

August 2014

# Review

Blind Veterans UK | St Dunstan's since 1915





**On the cover:** Steve 'Sparky' Sparkes, Ned Borwell, Darren Blanks, Graham 'Kiffy' Kiff, Anthony 'Coops' Cooper, Russell Deamer, Maria Pikulski and Richard Hughes prepare to take part in the 100K London to Brighton walk. Photo by Luke Holroyd.

# Review



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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.

I'm pleased to say we've been able to identify and appoint an outstanding individual to take the helm of the charity as the new Chief Executive. You can read more about him in this edition. Leading an organisation is always challenging, and finding someone who can do it well can also be very difficult. It's necessary to find someone who combines a depth and breadth of expertise across several disciplines as well as someone who has the vision, character, track record of delivery and people skills to execute well.

We had a large number of applicants, from commercial, military, government and healthcare organisations. We also ended up with a very strong short list and I'm pleased to be able to report that we could appoint our first choice. I greatly look forward to welcoming Nick Caplin when he joins us later in the year, and feel confident that we have a very good leader to take the charity forward over the coming years.

On a different subject, having "re-grown" two new heels after the 100K walk from London to Brighton, it seems this year we've had more participants and importantly raised a very great deal of money for the charity. My congratulations to those of you who participated, your supporters and particularly to all those involved in its organisation. It's a genuinely challenging event, but a great way to bring people together, achieve something significant and generate so much financial support for a truly great cause.

As schools finish and many of us take some time for relaxation; I hope you will all find the opportunity to "ease springs" and enjoy time with family and friends. It's even more important these days, as we all seem to pack so much more into our lives and taking quality time to spend with those we love most is truly a great reward.

In my July letter I mentioned that we had recruited 708 new members over the last year, which is a record intake. However we estimate there are still 68,000 vision impaired veterans in the UK who are eligible to join us. To help reach out to those veterans I am asking each of you to continue to help spread awareness of our charity by displaying the enclosed poster in a very noticeable place in your community. It could be in your GP surgery, village hall, community centre or perhaps at one of your clubs. Your doing this for our charity is invaluable.

My very best wishes to you all, and I look forward to meeting many of you again during the Autumn months.



## Blind Veterans UK Calendar

### Activities from the Brighton centre in August.

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

### September.

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

### October.

Amateur Radio Week 3rd to 11th. Music Week 12th to 18th.  
The Golf Club 18th to 19th. Bowling Club 19th Oct to 1st Nov.  
Writers' Forum 20th. Great South Run 26th.

### November.

Cenotaph 8th to 9th. Writers' Forum 15th. Dance Week 23rd to 29th.

### December.

Turkey and Tinsel Week 14th to 20th.

### Activities from the Llandudno centre in August.

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

### September.

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

### October.

Walking/Photography Week 12th to 18th. Computer Club 22nd to 24th.

### November.

Military Week 2nd to 10th. Christmas Crafts 23rd to 6th December.

### December.

Christmas Crafts 14th to 31st.

### Activities from the Sheffield centre in August.

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

### September.

Culture Week 8th to 12th.

### October.

The Big Draw 6th to 10th.

### December.

Christmas Theme Week 15th to 19th.

# Noticeboard.

Dates for your diary and useful information.

## Blind Veterans UK events in 2014/15.

If you want to take part in an event this year we have a range for you to challenge yourself in 2014 and 2015, while raising money to help us in our work.

### Red Devils Skydive — 3rd September.

### Cardiff Half Marathon — 5th October.

Take part in one of the UK's biggest road races in the glorious capital city of Wales. We have 10 gold bond places available. The registration fee and sponsorship have yet to be confirmed.

### Royal Parks Half Marathon — 12th October.

You will run the 13.1 miles through four of London's Royal Parks — Hyde Park, Kensington Gardens, St James' Park and Green Park — in their autumnal splendor. The registration fee is £30 and you need to raise a minimum of £300 in sponsorship.

### Brighton Half Marathon — 22nd February 2015.

### Brighton Marathon — 5th April 2015.

If you have your own place in this event or know anyone who has a place, please join the Blind Veterans UK team!

### 100K London to Brighton Walk — date to be confirmed.

Dates have yet to be finalised for next year's London to Brighton 100K walk when for the fifth year walkers will set off from London on this challenging walk that takes them through Surrey and Sussex to finish at our Brighton centre.

If you have any questions about any of the events or you would like to find out how to apply for a place, please email: [fundraising@blindveterans.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@blindveterans.org.uk) or telephone Aaron Tillyer, Community & Events Assistant at Blind Veterans UK on 020 7616 7927.



## Become 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 to help us celebrate our glorious centenary?

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, St Dunstan's since 1915. 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.

If you think your story could be one of those oral histories then we would love to record you speaking about it. 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](mailto:Kathryn.Jones-Romain@blindveterans.org.uk)

Or Hattie Lockhart-Smith on email: [hattielockhartsmith@hotmail.com](mailto: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.



# Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB appointed as new Chief Executive.

Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB has been appointed as Chief Executive of Blind Veterans UK. Nick will begin work on 13th October 2014.

A highly distinguished Officer who spent more than 30 years on active service, Nick Caplin began his career as a helicopter pilot for the Army Air Corps. He went on to hold a number of high profile senior postings, including General Officer Commanding United Kingdom Support Command (Germany), Deputy Commander and Chief of Staff of the Joint Helicopter Command and Kosovo Protection Corps Co-Ordinator. In October 2012, Nick became Chief Army Instructor at the Royal College of Defence Studies. He has extensive experience of leading and managing service delivery organisations and operations.

Nick's appointment follows the death of Robert Leader in April 2014. Robert was Chief Executive of the charity for 13 years.

Blind Veterans UK's Chairman, Tim Davis, said: "We are thrilled that Nick Caplin will be Blind Veterans UK's new Chief Executive. Nick has the necessary skills and experience to ensure that we can continue to grow the reach, impact and effectiveness of our vital work and support more veterans who need our life changing help."

Nick Caplin said: "I am proud and honoured to have been appointed as Blind Veterans UK's Chief Executive. Since 1915, the charity has provided outstanding services and lifelong support to vision-impaired ex Service men and women.

"As the charity approaches its centenary celebrations, I am looking forward to leading Blind Veterans UK into its second century of service and building on the excellent work of my predecessor, Robert Leader. In particular, I am excited by the prospect of extending the accessibility and reach of Blind Veterans UK's life-transforming services, to ensure that no one who has served our country has to battle blindness alone."

Nick Caplin is married to Isobel and has two grown-up children, Alastair and Camilla. His interests include classical music (he describes himself as a rusty pianist and organist), sailing (Yachtmaster qualified) and enjoying the outdoors. He was awarded the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service in 2001 and appointed Companion to the Most Honourable Order of the Bath in 2012.



**Picture:** Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB who will become Chief Executive of Blind Veterans UK from 13th October 2014.



## Success in the 100K London to Brighton walk.

Now in its fourth year the 100K London to Brighton walk was once again a spectacular event that challenged the 317 walkers who took part as they yomped across the start line at Putney to finish at the Brighton centre in 24 hours, or as close to. The route took them through the streets of London into the fields of Surrey and Sussex, as they trekked through the blistering heat of the day and successfully navigated their way through fields and across ditches in the pitch black night. Taking time to pause only at rest points for food and refreshments and to massage aching limbs and treat sore feet, their efforts raised over £122,000 for Blind Veterans UK, with more money coming in as we go to press.

The first to cross the finish line were team 30 Sig Regt in just 10 hours and 56 minutes. The first solo walkers were Benjamin Mann in 16 hours, 50 minutes and 38 seconds, Prabeen Gurung in 16 hours, 50 minutes and 42 seconds and Kyle Stanwick in 16 hours, 50 minutes and 43 seconds. We would like to make a very public thank you to all the walkers who took part, and that of course extends to those who took part but were unable to complete the entire 100K walk, as you put your best foot forward in this tough challenge.

Asked how he felt two weeks after the 100K walk, Darren Blanks, a 27 year old blind veteran from Cumbria who finished the walk in 25 hours and 37 minutes with his school friend Ned Borwell, said: "I want to thank Ned for doing the walk with me and for the many months we spent training for it. It was tough and there were low points, but overall I really enjoyed it and I'll definitely take it on again. I was back in the gym six days later and my feet are slowly getting back to normal, but it was all worth it as it's great to have done this for Blind Veterans UK!"

Blind veteran Maria Pikulski completed the walk with Richard Hughes in 24 hours and 33 minutes. Maria, who swore that she would never do it again, is now considering signing up to next year's 100K walk!

