The streets were packed with about 30,000 people of all ages and backgrounds who wanted to show their support for our Service men and women and veterans. I want to thank Craig Reed for marching with me. Craig is an instructor at HMS Collingwood and he has also been teaching Service personnel how to raise flags during the official Olympic celebrations. He was also involved with the Diamond Jubilee celebrations and is about to start work with the First Sea Lord. Later that day The Military Wives Choir, who supported our summer fundraising event, performed a selection of songs to a large audience. The finale of the day was a spectacular air show by the Red Arrows, which drew in the cheering crowds."



Picture: Nigel Whiteley with Chief Petty Officer Craig Reed.



Picture: Simon Brown with the Minister for Defence Personnel, Welfare and Veterans, Andrew Robathan MP. **Photos:** Jax Whiteley.

Second archery week from the 2nd to 10th June, by Peter Hammond.

Saturday 2nd June saw 15 archers from all over the country gathered down at the bottom field at the Brighton centre for our second gathering of this year. The archers were: Eileen Thompson, Marjorie Scott, David Poyner, Peter Price, Kelvin Platt, Keith Lanchester-Harding, John Bower, Patrick Sidnell, Paul Palmer, Michael Foreman, Bert Nelson, Clive Jones and Norman Perry. We were also joined by two new archers, Jack O'Hare and Sandy Donnelly. Welcome to the club and we hope that you have many years of enjoyment with us.

Saturday was taken up with equipment checks and practice for the archers, along with the usual catching up with each other.

Sunday was an away day as we all headed off to Ditchling Archery Club. The weather was cloudy with a few showers thrown in for good measure. It was great to meet up with old friends and meet some new ones. The round shot today was a Junior Windsor. Ditchling won this time - it was a win for us last year. Our team was Bert Nelson, Kelvin Platt, David Poyner and Peter Price.

Monday's round was a St Nicholas and it was for the Curly Wagstaff Trophy. It was cloudy and windy but at least the rain held off. Third place went to Clive Jones, second place was Kelvin Platt and the winner of the Curly Wagstaff Trophy was Bert Nelson. Well done Bert.

Tuesday was the Tri Service match. The morning was cold and windy and then whilst we were at lunch the heavens opened up and the round had to be shortened. The Army came first, the Navy in second place and we came in third, the RAF finishing in fourth place. Our team was formed of Peter Price, David Poyner, Bert Nelson and Paul Palmer.

Wednesday was the Diamond Jubilee Shoot. Once again it was a cold and windy day. Kelvin Platt came third, Michael Foreman came second and Bert Nelson was the winner.

Friday was a very windy day and because of safety, the shoot had to take place in the sports hall. The round was a Portsmouth and it was for The RUC pairs. Second place went to Eileen Thompson and Keith Lanchester-Harding. The winner of the RUC Pairs this year went to Peter Price and Michael Foreman.

Saturday was patchy sunshine with a bit of wind. The round shot today was a Junior Western against Ditchling and Newhaven. After a good match with plenty of banter between the archers came the long awaited results. Newhaven came third, we came second and Ditchling were the winners. Our team was Dave Poyner, Bert Nelson, Paul Palmer and Patrick Sidnell.

Sunday was showers and windy so once again the shoot had to be held in the sports hall. The round shot was a Portsmouth. Clickers Archery Club came from Norwich and we also had another team from Southampton University. Our archers won the match against Clickers and came second against Southampton University. Thanks to both teams who make such an effort to come and shoot against us, both have a very long journey to make this shoot possible and we do appreciate it. Our team members were Bert Nelson, Peter Price, Paul Palmer and Patrick Sidnell.

Over the course of the week many of the archers set personal bests and a few shot new club records. Peter Price was the first VI archer shooting with a tactile site to score over 500 points for the Portsmouth round. Well done to all the archers for making the second archery week such a great success. Jack and Sandy, we hope that you enjoyed yourselves and that you will join us for our next archery week in August.

Many thanks to David Poyner, our chairman, who organised this week's shoots. Also many thanks to all our coaches and volunteers for spotting for us, without them we could not have these archery weeks.

So once again many thanks to everyone involved for making the week so successful. Have a safe journey home and let's all catch up again in August.

Olympic Torchbearers Craig Lundberg, Darren Blanks and Simon Brown.

