

June 2013

# Review

Blind Veterans UK | St Dunstan's since 1915



**On the cover:** Blind Veterans UK members at the Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing in Ypres. Private Ken Facal, Alan Holderness, Kingsman Anthony (Coops) Cooper, Maria Pikulski and Wendy Kane.



# Review

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## Patron: Her Majesty the Queen

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## Blind Veterans UK Calendar 2013

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

### June

Canoe River Trip and Wild Camping 2nd - 8th **L**  
 Gardening Week 9th - 15th **B**  
 Sports Week 10th - 14th **B**  
 Writers' Forum 15th **B**  
 Advanced Fishing Week 16th - 22nd **L**  
 100km London to Brighton Challenge 22nd  
 Gardening Week 17th - 21st **S**  
 Cricket at Lord's 18th **B**  
 Church Stretton 50 year badge holders reunion 26th - 29th

## Blind Veterans UK Calendar 2013

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

### July

Raft building & paddle round the pier 1st - 6th **B**  
 Writers' Forum 4th - 6th **B**  
 Music Week 7th - 13th **L**  
 The Band of HM's Royal Marines Concert 10th **B**

### September

South Downs Way walk 6th to 10th **B**  
 75th Anniversary Pamper Week 9th - 14th **B**  
 Cycling Week 15th - 21st **L**  
 Writers' Forum 21st **B**  
 History Week 22nd - 28th **B**  
 Walking Week 30th - 5th October **L**

### November

Military Week 4th - 11th **L**  
 Cenotaph 8th - 10th  
 Writers' Forum 16th **B**

### August

Amateur Radio Week 2nd - 10th **B**  
 Race Week 4th - 10th **B**  
 Recreation Taster Week 11th - 17th **L**  
 Writers' Forum 17th **B**  
 Activities Week 19th - 24th **B**  
 Archery Club (III) 23rd - 31st **B**

### October

Devon activity weekend 4th - 6th **B**  
 Music Week 6th - 12th **B**  
 Culture Week 7th - 11th **S**  
 Writers' Forum 19th **B**  
 Dance Week 17th - 23rd **B**  
 Bowling Week 20th - 2nd Nov **B**  
 Great South Run - 27th **B**

### December

Writers' Forum 8th - 10th **B**  
 Christmas theme week 9th - 13th **S**  
 Christmas theme week 15th - 21st **B**

### Booking of themed and Club weeks at Brighton, Llandudno and Sheffield:

For holiday bookings please contact the Bookings Office on 01273 391500. Or contact your Welfare Officer if you require care.

### To book in for the activities:

**For Brighton** please call the Sports & Recreation dept on 01273 391465 or 01273 391467.

**For Llandudno** call the Sports and Recreation dept on 01492 868700.

**For Sheffield** please book in via the bookings office on 01273 391500.

# From the Chairman.

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

Llandudno is now open – officially! We had a great day on 2nd May when General Sir David Richards GCB CBE DSO ADC Gen (Chief of Defence Staff), came to do the honours for us. Mark Lovatt and his team had prepared the ground perfectly, about 150 guests were there to enjoy the occasion, and the sun shone on the righteous throughout! A full report appears later in the Review.

Happily I was able to announce at the Llandudno opening that General Sir David Richards had kindly agreed to become one of our Vice-Patrons. It is wonderful to have the on-going support of this very distinguished soldier.

Last month I dropped a few hints about someone well known to the charity who was hoping to enter the 100km fundraising walk from London to Brighton at the end of June. Well, I am now able to reveal the name of that person – it's me! By the end of June I will be within a few days of embarking on my 8th decade on this planet, and having always enjoyed a physical challenge it seemed like a good opportunity to celebrate by doing the Long Walk. My original intention was to do the whole thing with my wife, Woppy, but unfortunately my knees (which are considerably older than the rest of my body!) were not impressed. Woppy and I are both disappointed, but on the positive side Tim Davis (our Vice Chairman) and Colonel Mike Brooke OBE (Trustee) have readily agreed to join us as a team of four, and we are entered into the Relay event. Our team name is 'Trusty Trustees'. The Relay is, of course, a doddle compared with the individual event, but where old knees are concerned, needs must and all that. The combined age of the team is, I am assured, over 230, of which I have the lion's share!

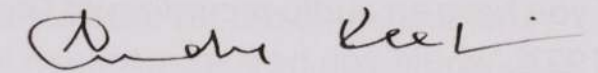
Our firm intention is to raise as much money as possible for Blind Veterans UK, and I have no hesitation in asking you to closely consider helping us. If every member contributed £1 we would collect over £3,000. If every member contributed £10 we would collect over £30,000 – and so it goes on. The maths is easy. All four of us will also be badgering our families, friends and work colleagues to help as well – we are aiming high.

I hope that you will feel that this is a good and appropriate way of raising much needed funds for this wonderful charity of ours.

You can give either by visiting our web-page at:

<http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/team/TrustyTrustees>

Or by sending a cheque made out to 'Blind Veterans UK', with 'Trusty Trustees' written on the back, or by calling Aaron Tillyer on 020 7616 7927 at the Blind Veterans UK Fundraising Department in our HQ in Harcourt Street, London and making a contribution over the phone, but also asking them to credit it to the 'Trusty Trustees' total.



**Picture:** The Chairman Major General Andrew Keeling, CB, CBE, RM, General Sir David Richards GCB CBE DSO ADC Gen (Chief of Defence Staff) and Mark Lovatt the Llandudno centre manager. Photo by Welshot Images.

# Noticeboard.

Dates for your diary and useful information.

## Request for an audio recording of The Life of Sir Arthur Pearson.

Do you have an audio recording of the autobiography of Sir Arthur Pearson?

If you have an audio recording of The Life of Sir Arthur Pearson, by Sidney Dark (1922), would you be happy to loan it to a member of Blind Veterans UK?

If yes, please contact Barbara Sweeney, PA to Welfare Services, on telephone: 020 7616 7922 or email: [barbara.sweeney@blindveterans.org.uk](mailto:barbara.sweeney@blindveterans.org.uk)

## Build your own raft and Paddle Round the Pier in Brighton.

### 1st – 6th July – Raft Building/Paddle Round the Pier.

Are you prepared to take on the mammoth challenge that is 'Paddle round the Pier'?

The challenge, should you choose to accept it, is to build a craft from scratch that can travel around Brighton Pier. Previous entries in the competition have been both brilliant and ridiculous - what can members create with the help of the Art & Craft Workshop, resident 'experts' and lots of other support! The wackier the better, come on, get involved and have a slice of this paddle pie!

Create your raft with the Art & Craft Workshop and then paddle round the Pier with the Sports & Recreation Department. For more information visit website: [www.paddleroundthepier.com](http://www.paddleroundthepier.com)

## Themed Weeks at the Sheffield centre in 2013.

### Gardening Week 17th - 21st June

The gardening week will include a visit to formal gardens, garden centres, the Botanical Gardens and the Sheffield Winter Gardens. You can also make your own hanging basket at our table top gardening session.

### Culture Week 7th - 11th October

Soak up some true Yorkshire culture during this week. We will enjoy an evening at the theatre and there will also be a black and white dinner at the centre, when you can dress up in dinner jacket and black tie for the gents and fancy frocks for the ladies. This will be followed by an evening of classical favourites. We will visit some of the local art galleries and enjoy some poetry, when you can share your favourite poems with the group.

### Christmas Week 9th - 13th December

During this week you can participate in some Christmas crafts and enjoy a trip to the theatre. We will visit a Christmas market to do some shopping and back at the centre you can try your hand at baking mince pies and making truffles. A traditional Christmas lunch will be served at the centre to ensure a truly seasonal experience.

Each of the themed weeks will include social time when you can take the time to relax and enjoy yourself, along with the visits to places of interest too. We have done this to allow you to enjoy one another's company.

The socials may include a meal at a local restaurant, a pub quiz or a cheese and wine evening at the centre. All themed weeks at Sheffield will cost £132 for four nights. There will be additional charges for entry into certain venues and for some visits. Partners and carers are welcome to join you for all activities throughout the weeks.

To book please contact the Bookings Office on telephone: 01273 391500.

## Blind Veterans UK thanks Seafarers UK for its generous donation.



**the leading charity  
for seafarers in need**

Seafarers UK enables life-changing support to be provided to tens of thousands of seafarers and their families experiencing real difficulty. Last year Seafarers UK gave £2.5 million in grants to more than 70 maritime charities providing frontline welfare services. Blind Veterans UK is incredibly proud that its work with blind and vision impaired former serving seafarers will be supported by Seafarers UK in 2013. To find out more about the work of Seafarers UK, please visit their website [www.seafarers-uk.org](http://www.seafarers-uk.org) or follow them on Twitter via @seafarers\_uk

## Best dressed chicken.

Welfare Officer, Debbie Martin, sent in this photograph of a chicken in a rather fetching jacket and hat. The natty ensemble was knitted by Rose Shed for her daughter Pat's chicken. A rescue chicken, it was featherless and traumatised when it arrived at its new home. Debbie reported it is now a happy chicken, its feathers have regrown and it is laying eggs. A happy ending.



