

July 2014

Review

Blind Veterans UK | St Dunstan's since 1915



MEMORY FADE
BUT FINGER
DO NOT END

On the cover: Blind veteran Charles Hanaway, who returned to Normandy for the 70th Anniversary of the D-Day Landings, stands and salutes at the grave of his fallen comrade Major Agnew at the CWGC's Manvieu War Cemetery in Cheux. **Photo:** Paul Hickey.



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Contact: Review Editor, Catherine Goodier 020 7616 8367
Email: revieweditor@blindveterans.org.uk



Patron: Her Majesty the Queen

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Contact telephone numbers.

The Brighton centre 01273 307811.

The Llandudno centre 01492 868700.

The Sheffield centre 0114 2672550.

The Booking Office: To book accommodation please contact the Booking Office on 01273 391500. If you have care needs please first contact your Welfare Officer.

ROVI on Duty: If you need to speak with the ROVI on Duty please telephone: 01273 391447.

IT Training Support: If you need to speak with the IT Instructor on support please telephone: 01273 391432.

New members: If you know someone who could be eligible to join Blind Veterans UK they can phone our Membership Department on freephone: 0800 389 7979.

From the Chairman.

Your message from Tim Davis.

At the beginning of June the Trustees met for its quarterly Council Meeting and given that we have recently finished our financial year end, I wanted to reflect on some of the changing dynamics of the organisation over the last year. Importantly we are continuing to grow our reach to vision impaired veterans across the country. Last year we grew our total members by 708 to over 3,600 as well as supporting over 670 widows. In part this has been as a result of our 'No One Alone' campaign, which has helped to increase the awareness of the charity and what we do. We also very much rely on the support of our members, their friends and families to continue to spread the word as well as organisation led initiatives to recruit new members. Please do keep up the good work.

We've also expanded the range and number of opportunities for respite and training, as well as expanded our resourcing and volunteers, which have all helped provide more ways the organisation can help our members. Interestingly while the average age of those who have developed a vision impairment since leaving the services has increased, the average age of those who have become vision impaired in service has reduced. This is a factor of improved health in old age and of course recent conflicts. It's an important trend and is why we will continue to focus on innovating services and support for our members of different age groups and stages of life. as we recognise that your needs can be quite different. Finally we have expanded our regional presence through the number of staff, number of visits and number of events (e.g. Reunion lunches) to ensure we continue to establish and reinforce our national footprint as a charity, and bring help and support closer to our members, wherever they live.

I'm pleased to report the organisation is in good health and continues to work hard, providing the needed support that you, our veterans, so justly deserve.

On a final note for those of you who were not able to attend, the Leader family held a service at the beginning of June to celebrate the life of Robert, our former Chief Executive. You won't be surprised to read that the church in Chiswick, which Robert attended regularly, was brimming over with guests filling all standing room places inside and also overflowing onto the lawn outside of the church. There were many members, staff, and Trustees who attended, as well as his wider circle of friends, family and colleagues. I'm certain this must have been of great comfort and support to Sue and the entire family. Robert can be very satisfied with the legacy he has left and the warmth and friendships he created throughout his life. If you're reading this now Robert — Cheers and thank you!

Blind Veterans UK Calendar

Activities from the Brighton centre in July.

Writers' Forum 3rd – 5th. Planes, Trains and Automobiles 6th – 12th (full).
Ladies' Week 13th – 19th. The Golf Club 19th – 20th.
Geocaching/Treasure Hunt Week 27th July – 2nd August.

August.

London Triathlon 3rd (full). Race Week 3rd – 9th (full).
Activities Week 17th – 23rd. The Golf Club 23rd – 24th.

September.

Walking/Exploring 7th – 13th. Pamper Week 14th – 20th (full).
Fishing Week 14th – 20th. Writers' Forum - 20th
The Golf Club 20th – 21st. History Week 21st – 27th (full).

October.

Amateur Radio Week 3rd – 11th. Music Week 12th – 18th.
The Golf Club 18th - 19th. Bowling Club 19th Oct – 1st Nov.
Great South Run 26th.

Activities from the Llandudno centre in July.

Music Week 6th – 12th (full). Fishing Taster/Beginners Week 20th – 26th (full).

August.

Amateur Radio Club 1st – 9th. Recreation Taster Week 10th – 16th (full).
Family Weekend 22nd – 25th (full).

September.

Canal Boat/Cycling Week 21st – 27th. Mostyn Arts Week 21st – 27th.

October.

Walking/Photography Week 12th - 18th. Computer Club 14th – 18th.

Activities from the Sheffield centre July.

Photography Week 28th – 31st.

August.

Luncheon Club 18th – 22nd. G.O.A.L Group 26th – 29th.

September.

Culture Week 8th – 12th.

October.

The Big Draw 6th – 10th.

Noticeboard.

Dates for your diary and useful information.

Pull up a Sandbag and enjoy a themed week at the Sheffield centre from 6th — 10th October.

Enjoy a beer, like to talk? Then this week is for you.

During the week you will visit local venues including the traditional hostelries, where you can sample the local ales. There will be plenty of opportunities to share your stories with fellow members. You will also be encouraged to take part in 'The Big Draw' and encapsulate your stories into drawings. Even if you are not very artistic, The Big Draw is about taking part. The theme for drawings is to design a coaster or label. All materials will be provided.

The week will include a visit to a local brewery to see how beer is made. Some parts of Sheffield are renowned for their real ale pubs, notably the 'Valley of Beer' around Kelham Island and Shalesmoor, but the intention is to take enthusiasts to pubs in areas they may not be familiar with. Colin Williamson, Blind Veterans UK's resident beer expert, will give a talk about his favourite beers and you may even get to sample them!

For further information you can phone the Sheffield centre on telephone: 0114 2672550. To book accommodation please contact the Booking Office on 01273 391500. If you have care needs please first contact your Welfare Officer.

Review format changes and contact details for the Review.

The Review is also available as an MP3CD, by email and in Braille. If you would like to change the format you receive the Review in please telephone Catherine Goodier, Review Editor on 020 7616 8367 or email: revieweditor@blindveterans.org.uk

Peter Wiltshire.

It is with sadness that we announce the death of Peter Wiltshire who died on 4th June after a long and very debilitating illness. He was a member of the care staff at the Brighton centre for 40 years and we know that many of you knew him well and will be deeply saddened by news of his passing. If you would like to send a message to his family you can do so via the Brighton centre.

Would you like to be one of our 100 Voices to celebrate our centenary in 2015? By Kathryn Jones-Romain, Art & Craft Instructor.

Are you interested in recording some of the experiences that you have had with Blind Veterans UK?

Do you know anyone who has worked or volunteered at Blind Veterans UK who has some interesting snippets to share of life in Blind Veterans UK?

If so we want to hear from you!

To mark our 2015 centenary we are putting together 100 voices, a project that will celebrate 100 years of Blind Veterans UK. The aim of the project is to record 100 oral histories that tell the story of Blind Veterans UK from its inception in 1915 to the present day. Using personal experiences of people associated with the charity — you our members, your families and friends, staff and volunteers alike — both past and present, we want to spread the word of how the charity has touched the lives of so many people in so many different ways.

Through personal experiences and collective memories we want people to know about the stories that are not widely known about, the stories that make the charity what it is today.

At present we are in the recruiting stage as we want to hear from a range of people who'd like to take part. We will begin recording this autumn. As we can come to you with our recording equipment please don't worry if travelling is tricky.

Once we have recorded the 100 oral histories they will form part of a touring exhibition stopping at various venues around the UK, and be made accessible to people around the world in a range of digital formats. We hope they will become part of Britain's collective memory and be used as inspiration for generations to come.

So if you fancy taking part and would like to share your thoughts we'd love to hear from you.

The spoken word is a wonderfully powerful medium with an impact that the written word sometimes cannot match, so help us spread the word of Blind Veterans UK through your oral histories.

Please contact us by email. You can contact me, Kathryn Jones-Romain, Art & Craft Instructor, on email: Kathryn.Jones-Romain@blindveterans.org.uk

Or Hattie Lockhart-Smith on email: hattielockhartsmith@hotmail.com

Or you can contact the Art and Craft Department at our Brighton centre on telephone: 01273 391466 and ask to speak to me or Hattie.

Thank you and we look forward to speaking with you.



Picture: The blind veterans of the First World War train as poultry farmers at our Regent's Park training centre.

1Touch™ Coaching & Certification Course at the Brighton centre from 26th – 28th September 2014.

