

December 2014

Review

Blind Veterans UK | St Dunstan's since 1915



On the cover: Pictured front row Kingsman Anthony Cooper Doug Beattie MC Capt (Rtd) Royal Irish Regiment,, Paul Jacobs GM, Chief Executive Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB, President Ray Hazan OBE, Chairman Tim Davis, Joe Knight and Jim Hartley. Photo Philip Meech.

Back page: Standard Bearer Brian Eldridge, Paul Jacobs GM and Chief Executive Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB at Sir Arthur Pearson's Memorial. Photo by Blind Veterans UK member Keith Harness.

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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.

Season's Greetings

All the staff and volunteers at Brighton, Llandudno, London and Sheffield, and working around the country, wish you, the members of the Blind Veterans UK family, a very Happy Christmas.

We trust you will enjoy good health and happiness during the coming year. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all.



Picture: The Three Kings from a range of Blind Veterans UK Christmas cards.

Blind Veterans UK Calendar

Activities from the Brighton centre in December.

Turkey and Tinsel Week 14th to 20th. Writers' Forum 20th.

Activities from the Llandudno centre in December.

Christmas Crafts 14th to 31st.

Activities from the Sheffield centre in December.

Christmas Theme Week 15th to 19th (full).

From the Chairman.

Your message from Tim Davis.

For me year one as Chairman is now almost complete, and in brief reflection I would like to thank a number of you for what has been a great deal of very hard work and considerable achievements made by the organisation.

In particular, I would like to thank Barry Porter for stepping up as interim CEO and his management team also, when we faced the tragic passing of Robert Leader at the beginning of the year. I'd also like to thank the growing army of volunteers, whose contribution has been nothing short of outstanding, as well as the entire staff of Blind Veterans UK, who have delivered a growing range of services to a record number of members new and old. Finally to all those supporters, donors, family members and carers, who make all that we do possible, and help join up with Blind Veterans UK to create the impact that benefits our members. Family is truly an appropriate word to use in this context — it's a big one, and particularly poignant as we approach Christmas where family values come very strongly to mind.

I can't sign off for the year, without reflecting on the many events of the Remembrance week. I, together with our new Chief Executive and President, was privileged to be able to accompany over 100 blind veterans at the Cenotaph. There were also events held at the Llandudno centre, which my wife Lyn and I attended, as well as many others up and down the country. From a personal perspective two things struck me; firstly the overwhelming support across the country for what veterans have done to give us the freedom and independence we enjoy today, as well as specific support that blind veterans have created. The rousing applause and cheers from those who lined the Cenotaph was quite unmistakeable and I'm sure touched everyone there and also those who watched on TV. Secondly, the well spirited, positive and humorous nature of all our members, I feel certain is one of the key sources of inspiration that continues to engender and drive such huge support from all quarters. Thank you to our blind veterans, for all you've done for us, and continue to do to help your colleagues, friends and others.

My very best wishes to you all over the Christmas period.

From the President.

Your message from Ray Hazan OBE.

Whilst it is a temptation to focus on our centenary year, it must not be at the cost of the past twelve months. Each centre has had a full programme of both in-house and outdoor activities. Many of you have taken part in fundraising events; in short, Blind Veterans UK is as busy as ever.

To have taken in a record number of new veterans is a credit to the organisation and the staff involved in recruitment, admission and training. In brief, we go into our centenary year in good form and proud to be furthering the standards and objectives set down by our founder and the first pioneer blind Veterans of World War I.

Roberta joins me in wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and fruitful New Year.



Picture: Blind Veterans UK President Ray Hazan OBE speaks at the Ceremony of Remembrance to Sir Arthur Pearson Bt, GBE.

From the Chief Executive.

Your message from Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB.

It gives me great pleasure to write my first introduction for the Review. I joined Blind Veterans UK in mid October and have spent these first few weeks getting a feel for the charity and its people. Although I did not know Robert Leader personally, I feel that I am now getting to know him through my discussions with members and staff, and it is clear to me that I have some very big shoes to fill! He was certainly a remarkable man and the charity is fortunate to have benefited from his sterling service and leadership over many years.

I join you having recently completed a full career in the Army. I was commissioned directly into the Army Air Corps, which was unusual at the time as most Army Air Corps officers (or Teeny-Weeny Airways as they are affectionately known by some!) transferred into the Corps from other parts of the Army once they had built some experience. My service took me to many interesting and exciting parts of our world, and shaped the person that I am today. To me the most satisfying and rewarding part of my time in the Army was working with such fine people. From Private to General, I met hosts of good, honest folk, many of whom were truly inspirational. Together they constituted that Band of Brothers that we often hear mentioned, united by a common bond of service, purpose and friendship. I have been fortunate too to work closely with the RN and RAF, especially in the flying world and on operations, where I have experienced just the same camaraderie. I said to myself as I joined the Army that I would stay for as long as I enjoyed the work and experience — and they had to kick me out some 34 years later!

So it is with considerable appreciation that I now join this special community of Blind Veterans UK, a community where that unique bond of friendship continues and that is united in the common purpose of ensuring that no one should have to battle blindness alone. My first few weeks have been spent visiting the centres, meeting members, staff and volunteers and getting a feel for the work that keeps the charity busy. I have been struck immediately by the cheerful professionalism and dedication of our staff and volunteers and by the irrepressible good humour and determination of our members. As I write this piece, I reflect particularly on the poignant and moving events of the Remembrance Weekend, of the pride and courage of the 102 members who marched at the Cenotaph that I was privileged to accompany and of the extraordinary support that is provided by that army of spouses, partners and

friends. This is a living and vibrant charity, and one that is growing by the day. It is exciting to note that in the last year we experienced our greatest number of new members, 708 to be precise; and the forecast is that we will exceed that number by some margin in this year. So we face the happy challenge of accommodating this increase in membership and ensuring that we continue to deliver top-quality support to all. This will be much of the work that keeps us busy across the charity in the coming months.

The Centenary provides another exciting focus for us as we move towards 2015. There is a plethora of activity and special events being planned by the charity and for members to enjoy. I would highlight the Royal Garden Party planned for early summer and the Service of Thanksgiving to be held at Westminster Abbey in the autumn. We are keen to get as many members as possible to these two prestigious events and will provide more details on each as soon as the dates are confirmed. We will certainly have plenty of opportunity throughout the year to celebrate in style the extraordinary vision of Sir Arthur Pearson and the achievements of St Dunstan's and Blind Veterans UK over the last 100 years.

Christmas now approaches, with the frenzy of activity that accompanies this special time. Isobel and I are fortunate this year to have our two children with us for Christmas, and we will all be piling into the car (together with two dogs!) for the long drive north to our home on the Isle of Lewis in time for Christmas Day. Wherever you are, I wish you a peaceful and enjoyable Christmas, and I very much look forward to meeting you during our Blind Veterans UK Centenary Year.



Picture: Doug Beattie MC Capt (Rtd) Royal Irish Regiment, Kingsman Anthony Cooper, Paul Jacobs GM, Chief Executive Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB, Simon Brown, President Ray Hazan OBE, Chairman Tim Davis, General Sir Peter de la Billière KCB, KBE, DSO, MC & Bar, Joe Knight and Jim Hartley.

Noticeboard.

Dates for your diary and useful information.

Blind Veterans UK Founder's Day Awards for 2015.

Our Founder's Day Awards ceremony will be held at our Llandudno Centre on 26th March 2015, the date in 1915 on which the first 16 war blinded ex-Servicemen entered the new training centre at St Dunstan's Lodge in London's Regent's Park.

This annual ceremony celebrates the special achievements of members, volunteers and staff of Blind Veterans UK.

The recipients of the 2014 Founder's Day Awards were featured in the May Review. Do you know any equally commendable candidates?

The categories are:

- i) Community Award for best contribution to their local community or the family of Blind Veterans UK by a member, spouse, widow or widower.
- ii) Training Achievement Award for the best novice on learning new skills — member only.
- iii) Creative Art Award will recognise endeavour in a creative activity and encompass art, handicrafts, sculpture and music. If practical, an example should be sent with the proposal form. If not practical, then please send a photograph — member only.
- iv) Sports Person of the Year Award will celebrate an exceptional sporting achievement during the award year — member only.
- v) Innovator of the Year Award for any person or organisation which has successfully introduced to Blind Veterans UK a beneficial device or idea.
- vi) Outstanding Achievement Award is made to a member who has achieved an outstanding level of independence via their participation in activities promoted or provided through and by Blind Veterans UK — member only.

vii) Volunteer of the Year (over 25) to a volunteer who has shown an exceptional contribution to Blind Veterans UK to the benefit of our members – registered volunteer only.

viii) Young Volunteer of the Year for a young person aged 24 or under, where they have used their enthusiasm and dedication to achieve positive things with Blind Veteran UK members – registered volunteer only.

ix) Group/Team Volunteer of the Year to a team or group of volunteers who have together worked with each other to create a positive experience that benefits our members – registered volunteer(s) only.

x) Chairman's nominations for exceptional staff achievement. Nominated by line managers.

For guidelines and proposal forms for the above, please contact Barbara Sweeney, PA to Welfare Services, Blind Veterans UK, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London, W1H 4HD, tel 020 7616 7922, email barbara.sweeney@blindveterans.org.uk The closing date for nominations is Monday 1st December 2014.

Nominations are treated in confidence and discussed by Selection Committees in January. Nominees are not informed they have been nominated until the Selection Committee has reached its decision.

Our 2015 Centenary Garden Party at Buckingham Palace.

In the November Review we told you of the very special Garden Party that we will hold at Buckingham Palace in 2015 as part of a number of centenary events that will take place throughout the year. The Palace is still to confirm the exact date of the Garden Party but they have told us that we should know by December.