On 22nd March 2007, Corporal Craig 'Freddie' Lundberg, a sniper in The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment, was serving his second tour of duty in Iraq. His Platoon was part of an operation to arrest known insurgents in Basra when a neighbouring unit came under heavy attack. Positioned on a rooftop, Craig and his men immediately tried to draw the enemy's fire. In the fierce fighting that ensued, Craig was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade. The impact shattered his left arm and sent razor-sharp fragments of burning shrapnel flying into his face.

Craig lost his left eye instantly and his right eye was damaged beyond repair. Incredibly, Craig tried to continue fighting: "I got up and demanded my rifle, but it had been bent by the force of the blast. My mate got me another rifle and I tried to carry on firing. But I only managed a few steps before I collapsed."

Craig's life was saved by his colleague and friend Darren Topham who got him off the burning roof. The two have been best friends ever since and when on 1st June Craig Lundberg was the final Olympic Torchbearer in Liverpool he chose Darren to be there, to stand beside him, and share centre stage.

Craig told the Review: "I feel proud to have represented my city. It was a great experience, mainly because I did it with Darren. Who would have thought that five years after he saved my life and helped me off the roof we would be standing together with the Olympic Torch, being cheered by thousands of people. It was incredible to be the final Torchbearer in Liverpool. I came over with the Torch from Birkenhead on the Mersey Ferry. It's such an iconic part of the city; it's got an incredible skyline that's one of the best in the world. At Liverpool Pier Head where we lit the cauldron there were more than 21,000 people waiting for me to come with the Torch. I couldn't see them but I could certainly hear their applause. I didn't realise what a big thing it would be and the pressure that would be on me. Especially because there was an hour long programme on BBC1 dedicated to it. I wanted to make sure I got it right, didn't mess anything up. I didn't and it was amazing.

"I recently became a dad, which is the most incredible thing in the world, and I can tell my son Ben what an eventful year he was born into. I was nominated by the comedian John Bishop, who I met during filming of *Route Irish*, a film directed by Ken Loach. I want to thank John for nominating me and for buying the Torch for me."



Picture: Craig Lundberg lights the Olympic cauldron with Darren Topham. **Photo:** Simon Kirwan, Lightbox Photography. Tel: 01704 566066 Mob: 07751 621691 Web: www.the-lightbox.com

On 21st June, 25 year old Darren Blanks had the honour to carry the Olympic Torch through Flimby, Cumbria. Darren, who served in the King's Royal Hussars, and completed two tours of Iraq, said:

"Apart from the birth of my son Jensen, it was one of the best experiences of my life. The atmosphere was incredible as there were the Samsung and Coca Cola party buses, the crowd was huge and there were 60 people I knew waiting to cheer me on. I think I smiled all the way as I ran with the Torch, as I couldn't believe I was carrying it. Samsung gave me my Torch and, like Jamie Cuthbertson who featured in last month's Review, I've been taking the Torch to nurseries and schools where the kids get a chance to hold it. It's great fun and I feel very privileged. Of course my son has held the Torch, but as he's only two years old it's a bit heavy for him to hold on his own right now.

"What made the day truly special is that I was handed the Olympic flame by Joss Naylor MBE, the legendary fell runner in the area. I didn't find out until the day that Joss would hand the flame to me. He's a super fit guy who on his 60th birthday ran up 60 peaks. I really want to thank my brother Wayne who nominated me and Samsung who selected me and gave me the Torch. It was a once in a lifetime experience that I will never forget."



Picture: Darren Blanks, right, lights his Olympic Torch in the 'kiss' from the legendary fell runner Joss Naylor's.

June 25th - Day 38 of this epic Olympic Torch Relay across the UK began just before 7.20am and travelled over 83 miles from Leeds to Sheffield. Without exception all the Torchbearers who carried the Olympic Flame that day received a typically warm Yorkshire welcome, under mostly-sunny skies. When the Relay reached Morley, the streets were packed and the atmosphere fantastic as Simon Brown had his turn to carry the Flame. Simon, who is now Membership Officer at Blind Veterans UK, was one of the first Torchbearers to be announced by Lloyds TSB. According to his nominator Eleanor Noakes, 'Simon's life changed forever in 2006 when he was shot in the face saving the lives of six of his colleagues in Iraq. After months of rehabilitation and dozens of operations to rebuild his face Simon now helps people come to terms with their own loss of sight at Blind Veterans UK. He is a true inspiration to his community.' For

his part Simon said that he was excited and nervous, but felt honoured and proud to represent Morley. He also said that to run in his hometown with such a fantastic turnout was amazing.



Picture: Simon Brown raises his right arm as he is at the centre of activity in Morley.



Picture: Simon Brown and partner Marika Kato celebrate in Morley.