If you would like to join them next year in the 2015 100K walk go to: [www.blindveterans.org.uk/100K](http://www.blindveterans.org.uk/100K) or contact Aaron Tillyer, Community & Events Assistant, Blind Veterans UK on telephone: 020 7616 7927 or email: [fundraising@blindveterans.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@blindveterans.org.uk)

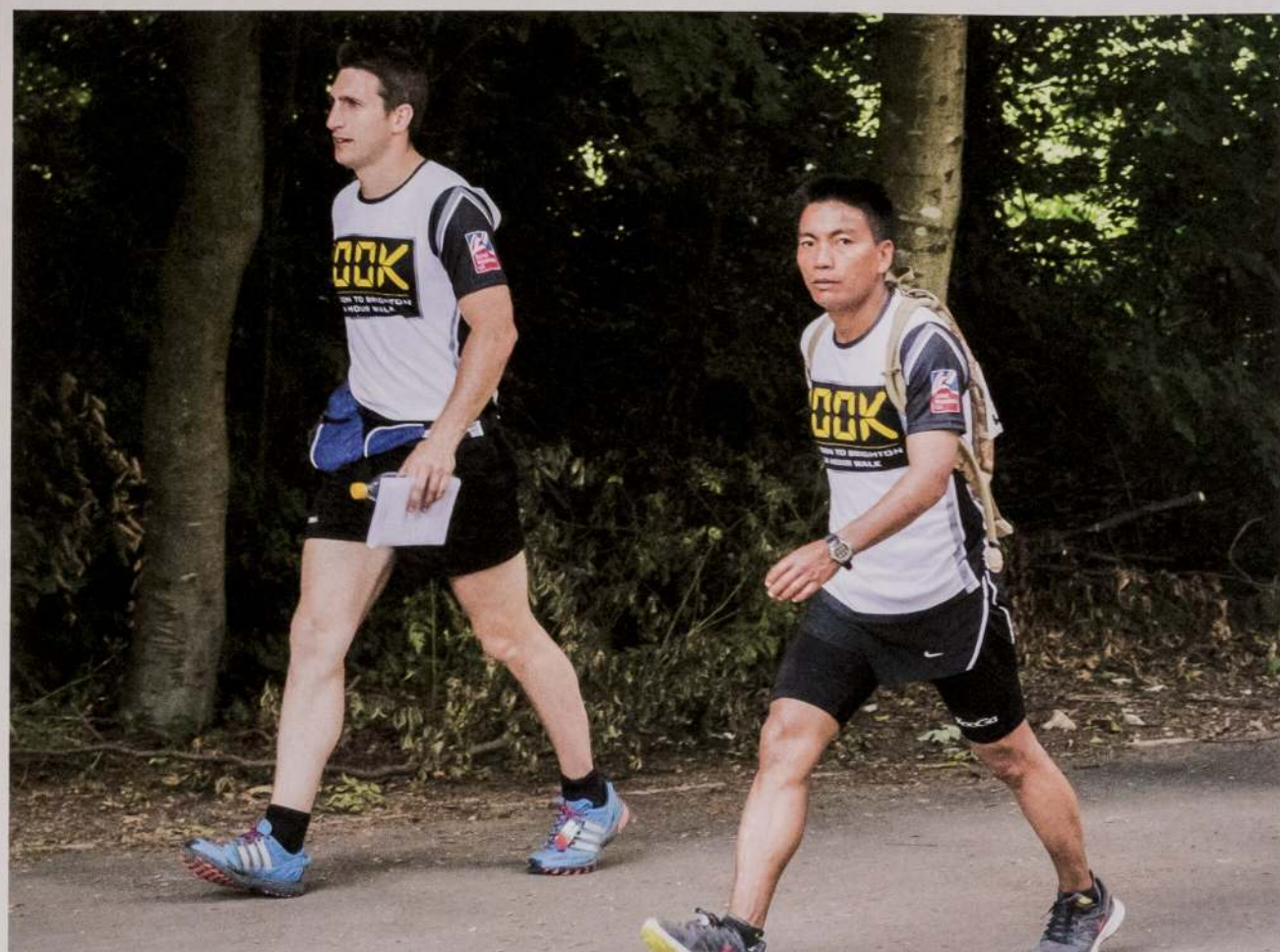


**Picture:** Maria Pikulski and Richard Hughes were captured en-route in this great photograph by blind veteran and keen photographer Mark Pile.



**Picture:** Paul Jacobs GM with his brother Joe who completed the 100K in 25 hours and 37 minutes.





**Picture:** Benjamin Mann and Prabeen Gurung.



**Picture:** Ally Benbow and Miriam Firestone lead the Mixed Nuts team of Brinley Bruton, Mark McCusker, Gillian Morris, Gladwin Parkes, Dave Payne and Bradley Sluz to finish in 23 hours, 23 minutes and 23 seconds.

Paralympian David Clarke, Britain's most capped blind footballer, took part with Steve Brady. They finished in 24 hours, 27 minutes and 29 seconds and 24 hours, 30 minutes and 7 seconds.



**Picture:** Gregory Amuntung came in 57th place as he raced through the 100K route. **Credit:** All photos by Luke Holroyd.



## Blind Veterans UK marks centenary of World War One.

This month Her Majesty The Queen will lead the nation in commemorating the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War at a service at Glasgow Cathedral on 4th August 2014 where she will be joined by other heads of state.

Across the country on 4th August, flags on public buildings will fly at half mast, while in Belgium, a service will be held at St Symphorien Military Cemetery near Mons, where similar numbers of British and German war dead are buried, including the first and last Commonwealth soldiers killed in the war.

The day will end with a vigil at Westminster Abbey where a single candle will be extinguished at 11pm, a century on from the moment when, in the words of Sir Edward Grey, Britain's foreign secretary at the time, "The lamps are going out all over Europe, we shall not see them lit again in our lifetime".

At Blind Veterans UK we will pause to remember the remarkable First World War men and women of our charity.

This month to tie in with an article by Gerry Jones, who joined Blind Veterans UK in 1973 (see pages 16 to 18), we bring you an article from the December 1916 Review by an unnamed Lady Cox. Gerry is a keen rower as were many of the First World War men.

## Coxing on the Lake. By a Lady Cox. From the December 1916 Review.

"One morning when the sun began to shine, and the birds began to twitter, and the cold was not so bitter — the athletic boating men came out to row; and the athletic maidens came to steer them round the lake. Then was it pleasant indeed to the coxon to find herself sitting in the boat while a strong man in a sweater pulled her round the lake; it felt so safe, too, to hold on tight to both the steering ropes, and so charming to be able to tell a beginner what to do — till the Manager called across the water that she was doing it all wrong.

"Then she would try to look as if she knew, really, what to do, but was doing it the other way for fun. It was great sport, too, to steer the boat for the landing place at full speed, to finish with a delicious 'biff' that made her scream with

excitement, and nearly fall into the water. Till she found out that was wrong, too, and that the correct way to steer a boat in was to say, while yet a long way out on the lake, and in a clear, business like voice, 'Easy rowing - ships oars!' and then to pull gracefully at one rope at a time, glide in without a scrape or a scream, and step daintily ashore without upsetting the boat. Sometimes the other boats got very much entangled indeed, and the boaters became rather upset about it.

"A lady was so upset about it once, that she got into the water, and, her dress billowing out round her, forming a sort of aquatic parachute, which kept her afloat — she sped quickly across the lake till she was blown inshore, where she landed with her stockings wet, as if from an unpremeditated paddling expedition, but otherwise dry and composed, having much enjoyed her sail across the waters of the lake. Yes; there is certainly much pleasure to be got out of coxing for soldiers on the Regent's Park Lake.

"Coxing for a double, for instance. That is really WORK, and the coxon feels her position acutely. Sitting on the extreme edge of the seat, she leans forward and backward, and says, 'One, two,' quite like Mr Calcutt does it. Kitchen and Hall were an excellent pair, and they flew through the water and got up the Dardanelles in next to no time. Spinks keeps his coxon working, too. He doesn't believe in slacking, and takes the boat round at a spanking pace. He sometimes takes a breather, but before long, is at it again, and the coxon is never idle long, but has to keep busy with the steering ropes as they pass the less vigorous rowers. Different rowers for different times! In the morning the coxon feels energetic, and likes plenty of go in the pulling. In the evening, Pell, in his non-racing mood, is delightful to cox for. His long, easy stroke sends the boat along with a restful, soothing motion, which, with the warm sun pouring down and the gentle breeze fanning her face, is quite delightful to the coxon after a hard day's work.

"What a lot of nonsense one can talk about coxing on the lake, to be sure! I could go on a long time, and say a lot of things about a lot of rowers — but all there's a time to say now is: the coxon's job is a ripping one; she will miss it when the winter comes — miss it as she will miss the faces that have disappeared from St Dunstan's by then. She wishes that all the rowers could stay there all the time — always to be there to answer her 'Good morning' in the moorings, and her 'Hullo!' in the evening."

I.M.H.



## Cornwall Rowing Association for the Blind — CRAB: By Gerry Jones.

For the first episode of ITV's Weekend Escapes actor, Warwick Davis and his family packed their camper van and headed to Cornwall where he took part in a number of activities for the series about holidaying in Great Britain. Filmed in the autumn of 2013 the episode aired on Friday 11th April 2014 when it showed Warwick as a keen 'staycationer', as he loves nothing more than spending time in Britain rather than travelling abroad. However his family don't feel quite the same way.

For his last adventure in Cornwall he joined us at CRAB: Cornwall Rowing Association for the Blind, when he gamely got into our gig, a six-oared rowing boat, and helped out the cox by using ropes to control the rudder and shout words of encouragement to us rowers. He had a great time and as we rowed Warwick said to the camera: "So I'm steering, the rowers are blind and I can't swim. What could possibly go wrong?" Of course nothing did go wrong, it was all a great adventure that made for an excellent piece of TV and we were thrilled to be part of it to raise the profile of blind rowing and CRAB.

To give you the history to CRAB, in August 1998 a group of blind and partially sighted people decided they wanted to row across Mounts Bay in a gig during the solar eclipse in August 1999, to raise awareness of the plight of blind people in the County of Cornwall.

We were persuaded not to by Kevin Sherris, Chairman of the World Pilots Gig Championships, who instead invited us to take part in the following year's event. We were soon in training for the 1999 Championships with the assistance of a sighted cox and a gig, 'The Good Intent', which we borrowed from Newquay Rowing Club, to whom we were affiliated and we found ourselves the talk of the Championships.