## The annual concert by Her Majesty's Royal Marine Band at the Brighton centre on 10th July 2013.

It is approaching that time again when we will soon have the pleasure of the company of HM's Band of the Royal Marines at our Brighton Centre.

We at Blind Veterans UK are privileged each year to experience the magic of this concert; a day which is always immensely enjoyed by all. This special event is a highlight amongst our annual programme for local and visiting members.

However, hosting this event also provides us with a wonderful opportunity to invite and give something back to our volunteers, VIPs and supporters and to demonstrate our ongoing connection with this group of people.

As you are aware it is a popular event and we only have a limited number of seats available for members and their spouses who live locally. If you wish to apply for a place, please contact Charlotte Davies on 01273 391412.

There will be a limited bus service for members who live in the immediate vicinity of Ovingdean and who require the assistance of transport. If you do live locally and are able to make your own way in, this would help to alleviate unwanted pressure on the Transport department.

Unfortunately lunch bookings cannot be taken on the day except for those already staying in-house.

Order of events for the afternoon:

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 1330        | Pimms served in the Inner Garden          |
| 1400 – 1515 | Concert by HM's Band of the Royal Marines |
| 1520        | Afternoon tea in the Inner Garden         |
| 1600        | Guests depart                             |

We look forward to enjoying the concert with you.

## London Marathon success, by Steve Mills, Sports & Recreation Instructor.

Months of training and preparation were over and the big day loomed for our five members who were running in the 2013 Virgin London Marathon. Everyone had trained hard in the rain, snow and wind chilled winter months, just for the day of the marathon to be beautiful sunshine. Typical! This year David Cranson, Billy Drinkwater, Iain Millard, Mike Scholes, Alan Lock and Darren Blanks made the crazy decision to attempt to run the London Marathon. Now for some - Iain Millard, Mike Scholes and Alan Lock - this was just a normal day for them, as they had competed in the event many times before, but nothing ever goes to plan. For the others David, Billy and Darren, this was their first marathon as they competed in the second largest marathon in the world with 36,000 participants.

Everyone got an early night on Saturday before waking up bright and early at 6.30am on Sunday. They chomped down on various breakfasts, which ranged from cereal and yoghurt to a full English fry up, hoping this would give them the energy to get over the finish line.

The race started at 10.00am on a sunny morning and after the fun of navigating the busy trains crammed with other runners and fans we reached the start line at Greenwich Park. From that point on it was down to our amazing members to get themselves around the 26.2 mile course with the assistance of our committed guides, Claire Townsend, Jon Street, David Lewis, Michelle Sheridan and Richard Smith.

After the 30 second silence in memory of those who died and were injured in the Boston Marathon bombings, the gun sounded off, and away everyone ran.

We only had to wait for three hours, 19 minutes and 19 seconds for Mike Scholes, as he came 3,224 in the Marathon. Hot on his heels, coming in at three hours 49 minutes and 11 seconds, Darren Blanks galloped around the finish bend and crossed the finish line. To be honest, Darren looked like he had hit the wall and every step probably felt like a mile, but Jon his guide pushed him on to make that special sub four hour marker. After Darren, Alan Lock popped into shot after regaining his guide whom he had lost earlier in the race. They crossed the finish line in five hours, four minutes and 21 seconds. By the looks of things Alan was guiding his friend Richard rather than the other way round.

David Cranson with guide Dave Lewis crossed the finish line next in five hours, 15 minutes and 48 seconds with an exhausted look on his face, but a great big smile at having achieved his goal of getting round. Billy Drinkwater eased in at five hours, 37 minutes and 13 seconds and headed straight for the pub for a cool refreshment to celebrate with his guide Michelle. Finally Iain Millard, our veteran marathon runner, finished his 13th London Marathon in five hours, 41 minutes and 13 seconds with the help of Claire Townsend. Iain said that he would never do another marathon in his life, but I'm sure we will be able to persuade him for next year! You can't finish on the unlucky number 13.

Overall it was an amazing day for all our members and guides taking part. I would like to say a big thank you to everyone who helped on the day and the support we received from friends and family around the course.

If you would like to do the London Marathon next year please contact the Sports and Recreation department in Brighton and speak to any of the Sports and Recreation team. The telephone numbers are: 01273 391465 or 01273 391467.



**Picture:** Blind Veterans UK London Marathon runners from left to right: Billy Drinkwater, Michelle Sheridan, Jon Street, David Cranson, David Lewis, Iain Millard, Claire Townsend and Darren Blanks. Photo by Steve Mills.

## The winners of the Chairman's Commendation Award.

In last month's edition of the Review we celebrated the Founder's Day Awards. Each year on 26th March we celebrate Sir Arthur Pearson through The Founder's Day Awards, which go to members and volunteers who have achieved something outstanding. This month we are pleased to celebrate the success of three members of Blind Veterans UK staff who were recognised for their outstanding work and were each presented with a Chairman's Commendation Award. It is the highest award for a member of staff.

### Claire Annett-Davids.

Claire joined Blind Veterans UK in December 2009 and works as a Business Accountant in the Finance Department. In early 2012 Claire took on a very important piece of work in relation to our investments and her involvement in this particular project made a significant difference to the outcome. Claire's work showed courage and commitment and helped the charity make an important decision in a timely manner. Claire is expecting her first child and we wish her the very best in the months ahead as she prepares for the birth of her baby. We know that she will be missed while she is away.



**Picture:** Claire Annett-Davids accepts her Chairman's Commendation Award from the Chairman, Major General Andrew Keeling, CB, CBE, RM.

### Tracey Young

Tracey is an HR Officer in People Services; she joined Blind Veterans UK in August 2008. From the launch of the new brand, Tracey has been its champion. She participated enthusiastically in the working group in the lead up to the launch and has shown courage in challenging those who have attempted to use the brand incorrectly. She has firmly insisted to people who have attempted to use abbreviations that the full name should always be used!

Tracey has also demonstrated considerable skill in integrating the brand and values into her everyday work and encouraging others to do the same. She has gone beyond what would normally be expected of her in her role. She continues to be a champion of the brand by changing documents and policies to use the new tone we adopt in our communications. She has also willingly taken on additional responsibility following a reorganisation of the operational HR team at Brighton.



**Picture:** Tracey Young with the Chairman, Major General Andrew Keeling, CB, CBE, RM and her Chairman's Commendation Award.

## Annie Symons

Annie is an Estates Assistant who started work for the charity in June 1993, 20 years ago. She embodies all of the values that many at the charity would only aspire to. She continually works outside the strict remit of her role and has done many out of hours activities for the charity that include organising day trips, line dancing for widows and visiting members in an emergency when their safety is an issue. She has worked with tremendous enthusiasm and does much to ensure that the experience of our members, their wives or husbands, widows and widowers and family is of the highest quality. She is unfailing and unlimited with her warmth, compassion and humour, which she constantly brings to her work. Annie's attitude to her work embraces the core values of the charity where her commitment and friendliness are often commented on.

Annie is excellent at dealing with all sorts of enquiries regardless of whether they are estates or welfare issues and she is always able to reassure those in distress. Her courage and resourcefulness are demonstrated on a daily basis as she deals with anything from bats on the rampage to haunted houses!



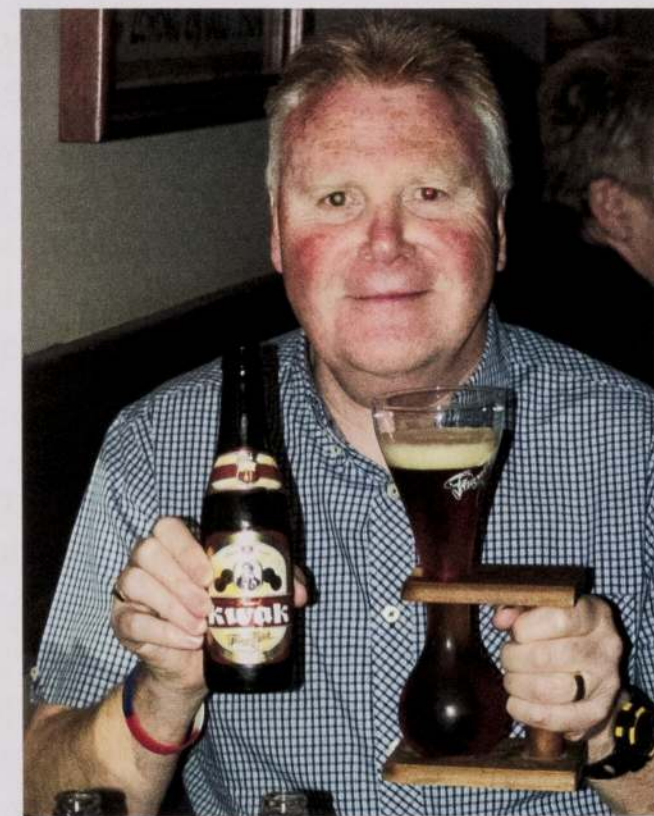
**Picture:** Annie Symons, from the Estates office in Woodingdean, accepts her Chairman's Commendation from Major General Andrew Keeling, CB, CBE, RM.