The beginnings of the Paralympics movement, by Rob Baker, Collections and Archives Officer.

The London Olympics and Paralympics this summer is an opportunity for us to remember that members of Blind Veterans UK, then St Dunstaners, participated in a wide range of sporting activities long before the formal beginnings of the Paralympics.

The term Paralympic was first used at the 1988 games, but the first Olympics which brought together athletes who were blind, amputees and in wheelchairs was that in Toronto in 1976. However the birthplace of the Paralympic movement is usually recognised as Stoke Mandeville in Buckinghamshire. Here Sir Ludwig Guttman, director of the Spinal Injuries Centre at Stoke Mandeville Hospital, organised the Stoke Mandeville Games for Second World War veterans with injuries of that nature.

Guttman's work was very important but he was not the first to organise competitive sport for a disabled group, and Blind Veterans UK, then St Dunstan's, had an important and pioneering role. Our location in our early years in London's Regent's Park was ideal for a wide range of sports and games. Rowing in the lake there was very popular with members, and soon this developed into challenge matches against other organisations, and an annual regatta on the Thames. Other sports that were popular included swimming, waterpolo, competitive walking and tandem cycling. An annual sports day took place, with hundreds of members taking part in activities including throwing the cricket ball, obstacle races, skipping, putting weights, the 100 yards relay and tug of war.

Football, unsurprisingly, was also very popular. Early attempts at playing conventionally, with a bell inside the ball, were unsuccessful, but in 1920 a challenge cup tournament was established with penalty kicks as the method of scoring. A sighted goalkeeper played for both sides. The Arsenal, Everton and Sunderland teams all came to test their skills against ours and the Arsenal and England goalkeeper, Ernest Williamson kept goal in a number of the challenge cup finals.

Our involvement in sport is a long and fascinating story which continues to the present day and includes participation in a team led by Ludwig Guttman at an International Games for the Disabled in France in 1969, as well as many appearances in events at Stoke Mandeville. We have other connections with Stoke Mandeville Hospital too, as our own Second World War Hospital Unit was based there from 1944 until the end of the war.

These links are featured in a new exhibition at Stoke Mandeville Stadium which traces the path to today's Paralympic Games. It includes photos from our Collections & Archives of the early activities in Regent's Park. The exhibition title had not been confirmed at the time of going to press, but it will take place from the 1st August to 23rd September. For further information, see the Mandeville Legacy website, www.mandevillelegacy.org.uk and the Stoke Mandeville Stadium website, www.stokemandevillestadium.co.uk or telephone: 01296 484848.



Picture: A walking race in Regent's Park.

50 Year Badge Holders Reunion, Church Stretton, 14th to 17th June 2012, by Ray Hazan OBE.

They came from all points on the compass - from Loch Fyne to Brighton, from Cardiff to Kent; all were aiming for one point on the map - the Longmynd Hotel, Church Stretton, St Dunstan's wartime location. Ten blind veterans, sixteen widows plus escorts were congregating to celebrate the holding of their 50 year badges and to welcome two new members to this special group.

There is no need to familiarise oneself with the hotel as it is a well used venue for the event, even down to being allocated the same room each time in most cases. The first evening meal is a case of eating, competing with the need to exchange news of the past 12 months. It is wonderful to witness the warm feeling as at a family gathering and it is a privilege to be part of it.

On the Saturday, we visited the Blists Hill Victorian town situated at the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site. The 52 acre site is a bustling reconstruction where you step back over 100 years consisting of homes, places of work and shops selling everything from bicycles to medicinal potions. A temperance lady urged everyone not to drink beer or other strong alcoholic beverages. A cart drawn by shire horses trundled up and down the high street. A cottage, moved from a site three miles away, gave an insight into family life in those days; head cracking door posts, tiny rooms heated by a single fire but the whole redolent of a close family life, content with what little they had. Whilst some returned to base, others visited the Ironbridge itself plus the Coalport China Museum.

We were very pleased that evening to welcome one of our Vice Patrons, Air Chief Marshal Sir Joe French, KCB, CBE, FRAeS, RAF accompanied by his wife Margaret. Our other guests were the new Mayor of Church Stretton, Tom Beaumont and his wife Yvonne, together with Christine Harvey, Town Clerk and her husband Philip and Nigel Marsden, whose mother was a devoted supporter of our organisation. Before Sir Joe addressed the gathering, Barry Porter introduced two members who had 'earned' their 50 year badges; David Thomas and Brian Lang. Both had served with the Royal Army Service Corps. David had worked as a telephonist with Barclays Bank until his retirement and Brian had spent 20 years with British Aerospace becoming a volunteer with the well known Christopher Grange centre in Liverpool.

