

April 2014

Review

Blind Veterans UK | St Dunstan's since 1915



On the cover: Paul Jacobs GM, Simon Brown, Kelly Hart and Louise Timms, Blind Veterans UK Brighton Sports & Recreation Manager, at The Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme.

Review



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Patron: Her Majesty the Queen

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Key: B for Brighton centre - L for Llandudno centre - S for Sheffield centre Blind Veterans UK Calendar

April.

Brighton Marathon 6th **B**

Virgin London Marathon 13th **B**

The Golf Club 19th – 20th **B**

Adventure Week 13th - 19th **L**

Ex POW Reunion 11th – 14th **B**

Writers' Forum 19th **B**

Masonic Weekend 25th - 27th **B**

Exploring the Peaks 7th - 11th **S**

May.

Widows' Week 4th – 10th **B**

Archery Club 30th May – 9th June **B**

Potting & Plants Week 4th - 10th **L**

Welsh History and Culture Week 11th - 17th **L**

The Golf Club 17th – 18th **B**

Water Sports for Heroes Day **B**

Writers' Forum 17th **B**

Wood-fest 25th May - 31st **L**

You can contact the centres on — Brighton 01273 307811, Llandudno 01492 868700, Sheffield 0114 2672550. To book accommodation please contact the Booking Office on 01273 391500. If you have care needs please first contact your Welfare Officer.

From the Chairman.

Your message from Tim Davis.

After what seems like an endless winter of rain, floods and high winds, my mood dramatically lifted on the weekend of March 15th and 16th as some truly Spring-like weather bathed most of the UK and all of France.

I decided to take my three sons to Paris to show them a city they could barely remember from their early years. Perfect Spring weather, combined with an abundance of blossom at a more quiet time of year in Paris, is really a wonderful experience. The news that Ireland and England had both won their Six Nations Rugby matches against France and Italy respectively the day before, also gave me an extra spring in my step as we admired some of the great architecture and variety of people going about their day!

What struck me was the feeling of hope for the coming year and general sense of optimism, which also seemed to be in abundance on the faces of those who wandered around enjoying the weather and peacefulness of the day (Sunday 16th). It occurred to me I often have this feeling at this time of year and I reflected a little as to why this may be.

In part it is the prospect of getting outdoors more; I've always been a fan of outdoors activity. It's also the feeling of looking forward to the prospects of Summer, and as I thought about the coming year, I also thought about what I hoped to get done at work, with Blind Veterans and with family and friends. This positive spiral triggered by hope and looking forward positively to what could be, generates inspiration and a renewed sense of purpose for me. It's also a wonderful tonic for life. I hope that many of you reading this can also reflect and get inspired in the same way as I have been.

During the course of this year at Blind Veterans UK, the organisation is investing in many things that I'm sure will well help catalyse hope, and as a result create a positive spiral of motivation and good feeling, as well as provide practical help. Looking at the recent "Review – Supplement", there is an extensive list of activities and theme weeks, which I would encourage you all to read and participate in. There are also many Reunion lunches up and down the country, which are great opportunities to meet existing friends and make new ones, as well as meet the staff of Blind Veterans UK who can answer any queries you may have. Welcome to Spring, and by the time you read this message, I hope you've taken the opportunity to book into a few of the numerous activities and events the organisation provides. Happy 2014.

Noticeboard.

Dates for your diary and useful information.

The Macular Society.

More than 500,000 people in the UK are affected by age-related macular degeneration, making it the most common cause of sight loss in the country.

The condition causes the loss of the central vision and can make it difficult for people to complete such tasks as reading or even recognising faces.

There are also rarer genetic forms of macular degeneration that affect younger people.

The Macular Society is the national charity for anyone affected by central vision loss. They provide free information and support to improve lives.

They have more than 275 Macular Society support groups around the UK, as well as running free helpline, counselling and telephone befriending services.

In addition to this they offer training to help people make the most of their remaining vision and fund research.

For more information on the Macular Society visit www.macularsociety.org or contact the helpline on 0300 3030 111.

Pensions supplement.

Details of the War Pension rates that will come into effect on 7th April this year can be obtained on request from Inderpal Kallah.

Telephone him at Blind Veterans UK headquarters on 020 7723 5021 or email: inderpal.kallah@blindveterans.org.uk, stating if you would prefer to receive the information in print, tape or email format.

Blind Veterans UK Masonic Group.

For many years, Blind Veterans UK has held a weekend for those beneficiaries who are Freemasons to get together and enjoy an annual meeting, whilst being hosted by the Temple Lodge in Brighton.

With the name change to Blind Veterans UK, the group remains the same, and their weekends still continue. But as the name of the charity has changed, so has the size and momentum of the group.

If you are interested in joining fellow Masons for a great weekend in April each year, why not join us at the Brighton centre, where the Masonic Group are guests of the Temple Lodge.

Age, Rank or experience are no barrier; it's a wonderful weekend for all.

Please contact W.Bro. Bob Strickland the group's Secretary for more details.

His email address is: robert.strickland1@btinternet.com

Or you can telephone him on: 01329 841022.

The next meeting of the Masonic Group will take place at the Brighton centre over the weekend of 25th to 27th April.

Dates for the Writers' Forum in 2014.

In 2014 the Writers' Forum will meet at the Brighton centre on:

Saturday 19th April. Saturday 17th May. Saturday 21st June. Saturday 20th September. Saturday 20th October. Saturday 15th November and Saturday 20th December.

A Writers' Weekend will take place from Thursday 3rd to Saturday 5th July at the Brighton centre.

To find out if the Writers' Forum is for you, please contact Donna Vaughan by email at: murphyvaughan@hotmail.com or phone the Brighton centre on 01273 307811 and a message will be given to Donna. A writer and broadcaster, Donna has run the Writers' Forum for the past 11 years. The eminent novelist Peter James is Patron of the Writers' Forum. To book accommodation please telephone the Booking Office on: 01273 391500. If you have care needs please first contact your Welfare Officer.

Letters to the Editor.

We welcome your letters so 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,

My name is David Norton, a retired engineer, and capable in mathematics.

I have discovered an unrecognised invalid integration in the mathematics of Einstein. The integration is not valid because the equation being integrated has two different Physical Quantities on its two sides, mass on the left hand side, and momentum on the right. Correction means that the Universe has four linear space dimensions, not just the three we see around us. The fourth space dimension enables a Theory of Gravity to be mathematically derived, which demonstrates that Gravity was stronger earlier in the Universe's life, and will be weaker later.

You may think that neither mass-energy equivalence, nor space-time can be challenged, but the maths says otherwise.

If anybody is interested, particularly if you are a Physicist or Mathematician, please contact me on email: david.john.norton@googlemail.com, or on telephone: 01202 707791.

Yours faithfully,

David Norton.

Celebrity spotting.

Returning to Hereford after a Younger Group weekend tour of the battlefields of the Somme, Carl Adams learned that the former England footballer Sol Campbell was onboard the train he was travelling in. He asked to have his photo taken with him, which Sol readily agreed to.

Carl said: "I was surprised he wasn't sitting up in First Class. He was a lovely bloke who instantly agreed to a photograph. Thank you Sol."



Picture: Carl Adamson, left and former England footballer Sol Campbell.

Change of dates for the Blackpool and Chorley Reunions.

The dates for the Blackpool and Chorley Reunions have been moved from September to August. The new dates are shown below.

12th August.	Blackpool.	De Vere Herons' Reach, East Park Drive, Blackpool FY3 8LL.
13th August.	Chorley.	The Pines Hotel, Preston Road, Clayton le Woods, Chorley, Lancs PR6 7ED.

Photo of Don Wessels, a war blinded South African veteran, to be exhibited at the Sony World Photography Awards at Somerset House.

Tara Mette, aged 21 from Namibia is one of the finalists in the Sony World Photography Awards for her image titled "Human Nature at its Best."

Her photograph depicts Don Wessels (44) a happily married husband and father of three sons, who was blinded and lost both hands 27 years ago following the explosion of an anti-personnel mine which he was holding in his hands.

Tara said: "Don's courage and strength, both physical [he's climbed Kilimanjaro] and emotional to become the man, husband and father that he is today must have been a long and tough journey but he conquered it to the best of his ability."

"I love documenting people and capturing their emotions. I love discovering people through my camera, exposing their strengths and their weaknesses; depicting their daily struggle or their strong inner core. Reality and truth are part of my core beliefs and this is what I aim to portray in my photographs. I want to share the bare truth and tell the whole story in my images."

On being named as a finalist:

"I feel like a little girl the day before Christmas. I was awe struck; it was completely unexpected. I have never won an award before, it is definitely one of the happiest days of my life."

How, when and where did you take 'Human Nature at its Best'?

"The first time I saw Don was when he was out walking with his dog and children in Somerset West [South Africa], and he piqued my interest. I contacted him via email and interviewed him. I then had the privilege of meeting him in person and got a chance to photograph him."

"He is a wonderful man and has an amazing family. I took the final image in his living-room and a friend of mine held the reflector so that he would stand out more."



Picture: Don Wessels holds his sleeping son as another sits in a chair and his wife adjusts the blinds. Photo: Tara Mette

The Awards ceremony will take place in London in May when Tara will be flown to London. The photo of Don and his family will be on display at Somerset House from 1st to 18th May as part of the 2014 Sony World Photography Awards Exhibition. The photo will also be published in the 2014 edition of the Sony World Photography Awards book.

Don Wessels, who is a member of St Dunstan's in South Africa, said: "The youngest of my three sons, Gido who is two, is shown sleeping on my lap. The student photographer, Tara, took more than 200 pictures and it all took so long that baby Gido got hungry. I gave him his bottle whilst still posing for the flood of pictures and that is where he fell asleep!"

"I believe the family, just as I, enjoy being able to do something to help somebody else. In this instance it led to much more than we expected and I am excited for what such exposure can do for Tara to set her up in her career as a photographer. With my eyes being without seeing, my baby's eyes closed and my wife Maatje manoeuvring the blinds to let in more light, there is a lot of symbology in the picture and I am sure Tara has a bright future ahead of her in her fledgling career. Our son Matteo (6) is in the chair and Francois (4) is not in that particular photo."

Top tips and a career focus on Kerry Levins.