This is an opportunity for members to learn the 1Touch™ self defence programme and become certified instructors. As places are limited please contact Steve Mills in the Sports & Recreation Dept at the Brighton centre for further details on telephone: 01273 391481 or email: steve.mills@blindveterans.org.uk

The mission of the 1Touch™ Project is to provide ongoing self-development and rehabilitation courses specifically for the vision impaired. The 1Touch™ is the first comprehensive descriptive self-defence program designed for the blind. The program is a hands-on self-defence technique for dealing with assaults, aggressive behaviour, and bullying. 1Touch™ explores participants' hidden assumptions regarding their own disability — their personal perception of their blindness and insecurities built upon that perception. The 1Touch™ Project is primarily a method of personal development. 1Touch™ addresses the physical and psychological causes of insecurity and vulnerability through the empowering practice of hands-on, active, self-defence methods, self-defence theory, and discussions examining what makes one insecure and why. The 1Touch™ Project's core values are minimising risk, maximizing independence, and increasing life chances. There is no age limit, no physical strength needed or prior martial arts background necessary.

Learning these techniques has proven highly effective in the development of: independence, self-confidence, spatial orientation, mobility and dexterity, tactile sensitivity, social interaction, communication skills, enthusiasm/self-worth and greater health physically and psychologically. The Instructors' course enables others to teach the 1Touch™ syllabus in their constituency. This course is presented in the form of seminar training with an amount of hours required for completion and a final examination. Once the participants have successfully shown competency they will be certified through the 1Touch™ Project, to operate 1Touch™ Self Defence for the blind in their constituency.

Testimonial: "As a member and Trustee of Blind Veterans UK I was struck by the significant boost to self-confidence that could be delivered by the 1Touch™ program. At the same time as providing valuable techniques to bring a sense of security to one's physical well-being it also provides a better understanding of the world around us and how to move safely and efficiently within it." Kerry Levins.

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

On 29th March, it was proposed that I move from my current room in the Brighton centre where I have been for the last three years to a newly refurbished and redecorated room, which was to be my new and permanent future home. I faced this with a great deal of trepidation as being a totally blind person the position of everything in my room was registered in my mind and the thought of moving everything from one room to another different shaped room would mean in effect, in my own mind, that my mental computer had completely crashed.

Nevertheless staff persuaded me that it wouldn't be as bad as I thought. Deena Davies, Residential Supervisor and two of her staff took over and from 10.30am to 11.30am they worked like Trojans to move my articles into the new room. They worked their socks off to do this and I am very grateful. After an hour when everything had been moved over, two of my family arrived to take charge and get the items into some approximate order as I would have to live with them.

My new room is very comfortable and feels very homely, I am completely happy with the move and I feel that on behalf of us residents who moved rooms someone from our side should say thank you to the various donors who gave so generously to make this happen. We received a considerable sum from the LIBOR money, from the Freemasons' Grand Charity, and from several donors who gave very generously and many other people who gave in many ways to help. We, the residents, are very conscious of the great amount of care that is exercised every second of the day to make our time here as comfortable as possible.

Thank you very much.

Clifford Louis Gower – War Blinded member at Blind Veterans UK Brighton.

£50,000 donation from the Freemasons' Grand Charity put towards the refurbishment of the Brighton centre.

We would like to make a very public thank you to the Freemasons' Grand charity for their generous £50,000 donation towards the major refurbishment project at the Brighton centre.

Martin Mitten, Sussex Freemasons Deputy Provincial Grand Master Elect, presented the cheque for £50,000 to Bob Strickland, a member of Blind Veterans UK since 2004 who is the secretary of Blind Veterans UK's Masonic Lodge and to Trustee and member Kerry Levins.

A bedroom will take the name of the Freemasons' Grand Charity in recognition of the donation.

Jackie Greer, Head of Care at the Brighton centre, said: "We are delighted to receive this hugely generous donation from the Freemasons' Grand Charity towards the development of the residential care facilities at the centre, which is already well underway.

"This refurbishment project, which has a total cost of £1.87 million, is essential to ensure that we can better accommodate our members who come to live here. We aim to deliver changes that will essentially allow much easier access to support and more comfortable living arrangements."

Jackie Ball, Blind Veterans UK's Group Manager for Relationship Fundraising, said: "Blind Veterans UK has enjoyed a longstanding relationship with the Freemasons for many years, as they have provided funding for a number of our capital projects at our centres in Brighton and Llandudno. The money will fully fund a state-of-the-art bedroom as part of a refurbishment of the centre's permanent residential care facilities.

"This most recent gift of £50,000 from The Freemasons' Grand Charity is a further example of its generosity and philanthropic culture. This donation takes the total raised for Blind Veterans UK by the Grand Charity and the many individual Freemason lodges throughout the UK to an impressive £250,000 over the past 10 years.

"We are exceptionally grateful for this extraordinary support and welcome the fact that so many of our blind veterans have also been welcomed into Freemasonry, which is demonstrative of the fact that the Freemasons is an organisation that embraces diversity.

"We thank them and look forward to our continuing relationship with the Freemasons."



Picture: From left to right Trustee and member Kerry Levins with Pedro, Bob Strickland member and Secretary of Blind Veterans UK's Masonic group, Jackie Greer Head of Care at the Brighton centre, Martin Mitten, Sussex Freemasons Deputy Provincial Grand Master Elect and Jackie Ball, Blind Veterans UK's Group Manager for Relationship Fundraising.

Charles Hanaway returns to France for the 70th Anniversary of D-Day. By Catherine Goodier.

In the June edition of the Review we brought you an interview with Charles Hanaway, who landed on D+6 and fought through to Germany with the 6th Battalion of Royal Scots Fusiliers, part of the 15th Scottish Division. To mark the 70th Anniversary of the D-Day Landings blind veteran Charles returned to France and we are honoured to bring you his account of an incredible and moving week from 2nd to 9th June.

Charles began: "Four of us travelled to France, my friend Paul Hickey, who is a military historian, and his son Joseph and father in law Richard 'Dick' O'Grady. We arrived in Ousitreham on Monday the 2nd and motored down to Sainte-Mère-Église that had been in the American sector as it was the first town to be taken by the American 101 Airborne Division when they parachuted in on 6th June 1944. The site there overwhelmed us, as it was full of vehicles and tents and people re-enacting the events of WWII. The amazing thing was that there were old and young men dressed in American uniform with WWII equipment, jeeps and destroyers. It was full of them. In the American sector they have memorials everywhere and we visited one on the outskirts of the city.

"Throughout the week I wore my Glengarry and medals and at Sainte-Mère-Église two Americans who had fought there 70 years ago with the 101 Airborne Division came over to me and we talked about that time. During the week people came up to me and in the supermarket one day a little girl said 'Excuse me Sir would you be in a photograph with my mother and father?' I agreed and the couple who were Chinese stood either side of me as we posed for the photograph. I was amazed by the number of people who approached me to shake my hand and the ladies who kissed me and the amount of people who asked me to sign autographs and pictures and people saying thank you all the time. It was so touching and emotional.

"I had an amazing experience when we visited Hill 112 where the Churchill tank still stands as a permanent Memorial. The area was regarded as being of huge strategic importance by the German commander, Field Marshall Rommel, who said 'whoever controls Hill 112 controls Normandy'. The hill was the scene of prolonged fighting which left 1,500 dead and 10,000 wounded or missing.

"When we arrived a party of about 15 or so people were there and one of the young ladies detached herself from the group and came over to speak with us. As I wore my Glengarry and medals she knew that I was a veteran. She was from Germany and asked if I would speak with one of her party. A man came forward and introduced himself as Erich Bissoir and said that he had been in the 12 SS Hitlerjugend Division and 'we fought you that year'. Our conversation was translated by the interpreter and at the end we shook hands and again it was emotional as it was a meeting of reconciliation after 70 years. He gave my friend his contact details and they will keep in touch.

"On 6th June we attended the ceremony at Ouistreham, the beach codenamed Sword. We arrived at 11am and sat in the stands and it was a scorching hot day. Her Majesty The Queen and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall, US President Barack Obama, Russia's Vladimir Putin and François Hollande of France walked within 30 feet of us. As I couldn't see what was going on my friend explained it to me.

"The ceremony was incredibly moving and it was an honour to attend. I felt elated to be there, along with so many other emotions as it was our fifth day of meeting and talking to people all the time. All the visions of when I was there before and the areas where we fought came back to me and it was like it had all taken place only yesterday. Just like the entire world the villages and towns had changed so much and grown, but I can still picture in my mind what they looked like 70 years ago.

"Even though I have been back over the years it was an incredible experience to return for the 70th Anniversary and we couldn't get over the reception we received from everyone. I met some people from Mastic who will have an event in September and they have invited me to go over and spend time with them. They even said that they would send transport to pick me up! I also met a lady who owns a museum in Belgium who has invited me to stay.

"At the end of the week on 9th June we had the most amazing coincidence as we drove the 180 miles from Ousitreham to Calais when half way through the drive Paul suggested that we stop for coffee at a service station. As we sat in a virtually empty coffee shop a man approached me and asked if I was a veteran and who I had served with, and I told him the 15th Scottish Division. He went on to tell me that I had fought at Best in Holland where he lives and I told him that I had and we had a bitter fight, particularly at the back of the brick factory

and I had not been there since the 50th Anniversary in 1994. He said he lives at the back of the brick factory and then asked me if I was Charles Hanaway, which shocked me, and when I said yes told me that he had just purchased my book and that I would be a most welcome guest at his house.