This means that the dates we mentioned in the November edition of the Review to complete an application form to attend the Buckingham Palace Garden Party are no longer applicable.

As soon as we receive the date we will let you know and issue application forms to all members. Please be assured that all members and their guests will be guaranteed a place if they choose to apply.

Blind Veterans UK member and carer survey.

Please take 15 minutes to share your views with the No One Alone Campaign team.

Blind Veterans UK currently supports approximately 4,000 ex-Service men and women with severe sight loss, but we know there are many more out there who need and deserve our support. But, finding them so we can offer support is not always easy, and that's why we are asking for your help.

The No One Alone campaign team has enclosed a survey in this issue of the Review for you to complete, so that we can understand more about you, and your experiences of living with sight loss. The results of the survey will help us to focus our work better so that we can reach more veterans who could benefit from our services, and to understand more about any problems our veterans may have faced before they were referred to us for support.

Who is the survey for?

There are two parts to our survey. The first part is for all of our current vision-impaired veterans (members) and the second is for the people who care for them.

The carer may be a husband or wife, or a child, or even a friend. It's for our veterans to decide who is the person who provides the most help and support to them, which would make them a 'carer'. The only thing we ask is that the person chosen as a carer is currently caring for one of our blind veterans.

Note

If you are not a vision impaired veteran, or not caring for someone who is, please do not complete the survey.

What kind of information are we asking for?

The information we are looking for covers a range of areas:

- Background information such as your age and how long you have been with Blind Veterans UK.

- How you spend your leisure time e.g. what newspapers you read and TV channels you may watch.
- Your experiences of being diagnosed with sight loss and the support services you've used, apart from those offered by Blind Veterans UK.
- Your experiences of Blind Veterans UK.

Please read each question carefully to make sure you are clear about what is being asked, as some of them ask about our services and some do not.

Although the information required may seem quite detailed, please be assured it is completely anonymous and confidential, and we will not know who said what on the survey results.

How will the information be used?

It will be used to help us improve our marketing techniques to reach more blind veterans, and to highlight any problems that our veterans may have faced in their sight loss journey; for example we may use statistics in the media or in a report for MPs and healthcare professionals.

Can someone help me fill in the survey?

Yes that's fine, as long they answer on your behalf. For example, a wife or husband can fill in the section for their partner who is a member, as long as it's about their partners experiences. They could then share their own experiences in the 'carer' section.

Who can I contact with any questions?

Please contact Jyoti Chand on telephone: 020 7616 7999 if you have any questions about the survey or need help filling it in.

When do I need to return the survey?

Please return it by Monday 12th January 2015 in the pre-paid envelope provided. Thank you so much for your help with this.

From St Dunstan's South Africa.

The Board of Directors, management, St Dunstaners and widows wish Blind Veterans UK members, staff and Council a very happy, safe and peaceful festive season. And may 2015 bring with it much joy and blessings.

St Dunstan's South Africa had a very productive 2014 and much was done during the course of 2014 to enrich the lives of our beneficiaries and to ensure they are happy and productive. A particular highlight was the Annual National Reunion over the weekend of 12th to 14th September. The Reunion was held at the Kwalata Game Lodge near Pretoria. Everyone enjoyed the weekend activities which included some team building events, a game drive and a gala dinner on the last evening. A group of 65 people attended the Reunion.

Very best wishes for 2015.

Charles Dickson
CEO

Buy your 2015 VIP diaries.

You can now order your 2015 VIP large print diary, address book and calendar.

An A4 VIP address book is priced at £9.25

An A4 VIP telephone book is priced at £9.25

An A3 VIP 2015 wall calendar is priced at £5.25

An A6 VIP 2015 pocket diary is priced at £5.00

An A4 VIP 2015 desk diary is priced at £8.50

Please contact Nathan Clements in Procurement on telephone: 01273 391441 to discuss your requirement & payment processes.



Picture: The 2015 VIP large print wall calendar, desk diary and pocket diary.

Regent's Park 1915 — the 2015 Review short story competition.

They say everyone has a novel in them, but for the 2015 Blind Veterans UK Review short story competition we want to find out how many people have a great short story in them. We invite you to send a fictional work on the theme of 1915 at our Regent's Park training centre and a snapshot of life there for the First World War men and women of our charity. So please get super creative and get writing.

All submissions should be an original work and not previously published. The competition is open to members, their spouses, widows or widowers. The judge's decision will be final.

The three winning stories will be published in the Review in 2015.

Please follow these steps when submitting entries for the competition:

- 1) Entries should be typewritten and should not exceed 1,500 words.
- 2) Only one submission per person.

Entries must be received by the Catherine Goodier, Review Editor, Blind Veterans UK Review, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD by 27th March 2014.

Review format changes.

The Review is also available on MP3CD and USB, by email and in Braille. If you would like to change the format you receive the Review in please telephone Mrs Shernaz Kapadia on 020 7616 8368 or email: reviewformat@blindveterans.org.uk

Acts of Kindness.

Mrs Hudson thank you from me Review Editor, Catherine Goodier, for your ongoing act of kindness.

Join us in our centenary 100 Day, 100 Mile Challenge at the Llandudno centre in 2015.

From 1st January to 10th April 2015 staff at the Llandudno centre will undertake a 100 Day 100 Mile Challenge. We would like to invite any veterans who visit the centre during that time to join in. Staff and veterans will work together to cover 100 miles via a number of methods that include walking, cycling and swimming. This initiative will run alongside a 100 Day Positive Change Challenge that will invite those within the Llandudno centre's fundraising region to be sponsored to make their own positive change for 100 days. It could be for them to set a target to read rather than watch TV for an hour every day, to walk rather than catch the bus, to go without alcohol for 100 days or to do a good deed a day for 100 days.

Victoria Beech, Regional Fundraiser at the Llandudno centre, said: "Many of us start the new year with good intentions and this challenge is a great way to allow all of our staff and veterans who visit the centre to think about making positive lifestyle changes while helping us to mark the start of our Centenary Year."

Veterans who visit the centre during the 100 Day Challenge period will receive an information pack that explains how they can get involved during their stay at the centre. If you would like to take part in the 100 Day Positive Change Challenge please get in touch with Victoria Beech, Regional Fundraiser at the Llandudno Centre. You can contact Victoria for more information by email: victoria.beech@blindveterans.org.uk or telephone: 01492 864574.



Picture: R&T Manager Steve Boswell, Matt Rhodes, R&T Liaison Officer and Llandudno Town Crider Billy Baxter and Llandudno Centre Manager Mark Lovatt stand in front of a mural by blind veteran Matt Rhodes of a Royal Marine during the Falklands War that was unveiled in the Falklands Room on 7th November.

Brighton Sports & Fitness Week 9th to 13th February 2015.

For the first of our annual Sports & Fitness weeks we will make use of the brilliant facilities here at the Brighton centre. Expect swimming, gym sessions and various sports in our sports hall as well as visits to local specialist centres to take part in indoor activities. Past sports have included; indoor rock climbing, indoor cricket and football, to name a few, and fitness classes such as spin and British Military Fitness.

This week is designed to get you active, try out new exercises and sports and leave you feeling motivated to go home and keep exercising. All classes and sports will be designed for members with various fitness levels so do not be put off if you can't run a marathon! If you would like to book on to this week or get more information please contact the Sports and Recreation Department on telephone: 01273 391463 or email: sports&rec@blindveterans.org.uk

Thank you from the Llandudno Admin Team.

Suzanne Evanson, Annie Gillam and Jane Keane would like to thank everyone who sponsored them in the Fire Walk. They completed it on Saturday 8th November, raising £320 against a target of £250 for Blind Veterans UK.



Picture: Jane Keane, Llandudno Centre Administrator, walked over hot coals for the sponsored Fire Walk at the Llandudno centre on Saturday 8th November 2014. The very successful Fire walk was organised by Victoria Beech, Regional Fundraiser at the centre. To date the Fire Walk and winter market have raised over £2,300 with money still coming in.

The Listening, Advice & Counselling Service by Emma Swayne, Case Management Team at Wellbeing Solutions.

It is now almost three years since the confidential Listening, Advice & Counselling Service (or Counselling Service, for short) was launched at Blind Veterans UK. We thought we'd give everyone a quick update on how it's going and a summary of what it's all about, as well as an invitation to try it out if you have not already done so.

But before we go any further, a quick reminder of what the service is: The Listening, Advice & Counselling Service is a free and confidential support service, offering Blind Veterans UK members, their families and their carers confidential counselling and/or expert advice on any subject. Appointments can be arranged by Welfare Officers or by contacting us directly, using the telephone number given at the end of this article. It's free and confidential.

Since February 2012, we have provided counselling and emotional support services to members of Blind Veterans UK and members' relatives and we're really pleased with how the service has been received.

We've provided counselling sessions in all parts of the UK and, mostly, in members' homes.

The feedback from members who have used the service has been heart warming and moving. The service is confidential, so we can't talk about actual people we've worked with. However, what we can say, is that a wide range of members have benefited, ranging from gentlemen in their nineties to younger members in their twenties. We help people come to terms with their very recent sight loss and talk with people who lost their sight over half a century ago. By no means are all conversations about sight loss and associated issues, we talk to people about everything and anything that is worrying them, from relationships and money worries to family problems, matters relating to property or arrangements for the future.

We find that whatever our age, circumstances, background or role in life, from time to time we all have problems — whether personal, family or practical.

Talking confidentially to a counsellor or advisor can help us understand a problem, make a tough decision, try a different approach or just learn how to cope with a situation that we can't change. Our aim is to help you find your own answer or solution to whatever is worrying you.