Since he left the Army in 1999, 43 year old Kerry Levins has enjoyed a successful career in IT. Here we speak with Kerry about his career and ask what advice he would give to those Blind Veterans UK members who are job hunting, or thinking about your future career.

Kerry Levins, Service Catalogue Manager for the global hosting organisation in BP, said: "In terms of training and the type of employment to aim for, it has struck me over the last few years that people shouldn't try to reinvent themselves as something they're not. If you don't have a background in architecture don't try and sell yourself as an architect. The important thing is to recognise your weaknesses and play to your strengths. Take time to think and work out what you're good at. Perhaps you're good at talking to people, or you're good with numbers, or creating elegant prose. Whatever it is focus on it, pick your strengths, and build on them.

"Undertaking training that is suitable and appropriate to your fundamental strengths will give you a better chance of finding gainful employment. And remember, whatever happens, don't allow anyone to tell you that it's not possible — if you believe it's possible, then it's possible.

"When it comes to interviews there are two schools of thought. You can be completely upfront about your vision impairment and walk in with white stick in hand. However, from personal experience, when I was first registered as severely vision impaired I went for a couple of interviews with white stick in hand, and they tended to be very short interviews. At the interview with BP, my current employer, I didn't mention my sight loss until I had the offer in writing. That is the first point you are legally obliged to inform a potential employer that you have a disability. Up until that point it's a level playing field, but we live in the real world. As I don't look blind, although my eyes don't point in the same direction, I can hide it well. Now I'm not suggesting for one minute that's the way to go. In fact I wouldn't do that now, but at the time it worked for me.

"Before you're employed there's support available to travel to interviews and for training if it's reasonable and justifiable, and Access to Work, part of the

Department for Work and Pensions, will provide support in arranging that. A quick internet search for Access to Work will give you the contact numbers. They have helped me over the last few years with my commute, as to get to work in a reasonable time, I either have to do a very awkward journey by train and public transport or have someone drive me. As it actually works out cheaper for someone to drive me, rather than commuting by public transport, I provide the car and they provide the driver and the additional fuel.

"With regard to adaptations in the working environment, your employer has a duty to provide reasonable adaptations to enable you to get on with delivering your role.

"Don't forget for technology advice there's Blind Veterans UK's IT department who are excellent. In terms of what's right for you I would listen to the advice from those guys, as they know what they're talking about. However, equally, if you don't get on with it, don't flog a dead horse, as if it works you will know fairly quickly.

"Once again: remember and believe that there are options available to you. It's a case of not feeling constrained by other people's train of thought. Don't allow someone to tell you that it's not possible, if you believe it's possible, then it's possible."

As Service Catalogue Manager for BP, Kerry's role is to define the services that are delivered by the overall hosting organisation, effectively that's the hosting data centres and all the back end processing that happens within the IT environment. He defines what those services are and how much they cost and then calculates the total cost due to the operation of those services, which he then goes on to recover from the business. Currently that runs to about \$200 million.

For his job Kerry needs a good understanding of basic accounting and a sound knowledge of ITIL, the Information Technology Infrastructure Library, a set of guidelines for good service management within the IT world that was set up by the British Government in the late 1990s/early 2000s.

When he left the Army Kerry started work in IT sales, as apparently what he'd done in the Army was not project management at all it was sales, which struck him as slightly odd! He migrated from that quite quickly into a technical support management role as Head of Technical Support for Redstone, a telecoms

company. He then moved to the position of Commercial Manager, looking after the contracts side of life.

After he was made redundant he took a contract job with British Energy in Gloucester for a year as an IT Service Management Consultant; that took him down the ITIL route. When the contract ended he was phoned the same week by BP and invited for interview.

In between starting work for Redstone and joining BP Kerry was registered as severely vision impaired.

Below, Kerry, who joined Blind Veterans UK in 2010 and became a Trustee in 2012 answers, our 15 questions:

Where was the most exciting place that you served?

Hong Kong.

What's your favourite memory?

Cresting a ridgeline in Nepal and seeing Mount Machhapuchchhre seem to rise from the ground I suddenly felt very insignificant!

What's the most important lesson life has taught you?

It is easier to get forgiveness than permission!

How do you unwind?

Think up ideas that challenge the status quo.

What qualities do you admire in others?

Physical courage; the will and desire to overcome obstacles; and a willingness to say "Stop! That is wrong!"

What's your irrational fear?

Porcelain dolls and clowns!

What would you change in the world?

Ignorance, not knowing is fair enough, but not wanting to know is criminal.

What's the meaning of life?

We are defined by our actions, how society remembers us is entirely up to us!

What's your favourite place?

England's green and pleasant land!

What makes you happy?

Making others smile!

What would your blind self tell your sighted self?

Don't take no for an answer, if you believe you can do it, then you can do it, first be certain it is something that you should do and do it!

What's the biggest challenge you've overcome as a blind veteran?

Restraining myself when told "but you can't do that, you're blind."

What is the most useful piece of training or equipment?

My guide dog.

What three things could you not live without?

Daughter, guide dog, iPhone.

What's your favourite smell?

Gucci by Gucci.

Contact details for Access to Work are:

London, the South East and East England.

Email: atwosu.london@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Telephone: 020 8426 3110 — **Textphone:** 020 8426 3133

Fax: 020 8426 3134.

Cardiff for South West England, Wales, West Midlands and East Midlands.

Email: atwosu.cardiff@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Telephone: 02920 423 291 — **Textphone:** 0845 602 5850

Fax: 02920 423 342

Glasgow for Scotland, North West England, North East England, Yorkshire and Humberside.

Email: atwosu.glasgow@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Telephone: 0141 950 5327 — **Textphone:** 0845 602 5850

Fax: 0141 950 5265.

From the slopes of Canazei - ski report 2014.

Former helicopter pilot Gerry Jones from St Agnes in Cornwall is one of 16 Blind Veterans UK members who took part in this year's ski trip in the mountain resort of Canazei, Canazei Val Fasse in the Italian Dolomites, staying at the Hotel El Caisel, where they have skied for the last 13 years. Gerry first joined his fellow members, then St Dunstaners, on the slopes in 1979. He went on to run the ski club for 20 years, for many of them with his skiing guide Martin Blank.

Here Gerry speaks of the importance of the week: "The first ski trip I went on was organised by Ray Hazan, now our President, Ray Hazan OBE, who used ski guides from his former Regiment, The Royal Anglian's, to show everyone the ropes as they were at their Snow Queen hut in Bavaria. I had joined Blind Veterans UK, then St Dunstan's, in 1973 and the ski trip was a turning point in my life. I was working by this time and using the tricks in my mobility training that I had been taught by Jock Carnochan, a former instructor at the Brighton centre, but, like most, I had got into a day to day humdrum way of life. On that first trip I met some memorable people. From memory they were Ray Sheriff, Tiny Pointon, David Clark, Alan Wortley, Jack Fulling, and of course Ray himself.

"I don't think that I have ever laughed so much in one week before. Needless to say that on my return home my mobility improved, due mainly to the confidence I had acquired during that week. What hazards could there possibly be in a busy city high street compared to an icy Bavarian slope with barbed wire to mark the fringes? During that week I had passed under, over and through the latter, no Health and Safety in those days!

"When the charity went through a difficult financial time some years ago we vowed that the ski club would continue. As I was in the fundraising game at the time, I got the guides sponsored by their respective Regiments and Corps, and members who wanted to go had to fund themselves. Independence is our strapline and it came to the fore. We have since built up a unique relationship with HQ where members have helped out by funding the guides and the skiers with insurance. I also sought sponsorship for our ski jackets and other help from a 'rich uncle' to help out in certain emergencies.

"The annual ski trip is now organised by Carl Williams, Mark Brewin and Jamie Weller who did an excellent job this year. It was the first time they ran it completely by themselves and Martin [Blank] and I were able to sit back, relax and have a drink and not worry about anything. It takes a lot of organisation and their hard work paid off.

"Looking back over past years some of the memories just make me cry as they're so hilarious. The first time I went I came off the junior slope and joined some people from our group who were laughing hysterically. I asked them what had happened and was told that Bill Shea, a veteran who was blinded at Montecassino, had fallen and as he careered down the slope on his back, he passed between the legs of a woman wearing a fur coat and fur hat who was promptly knocked onto his lap and they both snowploughed down the slopes with her sitting on top of him.

"Another funny memory is the time I was in the queue at the junior lift in Bavaria. The queue ran past a hotel where we paid to swim in the pool. As we queued my sighted guide suddenly excused himself and shot off. When he returned I asked what had happened and he explained that Ray Sheriff had gone for a swim in the hotel's pool and found himself a sun lounger to relax on. What Ray didn't realise was that as he stretched out on the sun lounger, with his hands behind his head, wearing only a swim hat and a contented smile, he was in full view of people queuing for the lift. The stories go on and on, and all of us came away with new stories from this year's trip. And like our early days of skiing new members to the group came away with new found confidence.

"One of the best decisions was made six years ago when I asked Louise Timms to become involved with the ski club and she came out to Italy to see what it was all about. She is now an integral part of the week, as she assesses if people are fit enough to take part and if they will enjoy the week. She's a great asset and an unsung hero of the ski club.

"The week wouldn't happen without the guides who know Europe backwards, as lots of them were downhill racers in the Army. In the past I would teach the guides how to work with the members, which meant I didn't get a chance to improve, but when Martin Blank became my guide my skiing improved. His tactics were perhaps somewhat unorthodox, as in the bar one night he told me to stand at the bar, face the bar, put my hands on the bar. He said that behind the bar was the most gorgeous bar lady, he said you're excited so bob up and down from your knees, she's just walked past you so turn left, spin on your toe,

but still facing the bar girl. That was the principle I learnt to ski by!

"Age does creep up, but we ski for three hours each day. We leave the hotel at 9am, get on the lifts and reach the top of the mountain at 10am, and off we go. The weather this year was superb with beautiful snow conditions. You couldn't wish for anything better. I think it's a very important aid to people who have lost their sight, as it really builds confidence and aids mobility. You think, if I can ski down that, then I can certainly walk down the high street with a long cane."



Picture: Martin Blank with Gerry Jones in Italy.