The following year we decided to form CRAB and after a further year of rowing it was time to invest in a gig of our own. We were awarded a grant from the Sports Lottery Fund and the Restormel Leisure Fund and we raised money through sponsored head and beard shaves, auctions and men's pasty making competitions.



**Picture:** Gerry Jones (wearing dark glasses) rows hard as he competes with CRAB. Credit: Barefoot Photographer [www.barefoot-photographer.co.uk](http://www.barefoot-photographer.co.uk)



**Picture:** Warwick Davis with son Harrison, daughter Annabelle, wife Sam and dog Sherlock. **Credit:** ITV.



When the money had been collected Devoran boatbuilder, Ralph Bird, was commissioned to build the gig. The keel was laid in November 2002 and the aptly named Dall Lewyer, which is Cornish for 'blind pilot or leader', was launched in April 2003.

The crew meet once a week to train and our technique has notably improved over the last few years. However, we do not compete to win. For us, the most important aspect is the taking part. It's all about team work and having fun. Blind or fully sighted, pilot gig crews love being on the crest of a wave. This is one of the few sports where blind or partially sighted people can compete on a level playing field with everyone else.

All but one of the crew lost their sight in later life and gig racing has really helped everyone to build their confidence and self esteem.

In 2005 World Pilot Gig Championships (WPGC) we rammed the Breton crew and proceeded to beat them home on the 2.25 mile course. It was the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar and it was reported by the commentary boat and announced on St Mary's Quay to rapturous applause and much laughter by the spectators. Free drinks followed in all the pubs! It was thought at the time this would be the first and probably only occasion that CRAB would beat any other crew. In doing so we finished the course in 18 minutes, a vast improvement on our first attempt on that particular row which took 44 minutes.

In 2009, at the WPGC, CRAB sallied forth and beat five crews in the Veterans Race, two crews were left in our wake in the first long race and out of the next three races we soundly trounced a crew in two of them. We cannot remember celebrating this marvellous weekend!

In 2010 in the WPGC in the Isles of Scilly, CRAB in the veterans race left 10 crews in their wake and in the first main long race seven gigs were behind. At CRAB we were pleased to report that no crew likes to be beaten by "those blind buggers." In the words of Dads Army – "They don't like it up 'em."

In 2013 we rowed from Charlestown on the South coast to Falmouth a distance of some 30 miles. We also rowed in the Scillies and in the Vets Race had 20 crews behind us. In the main long race which sorts out which group you go into, we had 17 crews left in our wake. We ended up winning our group (the bottom group) in the final race and were presented with our trophy on the podium.

## Harry Beevers's 10 Questions on the subject of Autobiographies and Biographies.

1. Who called her 2009 autobiography *Some Sunny Day* after a line in one of her most famous songs?
2. *Mustn't Grumble*, is the definitive autobiography by which Irish born D.J. and TV presenter?
3. Which sportsman's autobiography is entitled 'Frame and Fortune'?
4. On whose autobiographical novels was the TV series *All Creatures Great and Small* based?
5. *First Man* by James R. Hansen in 2005, is the first and only authorised biography of which American?
6. In September 2002 which BBC war reporter released her autobiography, *The Kindness of Strangers*?
7. *The Good, the Bad and the Bubbly* is the biography of which former international footballer?
8. The former jockey and novelist Dick Francis wrote the biography, *A Jockey's Life*; who was the jockey?
9. *Cats on a Chandelier* is a biography of which British composer?
10. *As I Walked Out One Midsummer Morning* was the second volume of an autobiography by the writer Laurie Lee. What was the title of the first?

Answers on page 33.



## My time as a POW. By Grenville Davies.

Grenville Davies, who is 94 and originally from the Welsh Valleys moved to Birmingham in 1935 where he still lives today. He was introduced to Blind Veterans UK by Terry Bullingham and became a member in 2012. They met when Terry was invited to address a branch of the REME Association that Grenville is involved with and they became friends. When Grenville's sight started to fail it was Terry who told him to contact the Membership department at Blind Veterans UK.

Grenville says that he has benefited greatly by joining the charity and he is staggered by the training that has helped him to cope with his sight loss. He attends the annual Prisoner of War Reunion at the Brighton centre and enjoys visits to the Llandudno centre.

He has published a book, *Came the Day*, that is available in bookshops, libraries and online. In it he relates his experiences when taken Prisoner of War at the beginning of WWII. Held in Stalag XXA and XXB POW Forced Labour Camps in Poland and Germany his story is retold from a diary he kept on scraps of paper obtained whilst in camp. Knowing the Germans were withholding Red Cross parcels containing food and provisions, being thoroughly demoralised through near starvation, hard work and cruelty, interspersed with occasional acts of kindness, simply increased the mental instability of many men, some of whom were driven to suicide. *Came the Day* tells how prisoners, with no hope of escaping, did their best to live off their wits and impede the German war effort to the best of their ability. Eventually, riddled with lice, disease, and in a state of near collapse, as the allies began to advance closer to the German borders, late one evening they were removed from their camps and aimlessly marched for hundreds of miles in the most atrocious weather conditions imaginable, not knowing whether at any moment they would be abandoned or shot.

### Grenville begins.

Having joined the TA in June 1939, I was called up three months later and shipped to France in late December as a member of the British Expeditionary Force. I was then a Private in the 14th Army Field Workshop Royal Army Ordnance Corps. After a fairly aimless few weeks playing soldiers in three remote parts of the Pas-de-Calais, we eventually established part of our workshop in Belgium for the recovery sections. I was in the main part of the unit along with the HQ at Carvin near Lille, at the furthest point from any action.

We carried out our duties repairing trucks and various armoured vehicles until mid May when we had to pack up all the equipment and were then confined to barracks for four days awaiting further instructions. Eventually we were ordered to move out after the local brothel, which was situated adjacent to the Officers' quarters, was hit by a bomb.

We eventually arrived in the grounds of a chateau where a signal from General Gort was read out congratulating us on our work and achievements and rewarding us with a well earned rest. That evening, enemy planes bombed an airfield, which unbeknown to us, was adjacent to our 'haven of rest'. At dawn we were again on the move to another chateau where we duly waited for some German tanks to come and inflict considerable damage to the chateau and us. The Colonel gave the command 'make for the coast; every man for himself.' Famous last words as he and his accompanying officer were unfortunately killed soon after by French machine gunners who were supposed to be assisting us.

I boarded a truck with other lads without any of us knowing where we were going. The only information we could get from the locals was that we were totally surrounded by the Bosch. We decided to conceal the truck for the night, spread out and have a go for freedom in the morning. On re-assembling we found two colleagues and the truck had vanished. A decision was made to split up into small groups and endeavour to contact more British soldiers. I had a couple of mates with me. For four days we meandered around aimlessly, constantly getting within close proximity of German convoys. Unbeknown to us this was the big assault on Dunkirk. Eventually we were captured by members of a Supply Unit who moved us to St Omer where allied captives were being held. During the next few days we were moved from place to place in ever increasing numbers, eventually arriving at Cambrai. From there we were transported in cattle trucks — although the notice stated '8 horses or 20 men', we were herded in batches of 50.

### Jeering and spitting.

Four days later we arrived at Trier just outside the border of Luxembourg. No food or water had been issued and everybody was showing signs of wear and tear. It was a sunny day and the town was festooned with Nazi flags and banners. The camp was situated on top of a hill and it seemed that the route was lined with the entire population, who seemed to have great enjoyment jeering and spitting on us. Third Reich! The camp was of the concentration variety and introduced us to the pyjama striped clothing issued to all the sad



inmates. However, at last we were fed, albeit rather frugally, and the following day we re-ran the gauntlet and returned to our cattle trucks for a further four days. By now Francis, a friend of mine from civvy street, had developed dysentery.

Our next destination was Thorn, Headquarters of Stalag XXA. Here I was housed in Fort 17 an old Polish cavalry barracks, where we were documented, numbered and had various items of uniform confiscated and substituted with old Polish equipment. One consolation was that we now received regular rations which were primarily a soup of potatoes and swede, supplemented with a portion of bread or biscuits and acorn coffee. Francis was soon sent to work on a farm and I eventually went to Langfur in a group of 100 removing soil from a field, which was then transported to an adjacent airfield. Months later we were moved to Willenberg, the Headquarters of Stalag XXB, which housed British, French, Belgian and Serb prisoners. As I had a wounded leg from a scar that turned into an ulcer I wanted to avoid any further work for a year.

On Christmas Eve 1941, a party of Russian prisoners came to the camp who were infected with typhus. This resulted in the entire camp having to trudge five miles to Marienburg to be deloused, commencing on Christmas Day. The first group were the hospital patients and I was in the second group classified as 'Excused Duties'. Having just collected our dinner, for which we had forfeited rations for a period of weeks to ensure a dry dinner as opposed to the customary soup, we were ordered to leave everything and set out for the delouser. On our return in the evening we found the huts had been fumigated leaving the food inedible. Happy Christmas!