## Colin Williamson's Beer of the Month

**Pauwel Kwak Strong Belgian Ale, as sampled in Ganzeke restaurant in Menin.**

You can recognise a Pauwel Kwak beer from across the other side of the pub, as it comes in a unique glass designed by the brewer himself, Mister Kwak. The glass is round at the bottom and fits into a wooden stand. This is because back in Napoleonic days, coachmen were not allowed to leave their coaches unattended outside coaching houses. Mr Kwak designed a glass that could fit onto their coaches so they may enjoy a beer or two whilst waiting for the gentry to continue with their journey.

The beer itself is described as a Belgian Strong Ale, which is exactly what it is. The beer weighs in at a very respectable 8.4 ABV so it is not a session beer, but one to savour in front of a roaring log fire. It is an amber coloured ale with a white foamy head and the nose is of yeast, malt and brown sugars. There is a hint of cinnamon and caramel and a very slight citrus taste to this beer. This is a well balanced beer with a nice mouthfeel to it. Slightly hoppy at the finish, it really is a splendid ale. Available at specialist beer shops and online.



**Picture:** Colin Williamson prepares to enjoy a Pauwel Kwak in its unique glass.



## **From the Apprentices, through the Second World War with Bomber Command, to Benghazi, back to the UK and to the Queen's Flight.**

On 2nd June 1953 the world stopped to watch and listen as Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, took her Coronation Oath. Afterwards in a radio broadcast on the day of her Coronation the Queen said: "Throughout all my life and with all my heart I shall strive to be worthy of your trust."

She has lived by those words and as we mark the 60th anniversary of the Queen's Coronation, Blind Veterans UK member John Thompson, a Chief Technician who Served with the RAF from 1938 to 1966 in Italy, Egypt and North Africa recalls meeting Her Majesty the Queen and HRH Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, on two occasions when he Served on the Queen's Flight.

"In late 1960 while I was stationed at RAF Benson with my family I was contacted by the Queen's Flight and asked if I had experience of Dakotas, which I had. He explained that if I joined the Queen's Flight I would operate the Dakota aircraft on the Queen's visit to Nepal in February 1961.

"As I was due to be posted to Wiltshire, which meant moving away from my family, I was of course delighted to accept the offer, as it meant I could remain with them at RAF Benson. I was interviewed by the Squadron Leader who told me there were two Dakota aircraft on the tarmac and I was in charge of them. We spent a month, what is known as a shakedown period, when the aircraft are flown so that any hidden defects would show up to ensure they were completely serviceable. They were airworthy and we flew to India.

"The normal aircraft for the Queen's Flight were the Herons, which were the small four engine aircraft. The Herons weren't designed for the extra loads that were incurred by the different passenger seats and other equipment that were needed for the tour. If one engine on the Heron had become inoperative they would not have been able to clear the hills surrounding Kathmandu. They were referred to as hills, but they were 9,000 feet, which is quite high and I'd call that a mountain! However, even with one engine inoperative the Dakotas would have been able to clear the hills and that is why they were brought out of service, as they had both been cocooned in Northern Ireland.

"One of the Dakotas had belonged to General Montgomery and he used it as an office. However it had very heavy partitions and all of these had to be removed in order to conserve weight. We flew to Delhi where we were stationed for two weeks before we flew up to Kathmandu in Nepal. During this time the Queen and Prince Philip had started their tour of India, which was largely carried out in the Herons. They had flown out to India in a BOAC aircraft. The tour of Kathmandu lasted about a week, during which time the aircraft flew to various landing strips, one of which was in Pokhara, which I understand has a proper landing strip nowadays, as it is the second largest city in Nepal. The Queen and Prince Philip stayed in a tent for a night in Pokhara.

"After the Queen and Prince Philip had toured Kathmandu they went back to another part of India, but they flew down there in one of the Dakotas. It was normal practice for the Queen to ask for the ground staff to be presented to her. One morning at about 0230 we were wakened and told to get dressed as we were to fly down to Gorakhpur in India, where we were to be presented to the Queen and Prince Philip. We flew in a Bristol freighter aircraft that had been flown in by the New Zealand Air Force, who supplied all the fire fighting equipment that was necessary for these landing strips.

"We were told to marshal ourselves in the front end of the Dakota where we were called forward one by one and presented to the Queen, who shook our hand and gave us each a signed photograph. As Prince Philip had a wicklow on one of the fingers on his right hand he shook hands with his left hand. I mentioned that was the practice of Boy Scouts, which he laughed at and agreed with.

"There was another tour when the Queen and Prince Philip visited Ghana and this time we just had the Herons. The tour from Ghana was fairly uneventful, we were again presented by the Queen and it was at a small aerodrome in Waterloo in Accra. It was just a grass landing strip at that time. On this occasion we were lined up and the Queen and Prince Philip came down. It wasn't as personal as the meeting we had in the Dakota in Nepal, but it was still very special."

An interview with John is included in this month's Talking Review when he speaks of his career in the RAF and VE Day.



**Picture:** HM The Queen and HRH Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, disembark from the Dakota in Kathmandu, Nepal during their tour in February 1961. Photo by John Thompson.



**Picture:** The Queen and Prince Philip are driven through Kathmandu. Photo by John Thompson.

## Cocktail of the Month, by Kevin Angell of the Bickley, Chislehurst.

**Treacle** (as sampled by the editor).

To make the perfect Treacle cocktail, first add half a teaspoon of honey to a cocktail shaker.

Senior Service members will approve of this cocktail, as next add 25ml of dark rum to dissolve the honey.

Fill a tumbler to three quarters full with ice. Place the cocktail shaker on top of the ice and with a spoon gently press the honey into the rum in a circular motion. Do this until the water between the cocktail tumbler and the shaker crystallises.

You may now pour your Treacle cocktail into a low ball glass filled with ice and add a glaze of apple juice on top. Enjoy.



**Picture:** Editor's choice. Kevin Angell of the Bickley in Chislehurst with the Treacle cocktail.

# Lest We Forget, by Catherine Goodier.

We have seen the haunting images of soldiers blinded in the First World War. Exhausted, they walk in single file, their eyes bandaged, their heads lowered, their outstretched arm placed on the shoulder of the blinded man in front. It is believed that those men, immortalised by the artist John Singer Sargent in *Gassed*, were walking to the Essex Farm Advanced Dressing Station (ADS) in the Ypres Salient of the Western Front in Belgium. Some of them never recovered their sight and they of course became the early members of Blind Veterans UK.

From 19th to 21st April 2013, I was fortunate to tour the former Ypres Salient with 20 members of Blind Veterans UK's Younger Group, to visit what have been described as the most terrible and glorious of the great battlefields of the First World War. It was the setting for a loss of life on a scale never before known. The weekend was organised by Colin Williamson, Cadet & Youth Challenge Project Officer, and our guide of the famous Salient was Chris Cuff of Anglia Tours. Our visit took us to the Commonwealth War Graves where we walked among the headstones of the thousands of men - and the women - who made the ultimate sacrifice. We took part in the Last Post Ceremony at The Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing. It was a weekend when past met present, as we visited Hill 60 and Hellfire Corner, once the scenes of bitter fighting, and the Essex Farm ADS, as today's members walked where early members of Blind Veterans UK had so bravely fought and perhaps been treated for their injuries.

For Paul 'Fin' Findlay, who Served in the Royal Army Medical Corps, the weekend was particularly poignant as his grandfather, PTE F Brotherton 2-DNS, Royal Scots Greys, fought in WWI. Fin said: "My grandfather was a remarkable man. He fought on the battlefields of WWI in France where he was shot in the knee and spent some time in the Dressing Station. I have a tapestry he made while in recovery that includes his cap badge and I brought with me a half penny he passed on to my family. Dated 1917, it had been hit with the impact of a round. The sense of peace I found on the former battlefields in Ypres was profound and it was hard to imagine that it was once the site of such bloodshed. I was lucky my Grandfather came back, as so many never did."