We have a wonderful team of counsellors who enjoy meeting and working with members through this scheme. All of our counsellors are carefully selected, fully trained, professionally qualified and properly insured. They are accredited with the appropriate and recognised professional body in their field of practice, for example, the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). We also want to reassure everyone that it's a confidential service. What you discuss with a counsellor is private, between you and them. This is an important ethical principle at the heart of counselling. Your confidentiality and anonymity would only ever be broken in the most extreme circumstances, for example, if a counsellor considered that you may pose a significant danger to yourself or others around you.

So, to everyone within the Blind Veterans UK family, please try this service out if you would like support. Remember, if you would like to talk in confidence to a friendly and sympathetic counsellor or are looking for useful, practical advice, the Listening, Advice & Counselling Service is there for you. We can help with any issue, problem or subject that may be troubling you. Alternatively, you may just feel a bit low or sad and want someone understanding to have a chat with. You do not pay for the counselling.

There are two ways to get in touch: either ask your Welfare Officer to refer you or call us directly. Our number is Freephone telephone: 0800 328 1437. We answer the telephone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We're delighted to be working with Blind Veterans UK to provide this wonderful service and look forward to helping many more members and their families and carers in the months to come.

The service is free and everything you say to a counsellor is treated with the strictest confidence. You can contact The Listening, Advice & Counselling Service on:

Freephone 0800 328 1437. Via mobile: 800 328 1437.
Via Minicom: 01482 661 911.

The Unknown Warrior.

The unveiling of the Cenotaph on Whitehall on the 11th November 1920 was combined with a ceremony to mark the passing of the body of the Unknown Warrior for re-burial in Westminster Abbey. We bring you a first hand account from the November 1920 Review by a war blinded First World War veteran of our charity, Herbert Thompson of the West Yorkshire Regiment.

The ceremony in the Abbey left an indelible impression on my mind — a feeling of ineffable sadness and melancholy, yet there was a message of inspiration and hope. I felt as if the spirit of the Unknown Warrior had whispered in my ear, "Courage brother; hope on."

I was one of the lucky three; chosen by ballot, from 170 blind from the men at Regent's Park.

I understood all; in addition, every step and every movement was explained to me by an accompanying guide. The atmosphere was impregnated with meaning. The Great Alchemist, by some miracle vouchsafed to me a more powerful vision than those who had eyes to see. Clear cut pictures of France and Flanders rose up before me. The dread solemnity of the occasion stirred the most poignant memories. I felt with my comrades almost ashamed that I had given so little, while he who lay sleeping by us had given all.

I stood near the tomb of a mighty king. Not far away were the hundred VCs. I heard them limp to their places and knew who they were. The solemn rolling of the drums and the slow martial music of the massed bands meant more to me, perhaps, than to other people. When the long roll of the reveille echoed away in the distance I thought a cloud had passed away by the sunshine.

Then with my comrades I was granted a privilege denied to all others. Each of us had been given a chrysanthemum before we left Regent's Park. Others had placed their wreaths at the foot of the coffin. A hand guided us, and we were allowed to bestow our tribute on the coffin itself. We spoke in the name of our blind comrades, and I felt a supreme emotion as my fingers brushed the resting place of the unknown hero. I came to the Abbey glad that I had been chosen from among so many. I went away sorrowing, but with the message of hope locked in my heart.

The Great Unknown by RCO Cowley 1920.

A Tribute to the Unknown Soldier buried in Westminster Abbey.

Of all the greatest heroes now at rest,
Of all the gallant men who've journeyed west —
The greatest is the man who fell — alone —
And, in passing, left a name — The Great Unknown.

He freely gave his noble life that we might live in peace in England fair and free;
He faced the galling dangers — undismayed,
And, when his life was asked, he gave it — unafraid.

The greatest love of man is to this end —
To sacrifice his life to save his friend,
And in that, keep the great command of Him who said,
"Ye die for him — ye die for Me."

So let us all go down on bended knee,
And honour him for all the world to see,
Oh mothers come and kneel before thine own —
Of all the greatest in the Great Unknown.

Before the war Raymond Cyril Oscar Cowley was a Librarian Assistant. He enlisted into the 1st London Rifle Brigade on 5th January 1915 as a Rifleman. He lost his sight through exposure when he was a Prisoner of War in Germany for two and a half years and was badly treated by his captors.

He was admitted to Regent's Park on 29th October 1919 where he trained in shorthand typing and Braille. He also took elocution and singing lessons as it was thought he could in some small way perform as a concert party artist. In 1922 he went to work at the Inland Revenue at Somerset House and in 1938 started masseur training. In July 1939 he passed the anatomy and physiology examination and in 1940 became a fully qualified masseur and electrotherapist. He died on 21st March 1944.

Military Week Remembrance dinner at the Llandudno centre. By Catherine Goodier.

The Mess call was made by Billy Baxter, the dinner gong sounded and we were piped into the grand dining room in the Llandudno centre by a lone piper. It was the start of what was to be an unforgettable, outstanding, fun and moving evening, and one that I believe would have impressed even our Patron, HM the Queen. The Llandudno centre is a place that dazzles, and tonight the light from its brilliance must surely been visible across the universe.

It was Friday 7th November and we were gathered at the Llandudno centre for the Military Week Remembrance dinner. The walls of the dining room and tables were adorned with poppies and programmes for the evening sat on each table. Steve Boswell who organised the evening was an outstanding President and Billy Baxter an equally outstanding Mr Vice.

Steve Boswell started proceedings when he introduced two poems. The first Fallen Saints, by Paul Jacobs GM. The second poem, In Flanders Fields by John McRae, was part of a rousing compilation by Dennis Sarginson played on a large screen that took up one wall in the enormous wood panelled dining room. It began as bells chimed to signal our entry into war on 4th August 1914. As we listened to the recording of In Flanders Field, Elgar's Nimrod played in the background and after a rousing crescendo the disembodied voice of an actor finished with the immortal words 'If ye break faith with us who die we shall not sleep, though poppies grow in Flanders fields' as the bells chimed once again. They echoed into Abide With Me a hymn that was composed by Reverend Henry Francis Lyte, Sir Arthur Pearson's great-grandfather. Towards its end the Last Post sounded over Abide With Me. It was moving, it was perfect. It was the type of genius that we expect at the Llandudno centre. Led by the President (Steve Boswell) everyone applauded Dennis Sarginson for his moving compilation.

Mr Vice (Billy Baxter) delivered his unique Grace, which you can hear with the full recording of the evening in the Talking Review and a harpist played throughout dinner.

Steve Baxendale and all of the staff of TNS Catering surpassed themselves with food and service that was equal to that of a Michelin starred restaurant. The vanilla panacotta with forest fruit compote in the shape of a poppy was a work of art.

Our glasses were charged as Mr Vice proposed the loyal toast to our Patron HM The Queen. He was followed by a heartfelt and witty speech from Mark Lovatt, the Llandudno centre manager who thanked everyone for attending and complimented Steve Boswell and Billy Baxter on a wonderful evening. To further applause and whistles he congratulated The Sports & Recreation team Paula Sartain, Dewi Roberts and Lee Evans on an outstanding Military Week and for delivering so many great activity and themed weeks throughout the year. Mark, who left the Royal Air Force three years ago as a Squadron Leader, spoke of the importance of Remembrance and of the service and parade that would take place at the Llandudno Cenotaph on Sunday. To finish he introduced our Chairman Tim Davis and his wife Lyn who were the guests of honour and the Chairman made a speech that was very well received.

Jim Hodgkinson responded when he spoke of his father, Private JW Hodgkinson MM, 2nd Bn Lancashire Fusiliers who was awarded the Military Medal for bravery during the First World War. It was a most moving speech. Mr Vice recited Major Hastings Brook's parody of If. Major Hastings Brook was a First World War member of our charity who lost his sight in the world's first tank battle. Mr Vice's final toast was to our glorious founder Sir Arthur Pearson Bt, GBE.

To close the evening the President introduced Grenville Jones who recited parting is such sweet sorrow from Romeo and Juliet before we were piped out by a lone piper. I had the pleasure to sit with Fred Clark and Daphne and John Dix and Gordon Woodyatt the Parade Commander responsible for the Llandudno Cenotaph Parade and Jacky Gracey who works at the Llandudno centre. It was a sublime evening and I would urge you to consider attending next year. Billy Baxter once quoted someone who said that the building gives a big hug to all who enter it, and I wholeheartedly agree, as the people in it make it a special, warm and welcoming place.



Picture: The magnificent dining room, its walls and tables adorned with poppies.

Victory Over Blindness — Ceremony of Remembrance for Sir Arthur Pearson, Bt, GBE. By Catherine Goodier.

'Blindness has been dealt with by him in a way never echoed in history, and therefore in that alone perhaps he has his monument — an everlasting monument in the hearts of the blind and their friends.'

That epitaph was written by Bruce Bairnsfather in The Graphic following the untimely death of our founder Sir Arthur Pearson Bt, GBE who died at the age of 55 on 9th December 1921. Ninety three years later that tribute still rings true.

Each year during the Remembrance weekend our President Ray Hazan OBE and his wife Robbie lead a Ceremony of Remembrance in Hampstead Cemetery at the graveside of Sir Arthur Pearson Bt, GBE who was referred to as The Chief.

This year's service took place on Saturday 8th November. Ray Hazan OBE spoke of Sir Arthur Pearson, his vision and his life's great work that was so nobly done, as although he passed to his last long rest in 1921, his memory lives forever in his imperishable work that continues today through Blind Veterans UK. As Brian Eldridge lowered the Blind Veterans UK Standard former Rifleman, 25 year old Paul Jacobs GM, placed a wreath on Sir Arthur's memorial with Chief Executive Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB.

Sir Arthur Pearson's funeral took place on 13th December 1921 near to our then headquarters in Regent's Park, at Holy Trinity Church in Marylebone. It was conducted by the Bishop of London and one of those assisting was the Rev Harold Gibb, who had himself been blinded in the First World War. Nearly 1,500 blind veterans assembled in London, but the total number of those who came to pay tribute is even more startling, and was reported on worldwide.