The following Easter Monday I was detailed for a farm working party in Schonau. Here I remained for a year, but following an altercation with a neighbouring farmer I was sent back to the HQ to serve 14 days in solitary confinement. On my release I joined the Reichbahn party, which was great news as it was to be considered one of the plum jobs operating out of the main camp. It involved a five mile hike to a railway siding where we unloaded an average of 10 tons of coal per man. Eventually the entire party was despatched with an additional 100 to work in a Sugar Factory at Altfelde. There I became assistant to a female chemist who hated the job as much as she hated the British. She was an explosives chemist who had volunteered for the post in the Sugar Factory. We worked 12 hour shifts without any breaks (food was brought to you), then at weekends the shifts changed to 18 hours with a 10 minute

break. The changeover came at midday on Sunday and was the only time the majority of the lads saw daylight. My job was quite easy as I only fetched various samples at given periods, cleaned the utensils and fetched meals for the chemist and manager. Consequently I had lots of freedom to roam around and was able to relieve fellows who were unable to leave their positions.

#### **14 days in the Bunker.**

Token escapes were commonplace, but when escapees were picked up beyond the factory confines and returned to the camp they were given 14 days in the Bunker and on release were posted to a different job. As I enjoyed a lot of freedom the Germans suspected me of involvement with the escapes, and the manager, who was not too bad, would ask me who would be the next to go so that he could get someone to cover. Incidentally, I had no knowledge of the spontaneous escapes. Eventually I fell foul of the system when I lit a cigarette in a forbidden area and was given the mandatory 14 days in the bunker.

One day six of us were detailed to work in an engineering works repairing farm equipment. Obviously we had been selected from the engineering experience details that were given in our Army Paybooks. We didn't want to give our captors the advantage of our expertise and denied all knowledge of the experience they required. I said I was a clerk and I remember a fellow POW said that he was a deep sea diver. After four days of fooling around, and causing a little damage, five of us were returned to our previous job. The Reichbahn party were eventually drafted to Maxtal which was a railway rolling stock repair yard. I was selected to become a Blacksmith's striker to a little, old, retired, Polish Smith. We frequently fell out as he was afraid of the charge hand who would inundate him with work while taking it easy himself. This would prompt me into 'strike action' where I would sit down and read a book.

On Sunday 21st January 1945 everything changed for us. I can still recall that it was a bitterly cold day and snowing heavily. At 8pm we were assembled and told to pack a haversack and blanket and be ready to move within one hour. Chaos prevailed as we discarded prized possessions, packed all our food and donned as much clothing as possible — virtually two of everything. We marched to a small railway station and were transported to a farm that had been designated as an assembly point for all British POWs in the area. Here I met Francis again, who I had last seen some four years earlier as he had spent the entire period at the same farm! As a result he was quite hale and hearty.



I had always envisaged the day of liberation would involve us being drafted into a camp and left and I thought this was the moment. How disillusioned can one get! In appalling conditions we started a long march that was to last for 85 days, as we covered 870 miles with just 20 rests, when the majority of nights were spent in barns. After two nights we could hear heavy gun fire and presumed the Russians were not too far away. My pal Gordon and I thought we could escape and decided to take a chance and leave the column under cover of darkness. We made our escape and crept into the loft of a house and in the pitch darkness it was rather eerie but we were so exhausted we soon fell asleep. We woke at daybreak to find that we were surrounded by frozen sheets and various other items of the family wash. Returning to the streets we walked along the main road towards who we hoped would be our rescuers as we thought they were Russian troops. It was not to be as a Latvian Division of the German Army were in residence. They were none too pleased to see us and escorted us back to rejoin the rest of the column.

Before they found us I had acquired a sledge, which had been left outside a shop and it was great for carrying our kit and it proved to be a very important acquisition. On the 26th, having settled in a school building after covering about 15 miles in very arduous conditions, we were regrouped at 10pm to suffer what had to be our worst experience. A party of Russian POWs who were attached to us were so grossly undernourished that they were virtual skeletons, their wasted bodies were apparent through their inadequate clothing. A blizzard was raging, the cold was intense and these poor souls were beyond exhaustion. They didn't have the strength to walk, although they kept pushing themselves, and when they collapsed they appealed to the guards to shoot them to put them out of their misery. Having been a church member from a very early age and throughout my life, I am afraid my faith was badly shaken. If there was a God how could he allow such circumstances to prevail? Eventually we staggered into Jastrow and our haven was a church. The Russians were put on the ground floor and we went up to the balcony. A candle beneath a picture of the Madonna and child gave the only illumination. The Russians smashed furniture and lit fires and eventually a modicum of silence prevailed. Suddenly, music from a violin could be heard and it appeared that the entire group of Russians joined in singing a song that has haunted me ever since and remained in my memory. Years later the same tune, The Carnival is Over, which I discovered was a Russian folk song, Volga, Volga Ruski, became Number One in the hit parade.

The following morning the blizzard had abated and the British were allowed out of the church. Gordon looked after our kit while I went outside and was confronted by a soldier from my unit who I had not seen since France. He had an American Red Cross parcel and informed me where the store was. I ran there only to find all the parcels had gone but lots of items were scattered around. I grabbed a container which must have held five packages and gathered up various tins of meat and fats with the knowledge that we had a sledge to transport it. This proved to be our salvation as official issues of food were extremely erratic and three or four days without rations were commonplace.

### **Stark naked and waving towels.**

Each day we marched westwards and even the guards who were changed at intervals began to realise things were not going their way any longer. Our columns were frequently split as accommodation and food became more difficult. As the days passed the weather improved and nothing of any great significance happened until April when we reached Hamlin and had a rest period. Our billets were outside the town and when it was decided that we should be deloused we were split into groups to attend delousing sessions in a German Barracks. My group had just put our clothes in the ovens when allied planes arrived and gave Hamlin a pasting. Much to the disgust of the 'master race' we ran onto the parade ground stark naked and waving towels. The following day we had to go to the station and help remove bodies and debris.

As a result of this it was decided that we should be moved back towards the East. By 9th April 1945 we were in Schladen and while Gordon and I were shaving we noticed that the RAMC were holding a sick parade and there was my old pal Francis. He was in a terrible condition, haggard, filthy, matted beard and covered in lice. He said he was dying and had received no medical aid. After the parade I spoke to the medics who said that they could not help as he was not prepared to help himself. I explained that he was a friend from civvie street who had always kept himself immaculate and that I would clean him up. I did this with the help of Gordon. I cut his hair and beard, shaved him and generally tidied him up, exchanging some of his clothes for our slightly less contaminated ones. The medics spoke to the appropriate staff and he was transferred to a hospital where he remained for a further five weeks after liberation before he returned home.

It was only three days later on 12th April that we got to Ummendorf and were locked in a barn adjacent to the main road. There was a rear door, which had





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escaped the notice of the guards and on hearing a horse and cart rumbling past, I went to investigate and found it laden with crates. True to years of scrounging I grabbed one that contained boxes of cigars. During the night we had a rude awakening by a local English speaking civilian who announced that our guards had left and the Americans were not far away. He also said that he would ensure we all got fed. As nobody believed him he was showered with abuse and told in true Tommy language where he should go. Eventually somebody did get up to investigate and confirmed that our guards had left. There was no jubilation, as one would have possibly anticipated. No doubt our spirits and morale were so low that we always anticipated the worst would always happen. So we returned to the straw for yet another night.

At 10.30am the following morning American tanks rumbled in and while they threw us K rations, Gordon and I reciprocated with cigars. For a further two days we lived in that barn until trucks arrived and took us off to Hildesheim to await flights home. Here Gordon and I parted company as he was delegated as a reserve for anyone missing their flight. He flew home direct, whereas I went to Brussels the following day and then finally arrived at Wing near Aylesbury on 19th April, almost five years and four months since leaving England. Two days later I was allowed to go home to enjoy three weeks leave before reporting back to retrain for the Japanese war.

The total march lasted 85 days with 20 rest periods and covered approximately 870 miles. I have since returned to visit the places we marched through.



**Picture:** Craftsman Grenville Davies  
7601633 in the uniform of the RAOC/  
REME.

## The Seasons of the Year. By Winnie Hollins.

Snowflakes fall on cold barren ground  
Clouds flit across a silvery sky  
Trees groan as the cold wind blows  
Through branches bereft of leaves  
This is Winter my friend

Snowdrops push their delicate flowers  
Crocus, Daffodils show their colours gay  
Trees with branches filled anew  
With green leaves and tender buds thereto  
This is Spring my friend

The Birds fill the air with their songs  
Greet the warmth of a sunny day  
Soft fruits their ripening do show  
Red, as they nestle in their green leafy beds  
This is the Summer my friend

Apples and pears are ripe for picking  
Corn is cut and the hay is gathered  
Harvest fruits to fill the Churches  
And trees are dressed in red and gold.



# Hell for Leather in 1840.

## By Spencer Netherstreet.

This year's Review 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 a future edition of the Review.

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.

Last month we brought you *Peace*, the winning story by Constance Sweeting and this month we bring you *Hell For Leather*, by Spencer Netherstreet.

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A cold misty March dawn in the year 1840. The grey flecked sky outlined the great dome of St Paul's. Young Henry made his daily trudge from the mucky, murky streets of Clerkenwell to his workplace in Crutched Friars. He was the stock clerk in Percival's Furniture Makers. On arriving, he was ordered to go at once to Mr Percival's office. The proprietor looked more like an angry old frog than ever as he swivelled round in his chair. He rasped: "You are to go this instant to Hornchurch to fetch those 'A' grade leathers. I want them back here by noon." He complained: "There's no way of getting those skins here in time except by the confounded railway." Henry knew that they had just won the contract to supply four ornate chairs for the Mansion House. Something to do with a royal visit. Instructions were given by the chief clerk and a silver sixpence for his return fare to Romford. Also, unwillingly, five shillings for expenses to be accounted for to the last farthing. He must find his own way from the station to Hornchurch. The Tannery's carter would drive him back to Romford and his train was leaving in 20 minutes! Henry was astonished. A train journey was unthinkable. The railway only opened four years ago!