Gerry's guide Martin Blank, a former Army skier, said: "It's thanks to Peter Zamudio, the longest serving ski guide that I got into it, which I'm obviously very grateful for. I've met so many great people like Ray Hazan and G [Gerry] and each year is an adventure. Being with the veterans improves your life in all aspects as you develop a different point of view. The first person I guided was Ray Hazan in France in 1984 and I think I've guided G for the last 20 years, but we lost count after 10. I saw that G never had the same guide and told him that I'd be his guide and we could improve his skiing, and we did. One year we were in Bormio in Italy, where they hold the men's downhill, when someone stopped and spoke to Gerry as they thought he was a ski guide and asked him where to go. I burst out laughing and G told them as he couldn't see anything he couldn't help. Over the years we've had many a laugh and this year was no exception.

"We've skied in Canazei for the last 13 years where a lot of the instructors know us. They point the group out and tell people what we're doing. I ski behind G and tell him when to turn or ski straight as I can see an easier way for him to keep skiing safely and at a good speed. I might say right, right, left, which could be confusing. In the past when I guided Ray Hazan and gave him those instructions he'd turn left rather than right, but it was all part of the learning process! G and I tried to use the radios, but as he skies by sound and needs to hear what's going on around him we decided not to use them. He likes to hear if people are close by and he can judge the snow by the sound. Obviously sometimes the weather closes in and I might not be able to see much, but I don't tell G, we just carry on. I tend to chat a lot while we ski and members of the group say they can hear me half way around the mountain!

"Everyone gets a massive amount of satisfaction from the week. As we return to the same place each year it's great to see how people improve on the slopes and to meet the new members who join the ski club. Great friendships are made as people meet up outside the ski week."



Picture: Some of the group take a break from skiing and relax in the sun.

Charlie Daly, from Epping in Essex, who served in the Parachute Regiment, is another long time member of the ski club. He said: "I first joined the ski club in 1985, but the year before I completed a course over 12 months on the dry ski slopes in Harlow where I lived at the time. I had skied in 1968, but I still had my sight then. My first trip with the ski club was to Méribel in France. The training on the dry ski slope in England the year before helped, but I still attended the nursery school as skiing on snow is faster. As I've got older I don't push it anymore and Peter Zamudio who has been my guide for many years knows my capabilities and keeps me well within the bounds of my abilities. Everyone in the club wears a helmet and I wouldn't ski without one now.

"The ski week is the one week a year that really gets me out of myself and gets me going and makes me get up and go. There are the members and guides who have been going for years and there are always new people to meet who are skiing for the first time. I've been to the weddings of three of the guides, but we're not a clique, as new people are welcome to join and this year there were 45 of us in Italy. Over the years three of my daughters, a grandson and granddaughter have come out to ski with their old granddad. During the week we have a great time skiing and of course we enjoy the evenings too.

"My message to new people would be to just go for it. If you want to brighten up your life, go skiing. Being blind is not the best of things and life can become dull. We've all been there, going right back to Blind Veterans UK founder Sir Arthur Pearson and our second Chairman Ian Fraser, and I'd say just go skiing and get a life. You're travelling at speed on your own and you're free and you can really go for it at times. I'll be 80 in September and I keep going and I'll be back next year. I enjoy the week as much as I did 29 years ago. You have the mountains and the sunshine and everyone's laughing. What's not to love?"

Charlie's sighted guide is Peter Zamudio who skied for the Army; he is also the longest serving sighted ski guide of some 34 years standing. Each year 54 year old Peter, who works as a land Surveyor near Luzern, travels from Sörenberg in Switzerland where he lives with his wife Maja and their three children.

Peter said: "In 1980 at the age of 20 I was in 94 Locating Reg. RA in Germany and a member of the regimental ski team when we were asked if we would like to ski with St Dunstan's as guides. Most of us were very young and didn't really know what it was all about and I never thought it would turn out to be a life time event for me. I started guiding Ray Hazan and others in Wertach in the south of Germany. In those days we didn't really know much about guiding and

it was learning by doing. I remember we were blindfolded to find out what it was like and we made the big mistake of letting the kids who were there take us down. We ended up in the woods and in holes, and we say no more about that, but we survived and we learned how important it was to guide correctly and the trust that is needed between the skier and the sighted guide.

"I have been skiing with Charlie for more years than we can remember. The other guides often use radios to communicate, but we don't as we are well attuned. Charlie knows how well he is doing by my voice and the sound of the snow and the noises around him. He is amazing and I just hope I will still be skiing as well as he does when I am 80.

"All the Blind Veterans UK members inspire the guides with their happy and positive attitude to the life they lead. We all feel that we belong to something bigger as we join a family that becomes part of our lives. It changes us all."

Jamie Cuthbertson from Glasgow returned to skiing after an absence of 25 years. He said: "Charlie Daly sent me his ski diaries and I looked back through them and realised the last time I had skied with the club was in 1989. That was the prompt to get back to the mountains. It was in some ways the very same exciting trip and meeting up with old friends. The skis and equipment are different, as back in my day the sides of the skis were parallel, but the modern carving skis are much wider at the front and back. In the past we didn't wear helmets just woolly hats. I for one was glad to have my helmet as I banged my head at least three times. Combined with that were the head sets for skier and guide to communicate. Over the week there were quite a few innovations to get used to. Taff Harford was my guide and he was pretty brave as he must have been a wee bit apprehensive about my skiing skills, and the fact I'm totally blind. It was all very exciting and great to be back on skis and I must have done something right as I was given the cow bell for the most improved skier thanks to Taff's coaching; so I'm very pleased with that. I'd just booked the trip when I got a job with the Macular Society but my leave allowed me to go.

"Sadly I twisted my knee, which stopped me skiing on the last two days, but it's back to normal now and I'm back cycling and running. It was a very annoying injury as you don't think you've done that much damage as you can walk quite comfortably and then another minute you'll be off guard and slip on the snow and realise it is pretty sore. After I twisted my knee I was sitting around the hotel with Paul Cantwell on the Thursday morning when Maria Pikulski came in with her friend Dawn and said we should go to the nearby spa as it would

be good for my knee. We got a discount as Maria spoke in Italian and it was only when we were through the barriers that we discovered it was a naked spa. Mercifully our modesty was preserved as there were booths for the Turkish bath and the steam room. I'm just glad I couldn't see!"

Mark Abel, who returned for the third year running, said: "I skied when I first joined the Army back in 1983 when I went on Junior Leaders and we went on a trip to Bavaria from the UK. I was hooked straight away and I've been skiing every year since. When I lost my sight that was a totally different ball game and I thought it was over until Blind Veterans UK said they had a ski club. My boss is ex Navy and I fitted the week around my leave and it was straight back on skis and off I went. It was great to have that excitement again. My guide was Carl Vickers and he taught me to focus on what he said and did rather than what was going on around us. I asked Carl to ski in front as it suited me better and he knew how to guide me to ensure we skied together. Apart from the odd spill we did well. The first year I was hit by a sighted skier, which dented my confidence, but you recover from that, and this year's trip was very exciting.

"I used to ride motorbikes and skiing gives you the same freedom as you're out in an open space in the fresh air of the mountains. I'd say to anyone who wants to ski that it's always good to give something a go, even if you only do it once, when the opportunities arrive take them. If you've never skied before if you don't try it you'll never know if it's for you. The whole week is a highlight and a benefit for everyone who goes. Come and join us next year. I would like to thank Carl, Jamie and Mark for organising such a great week."

Wiley Buchanan, an instructor at Whistler Adaptive Sport (WAS) in Canada, joined the group in Italy as a guide. Wiley said: "When I was invited by the ski club back in 2013 to join their Italy trip I did not hesitate to accept. As the date came closer, I wondered about my decision as it was a long way to go and the WAS would be busy, and I was worried it would not be the same chemistry that we had when some of the guys came to Whistler in 2013. I had such a great time with the small group that came to Whistler that I wondered if I would fit in with the larger group.

"As it turned out all my concerns were unjustified, WAS was very understanding and I'd like to make a special thank you to my boss John Brown, who asked me if I 'could really afford not to go?' With that settled I landed at Gatwick airport on January 15th. Cam, another long time guide, who came over to Whistler as Sparky's sighted guide was there to greet me. When I met the group I was

greeted by hearty handshakes and much back slapping. Right away I was struck by how warm, genuine and inclusive everyone was.

"What followed was a week of fabulous food, good wine, deep light snow, and great friends to share it all with. It was a truly wonderful time. I enjoyed meeting all the ski group and was amazed at the high level of skiing that had been attained. I made too many memories to list here, from the first day of skiing to the last pint shared. I encourage all of you to keep skiing and new people to give it a go."

To finish, the organisers Carl Williams, Jamie Weller and Mark Brewin said: "It was another fantastic year on the slopes of Canazei with the ski club when we enjoyed some great skiing. We would all like to thank the guides who make it possible for us to ski and thanks to Louise Timms, Mara, Annaleise and Jean Paul. Here's to next year and meeting up with old friends and making new ones as new members of Blind Veterans UK join us."

If you would like to find out more about the ski club please telephone: Louise Timms, Brighton Sports & Recreation Manager at the Brighton centre on telephone: 01273 391463.



Picture: Vicky (guide), Jamie Weller and Carl Williams. Photo Jonathan Miller.

The rise and rise of Blind Veterans UK lunch and social clubs.

It's true that when you become a member of Blind Veterans UK you are no longer alone. There are three centres and numerous activities and themed weeks and weekends when you can enjoy a holiday. There is the Younger Group for members who are aged up to 60 and the G.O.A.L. (Get Out and Live) Group for those who are aged from 60 to 72 years. Over the last two years we have seen a rise in lunch clubs, now also called social clubs, across the UK that bring members and their spouses or carers together on a regular basis.

There are presently 28 social clubs across the UK in Belfast, Bognor & Fareham, Bridgend (Porthcawl), Cambridge, Cardiff, Colchester, Croydon - new for 2014, Dorset, Epsom & Staines, Exeter & Plymouth, Felixstow, Kent (Maidstone, Bromley and Rochester), Liverpool, Llandudno, Luton, Merry Hill, New Milton - new for 2014 - it also includes Christchurch and the New Forest, North East & Cumbria, Northampton, Oxford, Peterborough, Romford & Hornchurch, Scotland, Solihull, Southampton, Waterlooville and the Vale of Glamorgan.

The North East lunch club is a well established and well attended one that started in 2012, it was the brainchild of North East Welfare Officer Elizabeth Dodds. Here we ask Elizabeth about the lunch club.