"I shall never forget the week of the 70th Anniversary as it was the most moving and incredible week as people came up to say merci and shake or kiss my hand. It was so unbelievable. I'll never forget it. Being there the memories of 70 years ago were fresh in my mind and it was as though no time had passed at all. Meeting with the gentleman who had been in the Hitler youth was quite emotional, especially when we shook hands as it was an act of reconciliation. As was meeting the man who had bought my book. And of course visiting the grave of my comrade Major Agnew, which I have been to many times in the past. It was the most incredible and moving week."

The Queen's message was published in the official brochure of the 70th Anniversary of events that was given to all veterans, including the 650 British D-Day veterans who returned to Normandy to honour their fallen comrades. Her Majesty's message is reproduced below.

"I am very pleased to be able to join veterans here in Normandy to mark the 70th anniversary of the D-Day Landings.

"On 6th June 1944 after months of planning and training, the largest amphibious assault in history was launched to secure freedom in Europe.

"Hundreds of thousands of Service men made the journey across the Channel by sea and air, and through their brave actions and dogged determination, established a vital foothold in occupied Europe.

"This immense and heroic endeavour brought the end of the Second World War within reach.

"I am sure that these commemorations will provide veterans of the conflict and their families gathered here in France, along with their hosts, the people of Normandy, with an opportunity to reflect on their experiences and the incredible sacrifices that were made."

You can buy Charles's book *Living for the Moment* online at Amazon, Waterstones, Love Reading and other websites.



Picture: Charles and Erich shake hands in front of the Hill 112 Memorial after placing a tribute to the fallen. **Photo:** Paul Hickey.



Picture: Richard O'Grady, Charles Hanaway and Paul and Joseph Hickey.

Project Gemini 2014. By Colin Williamson, Contributing Editor.

For the first time since its inception members of St Dunstan's South Africa joined members from Blind Veterans UK and the US based Blinded Veterans Association on the annual exchange programme entitled Project Gemini. The week long exchange, which started back in 2011, brings together blinded veterans from all three organisations in order to participate in discussions regarding advances in technology which could assist blind and vision impaired veterans, the chance to experience the unique camaraderie that only exists amongst the Forces community and to participate in a variety of cultural and educational visits which we hope will enhance their visit to the UK and to our Brighton centre. Many veterans find this a very cathartic experience and some have gone as far to say that it is a vital step in their healing process.

The Blind Veterans UK participants arrived at Port Hall, close to our Brighton centre, on Saturday 16th May and quickly got to know each other and for some, renew old acquaintances. It wasn't long before the banter started and the inevitable 'war stories' were embellished upon. It was to be an early night for some of us as the American and South African contingents were due to arrive into Heathrow Airport at six a.m. the following morning and we had to be there to greet them. After a slight drama involving one of the South African participant's hold baggage (apparently his family packed the wrong bag which he assumed was blue, not, as it turned out, red, causing some delay at the baggage pick up point) it was also discovered that two of the Blinded Veterans Association members had missed their flights from Washington Dulles Airport and wouldn't arrive until the following day.

Having made alternative plans for the missing two, we set off for Port Hall and got everyone settled in. After a brief introduction, we headed off to the Smugglers Rest in Peacehaven for Sunday lunch and for some, a chance to try for the first time good old English beer! Sunday evening was spent getting to know one another at Port Hall and catching up on some sleep.

Monday was another early start as we were heading into London by train from Brighton station, the rail tickets were donated free, courtesy of Southern Rail. We had our own carriage for the journey and all refreshments were provided free of charge, three cheers for Southern Rail!

The first activity of the day was the inevitable Duck Tour, a trip around the capital in a WWII amphibious vehicle which has become a firm favourite and is always first on the itinerary. After an interesting forty minutes listening to the amusing and informative commentary by the tour guide we were transferred to our City Cruise boat for a trip down the River Thames to Greenwich. The boat, which was on its maiden voyage, was fantastic and a really good way to explore the river and its banks.

After an hour or so it moored at Greenwich Pier and we boarded a bus to take us to our next destination, The Royal Artillery Firepower Museum based in nearby Woolwich Arsenal. Just as we were sat down in the museum cafe for a quick lunch of bangers and mash we were joined by our missing two American guests accompanied by Blind Veterans UK Younger Group Co-ordinator Inderpal Kallah who had collected them from Heathrow earlier in the day.

The museum had opened especially for us and we spent a fascinating two hours touring the various exhibits hosted by Steve, our guide for the day. It really is an amazing museum and well worth a visit. Afterwards we caught the train to Waterloo station and the short walk to the Union Jack Club to meet up with Brigadier General Quintas, the U.S. defence attaché at the American Embassy who joined us for a few drinks and a chat. After a superb dinner we left to catch the train back to Brighton and Port Hall.

Tuesday was spent at our Brighton centre where we met with some of the rehabilitation staff for a tour of the impressive facilities and after lunch we took part in a friendly archery competition between a joint U.S./South African team and members of Blind Veterans UK and I'm happy to report that the Blind Veterans UK team came out on top! It was then down to the Marina and a game of ten pin bowling which was very competitive and great fun.

On Wednesday we visited the beautiful Hever Castle and Gardens and had some great fun at the Water Maze where a lot of the guys got extremely moist! The castle tour was very interesting and the gardens are amazing with beautiful topiary, dazzling bright colours and marvellous scented flowers. Wednesday evening was spent in the bar of the Brighton centre chatting with the residents and guests and a meal of fish and chips with mushy peas and curry sauce which went down extremely well with our cousins across the pond!

The weather on Thursday was a bit hit and miss with the occasional downpour interspersed with bright sunshine but it didn't dampen the spirits of the group who were looking forward to visiting the historical town of Lewes which has strong connections with the U.S. as it is where William Penn, Quaker and founder of Pennsylvania, was married and also where Thomas Paine, revolutionary, political activist and author of 'Common Sense' which advocated colonial America's independence from the Kingdom of Great Britain, lived in the 18th century.

Thursday evening was spent at the Brighton Greyhound Stadium where rumour has it fortunes were won and lost. Some of the group were invited to present rosettes to the winning owners and pose for photographs with the dogs. Wet noses all round!

Brighton Sea Life centre was the destination for Friday morning where the group had a really interesting backstage tour and after lunch we headed for the Amex Stadium, home of Brighton Football Club for a look around their very impressive ground. On Friday evening we had arranged a small presentation up in the Winter Gardens where we were joined by Chairman Tim Davis and his wife Lyn, Ray and Robbie Hazan, Interim Chief Executive Barry Porter and wife Dorothy and Trustee Rear Admiral (Ret'd) Stephen Meyer accompanied by wife Erica. Centre manager Lesley Garven was present along with other distinguished guests. The six American veterans and our two South African brothers were presented with their honorary life member certificates and the much coveted Project Gemini commemorative medal. Four Blind Veterans UK members also received the medal.

Saturday gave us the opportunity for a much needed lie in and then it was off to the pier for a bit of fun. Andy Bull was awarded top marks for his spectacular dismount from the mechanical bull which saw him somersault majestically through the air much to the amusement of his peers. Zuko Mtwana tried his hand at driving the dodgem cars and even had a ride on the Waltzer. Brave lads these Zulus!

After souvenir shopping the group made their way back to Port Hall to pack ready for a four thirty pick up the following morning.

Later that night we all went out for our final evening together to a delightful



Picture: Colin Williamson poses as the manager of Brighton & Hove Albion.



Picture: The Project Gemini group at Hever Castle in Kent.

country pub in the nearby small village of Arlington where we had a lot of laughs and a splendid meal. We exchanged email addresses and mobile numbers so that we could keep in touch with each other in the future.

It was a truly memorable week and I'd like to thank the staff from our Brighton, Sheffield and Llandudno centres for helping out on the event, also great credit must go to Louise Timms for all of her hard work in helping to organise the event and for all of her help during the week, it was much appreciated. Gratitude must also go to Dr Greg Goodrich from Palo Alto V.A. hospital in California for all of his assistance during the week.

I'd also like to thank the following members from all three organisations for making it such an unforgettable experience.

Blind Veterans UK.

Simon Brown
Chris Nowell
Andy Bull
Charlie Eastwood
Carl Adamson
Mark Abel
Louise Timms
Inderpal Kallah

St. Dunstons South Africa.

James van Eck
Zuko Mtwana

Blinded Veterans Association.

Tom Zampieri
Travis Fugate
Joe Bogart
Dan Wallace
Glen Minney
Mark Wilson.

A Year in the Garden. By John Dix.

Gardens up and down the land abound
With treasures that have all been found
By loving care and planning mind
Which patiently nurtures each new find
Aided by nature's wind, rain and sun
To give us joy to feast upon.

In winter time by fire lights glow
Catalogues and seed lists, schedules for show
What for the borders? What for the beds?
Shall we have blue, the yellows or reds?
Many the problem the soul to excite
This way? Or that way? We must get it right.