Half trotting he quickly passed the iron girders and construction work at the new terminus at Liverpool Street. He soon reached the sheds and flimsy platforms of the Eastern Counties Railway's terminus at Shoreditch. The silver sixpence was exchanged for his return ticket. Ahead, he could see the train of passenger trucks and elongated stage coaches displaying a show of large brass door handles. Smartly uniformed, silver buttoned porters noisily shepherded passengers along the narrow platform past a long open truck. This was being loaded with baggage and railway metal work. A top hatted gent with one red and one green flag under his arm was in charge. The next was the second class coach; their entry into the narrow doorway was hampered by crinolines, cloaks and parasols. Next there was the third class — six open trucks with bench seats already occupied by many less well dressed folk.

At the head was the belching, smoking, fearsome mechanical horse. An imposing smoke stack projecting upward from the fat tubular belly, on either side of which were shining brass cylinders thrusting down at 45 degrees to the driving wheels. All emitting jets of steam and ominously hissing. Coal was being shovelled into the furnace. Henry had been told that the top speed would be 20 miles in the hour, anything faster would force the air out of the carriages, asphyxiating the passengers. The waiting crowd cheered and waved as the train lurched out of the station. His threadbare great coat and wide brimmed soft felt hat were unequal to the cold blast of the wind as the speed increased. Woodlands, fields, meadows and stampeding cattle flashed by. Long halts at Stratford and Ilford made Henry anxious but, miraculously, the train arrived at the terminus at Romford on time.

A muddy trudge for over half an hour before the foul stench of the famous tannery guided him to its doors. Staff were agog to learn about the train journey, he emerged as a hero to ride in the pony and trap. The long roll of leather stowed in the cart looked very cumbersome. It took twice as long to return to the station. Mire and deep ruts hindered the way. The carter had to be given beer money before assisting to carry the five foot load on to the train. The Guard furiously insisted that the load was chargeable and must be removed to the luggage truck. Henry ran back to pay an exorbitant two shillings and sixpence for Leather Goods. The Guard was waving his green flag as the engine was drawing a deep breath. Henry sprinted to jump into the front truck, falling heavily. Everything went black. He was spinning dizzily, in a rush of air as though he was flying through space; then he was falling downwards.



Opening his eyes he was aware of lying on a fine pavement. An odd range of sounds all around. He scrambled to his feet finding that he was surrounded by plain square buildings that stretched up to the sky, and he was in the centre of a concourse that was full of oddly dressed people. Women, faces painted, wearing clothes that revealed legs and ankles. Young girls shamelessly even more exposed. Henry turned away in embarrassment. Men, mostly wearing floppy shirts and shapeless trousers; no cloaks, riding boots, no whips no leggings. All seemed to be chattering loudly in rapid gibberish that he could not understand. Some had trouble with an ear; a white box was held against it as they shouted at it. He realised that he must look very odd in this company, yet no one took any notice of him. In panic he realised that he must find the railway to get those leathers back to London. He would need to ask. Hearing a lady speaking slowly words of English he bowed deeply as he removed his hat and ventured "Your pardon madam" but the women swept on without seeing him. He tried again and this time a gentleman almost walked right through him. In despair he looked for some sign of the railway, but was startled to see several large speeding red boxes, two levels high with people inside them. No horses, but wheels turning by magic. He caught sight of the words South Street, this he remembered on his way to Hornchurch. The station must be near. He desperately felt in his pocket for his rail ticket. It was not there nor was the little bag of money. Heart sinking, he hoped that they might have dropped out of his pocket when he had fallen. Retracing his steps they were exactly on the spot. Relieved Henry reached down. As his fingers closed on the grey pasteboard ticket everything went black! Spinning through the air, flashing lights dimmed into a velvet blackness, a cold draught on his face.

Awakening he found that he was looking at the steam and smoke of the fiery locomotive that was pulling into Shoreditch. He was comfortably lying on the precious roll of Grade A leather. There was a triumphant return to Crutched Friars as the clock of St Helen's struck the last note of noon.

Henry's innermost thoughts occasionally questioned, did he really see that toy bird high in the sky drawing a white chalk line across!

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Spencer's early writing days began when he was a buyer for a food manufacturing company when Jack de Manio MC and Bar, a British journalist, best known as a radio presenter who began his career in the Forces

Broadcasting Unit in Beirut in 1944, used Spencer's articles in the Grocer magazine and in his broadcasts.

Spencer said: "Later in life I moved into futures, dealing in the cocoa and sugar markets, which meant there was very little writing, as you had to be pretty active and I was only too well aware of my shortfall in arithmetical genius as you had to keep an eye on the differentials, but it certainly kept things lively. Very late in my commercial career I was sent to China as the rep of the Beresford Group, an international trading group in China. I was fortunate to travel widely and this meant sending detailed operational reports and market issues to London. I learnt to edit and keep words to a minimum as there were no phone lines between China and London and very few Telex machines then. They must have dreaded me coming into the Telex room as I'd use the machine for 1¼ hours. In those days our trade with China was about 0.6% of our total world trade. During that time I met a rather famous man and we had a chat about the futures markets. At the time of our conversation he was the Mayor of Shanghai who went on to become Chairman of The People's Republic of China the following year, he was a lovely man who spoke beautiful English. Those were the happiest days of my business career and my wife Marion and our family were invited to Embassy do's. I started travelling in China in 1979 and finished work for the Government in 1992 and I look back on those days with a great deal of pleasure."

Spencer's creative writing career started when he answered a call by Havering Borough Council to submit a story to their competition in 2007. After that he had a weekly slot in the Havering Talking Newspapers with a series of 34 Old Tom stories, a character he created to chronicle a fictitious series of episodes in the life of a dear old bloke and his dog in a Chilterns village.

Spencer continued: "That was the start of writing creatively and when my sight started to fail I thought it might be over. But of course that all changed when I joined Blind Veterans UK in 2008 as the training at the Brighton centre has helped to keep me writing. It was absolutely superb and I taught myself to touch type and the lovely staff there were marvellous and it meant that I am able to get onto the computer and do a fair amount of typing. Although of course when you get to a certain age it all becomes a little bit difficult.

"With Hell for Leather I started with 4,500 words and beat it down to 1,050.



I found inspiration for the story in our lovely old St Andrew's Church at Hornchurch. As the horns celebrate the leather trade and I thought that would make a good story if I could think something up. And then I heard one of Michael Portillo's railway journey programmes and married the two together and put it in a time warp."

When asked about the most important part of being a blind veteran Spencer said: "Meeting Martin Shail and the lovely staff at the Brighton centre and the way they encouraged me and their great teaching is something quite incredible. They really are brilliant and are what I appreciate most. It's hard to put into words as I'm so grateful to them as they opened the door for me to write to Havering Borough Council's short story competition. What's the good of having lovely equipment that we're given and not using it?"

Spencer's older twin brother Jack (by 20 minutes) is also a published author and member of Blind Veterans UK and they both have a connection to the early days of our charity.



**Picture:** Spencer Netherstreet smiles after hearing he came second in this year's Review short story competition.

Their uncle Herbert Boshier Netherstreet was a signalman on the railway at Ypres when he was blinded in 1917. He was aided by nurses from St Dunstan's who made home visits from Regent's Park when they introduced him to Braille and taught him to knit. Unfortunately he succumbed to his injuries in 1921 leaving his widow and their little daughter. Spencer and Jack were also privileged to receive Sir Ian Fraser, our second Chairman, when he visited the Romford Branch of the British Legion in 1948 when Spencer was the secretary and Jack acting Chairman.

Another well known figure he was fortunate to meet was the Reverend 'Tubby' Clayton, of Toc-H, when he asked if he and some friends could look inside Spencer's office in an old relic that adjoined the church of St Mary's in the Wardrobe in Rood Lane in the City of London. The Rev Clayton was intrigued by the mullioned windowed shop front and Spencer was thrilled to show them around.

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 September edition of the Review we will bring you Mammoth Run by Marion Sharville, the third placed story, and an interview with the author.

### **Answers to Harry Beevers's 10 Questions on the subject of Autobiographies and Biographies from page 19.**

1. Vera Lynn.
2. Terry Wogan.
3. Steve Davis, former world snooker champion.
4. James Herriot, the pseudonym of the former vet James Alfred Wight.
5. Neil Armstrong.
6. Kate Adie
7. George Best.
8. Lester Piggott
9. Andrew Lloyd Webber
10. Cider with Rosie.



# G.O.A.L. Group. By Carol Davies.

It was an exciting five days from Monday 16th to Friday 20th June when the first G.O.A.L. Group Club event of the year took place. The group was made up of me with Chris Humphrey, Peter King, James Wyatt, Roger Williams and David Williams. We each travelled to Brighton, predominantly by public transport, to stay in Port Hall, which was our base.

## Tuesday 17th June.

We set off from Brighton on our first trip to Portsmouth Historical Docks where we were met by Trevor Sapey, Community Engagement, Outreach and Access Officer at The Mary Rose Trust, who acted as our guide throughout the day. He took us to the three historical ships where we were regaled with stories and information. Julian and Pat were our guides on HMS Warrior, Paul and his team on HMS Victory, and Trevor at the Mary Rose Museum. They were a fountain of knowledge and brought the ships alive and gave us an insight into life in that period. It was a truly amazing day.