Scenes unparalleled in their pathos were witnessed at Hampstead Cemetery, where the body of Sir Arthur Pearson was lowered to rest. War blinded men from all over the country had come from every part of Great Britain — the Battalions of the Blind, to honour their dead Chief. There were also large numbers of the civilian blind and with the attendance of the public, the great congregation at the cemetery totalled nearly 3,000 people. There were 300 floral tributes, one from our first Royal Patron HRH Queen Alexandra, which included a handwritten tribute.

The extract below was written by Ian Fraser, our second Chairman who was blinded on The Somme. It featured in the 1921 special edition of the Review that was produced to mark the death of Sir Arthur Pearson Bt, GBE.

The Chief.

When on that Friday morning the news first came to me that the Chief — the man who, to one and all of us has been the most living, the most dominant influence of our lives — was no more, it seemed to me that something impossible, something outside the range of thought had happened. Every effort I made to force my brain to think of other things — of the day's work that lay before me, of the movements and appointments I had planned — brought me up again and again before the blank wall that had been reared in front of me.

Universal tribute has been paid to our Chief by the world's greatest writers and its greatest men and women. My words can add little to the regard in which posterity will forever hold him. Only this would I say. By the death of Sir Arthur Pearson the world has lost one of its greatest and best loved citizens, the whole blind community has lost a leader who has given them — men, women and children — far more than material help, the heart and hope to scorn their handicap. But we men have lost the great Chief who made us fighting men again. Let us see to it that we maintain for all time the victories he has helped us to win. Our pride in that shall be his noblest epitaph.



Picture: Blind Veterans UK President Ray Hazan OBE speaks of the debt of gratitude to our founder Sir Arthur Pearson Bt, GBE. **Photos:** Keith Harness.

Rob Baker, Blind Veterans UK Archivist read two tributes to our founder, one of which is reproduced below. It is by a First World War blind veteran W J Voss of the Royal Field Artillery and is entitled The Light of the Mind.

'A few days after my arrival at the Chelsea Hospital I received a visit from that remarkable blind man, the late Sir Arthur Pearson, and like everyone else who came into contact with him I was immediately struck by his extraordinarily strong and captivating personality. Seated in a chair alongside my bed he took my hand between both of his, and for a good half hour talked to me of blindness and how victory over it could be achieved. I lay on my back drinking in his words; they were soft and healing to my wounds and shattered nerves. He lifted me out of the abysmal depths of gloom and mental depression, unmasked future possibilities, and proved to me convincingly that blindness was only a handicap to life, and not the end of it. When he had gone I saw all sorts of new vistas and possibilities rising before me; they were rosy and full of hope; what this great hearted man had just said had given me a new lease of life.'



Picture: Blind Veterans UK Archivist Rob Baker read tributes by WJ Voss and Sir Philip Gibbs at the Ceremony of Remembrance for Sir Arthur Pearson.

On the day of his funeral Sir Arthur Pearson's coffin was supported to the graveside upon a wheeled bier. Before it walked a boy scout, carrying a floral Union Flag, surmounted by a dove, bearing the letters V.O.B. Victory Over Blindness.

Upon the coffin lid was placed a wreath from our Royal Patron HRH Queen Alexandra that bore the inscription in her own handwriting.

With deepest regret and admiration for the noble benefactor of the Blind.
Life's race well run,
Life's work well done,
Life's crown well won,
Now comes rest.
From Alexandra.

The wreath from Lady Pearson, composed of violets in the form of an anchor, was lowered with the coffin into the grave. Then came the march past and silent farewell of the men for whom Sir Arthur had done so much — hand upon the shoulder of the man in front, each man paused for a moment at the open grave, and then onward again with memory alone to recall the loved leader.

After the service the 1,500 men assembled for a reunion before they returned home to their work and calling, back to their brave fight with fate, in their noble defiance of destiny. With each one went the unconquerable spirit of he who had been the harbinger of light, immortal, imperishable, the light of a deathless soul, Sir Arthur Pearson, Bt, GBE our founder.



Picture: Sir Arthur Pearson's funeral procession at Hampstead Cemetery on 13th December 1921.

Remembrance Sunday at the Cenotaph. By Catherine Goodier.

On Sunday 9th November 2014 in silence unbroken, save for the footfalls, passed the long column of the men and women of Blind Veterans UK and their escorts as they found their place on Whitehall and stood before God, the Queen and the Cenotaph. At 11am the field guns fired on Horse Guards Parade and during the great silence each person became immersed in their own deeply personal thoughts as they recalled friends, comrades and loved ones. It was a time to remember, a time to mourn, as some cast their mind back 75 years, while for others it was just a few short years. They stood in silent dignity and embodied the pledge 'We Will Remember Them' as they focused without distraction on the enormity of war.

Each year the men and women of Blind Veterans UK show the world how the courage of the soul, the strength of spirit, and the support of their peers and staff has helped them to triumph and gain victory over blindness.

Stephen Weir, who was escort to Peter King, summed up that courage when he said: "It was an amazing yet humbling experience at the Cenotaph when I was honoured to be invited as an escort for Blind Veterans UK in this very special year. How can one describe the emotion that I felt to be amongst and march with 10,000 other veterans, from so many different conflicts from the Second World War, to lads who were blinded and sustained other terrible injuries in Afghanistan. It brought tears to my eyes on more than one occasion during the weekend. The support from the public was fantastic and it made me proud to be British and to have served for my country. My thoughts were with the family and friends of the many men and women who never returned, from those I served with to the Unknown Warrior."

Billy Miller was the only member of the charity on parade who was blinded during the Second World War. He was escorted by Kevin Rixon, a former member of the Fleet Air Arm, who has supported our members for many years. Billy said: "During the Service of Remembrance I thought about my old school mates as we were all young during the war and sadly several of them were killed.

"This year was my last parade at the Cenotaph after 67 consecutive years. I was 24 when I came to work in London for our charity, and it was the first year that I

attended the Cenotaph. It wasn't organised like it is today as we made our way under our own steam to meet up and there were a handful of First World War and Second World War fellows who would attend. Of course they are all gone now. It was a long time before Ian Fraser was invited to become President of the Royal British Legion and they started to organise the Remembrance Sunday service.

"I knew so many of the First World War men of our charity as I worked as a telephone operator at Headquarters from early 1948 when they moved from Park Crescent to Marylebone Road and I think of them generally. I left my job in Leeds and moved to London as I was young and single and had everything to gain and nothing to lose — and I gained a wife and a family. Unfortunately my wife has now passed. After 67 consecutive parades I've decided that it's time to stop playing soldiers and with some sadness this was my final year."



Picture: Billy Miller and Kevin Rixon on Horse Guards Parade ahead of the Service of Remembrance. It was Billy's final parade after 67 years.

Billy was only 15 when war was declared and at the age of 16 he joined the Home Guard. He was blinded in Italy during his service in the Royal Engineers. Billy continued: "I didn't go to Church Stretton, but was one of a group who went straight to the Brighton centre to get it up and running after the war in April 1946. The only other person who is alive today from that group is Alf Dodgson. I first met Alf as we sat on the concrete floor of a wooden hut during basket making tuition. I can't think of any members of the staff from that time who are still alive. We had the summer holidays as usual in August and in September that year everybody came down from Church Stretton and then the FEPOWs arrived by the coach load.

"Going back to Italy after I was blinded, a New Zealand ophthalmologist and his wife were working as a team in the hospital and they did an experiment on me to see if they could get any sight back. It failed with one eye, but it worked with the other, although the sight wasn't very good. It was shortly after the end of the war and when they transferred to a hospital in Naples they asked if they could take me with them. An ambulance and an orderly arrived and when we arrived at the hospital there was a commotion outside the ambulance. I waited for all hell to let loose and was told not to worry as it was only the German prisoners of war as they wanted to know who would carry my stretcher in.

"The door opened and I thought they'll drop me on my head and this is my lot. However when we got inside they halted at the door to the first floor ward where an Italian band was playing. The sister signalled to them to take me to a bed on the other side of the ward and they marched right through the band and knocked them flying! They put me on the floor and stood me up and two of the Germans stayed for a while. We waited and one of them who was in charge told the other to go and wait downstairs too. The remaining German stayed with me and watched as the Italians picked up their chairs and instruments and sorted themselves out and started to play. He turned to me and gave me a pat on the back and as I knew *danke schön* I said that and we parted company. It couldn't have been friendlier. A few short months before we had been sworn enemies, but he stood with me as lovely as could be. The Germans were all prisoners of war and they were perfectly all right with me."

In 1949 with Sir Ian and Lady Fraser and their chauffeur, Billy went to Hampstead Cemetery where they paid homage to Sir Arthur Pearson at his graveside in an unofficial Memorial Service for The Chief.

Colin Williamson, the Review's Contributing Editor said: "Remembrance makes me think about all those young men who gave their lives so that we can take pleasure from the freedom that we enjoy today. It also makes me think about my late father who served during the Second World War with the Desert Rats and all of the hardships that he and other young men like him endured during that long war. And also of the young men and women who have paid the ultimate price in recent conflicts. It's an emotional day for me."



Picture: Simon Brown, Colin Williamson, Neil Graham and Billy Black.



Picture: Pete and John Walker.



Picture: Charlie Daly, Malcolm Cameron and Roger Hammond.



Picture: Leonard Prime, General Sir Peter de la Billière KCB, KBE, DSO, MC & Bar and Paul Jacobs GM.