The light grows stronger, the Jasmine has been
Snowdrops are nodding to add to the scene.
Next the Forsythia and purple Daphne
Violets and Daffodils, Anemone
Wallflowers with wonderful scents to unfold,
Welcome the Crocus, a carpet of gold.
The summer hosts are here at last,
Philadelphus and Lupins they went so fast,
Now Asters and Alyssum, Scabies are growing
While in the shrub border the Deutzia is snowing,
Snapdragons and Foxgloves and Delphiniums dance with Cupids dart the
Catanache.

Autumn arrives
Chrysanthemums and everlasting Helichrysums
Chinese lanterns around the paving
Michaelmas daisies from the borders waving
Now as the Yuletide comes before us Christmas rose, the Helleborus.

John Dix. Blind Veterans UK member.

Potting & Plants Week at the Llandudno centre. By Dewi Roberts, Sports & Recreation Instructor.

"Gardens up and down the land abound
With treasures that have all been found.
By loving care and planning mind.
Which patiently nurtures each new find
Aided by nature's wind, rain and sun
To give us joy to feast upon."

From 4th to 10th May potters and planters came from across the country to enjoy the early May holiday sunshine and to do a spot of gardening at the Llandudno centre. Hundreds of plants were planted and dozens of pots and baskets were decorated with a variety of flowers with names too long to remember!

The members were shown around the Falklands room where all the equipment had been set up; spades, forks, rakes, pots, baskets, beds, wheelbarrows, hosepipes, watering cans, compost and colourful flowers. The first couple of days were impressive, and as keen gardeners always do, they got stuck in!

Gardening is a matter of your enthusiasm holding up until your back gets used to it! This definitely proved to be the case for the members who planted the driveway that leads up to the centre, which will hopefully brighten up the gardens and accompany our residents in the beehives!

Mo Leighton, Blind Veterans UK member, offered to lead a gardeners' question and answer session which absolutely dwarfed BBC Radio 4's programme!

The enthusiastic bunch finished off the hanging baskets and plans were to sell them to other members or staff who had kindly volunteered to help during the week. John Dix, member and author of the opening verse, represented the willow making in the Arts & Crafts centre. He and others enjoyed hours of weaving in the workshop whilst others visited local garden centres.



Picture: Mo Leighton plants hanging baskets at the Llandudno centre watched by Sophie Flinders, Deputy Care Manager.



Picture: Daphne Dix, Dolores Balagtas HCA, Mo Leighton, John Dix and Marilou Gabriel HCA.

John Dix shows a hanging basket he has just planted.

The finale proved to be a success, as all the gardeners ventured over to Dunham Massey, one of the North's great gardens, home to Britain's largest winter garden, as well as a stunning new rose garden. Members relaxed in the gardens of the magnificent deer park before settling down with a delicious lunch inside the original building.

Mo Leighton, who led the gardener's question and answer session, said: "Losing my eyesight has obviously altered the way I garden considerably. I took part in the week to try to teach fellow members tips that I've learnt as I've adapted to gardening after sight loss. John Dix who is totally blind wanted to plant flowers in hanging baskets and it was a pleasure to work with him before he went on to plant hanging baskets on his own. During the week we went through 30 baskets as a team and about seven or nine planters and around 300 Petunias were planted in a bed outside. Some of the centre's care staff joined in and they had a great time too. I thoroughly enjoyed the week.

"I still garden at home where I have a greenhouse. I used to run over 1,000 cacti that I would show nationally and I'd show vegetables at the local shows. I had an acre for pleasure and an acre for work. It was a hobby that became a part of my life and it's wonderfully therapeutic as you can't think of anything else when you're gardening. At the moment I have around 30 or 40 succulents or cacti in my greenhouse and I've planted tomatoes and kidney beans, although of course I can't guarantee they're in a straight line!

"To make gardening easier with sight loss I have semi-raised beds that are made from gravel boards that you usually put under a fence and I've planted annuals and perennials and plants that will attract bees to the garden. Weeds can be harder to identify but the Mrs comes out to put me right about them, and I generally feel my way around the garden and tell by touch what's what. I thoroughly enjoy any time spent in the garden.

"The Llandudno centre has become a second home as I absolutely love it and the people there. I will be back for the fishing week; I did it last year and am excited to do some more sea fishing."

Blind Veterans UK Golf Club. By Pam Crossan, Club Treasurer.

Blind Veterans UK Golf Club met for the second time this year on 17th and 18th May. The weather was kind to us and the course looked in pristine condition. We had a practice day on Saturday and then played the competition day on Sunday, which leads up to the Captain's medal in October. The handicaps have been worked out which gives everyone an equal chance.

We would still like to welcome more members of Blind Veterans UK to join us on our golf weekends. If you would like to try your hand, golf lessons can be provided at our golf club, or you may have played in the past and would like to get back to the game. Do come and join us. You will find it a great weekend spent with good company and in a lovely setting. I hope to hear from you.

Please do contact me, Pam Crossan, Club Treasurer on telephone: 02381 787636. We will meet over seven weekends at the Brighton centre from April to October. The dates are 21st to 22nd June, 19th to 20th July, 23rd to 24th August, 20th to 21st September and 18th to 19th October.



Picture: Graham Johnson, Nick Barber and Chris Butler.

Northumberland Younger Group Weekend 9th - 12th May 2014. By Colin Williamson, Contributing Editor.

The beautiful county of Northumberland was the setting for our first ever visit to the region for a Younger Group weekend in May and despite the occasional downpour it didn't disappoint.

Members Charlie Eastwood, Chris Lee, Billy Black and Darren Blanks made up the group and were accompanied by our volunteer driver, ski guide Neil Graham (who is also known as Shaky) and Blind Veterans UK staff member Colin Williamson.

After meeting up at Newcastle rail station we picked up our hired minibus and set off for the two hour drive to our accommodation, a beautiful cottage in the tiny village of Netherton set in the scenic Northumberland National Park, which was to be our base for the weekend. After a quick lunch stop at a pub en-route we arrived at our first destination of the day, the Royal Air Force Association Home in Rothbury which overlooks the picturesque Coquet Valley, for a tour of their impressive facilities and a chat with some of the residents who were there for a welfare break. After the tour and a nice cup of tea we headed off to Netherton, a short drive away. That evening we ventured down to the village's only pub, The Star Inn, which has been serving beer since 1788 and was bought by the grandfather of the present owner, Vera Wilson, back in 1917 and the interior of the pub hasn't changed in eighty years. It's a real step back in time and landlady Vera is quite a character! If you ever visit this pub (and it's well worth the effort) don't do what Chris Lee did and sit in Vera's chair, she'll sharp chase you out of it! The pub serves one beer only which Vera serves up in a jug brought direct from the barrel in the cellar and she refuses to sell any food, this includes crisps and nuts, because she doesn't like grease marks on the glasses!

After breakfast the following morning we drove over to the Calvert Trust outdoor pursuit centre in Kielder Forest in the heart of the national park, to participate in a bit of climbing and a high ropes course which the group thought was the best that they've ever been on. After lunch we took to the water and canoed around Kielder Water, the largest artificial lake in the United Kingdom by capacity as it holds forty four billion gallons of water and is surrounded by twenty seven miles of shoreline.

In the early evening we drove over to Kielder Observatory for a fascinating presentation by the centre's astronomer who showed us around the facility. Unfortunately due to the adverse weather conditions we couldn't use the magnificent telescopes to peer into the galaxy.

An early start beckoned on Sunday as we were off to walk a section of Hadrian's Wall with some blind and vision impaired children from a local charity. We were joined by BBC presenter and rare breed farmer Adam Henson, whose sister founded the charity in 2005. The group were accompanied by local army, sea and air cadets who helped out with transport and acted as marshals along the route.

After the walk we drove back to our base to grab a shower and went out for a meal and a few well earned pints of snoring juice.

After dropping off the minibus on the Monday morning the group headed to Newcastle rail station to make their way home. It was a great weekend and I really hope that we can do it again next year. Thanks to everyone involved and a special thanks to Neil, our driver.



Picture: Rare breed farmer and Countryfile presenter Adam Henson poses with Cadets during the Northumberland Younger Group weekend.



Picture: The younger group and Cadets pose for a photo during their adventure.

Blind Veterans UK Younger Group has received funding from Newman's Own Foundation through a \$50,000 donation. Newman's Own Foundation is an independent, private foundation formed in 2005 by the late Hollywood actor Paul Newman to sustain the legacy of his philanthropic work. The Foundation's generous donation will also be used to fund our new Young Veterans Empowerment programme for members of working age who will benefit from a programme of social activities and specialised training over 12 months.

The Younger Group team will work with specialists to support young veterans into employment and training through work shadowing and tailored training in specific careers. Other training will include coping with parenthood with sight loss and social media training.

There will also be social events, bringing members together to share their experiences and reduce isolation. Members will decide the activities which might include Battlefield tours, tactile tours of museums and adventure activities. Participants are encouraged to attend without their normal carers and travel independently while we provide accommodation and food and subsidise transport. Existing members of the charity will mentor new younger members and encourage them to engage with the charity, providing reassurance about dealing with their sight loss and the journey ahead.