Sir Joe then gave a very entertaining résumé of his distinguished career recalling some of his lighter moments. He joined the RAF in 1967 as a helicopter pilot. Two years later whilst serving in the Middle East, he attended a Mess party. The next morning, he was summoned by the Squadron Commander, thinking it was to be a discussion about his future. But it was not the future he imagined. He had been very rude, apparently, to one of the young ladies attending the party. He was ordered to telephone his apologies, which he did and they were married two years later!

Sir Joe talked about his service in Northern Ireland; how the terrorist threat stopped Service men and women wearing uniform in public and lowering their awareness in the public psyche. He reminisced about the 55 countries he had visited during his Service and some of the characters he had met.

He talked about Iraq and Afghanistan - the latter, a war, which the longer it went on, was possibly more difficult to understand. He felt politicians had not adequately described why we were there. He paid tribute to the supporting staff, especially doctors, who had come out to the theatre to face unprecedented injury cases.

Sir Joe concluded by praising charities that provide after-care for those injured physically and mentally by conflict. He felt it a privilege to be associated with Blind Veterans UK. Ray Hazan OBE gave a vote of thanks and Pat Fulling presented Lady French with a bouquet. After dinner, Sir Joe went around the gathering talking to the blind veterans and hearing their histories.

Another dull day weather-wise greeted us on Saturday morning. Church Stretton seemed very empty and a visit to Ludlow for lunch consisted of dodging into shops to avoid the rain.

The final meal on Saturday evening was a wonderfully informal and cheerful affair. Chief Executive Robert Leader summed up the feelings of all those staff and friends and helpers by expressing heartfelt thanks for being invited to attend the gathering and to be able to experience the wonderfully warm atmosphere which personified this special group of St Dunstaners. Tribute was paid to all the helpers; escorts, staff from both Harcourt Street and Brighton and welfare officers. In particular, thanks to Barry Porter, Barbara Sweeney and the transport department who bore the brunt of all the administration.

A raffle was held in which a cake, beautifully decorated with our new badge and made by Dot Madgwick was won by Doreen Littlewood, escort to Marjorie Coupland. Bill Lyth generously donated a bottle of rum, which was won by a fellow member of the Senior Service, John Lilley.

Time for departure came all too soon. Farewells were expressed for another year and a very happy band of 'brothers and sisters' may have dispersed geographically but the bond and spirit of the old St Dunstan's can never be broken.



Picture: From left to right: Joan Osborne, Nancy Bickley and Marie Blacker.
Photo: Bill Lyth.

Answers to 10 questions on... the subject of ... elements from page 9.

1. Tin.
2. Silver.
3. Krypton.
4. Chlorine.
5. Gold.
6. California, the element being Californium.
7. Aluminium.
8. Iron.
9. Madam Marie Curie, born in Poland.
10. Canada.

Kerry Reed swims 2,000 lengths at Brighton.

Although her eyes were obscured by goggles as she powered through the water in the swimming pool at the Brighton centre, it was easy to see the determined look on Kerry's face. Kerry had set herself the challenge to swim 400 lengths a day over five days from 25th to 29th June. She would complete 2,000 lengths, which is enough to swim the channel. She did it. And all to raise money for Blind Veterans UK. Kerry who served with the RAF, and is now studying complementary therapies, wanted to give something back to the charity that she says gave her back her life after her descent into blindness.

Kerry said. "I would like to start by thanking Kayla Hammond and Steve Mills in the sports and recreation department for looking after my guide dog Spirit and giving me moral support. They counted the lengths as I swam, which I really appreciated. I would also like to thank Iain Millard for the great massages, which made all the difference to me as I had pain in places I didn't know could be painful. I would like to thank Minnie Finlay and her daughter Lisa for the good laughs we shared at the centre and their support and help with Spirit. It's now five days since I swam the distance to take me from England to France and I'm recovering. It was an incredible experience and I hope it brings in a lot of money for Blind Veterans UK, as it's my way of saying thank you to this wonderful charity that does so much for us."

If you would like to sponsor Kerry go to her Justgiving page at: www.justgiving.com/Kerry-Reed



Picture: Kerry Reed powers through the water.

Blind Veterans UK in the news

Like most charities, getting positive coverage in the newspapers and on TV and radio is a good way for Blind Veterans UK to raise its profile among potential new supporters and members. So we thought you might like to know how we are doing in that regard. Here are a few highlights:

April 2012 brought two significant PR opportunities – the London Marathon and the 30th Anniversary of the Falklands War.