The November 1918 edition of the Review included the following with regard to the cessation of hostilities and the mood at Regent's Park:

Soon after 11 o'clock on Monday [11th November], when the maroons were heard to go off, our band gathered themselves together and made a tour of the West End, adding much noise and happiness to the already deafening din and overwhelming joy of the streets, while a number of British and Colonial blinded men found their way to Buckingham Palace and were admitted through the dense crowds to the courtyard, where they were able to take a conspicuous part in the acclamations which were accorded to their Majesties the King and Queen, who appeared on the balcony of the Palace.

At Regent's Park itself the pent up enthusiasm of four years of waiting was let loose, and happiness and excitement were the order of the day. In the evening Sir Arthur Pearson gave a dinner at 21 Portland Place, at which were present a number of officers and others. The terms of the armistice were read from the evening paper, and were heartily acclaimed, and appropriate toasts were proposed and warmly received.

On Tuesday a congregation of close on a thousand people were assembled in the outer lounge when a short Thanksgiving Service was most ably conducted by the Rev EN Sharp, our Honorary Chaplain. The band set off again followed by about 100 men and VADs and friends. Their route took them past Buckingham Palace, where they marched past the Royal Family playing "God Save the King."

A newspaper correspondent wrote: As illustrative of the splendid spirit of the men of St Dunstan's, a number of them sallied forth 'all on their own' and accompanied by all the VADs and others they could press into service, marched in triumph through the streets of London headed by their band, with two or three motor vehicles crammed to the utmost capacity.

It did one's heart good to see them stepping gaily through the crowded streets, while the onlookers roared themselves hoarse, and the famous band blared out magnificently. We ourselves happened to see them going along Fleet Street, having chased them down Regent Street, across Trafalgar Square, along the Embankment, up Carmelite Street, and so into Fleet Street, enroute for the Strand and Buckingham Palace, and the best tribute paid to them was given by a sympathetic policeman, who, when we enquired as to which way they had gone, indicated the road with a jolly laugh and said: 'You aren't far behind them, they were swinging along all on their own.'

'All on their own' — that is the keynote. Surely there is no finer testimony to the work that is being carried out for our blinded soldiers than that little phrase.



Picture: From left to right: Billy Drinkwater, Ken Facal, Craig Webb, Kingsman Anthony Cooper and Rob Long.

'All on their own' resonates through our work today with older and younger members alike.

Young war blinded members of Blind Veterans UK who took part in the Remembrance Sunday parade at the Cenotaph were Billy Drinkwater, Ken Facal, Kingsman Anthony Cooper and Rob Long. With Paul Jacobs GM they were blinded in Afghanistan and along with Simon Brown, who was blinded in Iraq, they have each demonstrated strength and courage as they have gone on to rebuild their lives. They joined the men who had been blinded decades earlier who included Billy Miller, Mike Tetley MBE, Ray Hazan OBE, Charlie Daly, Pete Walker, Terry Bullingham and Steve Tuffen.

Dave Burrows who served in the Fleet Air Arm has been an escort at the Cenotaph on 28 occasions since 1983 when his service would permit. Dave said: "As we stand before the Cenotaph I look at the young men and women in the crowd and wonder how they would cope with conscription into a war on the scale of both world wars. I hope that they will never know. A lot of other thoughts come in to my mind, but that thought is at the forefront each year."



Picture: Charles Hanaway and Dave Burrows. Charles wore his father's First World War Military Medal.



Picture: Janet Hayes, Niki Kokonas, Sam Dyer and Louise Collins.

For the last 11 years the weekend has been organised by Niki Kokonas, Reunions & Cenotaph Manager, and it was with sadness that she announced this was her final year as she has moved too far to commute to London. The Remembrance weekend is a meeting of friends as blind veterans, their escorts, spouses, widows and staff take time to catch up. Four members of staff from the Brighton centre who attend each year are Bill Lyth, Steve Janering, Win Jordan and Stan Bowers who retired in 2013. Win Jordan, who served in the Women's Royal Army Corps, takes time to think of the soldiers she knew who were killed in Northern Ireland.



Pictures: Margaret Eldridge, Carol Sadler, Win Jordan, Wendy Kane and Maria Pikulski. Steve Janering, Security Supervisor Brighton was escort to Ken Purver and far right Jerry Greville-Heygate was escort to Gordon Paxford.

Peter O'Malley speaks of an enjoyable conversation with our new Chief Executive: "Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplan CB stopped to talk to me as he walked with Paul Jacobs GM to Horse Guards. He was in the Army Air Corps and wanted to know all about me, he had spotted my light blue Barrie as it was just like his. I got the impression that he is genuinely interested in each member."



Picture: Bill Lyth, Security Manager at the Brighton centre with George Hind and Linda Brotherton with Jean Davies.



Picture: Former Membership Managers Jeremy Hinton, Mike Watson MBE, David Habershon and the current Membership Manager Mike Purse.



Picture: Eamon Costello and Mick Scanlon.



Picture: Charlie Eastwood, Tommie Knoal, Ian Clarke, and Peter O'Malley.



Picture: Guy Keeling, Steve Nixon and Welfare Officer Dave Stretton.

Guy brought with him good wishes from his father, our former Chairman Major General Andrew Keeling CB, CBE, RM. Former Royal Marine Steve Nixon is the reason that he became involved with our charity in 1992.



Picture: Tony Harbour centre.



Picture: Cath Higgins.

The Remembrance Sunday parade ended as members and escorts marched past the saluting base on Horse Guards and answered the call 'Eyes Right' as they took the salute from HRH The Duke of York. Each person deserved the applause of the crowds as they marched past.

We returned to the Marriott Hotel for the post Cenotaph Parade lunch when speeches were made by the Chairman Tim Davis, President Ray Hazan OBE and Chief Executive Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB.

Mike Purse, Membership Manager, thanked Niki Kokonas for organising another outstanding Remembrance weekend and for 11 years of service before he presented her with flowers. Niki responded with a heartfelt speech of thanks. Special thanks must also go to Membership Administrators Jenny Barley, Sarah Clark, Alison Cushing and Suzanne Walker who are also responsible for the smooth running and all the Welfare staff who help over the weekend.

Amateur Radio Week 3rd to 10th October. By Ray Hazan OBE.

"This is MX0SBV calling CQ and by for a call". In plain English, means "This is the club station of Blind Veterans UK looking for any other station to respond". This call could be heard emanating from the radio shack for the week. The response could come from a fellow Radio amateur 500 yards away or from the other side of the world!

I took up the hobby as you could 'travel' the world without leaving your house. Since everyone is 'blind' on the end of a microphone, the vision impaired are at no disadvantage.

You need a Radio Amateur licence and must pass an exam on basic radio procedure. To begin transmitting on low power requires a mere weekend of preparation before attempting the exam at the lowest level.

Equipment, a transceiver, microphone, power supply and aerial can be borrowed from the RAIBC (Radio Amateur Invalid and Blind Club). Transceivers have become very 'blind friendly' these days. The inclusion of an optional speech chip within the radio set gives the 'white stick' operator access to meters and other vital information formerly available only with the help of special additional items.

Whilst communication via the computer means little interference or disruption, talking via the air-waves is something magic by itself.

The hobby has much to offer in its variety — trying to contact as many countries as possible, striving to contact every area within the UK; constructing your own radio; experimenting with aerials; moon bouncing signals; operating a safety net; communicating and keeping up languages and Morse code, are to name some of the various challenges.

The Blind Veterans UK Amateur Radio Society was formed in the mid 1970s and meets for the duration of a week at a time in our Brighton and Llandudno centres. The society fulfils an important role in spreading the word about the charity's existence and work.

Lest We Forget. Armistice Day Service at the new War Memorial at the Brighton centre. By Catherine Goodier.

At 11am on 11th November the official dedication of the War Memorial in the inner garden at the Brighton centre took place in a ceremony that was led by Bill Lyth. Ted Pepper who has been a member of the charity since 1968 placed a wreath in honour of the fallen and the wounded. Esther Freeman, Membership Activities Manager stood in contemplative silence as she held a large poppy wreath that had been made in the Art & Craft Workshop.

The memorial was a team effort, but the concept for its design came from Dave Bryant, Art & Craft Instructor. Here Dave talks about the war memorial. "I initially came up with the idea about three years ago when a number of our members, who weren't in the best of health, were unable to attend the Remembrance weekend at the Cenotaph in London. I thought it would be good for them to have a place here where they could remember their comrades and pay respect. To make that a reality I copied an idea from Leigh Gibbins who also works in the Art & Craft Workshop as he'd built a water feature in a care home in Southwick.

"The war memorial is made of new railway sleepers to represent a First World War trench. Water runs down the memorial to represent the conditions that the soldiers faced with the continual rain and mud. That to me made it come alive and it has become a living monument. To represent the present day conflicts I wanted something modern and stainless steel bars are in between the wooden sleepers, as the juxtaposition represents the coming together of the past and present wars and conflicts. It is a memorial for all generations, including future generations.

"The memorial is to mark a centenary since the outbreak of the First World War, and our 2015 centenary, as we were founded for those First World War men. It recognises the sacrifice of our members who were wounded and the tragedy of the loss of life of so many. I hope it's something that everyone can come and visit and perhaps even the general public. It's something that we're all very proud of and we were pleased that so many attended the Armistice Day Service. It's something that the team responsible for the memorial firmly believed in and we'd like to thank everyone who has supported us."

The team responsible for the war memorial included Leigh Gibbins, Bill Lyth, Vanessa Young and Lesley Styche. Thanks must also go to Stewart Butler Builders.



Picture: Blind Veterans UK Standard Bearer Nigel Whiteley, Leigh Gibbins, Ted Pepper, Bill Lyth and Dave Bryant at the Brighton centre War Memorial.



Llandudno centre visit to North Wales Police Firearms Training Unit. By Colin Williamson, Contributing Editor.