Action man Alan Lock's cross Channel relay swim. By Catherine Goodier.

In the October 2013 edition of the Review we brought you details of Alan Lock's latest challenge to swim the Channel as part of a relay team. Here we catch up with the action man who joined Blind Veterans UK in 2005. In his 34 years on the planet Alan has covered most of it on foot, boat or skis. He's run through deserts to complete the extreme Marathon de Sables, a six day 156 mile ultramarathon across the Sahara, which only the super fit complete. In 2008 he rowed across the Atlantic with Matt Boreham from La Gomera in the Canaries, to finish in Barbados, where they stepped onto dry land after 85 days at sea and straight into the Guinness World Records hall of fame. Another extreme challenge was in the winter of 2011 to the new year of 2012 when Alan was part of a team of four to take part in the South Pole Challenge. For 39 days they battled against the elements as they ran the constant risk of frost bite and injury. A film of their adventure can be viewed at: [www.youtube.com Polar Vision Channel](http://www.youtube.com/PolarVisionChannel)

Alan is training for his next challenge — to swim the Channel in September 2014. It is the lead in to his solo Channel swim in 2015.

Alan kept still for long enough for me interview him. He said: "I'm due to swim the Channel from Dover in a three person relay team with Richard Smith and John Maxy. It will probably be around the 20th of September, but the exact date has yet to be confirmed. We will swim from Dover to somewhere on the coast of France as the final destination is dependent on the tide. How far each of us swims once again depends on the tide, but we will probably each swim between seven and 10 miles, swimming for two hours then four hours off as we go onto the support boat to get warm and eat. In total it should take around 20 hours.

"Richard was my running partner in last year's London Marathon and was also one of the South Pole expedition members. When we swim the Channel he will be the main person that I rely on, although there will also be a team in the support boat.

"To train I swim anything from 15 to 20 km a week, a combination of swimming in the pool and in London's Serpentine and when Richard and I can in the sea.

We will train in the Channel off Dover in a couple of week's time and in the sea at Brighton before heading off for more training in Jersey where I either swim with someone or follow a kayak. When we're there we train with Wendy Trehiou who has swum the Channel a number of times. We use Jersey as we know people who give us accommodation and there's a lot more swimming you can do as we get used to swimming in colder choppy conditions, and get used to swimming in seaweed.

"Training started a year ago and it's been a gradual process. I could always swim, but I didn't swim crawl that well and had to train up on that and work out the technique and get used to swimming in the sea for the endurance. I was in Spain for a swim camp when I did 11 hours in the sea over three days, split into two hour chunks that also included night swims. The hardest thing for me is that although I'm not totally blind it's still very difficult to swim in a straight line and that's why there will be people on the support boat with whistles to make a noise so that I can follow the sound."

I asked Alan to explain the appeal of his challenges. He responded: "It's the same as the other members of Blind Veterans UK. When I had to leave the Royal Navy I didn't want to end up sitting behind a desk. It's frustrating because of the eyesight but I still wanted that challenge and I can do these for myself and also for Blind Veterans UK and other charities to raise money for them. When I first lost my sight, reading about other blind veterans who went skiing and were still active in sport inspired me. Also at the end of the day I enjoy it!"

"There are a lot of people within Blind Veterans UK who have much worse sight issues than me and it's great to carry that camaraderie and spirit that comes from the military into an organisation that really supports people through work and their day to day life and rehabilitation and sporting activities. It's fantastic. The charity has a very solid remit that it fulfils very well. I want to thank Louise Timms and her team at the Brighton centre, as they help out when I go there and we train in the sea, and their continued support is invaluable."

Alan will swim the Channel to raise funds for Blind Veterans UK, Blind in Business and Sight Savers.

If you would like to sponsor them their Justgiving page is at: www.justgiving.com/Alanschannelswim



Picture: Alan Lock after a training swim in the seas off Jersey.

Trooping the Colour 2014.



Margaret (pictured above) and Brian Eldridge attended this year's Trooping the Colour. "We had a brilliant weekend in London and feel very privileged to have been given the tickets by Blind Veterans UK. We enjoyed Trooping the Colour and talking to our fellow veterans on and off the parade ground. Afterwards we walked up the Mall to watch the fly past outside Buckingham Palace when we saw the Royal family on the balcony. It was all very well organised and great to be part of such a spectacular event," said a beaming Margaret.

Audio described workshops of First World War wounded soldiers at the Whitechapel Gallery.

The Whitechapel Gallery in London's East End will hold audio description workshops for blind and vision impaired people on Wednesday 2nd July, Wednesday 6th August and Wednesday 3rd September from 11.30am to 12.45pm.

The workshop will focus on the current display of Kader Attia's exhibition 'Continuum of Repair: The Light of Jacob's Ladder'. The installation by the French-Algerian artist will be audio described and tactile drawings will be available as there will be a handling element to the workshop.

A series of marble busts of wounded soldiers from the First World War and repaired North African wooden learning boards (ketabs) observe a towering structure of bookshelves filled with centuries of accumulated human knowledge.

This commission is made especially for the Whitechapel Gallery and is inspired by the religious story of Jacob's vision of angels ascending to heaven, as well as by the space itself which is steeped in history as a former library reading room.

Please note that both sessions are identical so you only need to book for one.

The sessions are free and can be booked by calling Visitor Services on 020 7522 7888.

If you do plan to attend please also telephone Catherine Goodier, Review Editor on telephone: 020 7616 8367.

Nearest tube: Aldgate East — Hammersmith and City, District lines.

Buses: 15, 25, 205 and 254 stop near the gallery.

The winners of Blind Veterans UK short story competition. Judged by David Nobbs.

This year's short story competition was judged by the brilliant and prolific comic novelist David Nobbs, whose latest novel *The Second Life of Sally Mottram* is now available in paperback at £8.99. Published by Harper Collins it is available in all bookshops and online. It's recommended reading and we will bring you a review in the August edition.

David's career as a comedy writer began in 1963 when he was a contributor to the iconic live Saturday evening satire show, *That Was The Week That Was*. You will of course all know him for *The Fall and Rise of Reginald Perrin* and perhaps you watched the recent rerun of *A Bit of a Do* on the Drama channel.

Here David writes of his choices for this year's three winning stories.

First prize – 'Peace', by Constance Sweeting.

Second Prize 'Hell For Leather', by Spencer Netherstreet.

Third prize – 'Mammoth Run', by Marion Sharville.

David Nobbs said: "I enjoyed reading the stories, I hated judging them! Anyway. I would like to congratulate all the writers. I found something to enjoy in all the stories.

"I would like to mention the ingenious stories of Joan Beevers and Harry Beevers, the battle scene in 'The Happening' by G.Rowland and the emotion in 'The Visit', which had no author's name.

"I agonised over third place. Connie Apletree's 'A Starry Night', took a very imaginative look at a distant future. 'Mammoth Run' took an imaginative look into a distant past, and shaded it, for me, because of the lovely image of the reflection in the lake and because it had a good last line, whereas I felt 'SA Starry Night' should have ended at the penultimate paragraph, a lovely image, while the last paragraph wasn't needed.

"My second choice, 'Hell For Leather', was one of the few to move forward in time in its fantasy. It didn't get the prize so much because of its story as because of its wonderful conjuring up of London in the 1840s, its telling use of detail, and, again, a great last line.

"My winner, 'Peace', was not the only story to use World War One, and it wasn't the only story to move me, but it moved me a great deal and, for me, it had to win. It is a beautifully controlled piece of writing.

"As I said, I do hate judging, as all creative opinions are subjective."

Below is Peace by Constance Sweeting (nom de plume). Spencer Netherstreet and Marion Sharville's stories will be reproduced in the August and September editions of the Review when we will also bring you an interview with them.

Peace by Constance Sweeting.

As a child I would visit the local war memorial to the men who were killed during the First World War, the memorial that had my great grandfather's name on it, as he was killed at the age of 40.

As a young woman I didn't think about him, or my distant family. I moved out of the area in my late 20s and built a life and what passed for a career in the Cotswolds.

As I grew older I started to think of my great grandfather – Albert George. A young soldier in the only photograph my grandfather had. I only knew about the family from my mother. My grandfather died when I was 10 and I remember him as a quiet man but as a young girl I was far too scared to speak to him. I don't know why as looking back he was a kind man, not the imposing person I imagined. I remember when two local boys were giving me a Chinese burn in the front garden my grandfather came over and asked why they were picking on me as they were much older and I was a girl. He told them to go away and they did. He would sit in the garden on the stump of a tree that had been cut down, cross his legs and smoke a cigarette. Finding peace. In the summer he'd wear a panama hat and his shirt sleeves would be rolled up. He'd been a scaffolder his entire life and now it strikes me as a strange profession for him as I can see that he was a kind gentle man who was more of an artist than a labourer.