Review: What was the genesis of the lunch club?

Elizabeth Dodds: "The lunch club started as we recognised that people really enjoyed going to the reunion lunch and what I picked up on visits was that people really missed the opportunity to meet up again as the reunions are an annual event and they wanted opportunities to meet up in their region. That was the main reason behind the lunch club, to get people together. We recognised that people don't have many opportunities to get out and socialise and this would fulfil that need and help people who were pretty isolated to meet others and feel that people cared."

Review: How do you organise it?

Elizabeth Dodds: "The entire operation is now organised by Lesley Hall, Welfare Support Officer. When we first started we pulled together a list of people who had expressed an interest in meeting up and I went through my caseload and contacted everyone to give us an idea of the number of people

who would attend. Originally the lunch clubs were held at the Royal Station hotel in Newcastle, but we moved to the Assembly Rooms as they suited us better. Unfortunately they decided to make alterations to the room we used and we had to look for a new venue.

"We have just held our latest lunch club at The County Hotel in Newcastle and over 70 people attended. Without exception everyone really enjoys it. One younger member travels from Egremont in Cumbria, which is quite a distance, but we find that people come from far and wide come hell or high water.

"We've received some lovely comments from members and their families. Wives have said that before their husbands came to the lunch club they had become despondent and would just sit in a chair at home, not engaging with anything or anyone. Now they see a marked difference in their husband and feel that they've got him back, which is wonderful to know. One person said before the lunch club her husband didn't leave the house on his own and it's given him confidence to go to other places. He says that the lunch club has liberated him.

"There are so many hidden benefits from getting people together. One of the obvious ones is that people have forged strong friendships. We have a group who each December holiday at the Llandudno centre where they have an amazing time. I think the fact we have consistently high numbers attending speaks volumes of how much people value and look forward to them.

"In April we will hold a special lunch club when members of the James Last Band will play swing music and we'll have a big dance. In December we all sit down to a traditional Christmas lunch and last year around 90 people came and put on their Christmas party hats and enjoyed the festive fun. For so many it's their main opportunity to socialise at Christmas.

"We don't offer help with transport, but as a lot of the members are getting older and have mobility issues, if someone is really struggling we look into how we can help, and help for those who are struggling financially. The main thing is to get as many people to The County Hotel in Newcastle to come and join us. It's a lovely occasion and we can't wait for our centenary celebration lunch club in 2015. We're already asking people how they want to celebrate it.

"Lesley and I are very proud of the members as they always want to help when they come along. We have widows who attend and help the volunteers and they've brought friends with them, which is great as we need a lot of volunteers.

"As we hold an annual raffle the members have always been very generous donating raffle prizes. Sylvia Burton who is a widow makes cards for us to sell and members Les Dobson and Bill Mooney make pens that they sell and donate money from each sale to us. Bill and Les also make wood turned bowls and Geordie Gates made a lovely Christmas cake that raised over £70. They all want to help to give something back. When I run the Great North Run they always sponsor me to raise money for Blind Veterans UK.

"Lesley [Hall] is a heroine behind the scenes, as she does all of the hard work to get it right — and she really does get it right. The County Hotel has been fantastic and their team worked very hard to ensure that everything ran smoothly. If you're in the North East and you haven't come along to the lunch club yet, do come and join us."

Joe Elsander (75), a member of Blind Veterans UK since 2006 who attends the lunch club, said: "Elizabeth and Lesley have done a brilliant job as they have brought everyone together. My wife Anne and I have made some really great friends and we've got quite a gang going and we see each other all the time. Bill and Evelyn Mooney only live 15 minutes from us and since the lunch club started we've become great friends and go on holiday together to the Llandudno centre where we all have a great time. People say Bill and I are now joined at the hip as we're inseparable!

"The lunch club is a great idea. Before it started the only time I would meet anyone was at the Brighton centre or the annual Reunion, which are obviously wonderful and this just reinforces the fact that joining Blind Veterans UK is one of the best things I've done in my life."

Anne Elsander agreed when she spoke of the positive benefits of the lunch club. Anne said "It's marvellous as we've made a lot of new friends, many of them people who live just a 15 minute drive away, but we would not have met them if it hadn't been for Elizabeth and Lesley and the lunch club. We no longer feel isolated as we have friends who are close by. We often pop up to see Bill and Evelyn Mooney to have a cup of tea and a chat and it gives us a day out.

"There are 19 of us who met at the lunch club and each year we go to the Llandudno centre for the Christmas themed week when we have a great time, and the group obviously includes Bill and Evelyn. When we're there we take in the pantomime and carol singing and visit a wonderful jewellers that we've discovered.

"There's so much to do and the centre is always so beautifully decorated and the staff so kind and welcoming. "The lunch clubs have definitely given people more independence as they meet one another and it has improved their lives. Elizabeth and Lesley are wonderful and we are all grateful to them for the lunch club as it is life changing. They deserve a medal!"



Picture: Joe and Anne Elsander with Mavis Avery, centre, who won a cuddly rabbit in the raffle.



Picture: Former Leading Wren Pamela Woodford at the lunch club.



Picture: North East Welfare Officer Elizabeth Dodds accepts a Burr Elm centenary bowl from Bill Mooney.

The younger group tour the battlefields of The Somme. By Catherine Goodier.

Searching for words the official Army historian who summed up the final stages of the Battle of the Somme in November 1916 wrote:

'Our vocabulary is not adapted to describe such an existence, because it is outside experience for which words are normally required.'

Chris Cuff, our guide from Anglia Tours, repeated those words as the Younger Group toured the former battlefields of The Somme on Saturday 8th and Sunday 9th March. Organised by Inderpal Kallah, Blind Veterans UK Younger Co-ordinator, they followed in the footsteps of the First World War men of our charity.

The Battle of the Somme started on July 1st 1916 and lasted until November 1916. For many people it was the battle that symbolised the horrors of warfare in the First World War; as it epitomised the futility of trench warfare. By the end of the battle, the British Army had suffered 420,000 casualties including nearly 60,000 on the first day alone. The French lost 200,000 men and the Germans nearly 500,000.



Picture: At Serre Road Cemetery No 2, Mick Scanlan, Carl Liversage of the CWGC, Darren Blanks, Gary Ogden, Louise Timms, Simon Brown, Esther Freeman Member Activities Manager, Colin Williamson, Kelly Hart, Paul Jacobs GM, Adrian Neat, Kevin Alderton, Alan Lock, Will Phillips, Stephen Percival, Patrick Carrick, Phil Ruffy, Chris Lee, John Evans, Dave Blagg, Peter O'Malley, Carl Adamson and Barbara Sweeney of Welfare Services.

We arrived at The Somme in time for lunch at Avril Williams 'Ocean Villas' guest house and tea rooms at Auchonvillers. We were met there by Carl Liversage and Nigel Stevens of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) who travelled with us to Serre Road Cemetery No 2 where they spoke of Private Horace Iles who was killed on 1st July 1916 at Serre, Somme and the work of the CWGC. The meeting was arranged by Blind Veterans UK Vice Patron, Sir Joe French KCB, CBE, Commissioner of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Serre Road Cemetery No 2 has a total of 7,127 British and Commonwealth burials, of these only 2,183 are identified. Serre was one of the strongly fortified villages held by the Germans at the beginning of the Battle of the Somme. In June 1916, the road out of Mailly-Maillet to Serre and Puisieux entered No Man's Land about 1,300 metres south-west of Serre. About five miles north of Albert it marked the most northern point of the main attack on the 1st of July 1916.

One of those First World War men who took part in the Battle of the Somme was Lord Fraser, our Chairman from 1921 until 1974. The then Captain William Jocelyn Ian Fraser of the King's Shropshire Light Infantry was blinded on 23rd July 1916 aged 18. He said: "The war killed one million of the flower of our youth and wounded and disabled others."

In his autobiography he wrote: 'I was at The Somme and it was there I was blinded. I didn't think much about my blindness when I was hit. I suppose I slept a good deal, and perhaps I was unconscious for a time, though I actually remember being tied up immediately after I was wounded, and I talked to my Company Commander as I walked down the line to a dressing station.'

'I recalled my first experience under artillery bombardment. I had been frightened — frightened on two accounts: first of all for my own life and limb; and secondly, frightened lest I should let the show down; but I got used to shell fire, and to crawling about and being sniped at, and to all the other hazards of that war, and even though later on shell splinters and bullets may have come very near to me, I was never so frightened again as I had been at first.'

I remember being wheeled along on a stretcher — one of those flat things on a pair of wheels, rather like the barrows from which hawkers sell fruit. We seemed to go for miles down the Pozieres-Bapaume Road — a shell swept road. I remember an anti-tetanus serum, and the doctor marking a cross upon my forehead with indelible pencil. He told me about this; it was a sign that I had been inoculated, so that the next doctor wouldn't do it again. I remember thinking that was rather funny.

'Later I was initially sorry for myself. My God, what a sacrifice I had made, so light-heartedly, so cheerfully! And I was so young; only 18 when that bullet hit me. And here I was out of the war, which I had trained for, for so long. Not only out of the war, but out of life. That was a dreadful thought.

'I can only think of odd things that happened during these weeks — my cousin Lilia Howard who came out to see me, brought out by the Red Cross, because I was on the danger list, and who read to me for hours while I lay in the Casino at Le Touquet, which had been converted into a hospital. Before we left France we read Trent's Last Case, a jolly good book it was.

'I can still recall the charming red-headed VAD who nursed me — I suppose someone told me she was red-headed, but I knew she was charming without being told. The journey home in a hospital ship, across that fateful stretch of water: the English Channel, which six of us young subalterns from Sandhurst had crossed in the other direction only a few weeks before. The agent from Cox's Bank, who came and spoke to me as I lay in my bunk on the hospital ship, and asked me if I would like to send a telegram and if I wanted some money. He sent the telegram and gave me a few shillings. I could not sign a cheque, but I promised to pay, and I did pay. (I have banked with Cox's now merged in Lloyd's ever since). The cheerful bustle of Victoria Station as people met the train and gave the wounded men chocolate and tea; the hush and the drawing aside of the cheerful crowd as they saw my stretcher lifted out, my face and head completely bandaged up. Then I was in an ambulance being driven through London in the early hours of the morning by a girl. Another girl sat in the back and held my hand.