**Picture:** The G.O.A.L Group at Portsmouth Historical Dockyard.

## Wednesday 18th June.

We travelled by bus to the Brighton seafront where we all stepped onto the Brighton Wheel, the city's latest attraction, which is located on the sea front. We then enjoyed fish and chips for lunch before meeting Philip Armstrong, our guide to The Old Police Cell Museum housed in the basement of Brighton Town Hall.

We were intellectually guided through Brighton Borough main police station from 1830 to 1967, learning about the murder of Chief Constable Henry Solomon in 1844 by 23 year old John Lawrence who had stolen a roll of carpet. While interviewing Lawrence, the Chief Constable was bludgeoned with a poker causing a head injury from which he later died. Lawrence was found guilty of murder and publically hanged at Horsham.

The museum also houses a unique collection of truncheons and tipstaves, one of the largest in the country. This collection was collated by Alderman Caffyn throughout his lifetime and is on permanent loan to the museum from the Sussex police authority.

Philip told us about life in the cells throughout the years. One of the stories was of the riots in 1964 between the Mods and Rockers, many of whom were arrested. The cells are usually for one person only, but on this occasion, they put 41 Mods and Rockers into a cell. The thought was that in this confined space there would be no room for fighting. On one of the cell walls there is a piece of graffiti which reads "Dave the Rocker June 1964". Some years later, when carrying out a tour of the cells and relating the story, a man in the tour claimed to be Dave the Rocker.

## Thursday 19th June.

We travelled by train and bus to Tangmere Aviation Museum. The Museum is home to an impressive display of historic aircraft as well as a unique collection of aviation memorabilia stretching from the First World War through to the Cold War. Amongst the many attractions, there are numerous interactive displays and several aircraft simulators for visitors to experience.

We were fortunate enough to have Michael Maddox, an ex Naval Aviator, who accompanied us as a volunteer. He was invaluable during the tour. He explained in great detail about the planes on show which included the aircrafts Gloster Meteor F.4 Special (a World Speed Record breaking aircraft flown by Group Captain E.M. 'Teddy' Donaldson in 1946), and Hawker Hunter Mk3 (flown



in 1953 by the Museum's late President Neville Duke). Michael brought them to life for us and made the tour infinitely more enjoyable. This museum is well worth a visit.

Our daily activities were jam packed so we did not venture very far in the evenings. We either enjoyed each other's company at the bar or went back to Port Hall for one of Roger Williams's famous quizzes. We all think his quizzes are becoming more difficult or that our memories are not what they used to be. I like to think the former. On Friday 20th June we departed Port Hall and made our way home.

G.O.A.L. stands for "Get Out and Live". The group is for male and female members of Blind Veterans UK who are aged between 60 to 72 and want to join a group that strongly advocates independence within their day to day lives. The intention of G.O.A.L. is to encourage members to take the helm and steer themselves to an independent lifestyle with the support of other like minded vision impaired people. In order to involve all beneficiaries in the spirit of G.O.A.L. and Blind Veterans UK, which is to promote independence, the group is for members only and does not extend to partners.

Our events take place at the Brighton, Llandudno and Sheffield centres or we may arrange an event at a private venue, it really depends on what the members want to do. Due to the diverse capabilities of people and the varying physical requirements of different events, activities will be tailored to meet the participating members' capabilities within each group event. Travelling to and from the events independently will always be encouraged.

Each event is planned in advance and will comprise activities that have been suggested by members of the group. The scope is only limited by the practical suggestions of the group. It will give members the opportunity to try something totally new. In addition, activities not undertaken since losing their sight could be tried as a group, which would complement the charity's objective of assisting vision impaired ex-Servicemen and women to live more independently in their own community.

Future G.O.A.L. group events will take place at the Sheffield centre from Tuesday 26th to Friday 29th August and at the Llandudno centre from Monday 17th to Friday 21st November. If you meet the club's criteria and you'd like to join us please contact me, Carol Davies, on telephone 01754 450232 or Chris Humphrey on telephone: 01603 701402.

## **Blind Veterans UK Bowmen Outdoor Championships 31st May to 8th June 2014. By Graham Walker.**

Fourteen archers travelled to the Brighton centre when there were three matches in total.

The first match on 1st June was held at Ditchling and the team was formed of Paul Palmer, Kelvin Platt, David Poyner and Carol Sharpe. The score was: **Blind Veterans UK 5673, Ditchling 6084.**

On 3rd June we travelled to Portsmouth for the Tri Services match. The team was Peter Price, Carol Sharpe, Carol Davies and John Cunnington. The scores were: **Blind Veterans UK 5809, Royal Navy 5798, Royal Air Force 5780 and the Army 5778.**

Our match on 7th June was a return match with Ditchling at Brighton, which we won. The team was formed of Carol Davies, John Cunnington, Peter Price and Burt Nelson. The score was: **Blind Veterans UK 5924 and Ditchling 5767.**

We also had a match with Clickers Archery at Southampton University which we won. The team was Bob Strickland, Rob Stevens, Carol Davies and Graham Walker.

In between matches we had our outdoor shoots and on 2nd June we shot at St Nicholas which was won by: Kelvin Platt, Leslie George and Carol Sharpe.

On 5th June we shot a long metric five with Carol Davies, John Cunnington, Peter Price and Bert Nelson.

On 6th June we shot a double frostbile for the pairs with Peter Price and Bob Strickland.

Then we had a knockout final when Peter Price was the winner and John Cunnington the runner up.

Graham Walker got a gold medal for his six gold end.

We would like to thank all our coaches and spotters, and all the great helpers who did a fantastic job over the 10 days.

See you all again in August!



## Gun Club report by Roger McMullan.

It has been another good year for the Gun Club who took part in the Postal Leagues that are run by the National Small Bore Rifle Association when we shot against clubs from across the country.

We have formed a liaison with the Felixstowe Gun Club of the East Suffolk Association for the Blind, and hosted an event at the Sports Hall at the Brighton centre in November 2013, which was very successful. We have just returned from a short visit to Felixstowe to shoot at their range. Unfortunately due to ill health we were only able to take three shooters with us, George Oliver, Brian Taylor and Nigel Whiteley, but they did very well in the competition against three ladies from Felixstowe and the scores were as follows

East Suffolk Association for the Blind (E.S.A.B.) Team Felixstowe.

Sue Norman	96
Pam Rivers	83
Hannah Young	81

**Total 260**

Blind Veterans UK (St Dunstan's)

George Oliver	88
Nigel Whiteley	75
Brian Taylor	73

**Total 236**

Individual awards:

1st	Sue Norman (Felixstowe)	96
2nd	George Oliver (Blind Veterans UK)	88
3rd	Pam Rivers (Felixstowe)	83

Cups were presented by the Chairman of East Suffolk Association for the Blind at a dinner at the Brook Hotel where we were entertained for the evening before returning to the Brighton centre on Thursday.

We would like to thank everyone at Felixstowe and a big thanks to the wives and helpers, and especially Lee our coach driver who made the trip very enjoyable for everyone. We are already planning for a visit in November from Felixstowe and hope all our members will be fighting fit again to put on a good show and hopefully we will be able to beat them at last. Here's to another successful year.

If you would like to join the club we meet on Wednesday and Thursday morning in the Sports Hall at the Brighton centre when Terry Watts and I will be able to work with you to achieve your shooting goals.



**Picture:** Blind Veterans UK team with their trophy. From left to right: Nigel Whiteley, George Oliver and Brian Taylor.



**Picture:** The individual winners Pam Rivers, George Oliver and Sue Norman.



# Family News.

## Congratulations to:

### Birthdays:

**Fred May** who celebrated his 101st birthday on 10th July.

**Richard Stupples** who celebrated his 100th birthday on 3rd July.

**Bob Early** who celebrated his 100th birthday on 4th July.

**Sally Whittaker** who celebrated her 100th birthday on 24th July.

### Anniversaries:

#### Platinum (70th):

**Cyril & Susan Smith** of St Asaph, Denbighshire on 25th July.

**Albert & Dorothy Neville** of Cleckheaton, West Yorkshire on 31st July.

#### Blue Sapphire (65th):

**Arthur & Audrey Reynolds** of Preston, Lancashire on 2nd July.

**Bill & Irene Cantwell** of Southport, Merseyside on 2nd July.

**Sidney & Kathleen Cutter** of Solihull, West Midlands on 2nd July.

**Alan & Joyce Milburn** of Gateshead, Tyne and Wear on 9th July.

**Ronald & Joyce Hill** of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire on 16th July.

**Kenneth & Audrey Crump** of Dunstable, Bedfordshire on 16th July.

#### Diamond (60th):

**Gordon & Norma Lawrence** of Birmingham, West Midlands on 3rd July.

**Frank & Yvonne Sharples** of Nelson, Lancashire on 3rd July.

**Norman & Margaret Mills** of Brighton, East Sussex on 3rd July.

**Stuart & Jean Turner** of Wrexham, Clwyd on 3rd July.

**Frank & Irene Watmuf** of Bradford, West Yorkshire on 10th July.

**Colin & Pamela Deacon** of Hunstanton, Norfolk on 24th July.

**Ron & Pam Adams** of Wickford, Essex on 31st July.

#### Golden Anniversary (50th):

**Bob & Elizabeth King** of Derby, Derbyshire on 3rd July.

**Toni & Elaine Wilson** of Tredegar, Gwent on 11th July.

**Chris & Gabby Stronge** of Wantage, Oxfordshire on 11th July.

#### Ruby (40th):

**Graham & Trish Walker** of Leeds, West Yorkshire on 20th July.

#### Pearl (30th):

**Paul & Beverley Francis** of Washington, Tyne & Wear on 4th July.

**Gillian & John Mulholland** of Largs, Ayrshire on 26th July.

**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.**

**Diana Badman** who died on 3rd January 2014. She was the wife of Peter Badman.

**Barbara Durant** who died on 11th July 2014. She was the widow of the late George Durant.

**Edward Hughes** who died on 13th May 2014. She was the husband of Grace Hughes.

**Kathleen Gorrige** who died on 24th June 2014. She was the wife of Raymond Gorrige.

**Halina Hanson** who died on 13th May 2014. She was the wife of Henry Hanson.

**Ivy Hind** who died on 17th April 2014. She was the wife of George Hind.

**Grace Murley** who died on 2nd July 2014. She was the wife of Peter Murley.

**Rachel 'Rae' Palmer** who died on 17th June 2014. She was the wife of Henry Palmer.

**Eileen Seaman** who died on 30th June 2014. She was the wife of Kenneth Seaman.

**Margaret Stack** who died on 13th April 2014. She was the widow of the late David Stack.

**Denise Stewart** who died on 20th June 2014. She was the wife of John Stewart.



# Welcome to Blind Veterans UK.

**Betty Bateman** of Crawley, West Sussex served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1944 to 1947.

**John Bateman** of Ashington, Northumberland served in the Royal Navy, the Royal Armoured Corps and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1944 to 1953.