Among several members to run the London Marathon was 24 year old Lance Bombardier Rob Long. And he had two special running partners - his sighted guide and friend Lance Corporal Terry Desmond and Blind Veterans UK's Ambassador, actor Lachlan Nieboer. We took photographs of the trio training for the Marathon and circulated them to the media. The story of their comradeship and Rob's courage at running the Marathon while blind, really engaged the media, resulting in an impressive 393 news articles in a wide variety of publications including the Evening Standard and Sunday Telegraph. That excellent publicity inspired a surge in public donations, doubling Rob's fundraising target for Blind Veterans UK.

We knew that the 30th Anniversary of the Falklands War would bring media interest in our members, and so Falklands veterans Stephen Tuffen and Terry Bullingham, both of whom joined Blind Veterans UK as a result of injuries received during the Falklands War, agreed to step into the limelight.

Stephen talked about his Falklands experiences and the part that Blind Veterans UK, then St Dunstan's, played in helping him regain independence, in interviews with BBC TV South East, BBC Radio Kent, Kent on Sunday newspaper and several other regional papers. Terry Bullingham was interviewed on Radio 4's In Touch programme.

In June we needed the public to get behind the Tarts for Troops summer fundraising campaign and to that end we generated lots of coverage in a variety of media including British Forces News, Yours magazine, Mature Times, and all the papers local to our three centres. Much of the media interest was thanks to the fact the Military Wives Choir was backing the campaign, and their

own Tarts for Troops party gained fantastic coverage in their hometown of Plymouth. A special thanks must go to the members and staff of the Llandudno centre who held an 'extreme' tea party on the summit of Mount Snowdon. They drank tea and ate tarts in high winds and snow just to promote Tarts for Troops, and were rewarded for their efforts with super coverage in all the local media including Wales Daily Post.



Picture: One of the Military Wives at a Tarts for Troops tea party.

Family News

Congratulations to:

Dr Giles and Gemma Hazan, a daughter, Elizabeth Rose (7lbs 4oz) on 27th June; a second granddaughter to Ray and Roberta Hazan.

Nicola and Owein Curtis on the 28th December 2011 on the birth of a son Josiah Gwilliam, great grandson of Clifford Gower.

Louise and John Lehar on the 2nd May 2012 on the birth of a daughter Nieve Elizabeth, great granddaughter of Clifford Gower.

Nigel and Jacquie Whiteley are pleased to announce the marriage of Jacquie's son Michael Keeley to the lovely Louise Sinden on 21st June in Fiji.

Birthdays:

Happy 102nd Birthday to Thomas Christie of Leeds, West Yorkshire on 23rd July.

Happy 102nd Birthday to Arthur Steemson on 28th July.

Happy 100th Birthday to Joseph Davies of Blackpool, Lancs on 27th July.

Anniversaries:

Alec and Diana Palmer on their 72nd wedding anniversary on 7th July.



Picture: Diana and Alec Palmer on their wedding day.

Leonard and Clara Milnes on their 72nd anniversary on 20th July.

Blue Sapphire 65th:

Melvyn and Patricia Howe, of Porthcawl, Mid Glamorgan on 5th July.
Ronald and Vera Almquest of Bromsgrove, Worcestershire on 12th July.
Nancy and Richard Jackson of Godalming, Surrey on 22nd July.
Eric and Patricia Prior of Kidderminster, Worcestershire on 24th July.
Douglas and Nancy Lindley of Rotherham, South Yorkshire on 26th July.

Diamond (60th):

Nathan and Josephine Barker of Hove, East Sussex on 6th July.
Maurice and Rhonda Bell of Carlisle, Cumbria on 7th July.
Gordon and Amelia Jackson of Hartlepool, Cleveland on 12th July.
Eric and Doris Elliott of Romford, Essex on 19th July.
Douglas and Maureen Parker of Sheffield, South Yorkshire on 19th July.
Tony and Jeannine Billingham of Cambridge, Cambs on 24th July.
Thomas and Gwen Lavell of Dorking, Surrey on 26th July.
Eddie and Maria Dunn of Stoke on Trent, Staffs on 26th July.

Golden (50th):

Bryan and Val Alexander of Hayling Island, Hants on 21st July.
Graham and Eileen Keeling of Holywell, Clwyd on 29th July.