The group paused at Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery. The final resting place of 10,755 casualties, it is the second largest British and Commonwealth cemetery in Belgium.

We visited Poperinghe, affectionately referred to as Pop, the town that gave its name to 'On the Pop,' as troops would spend their precious R&R in the town's cafes and bars. It was there we encountered the dark side of Pop as we saw the Poperinghe Court Martial Executions firing post, where 301 men were killed. Many of them as we know today had post traumatic stress disorder.

Again, treading in the footsteps of those who went before them, on Saturday 20th April 2013, members of Blind Veterans UK attended the Last Post Ceremony at the Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing. Blind Veterans UK members Wendy Kane, Maria Pikulski, Private Ken Facal of the 1st Battalion Royal Anglian Regiment and Kingsman Anthony (Coops) Cooper of the 1 Lancashire Regiment placed two wreaths in memory of the fallen. Their photograph is featured on the front page of this edition.

Wendy Kane, who Served in the Royal Army Medical Corps, said: "As we walked to place the wreaths I thought I would cry. It was incredibly emotional, as I thought of the significance of the Memorial to the Missing and the loss of so many lives. It's a fitting tribute that The Last Post Association want to maintain this daily act of homage for perpetuity and that it has taken place every night since 1927, apart from during hostilities in World War Two. By 9th July 2015 the buglers will have sounded the Last Post 30,000 times."

Kingsman Anthony (Coops) Cooper, 25, of the 1 Lancashire Regiment, said: "The last time I heard The Last Post was in Afghan after two of my friends were killed. It was poignant to take part in tonight's ceremony with my fellow members and to place the wreath on behalf of Blind Veterans UK. I know we all took time to remember those who had made the ultimate sacrifice and I thought of my friends."

Private Ken Facal, 26, 1st Battalion Royal Anglian Regiment, said: "It's incredible to think so many soldiers were killed, at one time 50,000 soldiers in one day. That's almost half the number of regular soldiers in the British Army today. Earlier at Poperinghe Court Martial Executions firing post I was shocked that 301 soldiers were shot. I thought of them, along with all those who fought, and, like Coops, I thought of those I Served with in Afghan who made the ultimate sacrifice."

Maria Pikulski, an Eye Clinic Liaison Officer at St Helen's Hospital, said: "It was a moving weekend as we visited the graves of those who had died and saw the scale of the memorials to those who have never been identified. To take part in the Last Post Ceremony at the Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing was an incredible experience and a once in a lifetime honour. I thought of the 300,000 British and Commonwealth soldiers who were killed in the Ypres Salient. I hope it was of some small comfort to their families to know they are remembered at the Last Post Ceremony. I also thought of Staff Nurse Nellie Spindler, who was killed on 21st August 1917. She is buried at Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery."

Gary Tomlinson, who Served in the RAF, said: "I found the whole weekend filled with humour and sadness. The weekend started with an overnight stop in Maidstone with a quick jaunt through the Channel Tunnel. This in itself was very emotional as my cousin Keith Lynch died in the construction of the tunnel. Keith, who was a Royal Navy veteran, was 34 years old when he was killed. There is a memorial in Kent at Samphire Hoe that states: 'In memory of the 11 workers who gave up their lives during the construction of the tunnel from 1986 to 1992.' It lists the 11 men who died. I passed right over the spot where he died in the tunnel.

"In Ypres at The Last Post ceremony at the Menin Gate later that day I found the ceremony to the dead and the missing very moving. Ypres will stay with me for the rest of my life. With over 200 war cemeteries and over 90,000 men still missing, this part of Belgium has touched my very soul. I thought about Harry Patch, the last man to die who witnessed the First World War. He said that war is futile and I will let you make up your own minds."



**Picture:** Gary Tomlinson at the Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing.

**Picture:** Dennis Sarginson, Andy Bull, Tony Whitelaw and Mark Brewin.

We all agreed with Adrian Neat, who Served in the Royal Engineers for 11 years, when he said: "Everyone should attend the Last Post Ceremony at least once in their lives. It is sponsored by a fund set up by Rudyard Kipling who lost his own son in WW1 and whose body was never found. Lest we forget!"

It was at the Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing that we were joined by David Ross, who was one of our drivers for the weekend. David, who Served with the Parachute Regiment, regularly raises funds for Blind Veterans UK through The Nottingham Branch of the Parachute Regimental Association. It was a great coincidence that he was our driver and we thank him and his fellow members for all they do for us through their fundraising. We also met with old friends Chris and Milena Locke, of Lest We Forget Battlefields Tours of Ypres.



**Picture:** At the Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing from left to right: David Ross, Paul 'Fin' Findlay, Gary Ogden, Adrian Neat and former Royal Marine Alan Holderness, a Falklands veteran.

After the Ceremony we stopped to admire the beauty of the famous Cloth Hall. Destroyed during the war it has been rebuilt to its former glory. Those of you who have visited the Chapel at the Brighton centre will know that one of its stained glass windows is from the Cloth Hall. The window was presented to Lord Ian Fraser, who was Chairman of Blind Veterans UK for 52 years.

The June edition of the Talking Review includes a number of poems which were written by our members who were blinded in Ypres in the First World War. It also includes an account from the August 1927 edition of the Review by HG Gransby and FG Richardson, who were both blinded in Ypres. They attended the opening ceremony of the Menin Gate Memorial on 27th July 1927, when they were introduced to the King, and they write of their return to Ypres.

Henry George Gransby was a Post Office Telephone Linesman before the war. He joined the 1/17th London on 20th March 1915, rising to Lance Corporal. He was blinded in Ypres on 16th September 1917 at the age of 20. He came to Blind Veterans UK on 7th November 1917; he trained as a bootmaker and mat maker and became a successful businessman. Frederick G Richardson, a Corporal in the 1st Norfolk, went on to become a public speaker for Blind Veterans UK. Their account of the opening ceremony and their return to Ypres is read by Alexandra Lloyd-March from the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts.

On Sunday we visited Tyne Cot Cemetery and Memorial to the Missing on the outskirts of Passchendaele where we walked between a sea of white gravestones, across rich green grass in a cemetery filled with trees laden with green leaves. It was a beautiful sunny morning and we all found it hard to imagine that an area of such peace could once have been the scene of so much death and destruction. The grass we walked upon was once the poisoned ground of Flanders, where thousands drowned in its pools of mud, their bodies never found. Those who fought there would not have seen grass, only the blackened stumps of trees in a ground littered with the debris of war.

The resting place of 11,954 soldiers of the Commonwealth Forces, of which 8,367 are unnamed, it is the site of the largest number of burials contained in any Commonwealth cemetery of either the First or Second World War. It is the largest Commonwealth military cemetery in the world. Its surrounding walls are inscribed with the names of 40,000 missing men.

This month's Talking Review also includes an article from the January 1926 edition of the Review by Mrs Athol Capper, who returned to Ypres with her husband, a 2nd Lieutenant in the Buffs, who was wounded in 1915 at St Jean by a bullet through the back of his head. At Regent's Park he trained as a poultry farmer and specialised in breeding white Bresse chickens, for which he won many awards. Mrs Capper was Assistant Editor of the League of Nations Union, Geneva. Her account is read by Gabrielle Nellis-Pain from RADA.



**Picture: At Tyne Cot Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery and Memorial to the Missing.**

**Back row:** Jackie Greer, Head of Care at the Brighton centre, Chris Cuff of Anglia Tours, Joe Cousineau, Tom Williams Housing Manager, Andy Bull, Chris Lee, Dennis Sarginson, David Orr, Charlie Eastwood, Tony Whitelaw, Mark Brewin, Inderpal Kallah Younger Group Coordinator, Colin Williamson Cadet & Youth Challenge Project Officer, Alan Holderness, Private Ken Facal.  
**Front row:** Adrian Neat, Wendy Kane, Gary Tomlinson, Carl Adamson, Billy Black, Gary Ogden, Maria Pikulski, Kingsman Anthony (Coops) Cooper and Paul Findlay.

Such activities as these were made possible by BAE Systems who funded the pilot of the Younger Group project in 2009 and have been sole funders of the Younger Group ever since. Thanks to the funding from BAE Systems, members have enjoyed trips together that have helped them grow in confidence, as they realised they were not alone and they could share their experiences of dealing with their sight loss with their fellow members. I know from my own time away on younger events how I have seen people blossom and find the confidence they thought they had forever lost.

**"A War Poem, by William Robinson, who was blinded in Ypres in 1916.**

Published in Blind Veterans UK Review in December 1916.

Dark is the outlook this winter,  
For all, at home and abroad,  
But there's a purpose for all that is happening,  
Though it seems to us just a big fraud.