**Lawrence Betteridge** of Barnard Castle, County Durham served in the Lancastrian Brigade and the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1963 to 1982.

**David Billington** of Swanage, Dorset served in the Royal Army Educational Corps and the Royal Army Service Corps from 1950 to 1956.

**William Boulton** of March, Cambridgeshire served in the Royal Navy from 1952 to 1960.

**Gerald Bower** of Sheffield served in the Royal Air Force from 1951 to 1953.

**Roger Breese** of Colchester served in the Royal Air Force from 1953 to 1955.

**Ronald Buffee** of Poole, Dorset served in the Royal Navy from 1940 to 1945.

**Norman Cain** of Gateshead, Tyne and Wear served in the Royal Engineers from 1950 to 1955.

**Marjorie Cheetham** of Worcester served in the Royal Navy from 1944 to 1947.

**Leonard Collett** of Felixstowe, Suffolk served in the Royal Air Force from 1950 to 1952.

**Joseph Coutts** of Cramlington, Northumberland served in the Royal Signals from 1959 to 1965.

**Francis Cox** of Cirencester, Gloucestershire served in the Royal Navy from 1944 to 1946.

**David Credland** of Sheffield served in the Royal Air Force from 1948 to 1949.

**Albert Dalley** of Spalding, Lincolnshire served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps/Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1966 to 1975.

**John 'Rex' Davies** of Llandrindod Wells, Powys served in the Royal Air Force from 1955 to 1957.

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

**Reginald Dolan** of Abergavenny, Gwent served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1945.

**Thomas Dorset** of Hornchurch, Essex served in the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers from 1956 to 1961.

**Joan Dove** of West London served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

**Danny Dyche** of Chaddesden, Derby served in the Royal Signals from 1981 to 1985.

**David Ellis** of Lichfield, Staffordshire served in the Royal Welsh Fusiliers and the Suffolk Regiment from 1942 to 1946.

**Barbara Evans** of St. Albans, Hertfordshire served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1943 to 1946.

**Ronald Foster** of Blyth, Northumberland served in the Royal Air Force, the Royal Army Service Corps and the Royal Artillery from 1945 to 1961.

**Dennis Gilchrist** of South Shields, Tyne and Wear served in the Royal Engineers from 1946 to 1966.

**George Gourlay** of Grangemouth, Stirlingshire served in the Army Catering Corps from 1956 to 1962.

**Keith Greenhaf** of Newport, Gwent served in the Royal Air Force from 1972 to 1978.

**Joseph Hall** of Liverpool served in the Royal Armoured Corps and the Royal Corps of Transport from 1957 to 1972.

**Timothy Hammett** of Swansea served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1956 to 1962.

**Elizabeth Hansen** of Stockton-On-Tees, Cleveland served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1942 to 1954.



**Ronald Harvey** of Kenilworth, Warwickshire served in the Royal Navy from 1940 to 1946.

**Richard Haynes** of Richmond, North Yorkshire served in the Royal Artillery and the Royal Military Academy of Sandhurst from 1971 to 2005.

**George Holmes** of Rye, East Sussex served in the Royal Marines from 1946 to 1969.

**Jason Heathfield** of Eastbourne, East Sussex served in the Royal Air Force from 2009 to 2012.

**Harold Hillary** of Goole, Humberside served in the King's Royal Rifle Corps from 1944 to 1947.

**George Hutchison** of Kirkcaldy, Fife served in the Royal Air Force from 1948 to 1949.

**James Hutchison** of Cupar, Fife served in the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1951 to 1957.

**Frederick Hutton** of Carlisle served in the General Service Corps, the Royal Artillery, the Royal Signals and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and the Cumbria Army Cadet Force from 1942 to 1988.

**Kenneth Jackson** of Lincoln served in the Royal Air Force from 1950 to 1955.

**Raymond Kelly** of Eastbourne, East Sussex served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1952 to 1955.

**John Kinnis** of Paisley, Renfrewshire served in the Royal Signals from 1959 to 1974.

**John Lakin** of Millom, Cumbria served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Armoured Corps from 1946 to 1948.

**Joan Lawrence** of Mold, Clwyd served in the Women's Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1945.

**David Martill** of Worthing, West Sussex served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Artillery from 1946 to 1952.

**Anthony Martin** of Middlesbrough, Cleveland served in the Army Catering Corps from 1943 to 1947.

**Donald May** of Gillingham, Kent served in the Royal Navy from 1942 to 1946.

**Francis Middleton** of Ryton, Tyne and Wear served in the Royal Engineers from 1959 to 1962.

**Andrew Morgan** of Guildford, Surrey served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

**Frank Morris** of Dunfermline, Fife served in the Royal Signals from 1957 to 1959.

**Frank Moseley** of Haywards Heath, West Sussex served in the General Service Corps, the Royal Sussex Regiment and the Army Air Corps from 1942 to 1947.

**Peter Mullins** of Glastonbury, Somerset served in the General Service Corps and the Worcestershire Regiment from 1945 to 1948.

**John Oakley** of Jersey served in the General Service Corps, the Royal Artillery and the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1944 to 1960.

**Gerard Oskiewicz** of West Bridgford, Nottingham served in the Polish Army from 1944 to 1948.

**Nigel Pearcey** of Keighley, West Yorkshire served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps/Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1973 to 1985.

**Adrian Pegg** of Hinckley, Leicestershire served in the Royal Navy from 1990 to 1996.

**Arnold Peel** of Worksop, Nottinghamshire served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1947 to 1949.

**Mary Pratt** of Leicester served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1943 to 1945.

**Norman Roper** of Witney, Oxfordshire served in the Royal Navy from 1947 to 1956.

**William Rylance** of St. Helens, Merseyside served in the Royal Navy from 1941 to 1946.

**Clifford Shaw** of Crowborough, East Sussex served in the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1940 to 1948.



**David Steel** of Rochford, Essex served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1954 to 1960.

**Trefor Selway** of Colwyn Bay, Clwyd served in the Royal Air Force from 1950 to 1952.

**Norman Sharples** of Conwy, Gwynedd served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1944.

**James Sherratt** of Nantwich, Cheshire served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1952 to 1957.

**John Sloan** of Newcastle Upon Tyne served in the Royal Signals from 1946 to 1948.

**Flight Lieutenant George Smith** of Louth, Lincolnshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1943 to 1985.

**Ronald 'Ron' Smith** of Crewe served in the Royal Engineers and the Royal Artillery from 1937 to 1959.

**Jean Staff** of Seaford, East Sussex served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1947 to 1949.

**James Sutherland** of Retford, Nottinghamshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1946 to 1956.

**John Warwicker** of Woodbridge, Suffolk served in the Royal Marines from 1948 to 1950.

**Bernard Wheeler** of Eastbourne, East Sussex served in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1947.

**Raymond White** of Bridgwater, Somerset served in the Royal Air Force from 1946 to 1948.

**John Wood** of Cranbrook, Kent served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1943 to 1946.

**Alan Woods** of Nottingham served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1947.

**Jack Wright** of Woodbridge, Suffolk served in the Royal Navy from 1945 to 1947.

# 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.**

**John Andrews** of Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk died on 28th June 2014, aged 87. He joined the Royal Navy in 1943 and trained at HMS Royal Arthur. He served in LCTs during the Normandy Landings and after that he was drafted to the frigate HMS Lith and served in the Far East. He then served in Malta in HMS Woolwich and returned to the UK in HMS Lago Bay. He was discharged in 1946 as a Leading Steward.

**Harold 'John' Beardmore** of Crewe, Cheshire died on 22nd June 2014, aged 79. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1953 and trained as a Driver at RAF Bridgnorth. He served in Melksham, Wiltshire and was discharged as a Corporal in 1957.

**Gordon Bolton** of Tunbridge Wells, Kent died on 10th July 2014, aged 89. He joined the Royal Navy in 1943 and trained in Chatham and Worcester before serving in HMS Stockholm and then HMS London mainly on Atlantic convoys. He escorted the Mulberry Harbour across the channel for D-Day and was discharged in 1947 as a Stoker.