Ruby (40th):

Vernon and Pat Price of Eastbourne, East Sussex on 22nd July.
Clive and Linda Gerrelli of Crawley, West Sussex on 30th July.

Pearl (30th):

Colin and Brenda Williamson of Hebburn, Tyne and Wear on 17th July.

Silver (25th):

Les and Jenny Wigham of Stoke on Trent, Staffs on 11th July.

We regret to announce the death of:

Mary Argyle who died on 25th March 2012, she was the wife of Reginald Argyle.

Ursula Baldwin who died on 25th May 2012, she was the wife of Stanley Baldwin.

Phyllis Fleckney who died on 7th June 2012, she was the wife of Dennis Fleckney.

Mary (Josie) King who died on 20th June 2012, she was the wife of Joseph King.

May Lawson who died on 1st January 2012, she was the wife of John Lawson.

Mary Marsh who died on 5th June 2012, she was the widow of William Marsh.

Mavis Martin who died on 17th June 2012, she was the wife of David Martin.

Dorothy Morgan who died on 3rd July 2012, she was the wife of Jacob Morgan.

Joyce Morrison who died on 6th June 2012, she was the wife of Charles Morrison.

Margaret Pearson who died on 14th June 2012, she was the widow of the late Albert Pearson.

Florence Robinson who died on 2nd May 2012, she was the widow of the late Joseph Robinson.

Eva Warrington who died on 13th October 2011, she was the wife of Alan Warrington.

Richard Wilkinson, who died on 1st January 2011, he was the husband of Edna Wilkinson.

Welcome to Blind Veterans UK

Max Adams of Newhaven, East Sussex served in the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry and the Royal Army Service Corps from 1932 to 1946.

Bryan Aylward of South Croydon, Surrey served in the Royal Signals from 1952 to 1958.

Frederick Baldock of Birmingham served in the South Staffordshire Regiment from 1957 to 1960.

Eric Bertram of Maidstone, Kent served in the Royal Air Force from 1943 to 1947.

Jack Bottrill of Torpoint, Cornwall served in the Royal Army Service Corps and the Royal Corps of Transport from 1965 to 1968.

John Chamberlain-Hill of Crediton, Devon served in the Royal Artillery from 1954 to 1959.

Christopher Christmas of Liskeard, Cornwall served in the Royal Artillery and the Royal Engineers from 1957 to 1964.

Francis Clarkson of Whitby, North Yorkshire served in the Army Catering Corps from 1955 to 1960.

Francis Colley of Cambridge served in the Royal Artillery from 1940 to 1946.

Rodney Cordy of Newton Flotman, Norwich served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1956 to 1958.

Henry Cosgrove of Wirral, Merseyside served in the Royal Marines from 1941 to 1946.

Kenneth Crump of Dunstable, Beds served in the Royal Artillery from 1942 to 1947.

Harry Dawson of Langley Mill, Nottingham served in the Royal Marines from 1942 to 1946.

Kenneth Dean of St Helens, Merseyside served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Engineers from 1945 to 1948.

Ernest Dearing of Lewes, East Sussex served in the Royal Signals from 1940 to 1967.

Charles Devos of Uckfield, East Sussex served in the General Service Corps, the Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment), the East Surrey Regiment and the Gloucester Regiment from 1944 to 1948.

Bernard Eardley of Bury, Lancs served in the Lancashire Fusiliers from 1954 to 1960.

Frederick Edwards of Deeside, Clwyd served in the Royal Pioneer Corps and the Royal Welch Fusiliers from 1941 to 1946.

Charles Ellis of St Helens, Merseyside served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1941 to 1947.

Ronald Gard of Clehonger, Hereford served in the Royal Air Force from 1939 to 1946.

Norman Gavin of Forest Row, East Sussex served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

Anthony Gollop of Aylesbury, Bucks served in the Royal Engineers from 1975 to 1986.

Joan Grabham of Marton in Cleveland, Middlesbrough served in the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm from 1943 to 1946.

Charles Hanwell of Hove, East Sussex served in the General Service Corps, the

Royal Leicestershire Regiment, the Highland Light Infantry (City of Glasgow Regiment) and the Royal Leicestershire Regiment from 1944 to 1952.

William Heasman of Shoreham by Sea, West Sussex served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1946.

Kenneth Hobbs of Eastbourne, East Sussex served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1942 to 1947.

William Holden of Colne, Lancs served in the Royal Warwickshire Regiment and the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment from 1944 to 1946.

Bryan Hollands of Guildford, Surrey served in the Royal Signals from 1941 to 1947.