I know this is about my great grandfather, but I can't speak about one without mentioning my grandfather, also Albert George.

My mother once told me that my grandfather's overwhelming memory of his

mother was of sitting at the piano as she played. He said she was a Lady. All of a sudden I wanted to see the house he grew up in, which was just 15 minutes from the where I'd grown up. I knew it was a small terraced workers cottage that today sells to city types.

I drove from the Cotswolds, parked at the top of the road and walked to the cottage. There was a For Sale sign on the stone wall and on impulse I called the Estate Agent and set up a viewing for 10 minutes time. I stood outside until he arrived, a good looking guy in a flash motor.

As I stepped through the doorway the air changed. It had been cold and wet outside, but inside it was sunny and the dust was floating on the rays from the sun in the hallway in front of me. There was a smell of baking. Two small boys aged about 10 and eight ran down the stairs and right past me.

Just as I was about to turn to leave, a beautiful petite woman in a long skirt and blouse walked past me laughing as she mock scolded the boys and told them not to run as they might knock their father over as he came through the door. I turned, and there standing in the doorway, was my great grandfather. He was a young man. The woman ran to him and they embraced. Time froze as their bodies touched and I could see that he was breathing in her scent, the smell of her skin, her auburn hair and her freshly laundered clothes. This was a man who had been in France at the Front. A man who hadn't slept in a clean bed for months, perhaps years, who had lived with the stench of death and fear.

Here was my great grandfather, Albert George, home, and safe, in the embrace of his beautiful wife Kate.

Their embrace was broken as two young bundles of mischief launched themselves at their father. My grandfather Albert and his brother Les, two carefree young boys. Men I'd only ever seen as old and worn down by life, now happy, carefree and laughing. I'd never heard my grandfather laugh.

I followed them into a small living room where there was a piano, a dining table and chairs and two comfortable chairs. Kate led Albert to one of the chairs and he sat down, but not as I have ever seen anyone sit down. He melted into the chair. The bones in his body seemed to dissolve as he fed himself into the comfort of the chair and the clean stillness of the room.

I'd stepped back 100 years to witness a family that would be gone within a year. My great Grandfather was killed in 1915 and less than a year later Kate was dead. My grandfather and Les went to live with a relative and their lives changed forever. My heart was breaking as I watched this happy family in front of me. And they were happy. They touched – I didn't think people did then. Albert couldn't take his eyes off Kate and the boys. He hugged them, again in an age when I didn't think people hugged. He held them close as though he was trying to suck their very essence into him. To carry it back with him to France where he could think of them and remember the peace, something to remove his mind from the reality of mud, and filth, the constant fear and the smell and sound of death all around.

Kate bought him a cup of tea and a small plate of food, her hand rested gently on his, before she sat at the piano. Les, the younger brother, climbed onto his father's knee and sat there as my grandfather sat on the floor by the piano and looked at his mother. She played a classical piece that I recognised. Then she played two songs that the boys sang along to. I looked at Albert and tears were running down his face. Kate was looking at my grandfather and Les was sitting on his father's knee looking ahead and singing to the skies as Albert sat quite still as his tears fell silently.

My heart broke. It hurt as it never had. Here was a beautiful family but this was the last time they would ever see one another as Albert was killed in France.

The song was coming to an end and Albert wiped the tears away as Kate turned around.

"I can't believe you're here at last. The boys and I have so much planned for the four of us. Tonight we'll have a lovely dinner and then tomorrow we'll walk to Crystal Palace to see the dinosaurs. There's a concert in the Parish Hall that we could go to. Otherwise we can have our own concert here, just the four of us."

My grandfather said: "Les and I have learnt two new songs for you. We've been practising for weeks now."

"I'd prefer if we have our very own concert. Just us four. Just like we always do."
Said my great grandfather.

Kate walked over and took Albert's hand. I watched them look at one another and I understood that time does stand still. I prayed to God to let me do something. Please God don't take this man's life. Please spare him to grow old with Kate and watch his sons grow up. I walked towards Kate to touch her. As I placed my hand on her arm everything disappeared and I was once again stepping through the doorway.

I walked into the living room and saw a Bang & Olufson hi-fi and large flat screen TV on the wall above the place where the piano had once stood. Where were they? Where were my beautiful family?

Darren, the good looking estate agent, was beside me. I couldn't hear what he said. I turned to him "You look as though you've seen a ghost." "No ghosts. Is the kitchen through here? The garden's south facing isn't it?" I asked questions in a hurry to mask my heartbreak. "Is it ok if I take a look upstairs?"

Ten minutes later I'd left the house and Darren had driven off. I sat in my car desperate to cry, big sobs that come from somewhere deep in your stomach and rock you to your very core, sobs of the heartbroken. I'd have to wait. I drove to a florist and bought some freesias. I'd seen freesias in the living room and Kate had bent to smell them. They've always been my favourite flower. I went to the Memorial and put them in front of my great grandfather's name. I said a prayer - rest in peace Albert, Kate, Albert and Les. I love you all and may you all be together now. Laughing and singing, together again.

Once again we would like to thank David Nobbs for judging this year's short story competition. We are grateful to this prolific genius who has kept us entertained for many years as he spends his time writing about people who never existed and create things for them to do that never happened, and that he has the joy of their company all day!

In the August edition of the review we will bring you 'Hell For Leather', by Spencer Netherstreet. We will also bring you a Review of David's latest book *The Second Life of Sally Mottram*, which is available in paperback at £8.99. Published by Harper Collins it is available in all book shops and online. It is recommended reading.

Harry Beevers's 10 Questions on the subject of Musicals.

1. In which Stephen Sondheim musical does Mrs Lovett make meat pies?
2. Who was the male singing star in the films Calamity Jane and Seven Brides for Seven Brothers?
3. The musical Mamma Mia set on a Greek island features songs by which group?
4. Which of Andrew Lloyd Webber's musicals is set on a rubbish dump?
5. What was the name of Rodgers and Hammerstein's last musical, which was made into a highly successful film in 1965?
6. Which actor first played the part of the Phantom in the London production of the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical 'The Phantom of the Opera'?
7. In the musical The Music Man, how many cornets followed the 76 trombones?
8. Who took the female lead in the musical film My Fair Lady?
9. In which Rogers and Hammerstein musical is there a character who Can't Say No?
10. In which film and stage musical does Salvation Army officer Sarah Brown appear?

Answers on page 46.

Family News.

Congratulations to

Birthdays:

Dorothy Aldridge who celebrated her 102nd birthday on 7th June.

Billy Butters who celebrated his 100th birthday on 27th June.

Robert and Violet Wood who are collectively aged 200. Violet celebrated her 103rd birthday on 29th June and Robert his 97th on 10th July.

Births:

Alfred and Joan Waterman on the birth of a new great grand-daughter Iris Tupia Waterman who was born to their grandson Tom and his partner Sarah on 30th November 2013.

Ron and Irene Skidmore are pictured below with their great grandson Michael Jones who was born on 27th February 2014.



Anniversaries:

Blue Sapphire (65th):

George & Maureen Miller of Horsham, West Sussex on 4th June.
Keith & Brenda Arblaster of Stroud, Gloucestershire on 4th June.
Bill & Joan Gibbs of Thetford, Norfolk on 4th June.
Doug & Peg Day of Highbridge, Somerset on 6th June.
Andrew & Grace Ramsay of Penicuik, Midlothian on 7th June.
Arthur & Joan Head of Orpington, Kent on 11th June.
Douglas & Daisy Perkin of Crawley, West Sussex on 11th June.
Nigel & June Hills of Halesworth, Suffolk on 11th June.
Albert & Nancy Page of Coventry, West Midlands on 18th June.

Diamond (60th):

George & Jean Marsh of Southport, Merseyside on 5th June.
Dennis & Christine Ramsden of Faversham, Kent on 5th June.
Albert & Pat Adey of Chester Le Street, County Durham on 12th June.
Andrew & Edith Finnigan of Rhyl, Clwyd on 12th June.
John & Rita Davies of Fleetwood, Lancashire on 19th June.
Colin & Pearl Mills of Rotherham, South Yorkshire on 26th June.
John & Morrydd Doyle of Dyserth, Denbighshire on 26th June.
Monty & Sheila Chappell of Windsor, Berkshire on 26th June.
Colin & Betty Freeman of Rotherham, South Yorkshire on 26th June.
Alfred & Betty Fillingham of St Ives, Cambridgeshire on 26th June.
Edward & Pamela Phipps of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire on 26th June.

Golden Anniversary (50th):

Joe & Doreen Robins of Goole, East Yorkshire on 3rd June.

Ruby (40th):

Kenneth & Mary Storey of Stanley, County Durham on 22nd June.
Jack & Sheila Bainbridge of Shildon, County Durham on 24th June.

Pearl (30th):

Ray & Joyce Ransome of Middlesbrough, Cleveland on 12th June.

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.

Audrey 'Patricia' Ashworth who died on 31st May 2014. She was the wife of Edwin Ashworth.