Beneficiaries attending the Military themed week held recently at our Llandudno centre spent an interesting day at the North Wales Police Firearms Training Unit ranges at Ruthin in the Vale of Clwyd where they were shown the weapons and tactics used by the unit when deployed to an incident.

After an engrossing and detailed presentation by the team leader regarding the teams role as authorised firearms officers (AFO's) within the North Wales police force followed by a brief talk on the various firearms incidents that the unit have attended over the past year members of Blind Veterans UK got to handle some of the weapons that the unit carry with them in their armed response vehicles (ARV's) when called to an incident. The vehicles, usually marked and unmarked BMW X5 series cars, are used by many of the police firearms units within the UK because of the high seating position which provide good all round observation and more essentially, adequate room for a firearms officer to adopt an 'in the shoulder' firing position if required. Many forces, including the North Wales police force, regularly use Traffic ARV's which carry out normal road policing duties but which can be diverted to a firearms incident when required.

The weapons used by the firearms unit and passed around for our beneficiaries to handle were a Glock pistol, assorted Heckler & Koch carbines, a Remington pump action shotgun, a Taser (a pistol-like device that can incapacitate an individual through the use of an electrical current), a baton gun that fires non-lethal rubber or plastic bullets and a telescopic baton. Other items of equipment shown to the group were protective helmets, ballistic vests and shields, a door entry device known as an 'Enforcer' and 'speedcuff' handcuffs.

After the presentation and the chance to handle some of the equipment we were then driven up to the ranges to witness some vehicle interception techniques which involved unmarked ARV's stopping a suspect vehicle containing armed criminals. There was a lot of shouting, lots of shots going off and all handled extremely professionally, as you would expect from an elite unit.

After all of that excitement former Authorised Firearms Officer and now Blind Veterans UK Activities Team Leader Mark Hollis presented the unit with a Blind Veterans UK plaque in token of our appreciation.

I spoke with some of the beneficiaries who came along on the visit and asked them if they had enjoyed the day.

Jeffrey Warn, or Jeff as he prefers to be known, hails from the picturesque market town of Barnard Castle in Teesdale, County Durham and is a former Aircraft Engineer with the Fleet Air Arm, serving in the UK and the Far East. After leaving the services, Jeff worked for the Sultan of Oman's Air Force and upon returning to the UK joined the Fire Service until retirement. He has been a member of Blind Veterans UK for just over three years.

"I really enjoyed the visit and found it to be very interesting. This is the first themed week I've been on and I'm having a great time. Since I became a member I can't get enough of Blind Veterans UK and the more I do the happier I am! I live on my own so there's nothing stopping me from attending other themed weeks and coming along to the centres for training and holidays".

Another beneficiary along for the week was former Grenadier Guardsman Richard Cruice. Richard served in the UK, Northern Ireland and in Germany where he was posted to Berlin and the British Military Train which from the end of World War Two to the end of the Cold War ran daily from West Germany through East Germany to West Berlin. "This is my first themed week and I chose this one especially because I wanted to attend Remembrance Day with Blind Veterans UK at Llandudno as it's the nearest centre to my home in Manchester. Since I became a member two years ago I've been on an I.T. course at the Sheffield centre and enjoyed that and I'm looking at attending some of the younger events that are held around the country and possibly Activity Week down at the Brighton centre as well as some further IT training back at Sheffield".

Michael Surgenor joined the Army in 1987 and was posted to various locations including Northern Ireland, mainland UK, Belize, Cyprus and Germany. He's been a member of Blind Veterans UK for just over a year and was put in touch with the charity by a consultant at his local eye hospital who had heard about our recent name change to Blind Veterans UK and thought it would be a good idea for Michael to apply for membership.

"Before joining Blind Veterans UK I was a bit of a hermit. I didn't go out anywhere and lived a reclusive lifestyle. I lacked confidence and I suppose a little bit of self-esteem. When my Welfare Officer got in touch and arranged for me to visit to the Llandudno centre I was a bit apprehensive. To be truthful, I

even telephoned him the night before I was due to travel to say that I wasn't going to attend the week. Gladly, he talked me out of it and I'm really pleased that he did! I feel extremely grateful and humbled by what Blind Veterans UK have done for me and my family. I'm a different person and my family have noticed that. I love listening to the older veterans telling their stories and I also enjoy being part of the younger group. I'm really pleased that I came along on the visit to the firearms unit as it's been quite a while since I've handled a weapon and this brings back some great memories for me about my time in the Forces. I've also heard a lot about Project Gemini and that is something that I'd like to be involved in."

Another Grenadier Guardsman who attended the week was Paul Chadwick. "I'm into anything military and I also love coming to the Llandudno centre so this week was a definite for me; it's one week in the calendar that I couldn't miss. I particularly like the way that the centre has been designed and I think that the staff are wonderful. I thought that the visit to the police ranges was a great idea and I especially enjoyed the weapon handling. It's been a long time since I had someone in my sights!"

In 1940 a young Alan Saunders left school aged 17 and joined the Royal Marines Commandos. He went on to take part in the disastrous Raid on Dieppe in 1942 which saw British, American and Canadian Forces launch an attack on the German occupied port. The attack was repulsed and over 3,500 men (60% of the original attacking force) were either killed, wounded or captured. Alan was one of the lucky ones. Later in the war he took part in the Sicily landings, codenamed Operation Husky, and was medically discharged in 1945 due to sustaining multiple gunshot wounds. I asked Alan why he put his name down for the week.

"I've an interest in all things military and I very much wanted to be part of this week. I'll be taking part in the Remembrance ceremony where I shall honour those who never made it home and I shall remember my Royal Marine pals who made the ultimate sacrifice and also all those who fell in other conflicts. It was interesting to see the police weapons and hear about their tactics. They seem a pretty competent bunch!"

It was a very interesting day out and thanks must go to Lee Evans, Dewi Roberts and Mark Hollis from the Llandudno centre for putting it all together.



Picture: Fred Clark examines a Heckler & Koch carbine.



Picture: Elizabeth Sharpe-Nelson takes aim.

One Touch. By Peter O'Malley.

I went on the weekend One Touch coach's certification in September at the Brighton centre over a long weekend. The instigator of this idea was Kerry Levins, who is very enthused about it and for good sound reasons. He heard about it on a BBC programme and looked into it, for which we can all be grateful. He has found something remarkable and it can be used by members of Blind Veterans UK of all ages, both men and women. Some of our members had various medical challenges but were still able to complete the course. This is ideal for blind and vision impaired people. The One Touch approach will definitely help with our members' independence and mobility.

Hopefully this is incorporated into our organisation because we will all be the better for it. Amongst other organisations the RNIB endorses the One Touch System and it is taught at their headquarters.

I went along to the weekend course that took place in the Brighton centre with my sceptical hat on to find out what it's all about and if it was any good. I've had an interest in the martial arts for many years. Believe me I've seen some messed up ideas about self-defence.

The One Touch system was way beyond my expectations and was an excellent surprise for me. The guy who directed the course and invented it is called Steven Nicolls. He is an American who has lived in England for over 25 years. He had two assistants with him called Umit Turkesev who is black blind and a woman called Leilani Hattingho who is vision impaired. They are highly skilled in the One Touch self defence system. They helped our members get to know the movements. Steven Nicolls was taught traditional jujitsu by a Japanese master who went to Hawaii. Stephen has been practising martial arts for 35 years. Jujitsu is used by security services, the police and prisons service and doormen. Indeed Steven has trained their personnel over many years.

The One Touch system put together by Steven Nicolls is simple and effective. It draws on years of experience and extensive knowledge of self defence. It doesn't deserve a casual glance. If this self defence ideology is practised and incorporated into anybody's lifestyle it will result in giving the practitioners increased confidence. It will definitely help with their going out and about,

therefore giving more independence. Another important feature is the increase in confidence to interact more readily with others. Its practice can also help with physical fitness, and is well known to improve concentration and focus.

On the Sunday after two days of practise we had to give a presentation of techniques we learnt over the weekend. We had to explain clearly what we were doing and what was happening for blind and vision impaired listeners. This was like an audio transcription that we could hear at the cinema. While explaining what was happening we had to at the same time demonstrate with a partner how to respond appropriately to firstly, a push and secondly, to a grab to the front and also thirdly, a grab from behind.

Often intimidation or physical violence begins with a grab or push. When responding to someone putting their hand on your person, you can put your hand on top of theirs discovering which hand they have used. This is done by finding the location of their thumb and fingers. This lets you know if it's their left or right hand. This is why the system is called the One Touch system. This approach is non threatening and gives you the information and spatial awareness of where your adversary is. Victims usually freeze in fear, but with training in the One Touch system the grab or push lets you know how you can respond to protect yourself if necessary. With practise you can find how easy it is to counter intimidation and threats by putting the assailant to the floor in a way that will cause them to not have more ideas about bothering you again.

Kerry Levins says, "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 One Touch program. At the same time it provides valuable techniques to bring a sense of security to one's physical well being. It also provides better understanding of the world around us and how to move safely and efficiently within it."

Kerry attended the weekend at Brighton. Those members on the course worked hard at what they were doing. I have enjoyed the camaraderie of our Blind Veterans UK members. Some of the older guys in their eighties can deal with somebody who might want to steal their mobile phones. It's amazing what the Blind Veterans UK charity gets up to really and I hope that we progress this beginning along and make it one of the essentials that we do.

St Dunstan's Bowling Club. By Alan Gibson, Chairman.

We were all so sorry when Pete and Ann Bradshaw had to cancel due to Pete's illness a couple of days before we were due to arrive at the Brighton centre Ken and Barbara Parker cancelled as Barbara had to go in to hospital. We wish them well. It was good to have Ted and Joan Arnold and Peter Johns back with us after their illnesses. In total 23 bowlers took part. The results of the competitions are as follows, but first I'd just like to say Alan's back and Graham [Johnson] gotcha!