'I went to the Officers' Ward of the 2nd London General Hospital, a converted college in Chelsea and after that to Regent's Park, and it was there that a marvellous change came over me. It was partly that I was getting stronger, partly the example and invigorating personality of Sir Arthur Pearson himself, partly the example of other officers and men who had preceded me, and had settled down to a regular routine.

'The blinded soldiers, sailors and airmen at our Regent's Park training centre were 18 or 19 years of age or in their early 20s when they were blinded. They were fresh from the fields of France or Flanders, the deserts of the Near East, or the blue waters. Everything their young lives held out before them seemed to have gone. A curtain seemed to have fallen and blotted out all the brightness of the future.

'The house in Regent's Park was a haven of rest after the battlefield. It stretched a helping hand out to the blinded, soldier, sailor or airman in pain, in need, in success, or failure, in all the trials and tribulations of the day to day life. It sustains him materially and the spirit that was to be found there sustains him too. It was there we rebuilt our shattered lives.

'It is a sentiment that was shared by Paul Jacobs, GM, who served with 2nd Battalion The Rifles, as he too was blinded in war and understands the support that is to be gained from his fellow veterans. A 21st century soldier, the 25 year old was blinded by a Taliban bomb in Upper Sangin Valley, Helmand Province in Afghanistan's front line in 2009. He was awarded the prestigious George Medal for bravery as he continued to protect his colleagues after he was wounded. His medal citation praised his 'faultless courage, selflessness and dedication to his unit.'

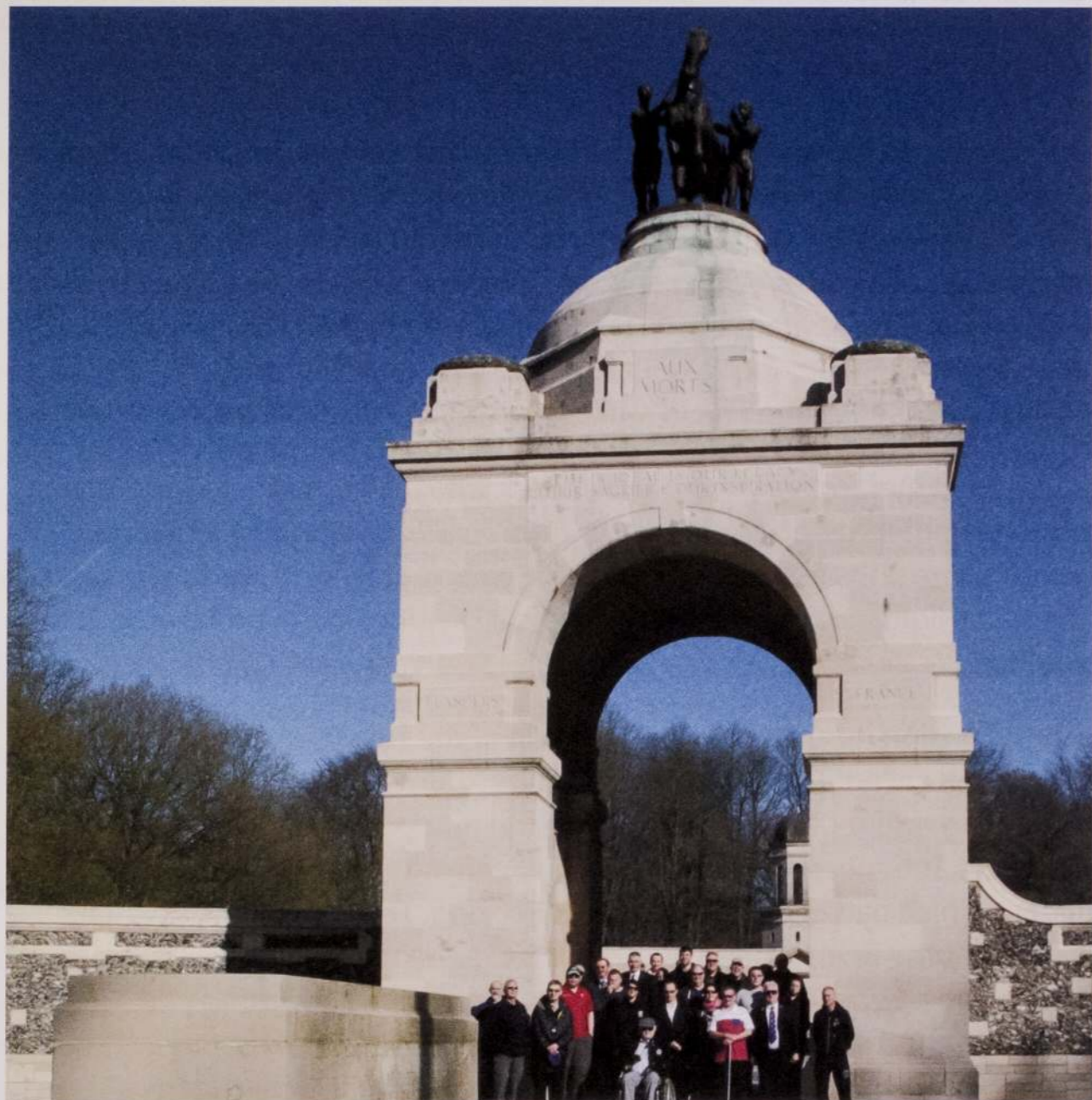
Paul Jacobs said: "It is an honour to be here to commemorate almost a century since the outbreak of war. We must not forget what those men of the Great War did for us as they risked and gave everything for our futures. On meeting other blind veterans of all ages, young and old, female and male the experience was a solemn one on The Somme, a true spiritual moment when all was quiet on the Western Front."

We then travelled to Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont Hamel. It was established in memory of Newfoundlanders who fell in the First World War. Beaumont-Hamel was attacked by the 29th Division on 1st July 1916 and although some units reached it, the village was not taken. It was finally captured by the 51st (Highland) and 63rd (Royal Naval) Divisions on the following 13th November.

The 29th Division included the 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment, as it was then called. The attack on Beaumont-Hamel in July 1916 was the first severe engagement of the regiment, and the most costly. On the first day of the Battle of the Somme, no unit suffered heavier losses than the Newfoundland Regiment which had gone into action 801 strong. The roll call the next day revealed that the final figures were 233 killed or dead of wounds, 386 wounded, and 91 missing. Every officer who went forward in the Newfoundland attack was either killed or wounded. For this reason, the government of Newfoundland chose the hill south-west of the village, where the front-line trenches ran at the time of the battle, as the site of their memorial to the soldiers (and also to the sailors) of Newfoundland.

Of the few battlefield parks in France and Belgium where the visitor can see a Great War battlefield much as it was, Beaumont Hamel is the largest. The actual trenches are still there and something of the terrible problem of advancing over such country can be appreciated by the visitor.

Sunday took us to Delville Woods and the South African National Memorial. It commemorates the Battle of Delville Wood, part of the Somme Offensive. This memorial also serves as the national memorial to all those of the South African Overseas Expeditionary Force who died during the First World War. A total of some 229,000 officers and men served in the forces of South Africa in the war. Of these, some 10,000 died in action or through injury and sickness.



Picture: At the entrance to Delville Wood South African War Memorial.

Another person to be moved by the weekend was Carl Williams, 40 from Hereford who said: "Our guide Chris was extremely knowledgeable and answered our questions. We went to some of the most extraordinary places it has been my honour to visit. As we travelled through the Somme we got a real sense of what took place almost 100 years ago as we were taken to battlefields where we paid our respects in the graceful and respectful manner they deserved. On Sunday we remembered the fallen at the biggest war memorial in Europe, The Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme when we held a ceremony in remembrance. Colin Williamson recited the exhaltation and Kevin Alderton played the Last Post and Reveille on his bugle. Kelly Hart with Louise Timms, and Paul Jacobs GM and Simon Brown placed wreaths to the missing during a two minute silence. I now understand the famous words 'We Shall Remember', I really do."



Picture: At the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme.

The Thiepval Memorial, the Memorial to the Missing of the Somme, bears the names of more than 72,000 officers and men of the United Kingdom and South African forces who died in the Somme sector before 20th March 1918 and have no known grave. Over 90% of those commemorated died between July and November 1916. The memorial also serves as an Anglo-French Battle Memorial in recognition of the joint nature of the 1916 offensive and a small cemetery containing equal numbers of Commonwealth and French graves lies at the foot of the memorial. **(Source:** Commonwealth War Graves Commission.)

When we reached the Thiepval Memorial, Mick Scanlon, who served in the Coldstream Guards for 20 years, found the name of a relative who was killed during the Battle of the Somme.

Another person to trace someone was Adrian Neat from Torfaen in Wales. He found the name on a memorial panel at Pozieres Memorial for William Moore, 25864, a Shoeing Smith in The Royal Field Artillery, who was his brother-in-law's grandmother's late husband.

Will Phillips, from Fareham in Hampshire who took part in his first younger group event, said. 'I think it was very pertinent on this visit that some of the members had combat experience in recent conflicts. Thus being able to visualise themselves in the place of the soldiers of a 100 years ago. Unfortunately Britain still needs Armed Forces and men and women who are willing to serve and put their lives in jeopardy for their country. Mankind never seems to learn. It was with more hope than judgment it was called at the time 'The war to end all wars.'"

Kelly Hart from Plymouth said: "The weekend was emotional, and a real honour to attend. It was a historic moment that I shall cherish as a young blind veteran."

We will finish with two poems by Paul Jacobs GM that reflect 100 years of war, copyright ©Paul Jacobs GM.



Picture: Kevin Alderton plays The Last Post at The Thiepval Memorial to the Missing.

In 2006 Kevin claimed the downhill speed skiing world record by a blind person at 100.94mph at Les Arcs in France.

The Silence of The Somme, by Paul Jacobs GM.

The silence of The Somme
The singing of the birds
One hundred years on
We commemorate the lives of young men on both sides
Two uniforms
One war
An outcome of complete sorrow for every mother and father
On both sides of this sad, sad war.

Fallen Saints, By Paul Jacobs GM.