The sleepless nights, and anxious days,  
On many a face leave traces,  
Each thinking of loved ones far away,  
And longing to see their faces.  
In France, and Serbia and the other fronts,  
Those brave khaki lads are fighting,  
Immeasurable gratitude we give,  
To them in their duty delighting.

Oh! Where is the 11th Division,  
Amongst us a short time ago,  
To face the odds, to pay the price,  
Proudly we saw them go.

They laid down their lives for their country,  
Just a few left to tell the tale,  
How they fought, how they fell, to protect us,  
As they meant to do, when they set sail.

Strong brave men of Britain, fill their places,  
As brave men only would,  
March fearlessly, patriotism showing,  
Go and fight, as an Englishman should.  
Save us from the fate of Belgium,  
From the horrors of German hands,  
Make England still a free country;  
Our good old native land.

The 30th Division, God bless them,  
In France they are doing their share;  
For England, home and justice;

The perils and hardships they bear.  
So we must leave them bravely fighting;  
Fighting for you and me;  
For when they come homeward marching;  
We shall all be safe and free.

One day they will come, we are hoping;  
They will freedom and victory bring,  
Back to the strain of the Marseillaise,  
And God Save the King.



**Picture:** At Hill 60 where at 1900 hours on the 17th April 1915 five mines were detonated under the German positions on the hill. Two pairs and then a single detonation - all at 10 second intervals. The explosions could be heard on Hampstead Heath in London.

To finish, Carl Adamson, 39, from Hereford said: "One day last year when I was just plodding on through my daily life I received a letter from Blind Veterans UK's younger group inviting me to Ypres to visit the Battlefields of World War One. I thought to myself what a great chance it would be to see what the soldiers of the Great War had been through. We visited the cemeteries, battlefields and the trenches where some of the heaviest fighting of the war had taken place. It was very moving and I felt how hard it must have been to actually fight and live in those conditions. I must say it was a fascinating and moving trip and I would like to thank everyone who made this trip possible. We are very fortunate to have a Younger Group."

## The Official opening of the Llandudno centre.

Chief of the Defence Staff, General Sir David Richards GCB CBE DSO ADC Gen, now a Vice Patron of Blind Veterans UK, arrived by helicopter in the grounds of the Llandudno centre on 2nd May to officially open it.

Following a tour of the centre, the General attended a special dedication ceremony for the late Captain Stephen Healey of the 1st Battalion The Royal Welsh (The Royal Welch Fusiliers) who was killed in an IED explosion on 26th May 2012 in Afghanistan. With fellow members of his Battalion he was an active supporter of Blind Veterans UK.

General Sir David Richards said: "I am delighted to have been asked to officially open the Llandudno centre. My visit to the centre is especially timely as I have just become a Vice Patron for the charity – a position I feel very privileged to accept. I have been extremely impressed by the first class staff and facilities here at this amazing location. And I have been humbled by the courage and positive attitude of the veterans here who have faced up to sight loss and regained their independence thanks to the support of Blind Veterans UK."

Mark Lovatt, centre manager, said: "It's been a great 18 months for the centre. We always had a clear plan of how we wanted the centre to be and it was important to all of us that it was member focussed. The staff have achieved that and it is because of their hard work and dedication that so many members return for training and holidays here, as they also do at the Brighton and Sheffield centres.

"Unveiling the memorial plaque to Captain Stephen Healey was touching and appropriate and the most important part of the day. His Commanding Officer, Lt Colonel Stephen Webb spoke highly of him, as did fellow members of his Battalion. We were honoured to have his fiancée Thea Davies with us for the official opening ceremony. Thea is determined to carry on his work to support us and she is completing a number of challenges to run for 415 miles. It's great to see that she has reached her target to raise £10,000 and we all wish Theo success with her remaining marathons."

Originally built as the Lady Forester's Convalescent Home, and opened on 24th July 1902, the official opening of the Llandudno centre was attended by Catherine, Lady Forester and Lord Forester.



**Picture:** General Sir David Richards GCB CBE DSO ADC Gen opening the Llandudno centre. Photos by Welshot Images.



**Picture:** Robert Leader DL, Chief Executive with Catherine, Lady Forester, Lord Forester and Colonel Mike Brooke OBE, a Trustee of Blind Veterans UK

## Prisoners of War Reunion, 19th - 22nd April 2013, by Ray Hazan OBE, President of Blind Veterans UK.

The above reunion, held at the Brighton centre, was attended by ex-Far East Prisoners of War (FEPOWs) and Prisoners of War (POWs). Amongst them were three new attendees, Kenneth Hill, FEPOW, accompanied by his wife Brenda, and Grenville Davies and Patrick South, both of whom were POWs in Poland.

Returning former Prisoners of War included Thomas Clough who was a Korean Prisoner of War, John Sharpley a Far East Prisoner of War, Peter Brice a German/Polish Prisoner of War and Stefan Ciesla a former Russian POW.

The President of the group, General Sir Peter de la Billière KCB, KBE, DSO, MC & Bar was unable to attend, as was Sydney Tavender, Chairman. Ray chaired the AGM which was held on Saturday morning. All stood to recite the exhortation and the names of those who had passed away during the preceding year were read out by Roberta Hazan. Mandy Markwick, Secretary to the group, read the minutes of the previous meeting and presented the financial statement. In addition to the existing Officers, Thomas Clough was elected Vice Chairman.

The group was joined for lunch by Chief Executive, Robert Leader DL, accompanied by his wife Sue, Mike Purse, Membership Manager and his wife Vicky, and Father Martin Morgan of the Parish Church of St Margaret, Rottingdean.

Robert read out a message sent by Sir Peter: 'My apologies for being absent today, I am at a friend's funeral. I so admire your courage and commitment every year when you gather here. You are all a fine distinguished example to younger generations. Above all, you keep alive the sacrifice made by so many in World War II. You emphasise the futility of war to future generations. It is a privilege to be associated with you: I salute you all and look forward to meeting with you again next year.'

In addressing particularly the new attendees, Ray said they were regarded as a special branch of the Blind Veterans UK family. This reunion gave them the chance to derive companionship, solace and understanding amongst colleagues who really knew what they had gone through.

We were privileged to be addressed after lunch by Rear Admiral Stephen Meyer, a recently elected Trustee of Blind Veterans UK.

He spoke modestly of his 34 years in the Royal Navy, from his commanding an Omani fast patrol boat at the age of 24 to his last command, HMS Illustrious, an aircraft carrier. During the Falklands war, he witnessed the sinking of the Coventry, a former command. In earlier years, he was ADC to Sir Henry Leach, late Chairman of St Dunstan's, as was. He also saw Service with the then Brigadier Andy Keeling. Stephen's interesting and witty talk was a perfect end to a most enjoyable and moving day.

Thomas Clough presented a gift to Stephen and thanked him, together with PBK for the lunch and to Mandy and Roberta who had made all the arrangements. The date of the next reunion, to be confirmed, is 25th to 28th April 2014.



**Picture:** Trustee Rear Admiral Stephen Meyer speaks with Keith and Brenda Hill and Stefan Ciesla. An interview with Keith Hill will feature in the August edition of the Review.





## VOLUNTEERS' WEEK

time to say thank you

**By Victoria Dickinson, Project Manager (volunteers).**

This year Volunteers' Week focuses on saying 'Thank you' to our volunteers for all the amazing activities they do to support our members directly and indirectly.

Member and volunteer John Cantwell, who started up the Oxford lunch club in February says, "Many people have a lot to give and don't realise it." John, an ex RAF Motor Transport Fitter, has been a member for four years and is inspired by the breadth and depth of the people he meets through Blind Veterans UK. As a Member Volunteer he has a lot in common with other members and feels he can come right out and ask "How bad is your eyesight?" without feeling he has 'to watch his words'.

John feels lucky to be part of Blind Veterans UK and finds his volunteering personally very rewarding and inspiring – he understands how veterans miss the camaraderie of Service life. "Everyone has a story to tell if you just look around at who you're with."

Megan Sturgess is a second year History student at Sheffield Hallam University. When she's not studying she spends some of her spare time volunteering at our Sheffield centre supporting our members' evening lounge activities.

Megan says: "I believe that helping people with a disability get the most out of life is very important. My volunteering with Blind Veterans UK is a fulfilling way to spend an evening socialising with inspirational people. I love relaxing with the members and hearing their stories. I look forward to meeting new people and hearing about the fun they have at the centre and the new skills they have learnt."



**Picture:** Volunteer Megan Sturgess with William Webb, Chas Stephenson and Roy Crawford.

**Christopher McEvilly** became aware of Blind Veterans UK through Welfare Officer Sue Reeves, who works in the Redditch Office.