Singles - Winner Alan Gibson. Runner up Graham Johnson.

Pairs - Winners Brian Taylor and Harry Murray. Runners up Graham Johnson and James Poole.

Triples - Winners Charles Clements, Len Pugsley, Graham Johnson. Runners up: Paul Watson, Ron Jones and Norman Perry.

For the first time in many years we played 'Fun Fours' and some were quite hilarious. It finished with Ted, James, Graham and Joan (after a fashion) winning. We wonder if penguin and Jock will be back with us next year. As usual our ladies played a big part in the tournament. Iris, Shirley, Kathy and Daphne and Joan who worked very hard in the 'office' without Ann. We are all looking forward to our March Tournament which now has a waiting list. I would like to wish you all a good Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.



Picture: Alan Gibson and Joan Osborne in costume for the Fun Fours.

Blind Veterans UK Bowmen formerly St Dunstan's at the British Blind Sport National Archery Outdoor Championships, Lilleshall 12th - 14th September 2014. By Graham Walker.

It was an excellent turnout with 11 of our archers competing in the National Championships. They were John Bower, Paul Palmer, Harry Docherty, Peter Price, Albert Nelson, Alexander Donnelly, David Poyner, Tom Roddy, Graham Walker, John Cunnington and Carol Davies. It was a very good turnout for our team.

This was our first time shooting a WA 1440 round, which is the recognised round for Paralympic events. With 12 dozen arrows at 30 metres, the face size changes from 60cm to 80cm and finally 122cm.

Results:

B1 Tactile.

Silver - John Bower.

Bronze - Paul Palmer.

B2/b3 Tactile:

Silver - Peter Price.

I. Open Recurve:

Silver - Tom Roddy.

Bronze - Graham Walker.

National Records were set by:

Carol Davies - B2/3 Recurve.

David Poyner - B2/3 Longbow.

The David Christie Award was won by Peter Price.

On the second day we shot a Long Metric 4; this round isn't just between the vision impaired archers, but against a sighted team of spotters and volunteers, which I am pleased to say we won, with Carol Davies, John Cunnington and Bert Nelson in the winning team.

Our archers and spotters travel from as far away as Dunfermline and Eastbourne. Without the dedication of our spotters in getting us to the event and spotting for us, none of this would be possible.

Family News.

On 16th October Joan Trench, a member of Blind Veterans UK for the past 11 years, celebrated her 107th birthday. Her daughter Oonagh Stephens sent us a report and photograph from the day:

"All of the family came to see mum, and she was in very good form. The Mayor of Pershore visited in the morning, and brought her a telegram from the Queen which he read and she greatly appreciated. She still so enjoys having her friends in to see her, and has some very wonderful memories of her times spent at the Brighton centre, which she often talks about. Welfare Officer Rachel Jennings has been a very true friend, and we are enormously grateful for all that she has done to help mother over the last few years when her sight worsened. She would like to be remembered to Betty Chalmers and Harry Henson, and hopes that they are in good health. She puts her longevity down to a very happy family life, some very special friends, and a tot of whisky occasionally in the evening."



Picture: Joan Trench cuts her 107th birthday cake.

Congratulations to:

Birthdays:

John Adams who celebrated his 101st birthday on 11th November.

Births:

John and Daphne Dix on the birth of their great granddaughter Lillian Joan Benn on 29th December 2013 in Darwin, Australia and their great grandson Miles Benjamin Fitzpatrick on the 25th June 2014 in Newcastle, New Zealand.

Weddings:

Congratulations to David and June Orr on the marriage of their daughter Katy to Robert McKee in Kilkeel Presbyterian Church on 13th September 2014.

Anniversaries:

Diamond Gold (75th):

Victor & Florence White of Tetbury, Gloucestershire on 23rd December.

Platinum (70th):

Wally & Joni Winter of Whitburn, Tyne & Wear on 18th December.

Blue Sapphire (65th):

Gregor & Julia Stewart of Stirling on 18th November.

John & Melba Morris of Penarth, South Glamorgan on 26th November.

Thomas & Gladys Nicholls of Carshalton, Surrey on 3rd December.

Frank & Muriel Moore of Nottingham, Nottinghamshire on 17th December.

Jim & Ruby Hodgkinson of Middleton, Manchester on 24th December.

George & Betty Donaghy of Sawston, Cambridge on 31st December.

Diamond Yellow (60th):

Frank & Jean Sherman of Eye, Suffolk on 9th October.

Harold & Rita Gooley of Prescot, Merseyside on 13th November.

Gerry & Eunice Orme of Wigan, Lancashire on 25th November.

Keith & Alice Chilton of Dewsbury, West Yorkshire on 4th December.

Derek & Ruth Batty of Leyland, Preston on 11th December.

George & Nora Woods of Walton on Thames, Surrey on 18th December.

Cecil & Gertrude Colley of Kingswinford, West Midlands on 18th December.

Len & Joan Seaton of Bradford, West Yorkshire on 27th December.

John & Eileen Roberts of Eastbourne, East Sussex on 27th December.
John & Joan Acheson of Selby, North Yorkshire on 29th December.

Golden (50th):

Bill & Kathrine Goddon on 24th October.

John & Marion Youden of Chichester, West Sussex on 7th November.

Charles & Mo Dodman of Fakenham, Norfolk on 9th November.

Ruby (40th):

Denis & Alexandra Kitson of Llanidloes, Powys on 7th November.

Brian & Anne Mahoney of Lewes, East Sussex on 9th November.

Pearl (30th):

Colin & Margaret Harle of Dunstable, Bedfordshire on 16th November.

Edna & John Harrington of Barnsley, South Yorkshire on 24th November.

Michelle & Pete Dutton of Stockport, Cheshire on 8th December.

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.

Joyce 'Joy' Banton who died on 31st August 2014. She was the wife of Arthur Banton.

Anne Bell who died on 20th October 2014. She was the wife of David Bell.

Joyce Brindley who died on 23rd October 2013. She was the wife of Frank Brindley.

May Ellis who died on 21st October 2014. She was the wife of Frederick Ellis.

Nancy Lindley who died on 29th October 2014. She was the wife of Douglas Lindley.

Myrtle Simonds who died on 1st November 2014. She was the widow of the late Frank Simonds.

Margaret Thomas who died on 8th October 2014. She was the wife of David Thomas.

Welcome to Blind Veterans UK.

Ian Beresford of Solihull, West Midlands Served in the Royal Engineers from 1955 to 1960.

Steven Birkin of Shipley, West Yorkshire Served in the Royal Navy from 1986 to 1988.

Duncan Black of Leyland Served in the Royal Air Force from 1960 to 1962.

Stuart Bottomley of Buxton, Derbyshire Served in the Royal Engineers from 1950 to 1956.

Beryl Cole (née Dole) of St Brelade, Jersey Served in the Royal Navy from 1947 to 1949.

Thomas Collins of Fareham, Hampshire Served in the Royal Navy from 1939 to 1953.

Kenneth Craig of Wirral, Merseyside Served in the Royal Air Force from 1947 to 1949.

Albert Cuthbertson of Newcastle Served in the Royal Navy from 1942 to 1946.

Brian Drake of Whitby, North Yorkshire Served in the Royal Signals from 1952 to 1953.

Albert Edwards of Sketty, Swansea Served in the Royal Air Force from 1953 to 1955.

Lewis Evans of Lampeter, Dyfed Served in the Royal Engineers from 1952 to 1959.

Richard Evans of Pevensey, East Sussex Served in the Welsh Regiment, the Manchester Regiment and the King's Regiment from 1953 to 1964.

Thomas Evans of Liverpool Served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Signals from 1942 to 1947.

John Eve of Eastbourne, East Sussex Served in the Royal Air Force from 1946 to 1949.

Dorothy Forrest (née Heath) of Chesterfield, Derbyshire Served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1942 to 1946.

William Gibson of Hartcliffe, Bristol Served in the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers from 1949 to 1961.

Douglas Ginman of Arundel, West Sussex Served in the Royal Air Force from 1956 to 1958.

Henry Green of Eaglescliffe, Stockton On Tees Served in the Royal Navy from 1947 to 1954.

Dorothy Groh of Newton Abbot, Devon Served in the Women's Royal Army Corps from 1951 to 1955.

Leslie Grover of Burgess Hill, West Sussex Served in the Royal Air Force from 1950 to 1977.

Elizabeth Guy of Chippenham, Wiltshire Served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1943 to 1946.

John Hawkins of Weston Super Mare, Avon Served in the Royal Marines from 1953 to 1955.

George Herridge of Basingstoke, Hampshire Served in the Cheshire Regiment and the Royal Army Service Corps from 1959 to 1965.

Albert Hirdle of Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire Served in the Royal Navy from 1940 to 1946.

Valerie Hibberd (née Powell/Butler) of Apperley, Gloucester Served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1946 to 1950.

Donald Howard of Wirral, Merseyside Served in the Royal Signals from 1955 to 1960.

Marion Jamieson (née Wells) of Bournemouth Served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1944 to 1946.

Keith James of Bridgend, Mid Glamorgan Served in the Royal Air Force from 1955 to 1958.

Thomas Jenkins of Peacehaven, East Sussex Served in the General Service Corps and the Queen's Royal Regiment from 1945 to 1948.

Lawrence Johnson of Inverness Served in the Royal Air Force from 1955 to 1979.

Eileen Jones (née Neck) of Ferndale, Dorset Served in the Women's Royal Army Corps from 1959 to 1963.

James Lally of St Helens, Merseyside Served in the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1951 to 1953.

Roy Layzell of Tavistock, Devon Served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

Kenneth Leighton of Louth, Lincolnshire Served in the Royal Navy from 1954 to 1966.