As I walk through the gates of Hell on Devil's Road
I look down this lonely dusty track
Where so many lives have changed
Physically or mentally the damage is done
You cannot turn back the hands of time
But life goes on
As the length of Pharmacy Road never ceases to end
Like the desert breeze that took these men from me
Their spirits and souls flow across the sea
Back to Blighty where the country will salute them
And where the men who stood beside them
Will cry a tear and never forget
RIP my brothers.



Picture: Their Name Liveth for Evermore. The Stone of Remembrance at Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme

Sarah Phelps's WWI drama *The Crimson Field* will air on BBC1 from April 2014. By Catherine Goodier.

In the World War One Centenary edition of the Review we brought you an interview with the writer Sarah Phelps about her forthcoming series, *The Crimson Field*, (then called *The Ark*), that will air on Sunday nights on BBC One in April.

On 3rd March myself and David Bassom, Head of Marketing and Communications, were fortunate to watch a screening of the first episode and it was intensely emotional from the start. Afterwards we rushed up to Sarah to ask her to pose for a photo before she was grabbed by an adoring crowd. The first thing Sarah asked was: "Do you think the veterans will like it?" I told her you would and I hope when it airs in April you will let me know. I predict the nation will tune in each Sunday to watch this gripping drama as they take the characters into their collective hearts.

The Crimson Field is one of the Great War's untold stories. It begins in 1915 when the first wave of nurses from the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VADs) went to France. Up until that point a handful of military nurses were struggling to cope. In a tented field hospital on the coast of France, a team of doctors, nurses and VADs work together to heal the bodies and souls of men wounded in the trenches. It stars Oona Chaplin, Hermione Norris, Suranne Jones, Kevin Doyle, Kerry Fox and Marianne Oldham.

Sarah speaks of the origin of *The Crimson Field*: "We were filming [the 2011 BBC adaptation of] *Great Expectations* and we were coming to the end of the shoot. The people I'd been working with asked me to read *The Roses of No Man's Land* by Lyn MacDonald, who is a historian. It was a history of the nurses, both military and volunteers [VADs] during WWI. I read it and found it captivating. It was part of a World War One that I didn't know about, one I'd never really heard about. I started reading a lot of histories about the First World War coming at it from loads of different directions.

"The BBC was very keen to have a drama that launched the centenary of the Great War. I perhaps came at it from a slightly different angle. The vision of the war is of the trenches and young men in the trenches and we wanted to have something that gave a different experience — one that gave a women's experience, as well as to get those women and men to tell a story of what England was, what Britain was then and the changes everyone was going through. It became really exciting."

As the credits roll you are instantly drawn into their world in France as you meet the medics who work there and the men they are treating who were wounded at the Front. Each one of the VADs is there for her own very personal reason. One to escape the stigma that she is 30 and unmarried. One plucky girl is blatantly under age, but she wanted to do her bit for the boys at the Front. A civilian nurse who is engaged but tells no-one, and another VAD with a brooding intensity who we know nothing about, but sense she has come from a very dark place. The military nurses have their own secrets too. There are two surgeons who come from very different backgrounds and the Commanding Officer who wants to send soldiers to Blighty for a rest, only to be overruled by the powers that be who want every man at the Front.

Sarah conveys a world in that tented hospital in a field in France. As we watch we are not looking back at history, we are watching them as they live, love, breathe and die in France.



Picture: The sublimely talented Sarah Phelps poses with a copy of the World War One Centenary edition of the Review following the very successful screening of the first episode of *The Crimson Field*. **Photo:** David Bassom.

When the Children Came Home, stories of wartime evacuees, by Julie Summers.

Members of Blind Veterans UK who were evacuees during the Second World War attended a talk at Fortnum & Mason in London's Piccadilly by the author Julie Summers who about her book when the Children Came Home, stories of wartime evacuees. They were guests of Melanie Wotherspoon ACA, Private Client & Charity Business Development Director at Jupiter Asset Management.

Julie's talk of wartime evacuees was fascinating, as is her book, and those who attended were Tony and Mitch Harbour, Betty Busby and Mollie Armstrong and Peter and Josephine Wagerman. Tony Harbour and Peter Wagerman both had happy memories of their time as evacuees, as they were welcomed into the hearts and homes of their foster families. However, Betty Busby only had bad memories of her experiences, and those of her siblings. Their experiences of not being listened to when they tried to tell adults of the cruelty they suffered at the hands of their foster family went unheard. It shaped Betty's future as she became a social worker and she always took time to listen to children.

Introducing her book Julie Summers said: "The idea for this book grew out of a conversation I had with a man who had grown up as an evacuee. He challenged me to look at the impact of evacuation on a generation of children and to explode some of the myths that have developed around the subject and which are perpetuated in literature and the media. As usual I found myself unable to resist the challenge. My first surprise came when I revisited my own family's story and realised that my father had, in the strict sense of the meaning, been 'evacuated'. He was sent with his school from the Wirral to the Lake District and spent a very happy couple of years living near Ullswater. He certainly did not fit my picture of a typical evacuee and my research led me to realise that of the 3,500,000 children evacuated in Britain, less than half had been sent away at the beginning of the war with a luggage label pinned to their coats.

"As I got deeper into the research for When the Children Came Home it became clear that the picture painted of evacuation that we have become familiar with is far from the whole story. There were four phases of evacuation in Britain and many minor movements of children as families decided to send sons and daughters away or bring them home based on decisions that did not always reflect the passage of history.

"Even if initially some children were homesick or unsettled, those who settled in well had a superb experience. Children like Peter and Tony who are here today from Blind Veterans UK have told me of the happy time they had as evacuees. Others like Betty did not and these are the stories that make the headlines and are of more interest, perhaps, to the press and general public. What this book seeks to do is to put these unhappy experiences into the context of the overall evacuation story and attempts to redress the balance. It is perhaps surprising that some children, especially those who had been very happy with their foster families, found it more difficult coming home than they had done leaving in the first place. This is understandable, not least as they were of course older when they returned to their natural parents. Some children never returned whilst others came back briefly, only to leave again and move to live closer to or even with their foster parents again. Almost everyone admitted to some period of readjustment but the majority of children, now adults, were keen to point out that they soon found a way to cope with home life once again."

The message of the book is an upbeat one that celebrates the positive aspects of the evacuation story. However it does not shy away from looking at the more difficult aspects of separation and the impact that had on the long-term well-being of the evacuee children. Julie's other books are: Jambusters, Rowing in Britain, Remembering Fromelles, British and Commonwealth War Cemeteries, Stranger in the House, Remembered, The Colonel of Tamarkan, The Shackleton Voyages and Fearless on Everest. They are available in all bookshops and online and her website is at: www.juliesummers.co.uk



From left to right: Tony Harbour, the author Julie Summers, Mollie Armstrong, Betty Busby, Mitch Harbour and Blind Veterans UK Director of Finance & IS, Ian Whitehead.

Pam Willner shows her tonsorial charm.

Pam Willner from our Llandudno centre opted to shave her head to raise money for Blind Veterans UK, as she is inspired daily by the veterans who stay there, and the way they each deal with their sight loss. Pam, who is TNS Catering's Front of House Supervisor at the Llandudno centre, had her head shaved during the centre's open day on Saturday 22nd February.

She said: "Having my head shaved worked in two ways, as to date it has raised almost £1,500 for Blind Veterans UK and it has taught me about myself. I didn't think it would have such a profound effect, but it has made me realise that I'm not defined by my hair. The first time I looked in the mirror was a bit shocking as it was so different, but I've grown accustomed to it. It was actually a really nice experience and Clare from Crimpers in Llandudno did a good job. At one time it was quite eerie as she shaved my head, as there was a roomful of people watching in silence - until I told them to say something! And thankfully they did.

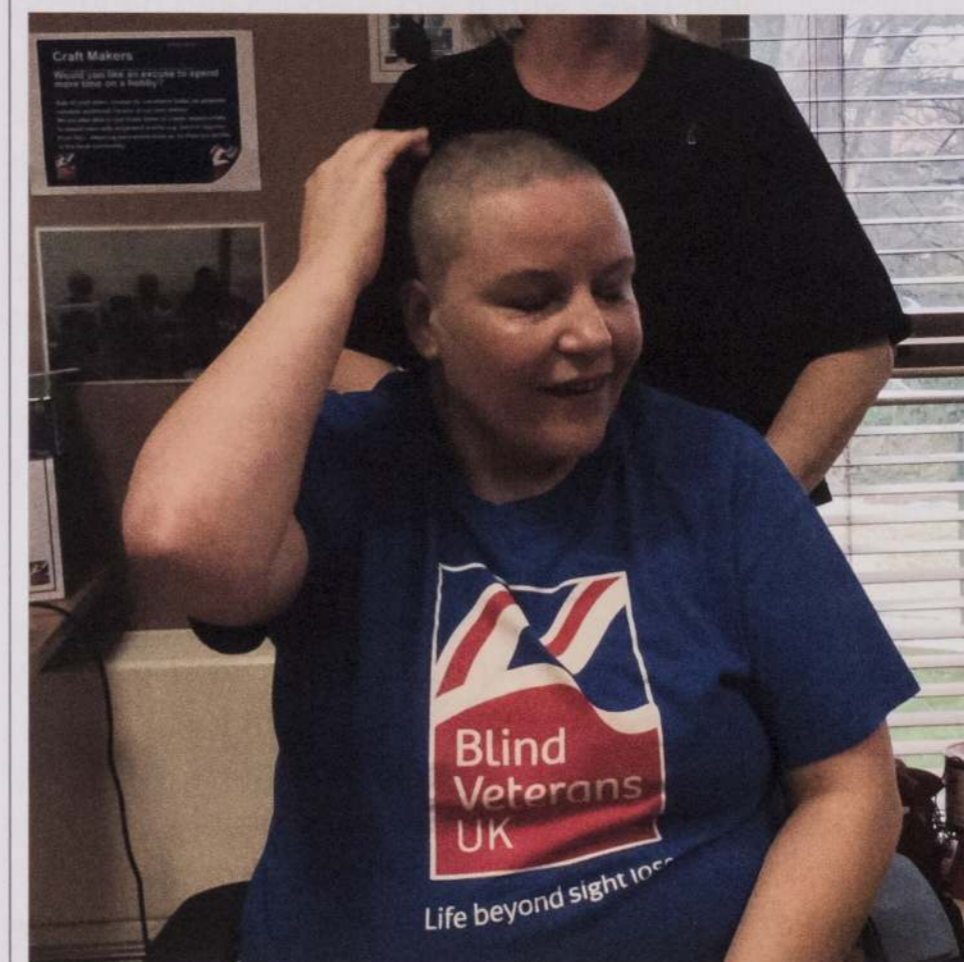


Picture: Pam before the sponsored head shave with Clare Jones.