Mrs Jeanne Chapman who died on 1st June 2014. She was the wife of Bryan Chapman.

Josephine 'Jo' George who died on 5th June 2014. She was the wife of Alan George.

Dorothy Hall who died on 9 May 2014. She was the wife of John Hall.

Ivy Hind who died on 1st April 2014. She was the wife of George Hind.

Rose Quigley who died on 25th May 2014. She was the widow of the late Bernard Quigley.

June Ryder who died on 18th May 2014. She was the widow of the late Edward Ryder.

June Stallard who died on 9th June 2014. She was the wife of Frederick Stallard.

Gwendoline 'Betty' Taylor who died on 7th June 2014. She was the widow of the late Joseph Taylor.

Michael Withers Green who died on 4th May 2014. He was the husband of Sheila Withers Green.

Welcome to Blind Veterans UK.

Wallace Adams of Bedford, Bedfordshire served in the Royal Navy from 1941 to 1946.

Randolph Alves of Jarrow, Tyne and Wear served in the Merchant Navy from 1962 to 1991.

Thomas Anderson of Jarrow, Tyne and Wear served in the Royal Air Force from 1950 to 1952.

Victor Ashlee of Sidcup, Kent served in the Royal Air Force from 1953 to 1955.

Reginald Bartley of Bexleyheath, Kent served in the Royal Air Force from 1946 to 1949.

Quinton Beattie of Ashbourne, Derbyshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1943 to 1947.

Donald Bevan of Taunton, Somerset served in the Royal Air Force from 1949 to 1950.

Helen Brennan of Seaham, County Durham served in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1945.

Albert Burt of Bridgwater, Somerset served in the General Service Corps, the Somerset Light Infantry and the Royal Army Service Corps from 1944 to 1947.

Marcel Cardon of Tonbridge, Kent served in the Royal West Kent Regiment from 1947 to 1949.

Bernard Chapman of Brynna, Pontyclun served in the Royal Engineers from 1950 to 1955.

Thomas Cheetham of Liverpool served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1951.

Jeffrey Clarke of Leamington Spa, Warwickshire served in the Army Catering Corps from 1959 to 1964.

Donald Cooper of Horsham, West Sussex served in the Royal Army Service Corps and the Intelligence Corps from 1953 to 1959.

Sidney Dansie of Sutton, Surrey served in the Royal Air Force from 1949 to 1950.

Dennis Dawson of Epsom, Surrey served in the Royal Signals from 1948 to 1950.

John Derbyshire of Wallasey, Merseyside served in the Royal Navy from 1957 to 1959.

Clarice 'Clare' Dickison of Wokingham, Berkshire served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1940 to 1944.

Norman Disley of Taunton, Somerset served in the Army Catering Corps from 1952 to 1983.

Joyce Felstead-Beasley of Launceston, Cornwall served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service in 1941.

Alan Fidler of Wirral, Merseyside served in the Royal Air Force from 1948 to 1950.

Godfrey Finigan of Liverpool served in the Merchant Navy from 1944 to 1950.

Harold 'Harry' Foster of Blackpool, Lancashire served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1947.

Jean Freegard of Romsey, Hampshire served in the Women's Royal Army Corps from 1951 to 1953.

Harry Gascoyne of Chesterfield, Derbyshire served in the Sherwood Foresters from 1963 to 1970.

John Grant of Lincoln, Lincolnshire served in the Royal Armoured Corps from 1953 to 1957.

James Greenall of Leeds served in the Royal Armoured Corps from 1949 to 1964.

Jeffrey Gronow of Carmarthen, Dyfed served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1959 to 1965.

James Heath of Lancaster served in the Royal Navy from 1944 to 1947.

John Hindle of Preston, Lancashire served in the Royal Navy from 1938 to 1945.

Gerrard Hodkinson of Carlisle served in the Royal Artillery from 1951 to 1955.

Laurie Honey of Hampton, Middlesex served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Army Service Corps from 1942 to 1947.

Graham Hutton of Darlington, County Durham served in the Royal Artillery, the Border Regiment and the King's Own Royal Regiment.

Leonard Judd of Haverhill, Suffolk served in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1946.

Thomas Kerr of Lisburn, County Antrim served in the Royal Air Force from 1948 to 1953.

Alan Knapman of Newcastle, Staffordshire served in the Royal Signals from 1957 to 1963.

Kenneth Lamb of Birkenhead, Merseyside served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Engineers from 1947 to 1949.

Andrew Lancaster of Sunderland served in the Royal Corps of Transport from 1963 to 1965.

Alan Lance of Uxbridge, Middlesex served in the Army Catering Corps from 1953 to 1959.

Sidney Malin of North West London served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Engineers from 1945 to 1948.

Christopher Manners of Longhope, Gloucestershire served in the Royal Signals from 1954 to 1964.

Arthur McKinley of Birkenhead, Merseyside served in the Royal Artillery from 1958 to 1963.

Helen McLeod of Craigie, Perth served in the Women's Royal Army Corps (TA) from 1964 to 1966.

William McMahon of Glasgow served in the Royal Air Force from 1945 to 1948.

Francis 'Hugh' Milton of Crewkerne, Somerset served in the Royal Fusiliers, the Royal Scots Regiment and the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1958.

Mark Moore of Morden, Surrey served in the Royal Signals from 1989 to 1993.

Patrick Morris of Bedworth, Warwickshire served in the Royal Navy from 1947 to 1952.

Dennis O'Connor of Widnes, Cheshire served in the Army Catering Corps and the Royal Artillery from 1955 to 1958.

Gerard Orme of Wigan, Lancashire served in the Royal Air Force from 1957 to 1959.

William Penfold of Linton, Cambridge served in the Royal Hampshire Regiment and the Royal Wiltshire Yeomanry from 1954 to 1959.

Karl Poole of Blackpool, Lancashire served in the Royal Air Force from 1989 to 1998.

Peter Porley of Middlesbrough, Cleveland served in the Royal Engineers from 1948 to 1953.

Lawrence Portet of Gosport, Hampshire served in the Merchant Navy from 1942 to 1972.

John Ricketts of Bexleyheath, Kent served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1952 to 1957.

Gerald Robinson of Lincoln Served in the Royal Navy from 1944 to 1946.

Victor Rossiter of Exeter, Devon served in the Devonshire Regiment, the Royal Army Ordnance Corps and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1939 to 1946.

Cyril Salisbury of Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk served in the Royal Air Force from 1939 to 1945.

Victor Searle of Liverpool served in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1947.

Neville Smith of Shrewsbury served in the Royal Air Force from 1960 to 1963.

William 'Bill' Smith of Bexhill on Sea, East Sussex served in the Royal Artillery and the Army Catering Corps from 1942 to 1947.

Paul Sykes of Saltford, Bristol served in the Royal Air Force from 1950 to 1958.

Carolyn Smith of Buckingham served in the Women's Royal Army Corps from 1964 to 1968.

Humphrey 'Harry' Tapner of Taunton, Somerset served in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1947.

Stephen Tapster of Marton In Cleveland, Middlesbrough served in the Middlesex Regiment and the Royal Artillery from 1939 to 1946.

Leslie 'Cyril' Tasker of Lewes, East Sussex served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1942 to 1947.

George Teague of Walsall served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Army Service Corps from 1943 to 1948.

Peter Terry of Cirencester, Gloucestershire served in the Royal Air Force from 1960 to 1969.

John Thorne of Woking, Surrey served in the Royal Navy from 1950 to 1959.

Harold Unthank of Saltburn By The Sea, Cleveland served in the Royal Armoured Corps from 1944 to 1947.

Francis Unwin of Orpington, Kent served in the Royal Artillery from 1939 to 1959.

Cyril Warner of Birmingham served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Artillery from 1947 to 1949.

Dorothy Windon of Rainham, Essex served in the Royal Air Force from 1943 to 1947.

Elizabeth Young of Lochgelly, Fife served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1942 to 1946.

Brian York of Rushden, Northamptonshire served in the Royal Armoured Corps from 1952 to 1955.

Answers to Harry Beevers's 10 Questions on the subject of Musicals from page 38.

1. Sweeney Todd.
2. Howard Keel.
3. Abba.
4. Cats.
5. The Sound of Music.
6. Michael Crawford.
7. 110.
8. Audrey Hepburn.
9. Oklahoma.
10. Guys and Dolls.

In Memory.

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

Robert Barnett of Chelmsford, Essex died on 14th May 2014, aged 97. He served with the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1940 to 1946. He was sent to Tel el Kebir in Egypt and was later transferred to Palestine for six months before returning to Egypt where he took part in the Sicily Invasion. From Italy he was sent back to the UK in time for the D-Day invasion. He moved through France, Belgium and Holland and was released to the reserves in 1946.

Ewart 'Roy' Barratt of Bampton, Oxfordshire died on 7th June 2014, aged 89. He joined the Royal Navy in 1943. He subsequently served at HMS Shrapnel in Southampton and afloat in the destroyer HMS Ariel. He was later at the Naval Air Station HMS Vulture in Cornwall before being discharged in 1947 as a Petty Officer.