He said: "Sue was aware that I wanted to do some voluntary work and suggested Blind Veterans UK. I chose to volunteer for Blind Veterans UK as having served with West Midlands Police from 1981 to late 2012 as a Police Cadet and Police Officer, I retired and found myself with spare time. I wanted to continue my 'people contact' in a worthwhile and constructive way. During my service I worked in many parts of the Policing world, including CID, Robbery and Burglary teams, Crime Fighting Initiatives and towards the end of my service passed my exams and qualified as a Sergeant when I was temporarily promoted over 18 months. Recent Government cuts, unfortunately, saw time run out and West Midlands officers were required to leave at 30 years, cutting many careers short.

"I have a fear of blindness and correspondingly have an enormous amount of respect for those who suffer with a vision impairment, yet make the most of their lives. To volunteer and to be able to help those people, even in the smallest of ways, gives me great satisfaction.

"I have attended several lunch clubs where members attend with their friends or family, partners or carers and enjoy lunch and social interaction. I have thoroughly enjoyed these and love meeting the different characters and ladies and gents who have Served in many different theatres of war and National Service, be it with the RAF, the Army, the Paras, The Royal Marines or the Royal Navy, from veterans of the Second World War, up to The Falklands War and the war in Afghanistan.

"The stories and banter are really funny and emotional at times. I am always humbled, yet left with a sensation of happiness and satisfaction after these events. I hope to do more training and increase my activity in the near future. I can thoroughly recommend volunteering for Blind Veterans UK and I look forward to the next lunch club!"

**Eric Sayce – Member:**

Speaking of how the volunteers have helped him, Blind Veterans UK member Eric Sayce, said:

"Initially I was apprehensive, but within a few minutes my doubts were proved groundless, as the volunteers were caring, well informed and had time to listen. Nothing was too much trouble, from helping me to choose flowers to send to my wife, to accompanying me on a visit to the doctors.

"Having a volunteer with me on a trip out really enhanced the events, as they gave me an audio description of what was happening around me. What was really important to me was their realisation that I liked to feel the artefacts at the places we visited to gain a visual picture in my mind that they could see with their eyes.

"Including the volunteers into the awareness training that the staff receive certainly paid off for me, as I felt safe and confident in their ability to look after me when out of the Blind Veterans UK centre, whether we were in town or on an organised trip."

## **Blind Veterans UK Masonic Group AGM 26th - 28th April 2013, by W. Bro. Ernie Bignell.**

Well, once again, our Masonic weekend has come around and we were looking forward to welcoming some new members. Our weekend started on the Friday, all of us identifying ourselves and catching up with the 'years' news (round the bar). Unfortunately, this year, Ron Freer has decided to retire from his Chairmanship and asked the members to approve Bob Strickland, as his successor. Ron Freer formed this 'club' 43 years ago and has been Chairman ever since. I can't tell you his age, but the figure 1915 is part of his email address.

On the Saturday morning, we held our AGM, which involves preparations for the evening visit to the Temple Lodge, in Brighton, and discussing arrangements for 2014.

The Lodge meeting is mainly carried out by our members, who of course, come from Provinces all over the country. We are always looked after very well, both in Lodge and afterwards, at the Festive Board. It has become part of the Temple Lodge's meeting that we, the Masonic Group, carry out a Ceremony. This year it was planned to be an enactment of the Ceremony of Passing, but as things turned out, the Temple Lodge were fortunate enough to have an initiation, so we were shown how to do it 'Sussex style'. Very enjoyable indeed, followed by a very good festive board. Aren't we lucky?

On the Sunday, we hold a convivial luncheon with our wives, carers, and friends, with one of our group presiding, and looking after our principal guests. This year was slightly different in as much as this was Ron Freer's 'Swansong' and he had invited as his personal guest R. W Bro. Kenneth Thomas, the Provincial Grand Master of Sussex, together with his wife, Maureen. Our new Chairman, Bob Strickland, was host. Also present was V.W.Bro. Grahame Robinson Carr, the Deputy Provincial Grand Master of Sussex and his wife Pip.

Somehow, the seating plan went astray, but in the end the luncheon proved to be very successful and it was thoroughly enjoyed by all. Here's to next year. As expected, the luncheon was up to the usual high standard that PBK Catering always supplies. Sue, their new catering manager, carried on the good work that we always received from her predecessor. Thank you Sue, and your staff.

If any Freemason, who is a member of Blind Veterans UK, wishes to join us next year, keep an 'eye' on the 2014 Review, for further information. Or, contact Bob Strickland, on email: [robert.strickland1@btinternet.com](mailto:robert.strickland1@btinternet.com)

Happy we met and Happy we parted - until next year.

## Family News.



**Picture:** Blind Veterans UK member Michael Taite, from Uckfield in East Sussex, celebrates his 100th birthday.

### Congratulations to:

#### Birthdays:

**Tom King** who celebrated his 101st birthday on 16th May.

**Charles Carpenter** who celebrated his 100th birthday on 20th May.

#### Anniversaries:

##### Platinum (70th):

**Wilfred & Daisy Morgan** of Kidlington, Oxfordshire on 22nd May.

##### Blue Sapphire (65th):

**William & Jasmine Butcher** of Newant, Gloucestershire on 1st May.

#### Diamond (60th):

**Douglas & Pat Stepney** of Peacehaven, East Sussex on 9th May.

**Bill & Mary Meadows** of Skelmersdale, Lancashire on 23rd May.

**Bryan & Jeanne Chapman** of Ashford, Kent on 25th May.

**John & Patricia Harris** of Reading, Berkshire on 30th May.

#### Golden (50th):

**John & Marcia Lappin** of Wakefield, West Yorkshire on 18th May.

#### Ruby (40th):

**John & Kay Wheeler** of Doncaster, South Yorkshire on 26th May.

### We regret to announce the death of:

**Margaret (Gret) Atkinson** who died on 30th April 2013. She was the widow of the late Arthur Atkinson.

**John Bowstead** who died on 17th March 2013. He was the husband of Nancy Bowstead.

**Gladys Carroll** who died on 4th February 2013. She was the widow of the late Matthew Carroll.

**Carol Henley** who died on 25th April 2013. She was the wife of Graham Henley.

**Rose Mantle** who died on 7th May 2013. She was the widow of the late Horace Mantle.

**Irene McDermott** who died on 14th April 2013. She was the wife of the late John McDermott.

**Patricia 'Pat' Paulson** who died on 23rd April 2013. She was the widow of the late Albert Paulson.

**Muriel Roberts** who died on 25th April 2013. She was the wife of Arthur Roberts.

**Sarah Terry** who died on 13th April 2013. She was the wife of Donald Terry.

**Margaret Wilkins** who died on 23rd March 2012. She was the widow of the late Stanley Wilkins.

**Winifred Winstanley** who died on 1st August 2012. She was the wife of William Winstanley.

# Welcome to Blind Veterans UK.

**Ronald Ashton** of Hyde, Cheshire Served in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1946.

**David Atkinson** of Ely, Cambridgeshire Served in the Royal Navy from 1972 to 1991.

**Peter Badman** of Shoreham By Sea, West Sussex Served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

**Harold Beeby** of Birmingham, West Midlands Served in the Royal Air Force from 1943 to 1948.

**Maurice Bell** of Sheffield, South Yorkshire Served in the Royal Air Force from 1951 to 1953.

**Frederick Bennett** of Stoke On Trent, Staffordshire Served in the Royal Air Force and the Royal Scots Fusiliers from 1944 to 1947.

**Lionel Blenkinsop** of Hartlepool, Cleveland Served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1946.

**Donald 'Don' Brasenell** of Castle Douglas, Kirkcudbrightshire Served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1954 to 1959.

**Francis Carter** of Wantage, Oxfordshire Served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1945 to 1948.

**Frederick Cattell** of Kirby Muxloe, Leicester Served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

**John 'Jack' Clinton** of Darwen, Lancashire Served in the Royal Navy from 1944 to 1948.

**Peter Collings** of Bognor Regis, West Sussex Served in the Royal Artillery from 1947 to 1949.

**William Conway** of Richmond, North Yorkshire Served in the Royal Air Force from 1952 to 1953.

**Barry Cottle** of Plymouth Served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1950 to 1955.

**Edgar Croshaw** of Solihull, West Midlands Served in the General Service Corps and the North Staffordshire Regiment from 1945 to 1948.

**John Dart** of Swindon, Wiltshire Served in the General Service Corps, the Wiltshire Regiment, the Army Catering Corps and the Royal Signals from 1945 to 1967.

**Gordon Eaton** of Solihull, West Midlands Served in the Royal Air Force from 1950 to 1952.

**John Fone** of Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire Served in the Royal Engineers from 1953 to 1955.