"The only problem I had was on the first night when I woke up as my head was cold. But a pair of tights at night has worked wonders, it's a tip I didn't know I knew and I have a selection of woolly hats to wear outside. My husband Simon works with me and he and my colleagues, and the veterans are incredibly supportive. I'm glad I did it as it's been a really positive experience and it's liberating not to spend ages in the morning washing and straightening my hair. I opted to shave my head as people jump out of planes or bungee jump, but I'm just not brave enough and this was the best thing I could think to do."

Mark Lovatt, the Llandudno centre Manager said: "Pam joined the Llandudno TNS Catering team when we opened in 2011 and she is completely committed to our work and provides a fantastic service for our members. I saw how nervous she was as the time approached to have her head shaved, and it's great she's so happy she did it. Everyone here would like to thank Pam for raising awareness of us and for the money she raised and also for her continued excellent work in the TNS Catering team."

If you would like to sponsor Pam you can telephone Viccie Beech at the Llandudno centre on 01492 864574 or go to Pam's justgiving page at: www.justgiving.com/pamwilner



Picture: Pam Willner feels her shaven head.

Book Review from Deb Ryan, RNIB. Sidney Chambers and the Shadow of Death by James Runcie.

A crime fighting vicar with a keen interest in cricket, warm beer and hot jazz stars in a new series of books called The Grantchester Mysteries by James Runcie (yes he is the former Archbishop's son for those wondering if there is a connection). This is the first of a planned six detective novels spanning 30 years of British history — from the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth in 1953 to the wedding of Charles and Diana in 1981. I'm not generally a lover of short stories but I found these complete episodes, which I suppose are more like novellas, connected by the same characters very entertaining and in an odd way quite comforting, in fact a perfect bedtime read.

They are set in what seems a more genteel age of the 1950s but, a bit like Midsomer, there does seem to be a perpetual crime wave hitting the town of Grantchester. Putting that small detail to one side, James Runcie's writing really brings the characters and the places in which they live to life. Sidney balances the pressures of being a full-time parish priest with the challenges and dangers of being a part-time detective. I particularly liked his relationship with his friend who is a real life detective, who seems to be either discouraging Sidney from getting involved or trying to use him and his "vicary" ways to get people to confide in him, and the gentle banter they have. There is also a "will they or won't they" element with not one, but two, female acquaintances.

Sidney meddles his way towards the truth with a gentle humour and a few morality asides. These stories definitely belong in the "cosy" crime section but for those who prefer a more cerebral approach to detection to bloody bodies and forensics, these tales are perfect. All in all a gentle, undemanding read.

Available in Braille and giant print from RNIB National Library Service. Audio available through Audible.co.uk or ask at your local public library. RNIB National Library Service is the largest library in the UK for readers with sight loss.

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Harry Beevers's 10 questions.

Five towns were candidates for city status in 1999: Blackburn, Brighton, Croydon, Stockport and Wolverhampton. Wolverhampton was one of the successful applicants, which was the other.

Which Welsh holiday resort in the county of Clwyd has a population of 20,710 and the STD dialling code 01492?

In army slang abbreviation P.B.I., for what does the letter I stand?

Who played the part of Lord Louis Mountbatten, as captain of HMS Kelly in the wartime film 'In Which We Serve'?

Which award for gallantry instituted in 1854 and now obsolete is abbreviated as D.C.M.?

Which jet-powered delta wing strategic bomber, designed by Roy Chadwick was operated by the Royal Air Force from 1956 until 1984?

The words 'MEXICANS EVER' are an anagram for which term referring to a member of Blind Veterans UK?

In World War II, which expression was used in the RAF for the rear gunner in a bomber?

Which term once used in the British Army for a Commissioned Officer of the lowest rank is now used for the lowest ranked Commissioned Officer in the American Navy?

Which branch of the British Armed Forces dates back to the year 1664 during the reign of King Charles II?

Answers on page 47.

Family News.

Congratulations to:

Birthdays:

Francis Burrow who will celebrate his 100th birthday on 2nd April.



Picture: Ken and Brenda Hill with great granddaughter Grace Louise Lilly Hill, who was born on Sunday 2nd March 2014.

Anniversaries:

Platinum:

William and Muriel Morris on 12th February.

Blue Sapphire (65th):

Stan & Joy Portway of Teesside, Cleveland on 2nd March.

Joseph & Millicent Lord of Fleetwood, Lancashire on 26th March.

Diamond (60th):

Robert & Mary Butchard of Liverpool, Merseyside on 6th March.

Leslie & Doreen Baker of Reading, Berkshire on 12th March.

Ted & Brenda Hindley of Caereinion, Powys on 18th March.

Harry & Bet Wood of Leven, Fife on 20th March.

Ronald & Joy Duncombe of Lancing, West Sussex on 27th March.

Charles & Patricia Houghton of Uxbridge, Middlesex on 27th March.

Phillip & Doris Howarth of Northampton, Northamptonshire on 27th March.

Brian & Wendy Murphy of York, North Yorkshire on 27th March.

John & Audrey Woodham of Trowbridge, Wiltshire of 27th March.

Golden (50th):

George & Elsie Shaw of Gosport, Hampshire on 6th March.

Leslie & Barbara Cartlidge of Cambridge, Cambridgeshire on 14th March.

Kenneth & Hazel Last of Stowmarket, Suffolk on 21st March.

John & Elizabeth Schartau of Mablethorpe, Lincolnshire on 26th March.

Peter & Freda Phillips of Brighton, East Sussex on 28th March.

Silver (25th):

Alan & Gina Hughes of Chorley, Lancashire on 29th March.

It is with deep regret that we record the deaths of the following and we offer our heartfelt condolences to their widows, widowers, families and friends.

Maureen Delph who died on 31st December 2013. She was the widow of the late Bernard Delph.

Margaret 'Madge' Evans who died on 28th February 2014. She was the wife of William Evans.

Stella Gorham who died on 24th February 2014. She was the widow of the late Kenneth Gorman.

Eira Jones who died on 26th December 2013. She was the wife of Stephen Jones.

Daphne Lowen who died on 10th February 2014. She was the wife of Peter Lowen.

Ethel 'Eth' Monck who died on 1st July 2013. She was the wife of William Monck.

Jean Purcell who died on 25th February 2014. She was the widow of the late Joseph Purcell.

Welcome to Blind Veterans UK.

James Alder of Northampton Served in the Royal Air Force from 1948 to 1950.

Mary Bailey of Worthing, West Sussex Served in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps TA from 1953 to 1955.

Joan Bronsdon of Salisbury, Wiltshire served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1941 to 1945.

Ronald Buckley of Hull, North Humberside Served in the Royal Air Force from 1945 to 1948.

Patrick Carrick of Carlisle Served in the King's Division, the King's Own Royal Border Regiment and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1987 to 1992.

George Clayton of Thornton-Cleveleys, Lancashire Served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1940 to 1946.

William Cooper of Cardonald, Glasgow Served in the Royal Air Force from 1956 to 1961.

Ken Currier of Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands Served in the Royal Signals from 1945 to 1948.

William Davies of Wrexham, Clwyd Served in the Royal Engineers from 1948 to 1950.

David Durrant of Beccles, Suffolk Served in the Royal Air Force from 1943 to 1947.

Harold Firth of Sheffield Served in the Royal Air Force from 1945 to 1948.

Gwendoline Forward of Seaford, East Sussex Served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1944 to 1947.

Patricia Gardner of Stone, Staffordshire Served in the Women's Royal Air Force from 1952 to 1955.

John Gasson of St. Leonards-On-Sea, East Sussex Served in the Royal Marines from 1946 to 1951.

Peter Gray of Falkirk Served in the Royal Navy from 1942 to 1946.

Anthony Griffiths of Stratford-Upon-Avon, Warwickshire served in the General Service Corps, the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, the Royal Leicestershire Regiment, the King's Own Royal Regiment, The Royal Signals and the Royal Army Pay Corps from 1944 to 1987.

Ram Gurung of Portsmouth Served in the Royal Gurkha Rifles from 1948 to 1968.

John Harries of Tuffley, Gloucester Served in the Royal Artillery from 1955 to 1960.

Thomas Horton of Newcastle, Staffordshire Served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1944 to 1946.

Eric Humble of Stockton-On-Tees, Cleveland Served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1949 to 1953.

Thomas Hyslop of Devizes, Wiltshire Served in the Scots Guards from 1939 to 1944.

Arthur Johnson of Wisbech, Cambridgeshire Served in the Royal Artillery from 1939 to 1946.

Sydney Johnson of Conwy, Gwynedd Served in the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1940 to 1946.

Alan Kilbey of Buckhurst Hill, Essex Served in the Royal Air Force from 1951 to 1953.

Roger King of Towcester, Northamptonshire Served in the King's Dragoon Guards and the Royal Armoured Corps from 1950 to 1956.

Barbara Lanceley of Paignton, Devon served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1939 to 1941.

Henry Leigh of Glasgow Served in the Royal Air Force from 1951 to 1953.

Reginald Lilley of Sidmouth, Devon Served in the Royal Air Force from 1946 to 1948.

Philip Little of Colchester, Essex Served in the General Service Corps from 1942 to 1943.

Ivor Luke of Exeter, Devon Served in the Royal Navy from 1942 to 1946.

Allan McGarrity of Wirral, Merseyside Served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1948 to 1950.

Ralph Medler of Norwich Served in the Royal Norfolk Regiment, the Royal Leicestershire Regiment and the North Staffordshire Regiment from 1941 to 1946.

William Moretti of Thetford, Norfolk Served in the Royal Air Force from 1947 to 1949.

Henry Noble of Diss, Norfolk Served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1947 and the Royal Air Force from 1960 to 1982.

Reginald Noble of Nottingham Served in the Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regiment from 1971 to 1981.

Gordon Oatley of Sandbach, Cheshire Served in the Royal Engineers from 1939 to 1961.

Brian Patrick of Bury, Lancashire Served in the Lancashire Fusiliers from 1954 to 1956.