James Kendall of Blackburn, Lancs served in the Home Guard from 1942 to 1945.

George Macken of Poulton le Fylde, Lancs served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

Eileen McAllister of Holyhead, Gwynedd served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1942 to 1946.

Gerald Mellish of Westcliff on Sea, Essex served in the Royal Air Force, the Royal Warwickshire Regiment and the Royal Norfolk Regiment from 1943 to 1947.

William Mock of Cranleigh, Surrey served in the Home Guard from 1940 to 1944.

John Moreline of Southend on Sea, Essex served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1941 to 1945.

David Morton of Huntington, York served in the Royal Signals from 1968 to 1992.

Ronald Oldham of Sheffield served in the Royal Artillery from 1942 to 1946.

Brian O'Neill of Barmouth, Gwynedd served in the Royal Navy from 1944 to 1948.

Peter Pascoe of Grays, Essex served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Army Service Corps from 1944 to 1945.

Ronald Pluck of Rainham, Essex served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1952 to 1958.

Ann Pollard of Skirlaugh, Hull served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1939 to 1949.

Geoffrey Poulter of Elland, West Yorkshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1946.

Robert Ramage of Prestwick, Ayrshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

Frederick Randall of Hatfield, Herts served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

Leonard Semmens of Padstow, Cornwall served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Army Pay Corps from 1943 to 1954.

John Stephenson of Alnwick, Northumberland served in the Royal Air Force from 1959 to 1991.

Phillip Sutton of Stratford-Upon-Avon, Warwickshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1980 to 1997.

Peter Thomas of Hayling Island, Hampshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1951 to 1954.

Albert Vickers of Barnsley, South Yorkshire served in the Royal Signals from 1947 to 1949.

Terrison Whitehead of Churchdown, Gloucester served in the General Service Corps, the Gloucester Regiment, the Devonshire Regiment and the Royal Army Service Corps from 1944 to 1952.

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.

Bertram Bale, Welsh Guards

Bertram Bale of Newport, Gwent died on 25th June 2012, aged 79. He initially joined the Merchant Navy, before volunteering for the Welsh Guards in 1953, serving in the UK and Egypt. He was discharged as a Lance Corporal in 1956 when he returned to the Merchant Navy. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Maud Beasley, Auxiliary Territorial Service

Maud Beasley of Aylesbury, Bucks died on 2nd May 2012, aged 97. She served in the ATS from 1941 to 1945 in the UK. Our sympathy goes to all members of her family.

Granville Burne, Royal Armoured Corps

Granville Burne of Burnham on Sea, Somerset died on 30th March 2012, aged 86. He served in the Royal Armoured Corps from 1943 until his discharge in 1948 as a Sergeant. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Norman Davidson, Royal Air Force

Norman Davidson of Spalding, Lincs died on 5th July aged 89. He joined the RAF in 1941 and served in the UK & Canada before he was discharged as a Warrant Officer in 1946. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Terence Foster, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers

Terence Foster of Long Eaton, Nottingham died on 23rd June 2012, aged 80. He joined the REME in 1950 as a career soldier and served in all parts of the world including Europe, Cyprus, Egypt, Kenya, Tanzania, Germany and Aden. He left the Army as a WO1 at the end of his 22 year engagement in 1972. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Mary Foulkes, Queen Alexander's Royal Army Nursing Corps

Mary Foulkes of Horsham, West Sussex died on 25th February 2012, aged 100. After completion of her nursing training she joined the QAIMNS(R) in 1942. She served in the UK, India and Burma. She was involved with the Burma campaign and followed the advancing troops in the Casualty Clearing Station. She was then involved with the reception and treatment of FEPOWs. At the end of the war she continued to nurse on a part-time basis at Stoke Mandeville Hospital. Our sympathy goes to all members of her family.

Kelvin George, Royal Air Force

Kelvin George of Hackney, East London died on 21st June 2012, aged 68. He served in the RAF from 1960 to 1964, serving in RAF Bruggen, Germany and at King's Lynn, Norfolk. He injured his back and was consequently medically discharged. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Edward 'Ted' John, Royal Navy