**Bernard Foy** of Wirral, Merseyside Served in the Army Catering Corps from 1956 to 1962.

**Kathleen 'Kay' Fraser** of Bishop Auckland, County Durham Served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1944 to 1946.

**Bernard Gardner** of Lancing, West Sussex Served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1947 to 1949.

**George Gibbons** of St Albans Served in the Royal Army Service Corps and the Essex Regiment from 1943 to 1947.

**Richard Gould** of Downham Market, Norfolk Served in the East Kent Regiment and the Royal Navy from 1935 to 1945.

**Albert 'Elliott' Hall** of Wigton, Cumbria Served in the Royal Navy from 1949 to 1954.

**Donald Hancock** of Hove, East Sussex Served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1944.

**Donald Hansen** of Stockton On Tees, Cleveland Served in the Royal Air Force from 1943 to 1947.

**Leonard Hawkins** of Sheffield, South Yorkshire Served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Army Pay Corps from 1947 to 1949.

**Barry Hill** of Eastleigh, Hampshire Served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1946.

**Arthur Hodge** of Waltham Abbey, Essex Served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

**Ralph Holt** of Crowborough, East Sussex Served in the Home Guard from 1942 to 1945.

**Stephen Jones** of Ammanford, Dyfed Served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1942 to 1947.

**Edward Keen** of York Served in the Royal Engineers from 1946 to 1948.

**Robert Kempster** of Watford, Hertfordshire Served in the Royal Air Force from 1951 to 1953.

**Ronald Marriott** of Crawley, West Sussex Served in the Royal Navy from 1945 to 1948.

**Charles Maxwell** of Pensby, Wirral Served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1944 to 1956.

**John Morecroft** of Leyland, Lancashire Served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1946 to 1949.

**John Morris** of Liverpool Served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

**Ronald Morrison** of Helensburgh, Dunbartonshire Served in the Royal Artillery from 1951 to 1956.

**Malcolm Mort** of Cardiff Served in the Royal Air Force from 1953 to 1960.

**Eric Moss** of Frinton On Sea, Essex Served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

**Peter Odd** of Cobham, Surrey Served in the Royal Navy from 1942 to 1947.

**Alexander Park** of Coatbridge, Lanarkshire Served in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1948.

**Archibald Pearson** of Glasgow Served in the Royal Air Force from 1946 to 1948.

**Stanley Pope** of Prestwich, Manchester Served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1945 to 1948.

**Alan Powell** of Rhyl, Clwyd Served in the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1949 to 1951.

**Arthur Prescott** of Morecambe, Lancashire Served in the Royal Air Force from 1951 to 1953.

**Arthur Sale** of Sidcup, Kent Served in the Royal Air Force from 1945 to 1948.

**Ronald Seagrove** of Iver, Buckinghamshire Served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1947 to 1949.

**Trevor Shaw** of Bradford, West Yorkshire Served in the East Yorkshire Regiment, the Parachute Regiment and the Royal Engineers from 1952 to 1966.

**William Anthony 'Tony' Shelbourne** of Flint, Clwyd Served in the Royal Air Force from 1950 to 1952.

**George Simpson** of Luton, Bedfordshire Served in the Royal Navy from 1936 to 1946.

**John Tallent** of Bristol Served in the Royal Engineers from 1950 to 1952.

**Aleksander Tarwid** of Alton, Hampshire Served in the Royal Air Force from 1949 to 1976.

**Eamonn Ward** of Lincoln Served in the Royal Air Force from 1953 to 1975.

**Dennis Webb** of Crawley, West Sussex Served in the Royal Air Force from 1946 to 1948.

**Reginald Webb** of Guildford, Surrey Served in the South Wales Borderers and the Royal Signals from 1944 to 1948.

**Douglas Witt** of Aylesford, Kent Served in the Royal Air Force from 1949 to 1951.

# 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.**

**Norman Biwer** of Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland died on 11th April 2013, aged 91. He Served in the Royal Navy from 1941 to 1946 on HMS Pennywort, a Corvette on the North Atlantic Convoys and HMS Volage, a destroyer and worked on the Russian Convoy protection. He also Served in the Far East, including Sri Lanka as a Chief Petty Officer.

**Brian Butler** of Wimborne, Dorset died on 23rd April 2013, aged 87. He joined the Royal Navy in 1944. At HMS Lochinvar he completed a mine sweeping course, where he then remained as a training officer. He was later sent to Cruxhaven as the First Lieutenant of a motor launch patrolling the sea around Heligoland. He was discharged in 1948 as a Sub Lieutenant.

**Joseph Byas** of Benfleet, Essex died on 5th May 2013, aged 80. He joined the Royal Ulster Rifles in 1952 and was posted to Hong Kong and later to Germany. He was discharged in 1955.

**Herbert Cole** of Abingdon, Oxfordshire died on 9th May 2013, aged 85. He joined the Royal Army Ordnance Corps in 1945 and Served at various locations in the UK and Germany. He was discharged in April 1948.

**Charles 'Noel' Devos** of Uckfield, East Sussex died on 5th May 2013, aged 87. He joined the General Service Corps in 1944 and transferred to the Buffs in 1945. He then transferred to the East Surrey Regiment and was commissioned in the Gloucester Regiment in 1946. He was discharged as a Captain in 1948.

**Henry Dixon** of Preston, Lancashire died on 28th April 2013, aged 93. He joined the RAF in 1940 and Served in the UK and Middle East. He was discharged as a Corporal in 1946.

**Clarence 'Bruce' Dockrell** of Ty Croes, Isle of Anglesey died on 23rd April 2013, aged 93. He joined the Royal Engineers as a boy soldier before full enlistment in 1938. He was with the BEF in France in 1940. He was mentioned in dispatches and was discharged in 1947 as a Warrant Officer Second Class.

**Graham Dower** of Exeter, Devon died on 3rd May 2013, aged 82. He joined the Royal Navy in 1947. He qualified as an electrical rating before joining HMS Eagle where he was in a volunteer band called The Blue Jackets. He finally Served on HMS Tintagel Castle as the PO Electrician before eventually discharging in 1956.

**Dennis Eccles** of Sutton, Surrey died on 30th April 2013, aged 84. He joined the Royal Navy at Portsmouth in 1945 as a boy seaman for a full career. After Service in a variety of ships he was discharged as a Chief Petty Officer in 1969.

**Peter Ferguson** of Brighton, East Sussex died on 19th April 2013, aged 83. He joined the Royal Navy in 1948 and specialised in stores and supplies. He sailed most of the major oceans and completed his Service as a Leading Supply Assistant in 1955.

**Beryl France** of Worthing, West Sussex died on 20th April 2013, aged 99. She joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force in 1941 and trained as a driver. She was based at Bassingbourn and Oakington before discharge as a Sergeant in 1945.

**Roy Gardner** of Gloucester, Gloucestershire died on 8th May 2013, aged 83. He joined the General Service Corps in 1947 and transferred to the Royal Armoured Corps. He spent some time in Berlin and Osnabruck and was discharged as a Lance Corporal in 1953.

**Alfred 'Bill' Gates** of Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire died on 22nd April 2013, aged 93. He joined the Royal Navy at HMS Vincent, Gosport, as a boy seaman. He was advanced to the rank of Petty Officer and in 1943 commissioned as a Sub Lieutenant. He latterly Served ashore in HMS King Alfred and HMS Pembroke, Chatham before being discharged as a Lieutenant in 1946.

**Henry 'Harry' Graves** of Windsor, Berkshire died on 16th April 2013, aged 91. He joined the Royal Artillery in 1942 and transferred to the East Surrey Regiment in 1944. He Served with the Desert Rats in Italy, Austria, Greece and Yugoslavia. He was discharged in 1947 as a Staff Sergeant.

**Daniel Guy** of Hebburn, Tyne and Wear died on 29th April 2013, aged 89. He joined the General Service Corps in 1943, transferring to the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. He fought in the Burma Campaign as part of the South East Asia Command. He then fought with the Middle East Land Forces. He was discharged in 1947 as a Craftsman.

**Ernest Harris M.M.** of Calstock, Cornwall died on 11th April 2013, aged 95. He joined the Royal Army Medical Corps in 1940 and joined a Field Ambulance Brigade in charge of a section of stretcher bearers. He was attached to the Irish Brigade in the 8th Army and fought in North Africa, Sicily and Italy. He fought at Monte Cassino and received the Military Medal for evacuating wounded from German positions in Monte Grande in December 1944. He was discharged in July 1946 as a Lance Corporal.

**Frank Hartley** of Felixstowe, Suffolk died on 30th April 2013, aged 87. He joined the Grenadier Guards in 1943 and Served in the UK, France, Belgium and Germany before discharge in 1947.