Robert Perry of Oldham Served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1946.

Vernon Polley of Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands Served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

June Ponting of Seaford, East Sussex Served in the Women's Royal Air Force from 1949 to 1950.

Joyce Poolman of Gillingham, Dorset Served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1942 to 1946.

Desmond Rochford of Taunton, Somerset Served in the General Service Corps, the Royal Army Ordnance Corps and the Black Watch from 1942 to 1947.

Ernest Ruthven of Enfield, Middlesex Served in the Middlesex Regiment and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1941 to 1952.

Michael Sherrocks of Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire Served in the Royal Marines from 1952 to 1954.

Eric Simpson of Conwy, Gwynedd Served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1946.

Kenneth Smith of Peterborough Served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Army Service Corps from 1947 to 1949.

Sidney Smith of Clacton-On-Sea, Essex Served in the Royal Air Force from 1941

to 1946.

Brian Stansbie of Burton-On-Trent, Staffordshire Served in the Royal Navy from 1957 to 1959.

Thelma Sumner of Newton-Le-Willows, Merseyside Served in the Women's Royal Air Force from 1943 to 1946.

Neil Teixeira of Bolton, Lancashire Served in the Coldstream Guards from 1945 to 1948.

Alexander Walker of Edinburgh Served in the Royal Signals from 1950 to 1962.

Walter White of Southampton, Hampshire Served in the General Service Corps, the Royal Hampshire Regiment and the Cheshire Regiment from 1944 to 1947.

The Reverend George Wood of Littlehampton, West Sussex Served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

Answers to Harry Beevers's 10 questions from page 41.

Brighton.

Llandudno.

Infantry.

Noel Coward.

Distinguished Conduct Medal.

Vulcan.

Ex-Serviceman.

Tail-end Charlie.

Ensign.

Royal Marines.

In Memory.

John 'Jack' Clinton of Darwen, Lancashire died on 17th February 2014, aged 87. He joined the Royal Navy in 1944 and served in the Pacific as a radar operator. He was discharged as an Able Seaman in 1948.

William 'Bill' Donaghy of Macclesfield, Cheshire died on 24th February 2014, aged 86. He joined the King's Regiment in 1946 serving in the UK and later in Egypt. He was discharged as a Private in 1948.

Thomas English of Wallasey, Cheshire died on 25th February 2014, aged 87. In 1942 he joined the Merchant Navy as a seaman. He sailed all the oceans but in the North and South Atlantic he remembers a few difficult encounters with German ships. He spent time in Cape Town, the South African Coast, South America, India and the Middle East before his discharge in 1968.

Albert Green of Spalding, Lincolnshire died on 10th October 2013, aged 82. He joined the Royal Pioneer Corps for National Service in 1951 and served in the UK. He was discharged as a Private in 1953.

Mildred Griffiths of Swinton, Manchester died on 3rd March 2014, aged 84. She joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service in 1947 and specialised working in the Clerical Department. She was posted to Edinburgh as the PT1 Order Clerk, then briefly to Waller Barracks in Devizes. She was discharged in 1947.

Eric Guy of Stockport, Cheshire died on 23rd February 2014, aged 75. He joined the RAF for National Service in 1954 and served in Egypt and Cyprus. He was discharged as an LAC Leading Aircraftman in 1956.

Albert 'Ted' Hardwick of Camberley, Surrey died on 23rd February 2014, aged 89. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1942 and qualified as a Weapons Mechanic. In 1943 he was in North Africa and took part in the Sicily landings, fighting through to Italy, mainly employed on radio counter measures. He returned to the UK and was discharged in 1947 as an LAC Leading Aircraftman.

Bryan Hollands of Guildford, Surrey died on 15th February 2014, aged 91. He joined the Royal Signals in 1941 and fought in France, Belgium, Holland and Norway. He was discharged in 1947 as a Lance Corporal.

Michael Hotherstall of Worthing, West Sussex died on 1st February 2014, aged 72. He joined the Royal Green Jackets in 1961, trained at Winchester and was posted to the 1st Battalion at Nook Camp, Wiltshire. He was then posted to Penang in Malaya for two and a half years before returning to Winchester. He was discharged in 1964 as a Rifleman.

Leonard Jury of Tavistock, Devon died on 4th February 2014, aged 99. He joined the Royal Army Service Corps in 1936 and transferred to the Royal Engineers in 1940. He was in France with the British Expeditionary Force before he was evacuated from Dunkirk. In August 1940 he joined the Home Guard and was discharged as a Corporal when it disbanded in 1945.

Kenneth 'Ken' Lindup of Solihull, West Midlands died on 26th February 2014, aged 94. Having joined the Coldstream Guards in 1938 he served in North Africa where he was made POW at Tobruk and was held in Italy for a period. He also served in France and Belgium where he was wounded, evacuated back to the UK and discharged as a Guardsman in 1946.

Raymond Lodge of Worthing, West Sussex died on 14th February 2014, aged 84. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1947 and specialised as a fitter. He served in the UK, Germany, Ireland, Malta and Gibraltar. He was discharged as a Corporal in 1955.

William Martin of Wigan, Lancashire died on 12th February 2014, aged 87. He joined the General Service Corps in 1945 and completed his training before transferring to the Pioneer Corps a month later. He served in the UK and one of his jobs was to guard prisoners of war. He was discharged in 1948 as a Private.

Andrew McParland of Kirkintilloch, Glasgow died on 22nd January 2014, aged 92. He joined the Royal Artillery in 1941, transferring to the South Lancashire Regiment in 1943 and in 1944 to the Army Air Corps. He served in France, Holland and Belgium and fought in the battle of the Bulge. He also served in Russia and in the Far East in Bombay, Singapore, Java, Siam and Malaya. He was discharged as a Lance Corporal in 1946.

Ian Metcalfe of Darlington, County Durham died on 16th February 2014, aged 80. He joined the Royal Marines in 1952, training at Commando Training Centre Royal Marines Lympstone and served in Royal Marines Commando units based in the UK. He also served at Suez, Malta and the Mediterranean until discharge in 1958.

Joseph 'Joe' Metcalfe of St Helens, Merseyside died on 14th February 2014, aged 91. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1941 and trained in Blackpool and Morecambe. He served in the UK and India and was discharged as an LAC Leading Aircraftsman in 1946.

Thomas Orton of Tamworth, Staffordshire died on 1st December 2013, aged 87. He was sent to Bodmin in Cornwall for basic training before he joined the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry. He served in the UK and Hamburg in Germany before he was demobilised as a Driver in 1948.

Donald Osborne of Hounslow, Middlesex died on 1st March 2012, aged 94. He joined the Royal Army Ordnance Corps in 1939, later transferring to the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers where he became an instrument technician. He served in France, Belgium, Holland and Germany. He was discharged in 1946 as a Sergeant.

Kenneth Passman of Stokesley, North Yorkshire died on 9th February 2014, aged 90. He joined the Royal Navy in 1942. He trained at HMS Duke, a Royal Naval shore establishment based in Great Malvern and was drafted to Scapa Flow. He was later sent to the Mediterranean, Singapore and Hong Kong before discharge in 1946 as a Stoker.

Antony 'Tony' Peake of Oswestry, Shropshire died on 14th February 2014, aged 83. He joined the Royal Air Force for National Service in 1951, training at RAF Padgate. He did aircrew selection at RAF Hornchurch and was a telephonist at RAF Bridgnorth for two years before his discharge as an SAC Senior Aircraftman in 1953.

William 'Bill' Prime of Chichester, West Sussex died on 12th February 2014, aged 90. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1941 and trained as a glider pilot in South Africa and served with 670 Squadron in India prior to discharge as a Warrant Officer in 1946.

Paul Reynolds of Wilton, Salisbury died on 1st January 2014, aged 58. He joined the Royal Engineers in 1971, doing three years as a boy and three years in Northern Ireland. He later served in Cyprus and Germany before discharge in 1976.

Emma Richardson of Burnley, Lancashire died on 21st December 2013, aged 89. She joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force in 1942 and after training she was posted to various RAF stations around the UK. She spent some time

at Fighter Command at Ladbroke before discharge as an LACW Leading Aircraftwoman in 1946.

Kenneth 'Ken' Rigby of Colchester, Essex died on 18th February 2014, aged 79. He joined the Royal Artillery for National Service in 1952 and served in Oswestry and Rhyl. He took part in the Queen's Coronation Parade in 1953 and was discharged in 1954 as a Gunner.

Lewis 'Jack' Stanley of Warwick, Warwickshire died on 26th September 2013, aged 90. He joined the Royal Navy in 1943 and qualified as a Telegraphist. He served with coastal forces in motor torpedo boats and minesweepers in the UK on convoy protection. Later he was involved with skirmishes into German and Dutch waters. He was discharged in 1946 as a Telegraphist.

Kenneth 'Ken' Tyler of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire died on 7th February 2014, aged 86. He joined the General Service Corps in 1944 and was later posted to the Gloucestershire Regiment. He was sent to India and in 1946 transferred to the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry. He left India after Independence and was discharged in March 1948. He rejoined the Royal Engineers in October 1948 and transferred to the Army Catering Corps in 1949 where he served until 1953.

Ruby 'Gwen' Warenaus of Wirral, Merseyside died on 17th January 2014, aged 92. She joined the Royal Naval Voluntary Aid Detachment in 1943 and served at Goodhaven and was discharged as a Senior V.A.D in 1946.

Sylvia Watts of Lincoln, Lincolnshire died on 27th February 2014, aged 91. She joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force in 1941 and served with Bomber Command at various UK air stations including RAF Cottesmore, Coningsby and Swinderby. She was discharged as a Corporal in 1946.

James Young of St Helier, Jersey died on 29th January 2014, aged 89. He joined the Royal Navy in 1943 and served in Iceland and the Pacific until discharge in 1946 as an Acting Able Seaman. Following Service he joined the Merchant Navy, serving until 1954.

Blind Veterans UK Legacy Gifts.

We are grateful to Blind Veterans UK member, George A Jackson, who left a bequest to Blind Veterans UK in his Will. Mr Jackson of Camberley, Surrey died on 24th August. 2013.

Picture: Charlie Daly and Peter Zamudio enjoy the perfect snow during the annual ski club week in Canazei, Italy.