**Sydney Bond** of Swindon died on 8th July 2014, aged 93. He joined the Wiltshire Yeomanry (TA) in the 1930s and the Royal Army Medical Corps for permanent service in July 1939. He served in the UK and Middle East and was discharged in 1946. He was recalled in 1950 to fight in the Korean War and was finally discharged in 1951.

**Margaret Bryan** of Maidenhead, Berkshire died on 27th May 2014, aged 89. She joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service in 1943 and trained at Pontefract. As a Clerk she served in the UK, Brussels and Hamburg prior to discharge in 1946.

**Major Arthur 'John' Davie** of Taunton, Somerset died on 28th June 2014, aged 91. He joined the Army as a full career soldier in 1943, initially in the General Service Corps. He served in Italy, India, the Far East, Germany and Korea with the Royal Artillery from 1943 to 1946. He transferred to the Royal Army Service Corps and was commissioned. He then served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1965, leaving as a Major in 1978.



**William 'Bill' Dickson** of Edinburgh died on 5th July 2014, aged 93. He joined the Royal Navy in 1941 and after service on an Admiral's staff he joined the destroyer HMS Wishart which was deployed in the North Atlantic and east coast of the USA. He was discharged in 1946 as a Temporary Acting Leading Signalman.

**Robert Dunbar** of North West London died on 15th June 2014, aged 88. He joined the Royal Navy in 1943 and served with coastal forces in the North Sea and the English Channel before discharge as an Able Seaman in 1947.

**Joseph Harker** of Bradford, West Yorkshire died on 15th June 2014, aged 87. He joined the Royal Irish Fusiliers in 1944 and served in Northern Ireland and Egypt. He was in Palestine from 1945 until his discharge in 1948.

**Henry Harris** of Brighton, East Sussex died on 6th July 2014, aged 79. He joined the Royal Pioneer Corps in 1954 for National Service and served with 260 Company in Basingstoke. He was discharged as a Private in 1956.

**Herbert Hawkes** of Romford, Essex died on 23rd June 2014, aged 88. Called up for National Service in April 1946, he joined the General Service Corps and transferred to the Royal Army Service Corps two months later. He served in the UK and Italy before discharge as a Private in 1948.

**George Hewitt** of Near Wisbech, Cambridgeshire died on 6th July 2014, aged 86. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1945 and trained as a storekeeper. He was posted to Egypt where he was busy returning stores to the UK after the Israel/Palestine campaigns. He was discharged as a Corporal in 1949.

**Margaret Hillerby** of Bridlington, North Humberside died on 27th March 2014, aged 88. She joined the Women's Royal Naval Service in 1943 at the age of 18 when she served as a teleprinter operator based at Portland until she was discharged as a WREN in 1946.

**Reginald Ingram** of Basildon, Essex died on 17th June 2014, aged 85. He was called up for National Service in 1947 and joined the Rifle Brigade. He later transferred to the Kings Royal Rifle Corps in Palestine where he spent all his service. He was discharged as a Lance Corporal in 1949.

**John Lea** of Tetbury, Gloucestershire died on 13th July 2014, aged 79. He joined the 1st Royal Dragoons for National Service in 1955. He trained at Catterick and joined the Royal Dragoons at Wesendorf. He notably represented his Regiment and Division at football, leaving as a Lance Corporal in 1957.

**Francis 'Jim' Lile** of Newton Abbot, Devon died on 17th June 2014, aged 92. He served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946 in India, Sri Lanka and the UK. He was discharged as a Leading Aircraftman.

**Mary 'Peggy' Lukes** of Llandudno, Gwynedd died on 2nd July 2014, aged 97. She joined the Royal Air Force as an MT Driver and her first post was RAF Waddington, a Lancaster Bomber station. She married in 1943 and was discharged in 1945 on compassionate grounds as her husband Tom was seriously wounded in a mine explosion in Holland in May 1945 that left him blind and he became a member of St Dunstan's soonafter.

**Norman Lyth** of Stockton on Tees, Cleveland died on 9th January 2013, aged 90. He joined the Royal Navy in 1940 and after training having specialised as a Gunner he joined HMS Cleopatra which survived a torpedo and made it into Malta. He later served in Iceland and Home Waters. Following a draft to the Far East and Australia he was demobilised as an Able Seaman in 1946.

**Charles Mathieson** of Epsom, Surrey died on 19th June 2014, aged 93. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1938 and served in the UK, the Western Desert, Sicily and Italy until discharge as a Chief Technician in 1969.

**Frederick 'Fred' Page** of Guisborough, Cleveland died on 20th June 2014, aged 93. He enlisted in the Field Artillery in 1939 and, too young to go abroad, he served in London manning Ack-Ack batteries before transferring to searchlights in the south of England. He was subsequently deployed with a Field Artillery Unit through France to Belgium and Germany. After transfer to the Catering Corps in 1944 he was demobilised in the rank of Corporal in 1946.

**George 'Captain' Power** of Ringwood, Hampshire died on 30th June 2014, aged 95. He joined the 6th Bn Welch Regiment as a Territorial Army Subaltern in 1939 and served until 1941.

**Vernon Price** of Eastbourne, East Sussex died on 21st May 2014, aged 90. He served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1946 to 1948 at Aldershot.

**William Pullin** of Bath died on 1st June 2014, aged 92. He joined the Royal Artillery in 1941 and was attached to the 15th Scottish Infantry Division. He landed on Gold Beach on D-Day but was injured later when a roadside mine exploded beside him. This led to Eales disease which caused the loss of his left eye. He was discharged in 1946 as a Bombardier.



**Reginald (Reg) Roper** of Bargoed, Mid Glamorgan died on 7th July 2014, aged 89. He joined the Royal Navy in 1942. He served in the Atlantic, Pacific, North Sea and Burma as a Leading Stoker until discharge in 1946.

**Albert Salisbury BEM** of Colchester, Essex died on 12th July 2014, aged 86. He joined the Royal Air Force for National Service in 1946, training at Melton Mowbray then joining the RAF Regiment at Grantham. He served in Germany as part of the British Air Force Overseas before discharge as a Leading Aircraftman in 1948.

**John 'Stan' Sharpley** of Carlisle, Cumbria died on 3th July 2014, aged 96. A career soldier he joined the charity as a war blinded member in 1996 as a result of Nutritional Retrobulbar Neuritis from his time as a FEPOW during the Second World War. On leaving school he began life as a farm labourer and on reaching the age of 17, enlisted in his local Regiment, The Loyal Regiment (North Lancashire). After completing his basic training, he joined their 1st Battalion which was then part of the International Forces guarding Shanghai in 1936. The other Battalion at the time was the 1st Battalion The Gordon Highlanders. Whilst stationed in Shanghai these two Regiments often played football against the Japanese Forces who were not very friendly. Both Regiments were posted to Singapore towards the end of 1938 where they remained until the outbreak of the Far East war in 1941. They were then moved up country into Malaya where Stan was captured before the Fall of Singapore. He spent his captivity in Singapore where he rotated between Changi and Adam Road Goals. After nine years service in the Far East, which included three and a half years in captivity he returned to the UK in time for Christmas 1945. It was then found that his eyesight had been badly affected by Nutritional Retrobulbar Neuritis and he was discharged from the Army in July 1946. Whilst serving with his Regiment in the Far East he had made a name for himself playing hockey, and in running. He was placed 12th in the Malayan cross country championship in 1939, a competition which was open not only to members of HM Forces, but also to all expatriates living and working in Malaya. As a civilian he became a licensee managing his own public house until 1981 when he retired.

**Major Joseph Smith** of Edinburgh died on 22nd April 2014, aged 93. He joined the Royal Scots in 1939 and transferred to the East Yorkshire Regiment and after commission in May 1941, he served in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, the Kings Own Royal Regiment and the Royal Army Ordnance Corps until discharge as a Major in 1950.

**Matthew Sweeney** of Redcar, Cleveland died on 29th June 2014, aged 94. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1939, qualified as an Aircraft Mechanic and was posted to India and later Burma. He worked on US Vengeance dive bombers and was injured by a bomb in an air accident in 1943. He was discharged as a Corporal in 1946. He rejoined the RAF in 1950 and was discharged in 1956.

**George Teague** of Walsall, died on 23rd June 2014, aged 88. He joined the General Service Corps in December 1943 transferring to the Royal Army Service Corps in Apr 1944. He served in Europe and Palestine as a Private and was discharged in 1948.

**Ronald Underwood** of Washington, Tyne and Wear died on 8th July 2014, aged 81. He joined the Army Catering Corps in 1950 for National Service and served in Malaya, Aden and Yemen. After extending his service by a year to 1953 he enlisted in the Regular Army until 1968, leaving as a Corporal. He then re-enlisted in the Royal Corps of Transport from 1972 to 1977.

**Brian Whitehouse** of Derby, Derbyshire died on 15th January 2014, aged 78. He completed his National Service in the Royal Air Force from 1953 to 1955 in Bomb Disposal at RAF Detling in Kent and he was also attached all over the UK. He was discharged as an Aircraftman First Class.

**Ernest Williams** of Harborne, Birmingham died on 21st March 2014, aged 83. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1948 and served in the UK and Egypt in fire fighting and aircraft rescue. He was discharged as a Leading Aircraftman in 1953.

## Blind Veterans UK Legacy Gifts.

We are grateful to Blind Veterans UK member Ernest Donald Woodall who left a bequest to Blind Veterans UK in his Will:

Mr Woodall, previously of Southport, Merseyside died in January 2014.



**Picture:** Blind veteran Kelly Hart and Sarah Ganfield with Brighton centre manager Lesley Garven directly behind them.