Neil Buchanan of Beverley, North Humberside died on 2nd June 2014, aged 90. He joined the Royal Navy in 1942 and after training joined the Battleship HMS Howe and served in the Red Sea, Arctic and Pacific oceans and the Mediterranean before discharge as an Acting Leading Stoker in 1946.

Charles Channings of Dudley, West Midlands died on 28th March 2014, aged 84. He joined the Royal Signals for National Service in 1947 and served in Germany. He was discharged as a Lance Corporal in 1949.

Ruby Corner of Middlesbrough, Cleveland died on 9th June 2014, aged 94. She joined the Women's Royal Air Force in 1941 and undertook training in Bridgnorth, Shropshire when she qualified as an Accounts Officer. She was posted to Padgate, Warrington where she was commissioned as a Flight Officer. She later served with the 2nd Tactical Air Force. She was discharged in 1946.

Herbert 'Bert' Cross of East London died on 31st January 2014, aged 86. He joined the General Service Corps in 1945 and later transferred to the Black Watch Royal Highland Regiment. He was discharged in 1950.

Patrick 'Paddy' Crummey of Kirby, Liverpool died on 2nd June 2014, aged 84. He was called up for National Service in 1951. He trained at Catterick and spent his service as a cook in the Catering Corps, based in the south of England. He was released to reserve in 1953.

Cynthia Devereux of Chippenham, Wiltshire died on 19th May 2014, aged 89. She joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service in 1942 serving in a variety of UK locations and was for a while the pin-up of the 8th US Air Force before her discharge in 1946.

Leslie Fackrell of Bristol died on 19th May 2014, aged 85. He joined the General Service Corps in 1947 for National Service, transferring to the Royal Armoured Corps, serving in the UK and Singapore prior to discharge in 1949.

Ellen 'Helen' Francis of Bakewell, Derbyshire died on 4th May 2014, aged 91. She joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service in 1942 and trained in Peterborough. She served in the UK mainly at RAF Stradishall employed in the Royal Signals and supporting the Royal Artillery. She served at other RAF bases before discharge in 1945.

Thomas Geary of Neath, West Glamorgan died on 19th May 2014, aged 92. He joined in the Royal Air Force in 1937 and after training at RAF Halton he became an Aircrew Flight Engineer on Halifax, Lancasters and later Liberator aircraft. He served in the UK and India and after the war remained in the RAF serving in Singapore, Malaya and Hong Kong. He was discharged in 1952 as a Sergeant.

Marjorie Godwin of Bath, Somerset died on 1st June 2014, aged 93. She joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force and trained as a driver, first based at Cardington on balloons before going to Birmingham. She later trained as a mechanic and worked on aircraft engines such as Ansons and Martinets in South Wales at Porthcawl. She then moved to Stranraer and subsequently to the Isle of Man. She was demobilised in 1946 as a Leading Aircraftwoman.

Herbert 'Bert' Goodwin of Monmouth, Gwent died on 6th June 2014, aged 86. He joined the Royal Navy in 1944 as a Signaller and served in the UK, Mediterranean and Persian Gulf before discharge in 1948.

John Hamer of Hereford died on 16th May 2014, aged 82. He joined the Royal Engineers for National Service in 1950 and served in Germany, Cyprus and the Channel Islands before being discharged as a Lance Corporal in 1952. Remaining on part-time National Service until 1955 he later served with the Royal Army Service Corps (TA) from 1956 to 1980, discharging as a Lance Corporal.

Royston Hester of Redhill, Surrey died on 22nd April 2014, aged 84. He served in the Royal Air Force from 1948 to 1949 leaving as an Aircraftman Second Class.

Donald 'Don' Holt of York died on 5th June 2014, aged 90. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1941 and qualified as a Wireless Operator. He went to Normandy on D + 6. He was attached to the 2nd Tactical Air Wing and moved through Holland and Belgium to Denmark. In 1945 he went to Germany before being discharged as a Leading Aircraftman in 1946.

Mohan Kataria of South West London died on 9th June 2014, aged 97. He qualified in medicine in India and joined the Indian Army Medical Corps in 1940. He served at the 29th Combined Military Hospital in Iraq and was later in Italy, based at a hospital in Ancona. He was discharged as a Captain in 1945.

John Lappin of Wakefield, West Yorkshire died on 19th May 2014, aged 86. He served in the Royal Engineers in the UK and Europe from 1947 to 1950, leaving as a Corporal.

Peter McMahon of Glasgow died on 1st April 2014, aged 86. He joined the General Service Corps in 1945 and trained at Elgin. He was medically discharged as a Private later that year when his hearing was damaged.

Trevor MacPherson of Birmingham, West Midlands died on 19th March 2014, aged 89. He joined the Royal Signals in 1945 where he trained at Pollington, Yorks. After Signal training at Catterick he was posted to Bielefeld, Germany and later to Kiel, Brunswick and Hereford. He was discharged in 1948 as a Lance Corporal.

Donald 'Don' Morton of Abingdon, Oxfordshire died on 3rd June 2014, aged 79. He served in the Royal Air Force from 1953 to 1955. He completed specialist training at Yatesbury on Air Radar equipment. He was discharged as a Senior Aircraftman.

David Powell of Saltdean, East Sussex died on 30th May 2014, aged 51. He served in the Parachute Regiment from 1978 to 1990 leaving as a Corporal.

Frances Raine of Darlington, County Durham died on 3rd May 2014 at the age of 105. She was commissioned in the Queen Alexandra's Army Nursing service in 1944 and served in a Field Hospital in the Middle East and the Suez Canal Zone, also in Tel-El-Kidir and Jersusalem. She was discharged in 1947 as a Lieutenant.

Lawrence 'Ken' Richards of Haywards Heath, West Sussex died on 7th June 2014, aged 82. He served in the Royal Air Force from 1950 to 1963 leaving as an Aircraftman Second Class. He carried out his training at Cardington in Bedfordshire, followed by Pershore in Worcestershire where he completed his police training. He served in the UK, Egypt and Australia at the Nuclear Testing Ground.

Derek Richardson of Hartlepool, Cleveland died on 1st June 2014, aged 84. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1947 and trained at Bridgnorth, followed by postings to St Athan, South Wales and then Grantham, Lincolnshire. He achieved the rank of Aircraftman handling ammunition and aircraft. He was discharged in 1949.

Ronald Seagrove of Iver, Buckinghamshire died on 5th June 2014, aged 85. He joined the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers for National Service in 1947, serving in Otley until discharge as a Private in 1949.

Hildegarde 'Sandy' Spring of High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire died on 20th May 2014, aged 97. She served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1945 leaving as a Leading Aircraftwoman.

Raymond Watts of Lancaster, Lancashire died on 20th May 2014, aged 88. He began his service in the General Service Corps in April 1944 and was posted to the West Yorkshire Regiment in May 1944, he was deployed to Europe in September that year. He joined the Highland Light Infantry in 1945 when he was wounded just outside Bastogne and was later deployed to Palestine. He was discharged as a Corporal in 1948.

Edward Williams of Welshpool, Powys died on 20th December 2013, aged 91. He joined the Royal Welch Fusiliers (7th Battalion TA) in 1938 and at the outbreak of the war transferred to the 1st/6th Essex on Search light duty. He then joined the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment in 1943 followed by the York and Lancashire Regiment in 1944 before landing at Sword Beach on D-Day with the 2nd Battalion East Yorkshire Regiment Assault Brigade and moving through France to Belgium, Holland and Germany. He was deployed briefly in Norway and Iceland. He then went to Egypt, Palestine and Ishmalia. He was discharged as a Warrant Officer in 1946.

Eric Woodcock of Mansfield, Nottinghamshire died on 2nd June 2014, aged 92. He served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946. He trained as a fitter at Halton followed by a posting to Palestine and later on a temporary basis to Egypt. He left as a Technical Sergeant.

Patrick Wraight of New Milton, Hampshire died on 3rd June 2014, aged 88. He was Commissioned in the Royal Artillery in 1944 serving in the UK, India and Palestine. He was discharged as a Captain in 1945.

Kenneth Young of Towcester, Northamptonshire died on 17th May 2014, aged 85. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1947, training at RAF Padgate as a General Duties Clerk. Deployed to the Suez Canal Zone he returned to Weeton for demobilisation in 1949.

Blind Veterans UK Legacy Gifts.

We are grateful to Blind Veterans UK members Dr Stanley Ludkin OBE and Mr Edward Woodall who left a bequest to Blind Veterans UK in their Wills:

Dr Stanley Ludkin OBE previously of Sherburn, County Durham passed away in April 2014

Mr Edward Woodall previously of Southport, Merseyside passed away in January 2014

Picture: Blind Veterans UK Chairman Tim Davis with Glen Minney, Director of Government Relations, Blinded Veterans Association of America. Glen, who served in the Navy for 21 years, presented Tim with a ship's bell at the Project Gemini presentation.