**Margaret Holding** of Polegate, East Sussex died on 21st April 2013, aged 87. She Served in the UK in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1945 to 1947 .

**Cyril Hood** of Halifax, West Yorkshire died on 30th April 2013, aged 90. He joined the General Service Corps in 1943 and transferred to the Royal Signals. He supported the D-Day landings on Gold Beach from a headquarters based on a Royal Naval frigate. He was demobilised in 1945.

**Leonard Hubbard** of Bexhill on Sea, West Sussex died on 10th September 2012, aged 100. He Served in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1943, leaving as a Corporal.

**Annabella Kitson** of Notting Hill Gate, London died on 6th May 2013, aged 89. She was first employed to assist Esmond Knight RN, a late member of Blind Veterans UK and a well known actor, who was blinded onboard HMS Hood. She helped him to write his book 'Seeking the Bubble'. She joined the RAF in 1943 and trained in Glasgow as an RAF Wireless Mechanic, leaving as a Sergeant in 1946.

**Bruce 'Bill' Lord** of Uxbridge, Middlesex died on 5th April 2013, aged 86. He went to sea aged 14½ in a merchant ship and Served throughout the war. He joined the RAF in 1947, qualified as a motor boat crew on air-sea rescue launches and Served in the UK, Singapore and Hong Kong. He was discharged in 1952 as a Leading Aircraftman.

**Anthony Maher** of Widnes, Cheshire died on 18th April 2013, aged 79. He completed National Service from 1952 to 1954 in the Army Catering Corps. He Served in the UK and Hamelin and Sennelager in Germany. He subsequently joined the TA in Liverpool for a further two years.

**Dennis McDonald** of Fleet, Hampshire died on 6th May 2013, aged 90. He joined the RAF in 1941 and trained as a Navigator in Canada. Based in Lincoln he flew bombers and was discharged as a Flight Lieutenant in August 1946.

**Raymond Melough** of Brighton, East Sussex died on 27th April 2013, aged 92. He joined the RAF in 1940 and specialised as an Electrical Engineer based in the Ground Maintenance Unit. He Served in the UK, Gibraltar, Sicily, Italy and North Africa. He left as a Sergeant in 1946.

**William 'Frank' Mock** of Cranleigh, Surrey died on 18th April 2013, aged 91. He joined the Home Guard in 1940. He was involved in essential war work with the production of motor torpedo boats on the river Dart and with testing and trials in the English Channel. He was demobilised in 1945 as a Sergeant.

**Albert 'Bert' Mockeridge** of Tredegar, Gwent died on 14th April 2013, aged 89. He joined the RAF in 1941 and became a navigator. He joined 78 Squadron, a Wellington Bomber unit. He later converted to Halifax Bombers and completed 40 sorties. He then spent some time on Sunderland flying boats before discharge as a Warrant Officer in 1946.

**Lucy Nelson** of Rainham, Essex died on 17th March 2013, aged 89. She joined the Women's Royal Air Force in 1941 and Served in the UK at various locations. She was discharged as a Leading Aircraftwoman in 1946.

**Edith North** of Stanley, County Durham died on 17th April 2013, aged 88. She joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service in 1945 and Served in the UK as a clerk until discharge in 1947.

**Ronald Oakley** of Littlehampton, West Sussex died on 18th April 2013, aged 93. He Served in the Royal Signals from 1937 to 1946 in Ireland, Syria, Egypt, Palestine, Italy, Greece and France when he took part in the D-Day Landings.

**George Parrish** of Emsworth, Hampshire died on 26th April 2013, aged 87. In 1944 he joined the General Service Corps, transferring to the Royal Artillery. During the war he Served in India; following the war he Served in Germany, Cyprus and the UK. He was discharged at the end of his 22 year engagement in 1966 as a Bombardier.

**Arthur Patton** of Peterlee, County Durham died on 28th April 2013, aged 75. He joined the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers in 1954. Serving with the Airborne he was attached to the 2nd Battalion Parachute Regiment in

Cyprus. Involved in the Suez crisis he landed in the Canal Zone in 1956. He was demobilised in 1957.

**Geoffrey Payne** of Thetford, Norfolk died on 7th April 2013, aged 80. He joined the Royal Artillery in 1951 for National Service, but after a month he transferred to the Royal Military Police. He Served at Shape HQ in Paris and was discharged in 1953.

**Kenneth 'Ken' Razzell** of Orpington, Kent died on 8th April 2013, aged 87. He Served in the Royal Navy from 1944 to 1946. He specialised as an air mechanic and Served with an Air Sea Rescue Squadron in Scotland. He also Served in the Pacific, the Far East and on HMS Simbang in Singapore.

**Ebenezer 'Mervyn' Reeves** of Brighton, East Sussex died on 22nd April 2013, aged 58. He Served in the General Service Corps in 1973.

**Albert Richards** of Welshpool, Powys died on 17th April 2013, aged 89. He joined the 70th Battalion the Royal Warwickshire in 1942 and specialised as a signaller (wireless operator). He then joined Number 1 Special Force via Gibraltar and Algiers and was deployed into Italy, remaining a radio operator for the Special Forces until the end of the war.

**Arthur Roberts** of Lytham St Annes, Lancashire died on 11th May 2013, aged 86. He became a Merchant Navy Cadet at the age of 14 and went to sea aged 15. He joined the Merchant Navy in 1942 and was invalided out in 1943 due to poor eyesight. He signed back on after attending Wireless College as a Radio Officer and took part in the D-Day landings, ferrying Polish troops to the invasion beaches. He completed his Service in 1946 as a Radio Officer.

**Denis Saxby** of Chesterfield, Derbyshire died on 24th April 2013, aged 89. He joined the General Service Corps in 1942; he then joined the Royal Armoured Corps in 1943 as a Gunner. He was deployed to France shortly after D-Day. Wounded in Holland he was evacuated to Calais where he recovered and then re-joined his unit to move in to Germany with the 79th Armoured Division. He transferred to the Royal Scots Greys in 1945 and was discharged as a Trooper in 1947.

**James Scott** of Rochester, Kent died on 13th May 2013, aged 87. He joined the Royal Navy in 1943. He was posted to Devonport where he was injured and after a spell in a Bristol hospital he returned to Chatham. He remained in the Navy but worked at an ammunition depot. He was discharged in 1946.

**William Smith** of Eastbourne, East Sussex died on 1st May 2013, aged 92. He joined the Royal Artillery in 1940 and trained as a radio operator. Serving in the UK before going to Europe in late 1944 he was discharged in 1946 as a Gunner.

**Yvonne Smith** of Romford, Essex died on 10th April 2013, aged 89. She joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force in 1942 and qualified as a driver. She Served in the UK, until her discharge as a Leading Aircraftwoman in 1945.

**Jack Stansfield** of Coventry died on 10th April 2013, aged 92. He joined the Duke of Wellington's Regiment in 1944 and then transferred to the Royal Signals in 1945 as a wireless operator before moving to the Royal Army Pay Corps. He was demobilised in 1947.

**Ronald Taylor** of Hailsham, East Sussex died on 29th March 2013, aged 80. He Served in the Grenadier Guards for National Service from 1951 to 1953 in Egypt and Cyprus.

**Gordon Thomas** of Exeter, Devon died on 21st February 2013, aged 87. He joined the General Service Corps in 1944, then transferred to the Royal Army Service Corps and was an Officer's driver throughout the war. On D+4 he landed on the beaches at Normandy with the Canadians and was in Kiel, Germany when the war ended. He was discharged in 1948.

**Brian Tingle** of Sheffield, South Yorkshire died on 19th October 2012, aged 74. He joined the Royal Artillery in 1956 and Served in the UK and Germany. He was discharged in 1958, but stayed in part time National Service until 1962.

**Douglas Webb** of Henley on Thames, Oxfordshire died on 20th April 2013. In 1939 he joined the Royal Artillery Searchlights, Serving in a variety of locations in the UK. He was in the British Expeditionary Force and evacuated successfully back to the UK. He returned to France after D-Day and moved into Belgium, Holland and finally Germany. He was demobilised in 1946.

**Horace 'Jim' Willingham** of Wembley, Middlesex died on 24th April 2013, aged 88. He joined the RAF in 1943 and qualified as a flight mechanic. He worked on various aircraft, including Sunderland flying boats during a 12 month posting to Lagos, West Africa. He also Served for 14 months on an RAF airfield in France from 1946, leaving as a Leading Aircraftman.





**Picture:** Fusilier William (Billy) Windsor with The Goat Major of the 1st Battalion, The Royal Welsh (Royal Welch Fusiliers) and Billy Baxter, Rehabilitation & Training Support Worker, pictured at the official opening of the Llandudno centre on 2nd May 2013. Photo by Welshot Images.