Edward 'Ted' John MBE of Brighton, East Sussex died on 9th June 2012, aged 86. Ted who was originally a native of Wallasey moved into the Brighton centre in 2010. He served as a Signaller in the Royal Navy from 1944 to 1947. Ted became a member of Blind Veterans UK, then St Dunstan's, in 1951. He was made an MBE for his work with the Police in June 1981 in the Queen's Birthday Honours. A radio ham, he was one of the founder members of the then St Dunstan's amateur radio society. As Secretary, he never missed a meeting in 35 years. He was always there to welcome new members and encourage beginners. During the Queen's visit to the Brighton centre in 1985 he spoke with Her Majesty about amateur radio. In 2011 he was awarded the G3MOW Memorial Trophy, the vote was carried unanimously in favour of him in recognition of 35 years of loyal service to the Society. He was also a keen member of the walking club. In all aspects of life, he had the full support of his late wife, Beryl. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

John Lee, Royal Air Force

John Lee of Colwyn Bay, Clwyd died on 28th May 2012, aged 91. He joined the RAF as a Dental Officer in 1942. He trained at RAF Sidmouth and worked in a mobile dental surgery throughout the eastern counties before permanent posting to Guildford prior to being discharged as a Flight Lieutenant in 1947. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Harold McMullan, Royal Air Force

Harold McMullan of Aylesbury, Bucks died on 1st June 2012, aged 85. He joined the RAF in 1948 and trained at RAF Padgate. He served as a drill instructor at RAF Uxbridge and South Cerney, Wilts, before discharge as a Corporal in 1953. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Leslie Peploe, Royal Air Force

Leslie Peploe of Brighton, East Sussex died on 23rd June 2012, aged 94. He served as a Leading Aircraftman from 1940 to 1946 in the UK and India. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Robert Peters, Royal Signals

Robert Peters of Brighton, East Sussex died on 8th June 2012, aged 89. He joined the Royal Signals in 1941 and after training went to radio school. He served in Aldershot and was later posted to India via South Africa. He spent a couple of years in Bangalore and was then deployed to support the effort in the Burmese campaign with the 14th Army where he finally ended up in Rangoon. He returned to the UK and was discharged as a Signaller in 1946. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Donald Sangster, Royal Signals

Donald Sangster of Fife, Scotland died on 16th June 2012, aged 89. He joined the Royal Signals in 1942. He was deployed to India via the Cape of Good Hope and spent time in Bombay and Delhi and a variety of other places including the North West Frontier. He briefly went to Burma. When the war was over he moved to Singapore before his discharge in 1947 as a Corporal. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

John Scott, Royal Engineers

John Scott of Boat of Garten, Invernes-shire died on 7th May 2012, aged 79. He joined the Royal Engineers in 1957 for National Service. He served in the UK and was with a Field Survey Squadron in Kenya. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Sydney 'Syd' Sharples, General Service Corps and the Royal Army Medical Corps

Sydney 'Syd' Sharples of Penwortham, Preston died on 6th June 2012, aged 87. After training in the General Service Corps he transferred to the Royal Army

Medical Corps in 1948 and served in the pharmacy department at Aldershot and in the BAOR. He was discharged as a Sergeant in 1950. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Kenneth 'Ken' Sims, Royal Navy

Kenneth 'Ken' Sims of Northwood, Middx died on 10th June 2012, aged 91. He joined the Royal Navy in 1937 as an apprentice Electrical Artificer. After training he was posted to Ceylon and seconded to the Fleet Air Arm on torpedo duties near Trincomalee. Japanese air raids destroyed the Squadron in 1943 and he moved to Tanga, Tanzania. He then joined the submarine depot ship, HMS Forth and remained in the Royal Navy after the war specialising as an Electrical Artificer. He was discharged as a Chief Petty Officer in 1952. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Roy Smith, Royal Army Medical Corps

Roy Smith of Burnley, Lancs died on 19th May 2012, aged 79. He joined the RAMC for National Service in 1950. He served in Tripoli and at the end of his Service in 1952 signed up for part time service, finally leaving in 1956. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Herbert 'Sid' Wisdom, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers

Herbert 'Sid' Wisdom of Brighton, East Sussex died on 2nd July 2012, aged 96. He served in the REME from 1944 in the UK and Greece until his discharge as a Sergeant in 1946. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Colin Wright, Royal Air Force

Colin Wright of Middlesbrough, Cleveland died on 24th June 2012, aged 81. He joined the RAF in 1952, trained at Padgate and became a motor bike dispatch rider, being posted to RAF Rudloe Manor. A few months later he was sent to Singapore and returned to the UK before discharge in 1954 as a Leading Aircraftsman. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.

Frederick Yates, Royal Artillery

Frederick Yates of Garstang, Preston died on 8th June 2012, aged 93. He served in the Royal Artillery from 1939 to 1946 in the Far East. Our sympathy goes to all members of his family.