William Maguire of Beccles, Suffolk Served in the Royal Navy from 1951 to 1963.

John Mays of Saltburn by the Sea, Cleveland Served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1949 to 1973.

John McInulty of Swadlincote, Derbyshire Served in the Staffordshire Regiment from 1970 to 1978.

Brian McManus of Rhyl, Clwyd Served in the Merchant Navy from 1944 to 1972.

Francis Nichols of Prenton, Merseyside Served in the Royal Navy from 1942 to 1946.

Leslie Nicholls of West Bromwich, West Midlands Served in the Royal Army Service Corps and the Royal Pioneer Corps from 1948 to 1950.

John Pearce of Stowmarket, Suffolk Served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1946.

Cyril Pine of Exeter Served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1946.

Walter Poole of Solihull, West Midlands Served in the Royal Air Force from 1954 to 1957.

Gordon Pygott of Barnsley, South Yorkshire Served in the Royal Navy from 1947 to 1955.

Christopher Richards of Pershore, Worcestershire Served in the Royal Navy from 1960 to 1992.

Lillian Richards (née Chugg) of Swansea Served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service in 1942.

Francis 'Frank' Rushton of Dalton-In-Furness, Cumbria Served in the General Service Corps and the King's Own from 1946 to 1948.

Thomas Salmon of Prescot, Merseyside Served in the Royal Navy from 1942 to 1948.

Nicholas Salt (née Clarke) of Warminster, Wiltshire Served in the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1942 to 1945.

David Simms of Bingley, West Yorkshire Served in the Prince of Wales's Own Regiment and the Duke of Wellington's Regiment from 1959 to 1965.

Israel Singer of Edgbaston, Birmingham Served in the 14th (King's) Hussars from 1942 to 1947.

Frank Staples of Swindon Served in the Royal Engineers from 1955 to 1958.

Andrew Stevens of Royal Wootton Bassett, Swindon Served in the Royal Air Force from 1975 to 1984.

Rosemary Stone of Abingdon, Oxfordshire Served in the Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps from 1952 to 1957.

Rowena Taylor (née Hitchings) of Saltash, Cornwall Served in the Women's Royal Air Force from 1970 to 1974.

Donald Turton of Pinxton, Nottingham Served in the Royal Air Force from 1949 to 1950.

Winifred 'Hazel' Vines (née Clementson) of Plymouth Served in the Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps from 1947 to 1951.

Doris Young of Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire Served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1943 to 1945.

Ronald Welsby of Derby, Derbyshire Served in the Royal Navy from 1944 to 1948.

William Wharmby of Selston, Nottingham Served in the Royal Artillery from 1953 to 1958.

Irena Wolicka-Wolszleger of Pwllheli, Gwynedd Served in the Polish Army from 1942 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.

Raymond Andrews of Lewes, East Sussex died on 9th November 2014, aged 96. He joined the Royal Sussex Regiment in 1939 and Served in France, Belgium, Germany, Austria and Italy. He was discharged in 1946 as a Private.

Edwin Ashworth of Southport, Merseyside died on 5th November 2014, aged 92. He was commissioned into the Royal Air Force and trained as a pilot in the USA before his first posting to RAF Manston in Kent, mainly flying Typhoons and Hurricanes. He went to Normandy and flew in the Northern Europe Campaign in 1944/45, ending up in Eindhoven. He was discharged as a Flight Lieutenant in 1946.

Ivan 'Tom' Atkins of Newent, Gloucester died on 8th October 2014, aged 99. He joined the British Army in India and Served in the Royal Artillery from 1935 to 1961 in India, Malaya, Hong Kong, Japan, Thailand and Australia, leaving as a Captain.

Barbara Bahrynowski of South West London died on 13th August 2014, aged 90. A Polish citizen at the outbreak of the Second World War she became involved with the underground resistance movement against the German invaders, was taken prisoner and sent to PoW camp in Holland. After liberation she joined the Polish Army in September 1945 and her unit dealt with German prisoners.

George Bell of Eastbourne, East Sussex died on 12th October 2014, aged 97. He joined the Scots Guards in 1940 and Served with the London District Defence Battalion until 1943 when he embarked for North Africa with the 1st Army and then to Italy meeting up with the 8th Army landing at Anzio in January 1944. He was wounded in the legs and after leaving hospital he transferred to Catania, Sicily and rejoined his Battalion in May 1944 at Monte Cassino. He continued fighting through Italy to Trieste. He was discharged in 1946 as a Guardsman.

Christopher Bostock of Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire died on 14th October 2014, aged 91. He went to Sandhurst in 1942 and was commissioned in the Royal Fusiliers in 1944 but was sent to Italy with the King's Dragoon Guards. He was in Egypt when the European war ended and was discharged as a Captain in 1946.

Eleanor Brushfield of South West London died on 23rd October 2014, aged 97. She enlisted in the Women's Royal Naval Service in 1941, training at HMS Flowerdown, a signal station near Winchester. She continued service at HMS Excellent in Portsmouth for gunnery training before moving to Worthy Down naval flying school and was later drafted to the naval air base near Ayr, Scotland. During her service she was involved with the tracking and intelligence surrounding the sinking of the Bismark. She was discharged in 1946 as a Chief Petty Officer Wren.

Albert Burt of Bridgwater, Somerset died on 17th October 2014, aged 89. He joined the General Service Corps in 1944. Serving briefly in the Somerset Light Infantry he transferred to the Royal Army Service Corps in 1945 and was posted respectively to Lytham St Annes, Worsted, Mundesley-on-Sea and Egypt. He was discharged in 1947 as a Sergeant.

Robert Bysouth of Benfleet, Essex died on 19th June 2014, aged 90. He Served in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1947 leaving as a Fitter 2A. He Served in the UK and South East Asia spending a couple of years seconded to the Indian Air Force dealing with Blenheim 4s and Hurricane fighters.

Leonard 'Len' Carradice of Cleckheaton, West Yorkshire died on 29th July 2014, aged 98. He joined the Duke of Wellington's Regiment in 1940. He was later transferred to the Royal Armoured Corps and specialised in radio gunnery and driving. He was discharged as a Corporal in 1946.

Gordon 'Joseph' Clarke of Cleethorpes, South Humberside died on 10th October 2014, aged 83. He joined the RAF for National Service in 1949 and Served as a cook at RAF Binbrook and RAF Scampton until 1951.

Donald 'Don' Cooper of Horsham, West Sussex died on 4th November 2014, aged 79. He joined the Intelligence Corps in 1953 and Served in Germany. He was commissioned in 1955, completing Service as a Lieutenant in March 1959.

Reene Dobson of Nottingham, Nottinghamshire died on 26th October 2014, aged 93. She joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force in 1943 and Served at Kirton Lindsay, Finmere, Darlington and Shropshire before being discharged as an Aircraft Woman First Class in 1945.

Roy Edgar of Winchester, Hampshire died on 8th November 2014, aged 93. He Served in the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry from 1939 to 1946 in North Africa, the Middle East, Mediterranean and Europe. He was discharged as a Captain.

Ronald Enciso of Bishop Auckland, County Durham died on 13th July 2014, aged 94. He joined the Somerset Home Guard in 1940 and trained locally at Weston Super Mare. Much of his time was spent on guard duty and working in the HQ. He was discharged as a Private in 1944.

William Evans of Brighton, East Sussex died on 8th October 2014, aged 90. He joined the General Service Corps in 1943, transferring to the Royal Army Ordnance Corps. He was deployed to France, fighting through to Germany. He was discharged as a Lance Corporal in 1947.

Elsie Fixter of Leeds, West Yorkshire died on 7th October 2014, aged 90. She joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force in 1942 and Served in the London area and Sheffield as a barrage balloon operator. In 1943 she re-mustered as a caterer, Serving in a variety of locations, before leaving the WAAF as a Leading Aircraftwoman in 1946.

William Forshaw of Morecambe, Lancashire died on 25th September 2014, aged 101. He joined the Royal Artillery in 1940 and transferred to the Royal Army Ordnance Corps a year later, followed by the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers in 1942. He was a radar technician Serving in Italy, Egypt and North Africa and was discharged as a Corporal in 1946.

Miriam Gilchrist of South Croydon, Surrey died on 25th September 2014, aged 94. She joined the Women's Royal Naval Service in 1942 and was drafted to Durban. She was discharged as a Petty Officer Wren in 1946.

Albert Cheetham of Derby, Derbyshire died on 12th October 2014, aged 93. He joined the General Service Corps in 1943 later joining the Royal Engineers. He was involved in the landings after D-Day in France and moved through Belgium, Holland and finally Germany. He was discharged in 1947.

Richard 'Glyn' Davies of Church Stretton, Shropshire died on 17th October 2014, aged 87. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1945 for National Service and Served in India at the HQ of Lord Louis Mountbatten who was Viceroy at the time. He was posted to Hereford before discharge in 1948 as an Aircraftman First Class.

Thomas Gildea of Liverpool, Merseyside died on 26th September 2014, aged 82. After joining the 1st Battalion The King's Own Royal Regiment in 1951 he was posted to Germany. He was discharged in 1953 and joined the Merchant Navy.

Peter Gill of Redcar, Cleveland died on 16th October 2014, aged 94. He joined the Royal Artillery in 1938 serving in the 33rd Field Regiment. He fought in Egypt, Greece, Crete, Sicily and North West Europe and was discharged as a Gunner in 1946.

Vincent 'John' Gryba of Ormskirk, Lancashire died on 13th October 2014, aged 83. He joined the Junior Army Royal as a Boy Soldier in 1948. He Served in a variety of countries including Kenya, Cyprus, Malta, Egypt, Jamaica and Africa before being discharged in 1964 as a Staff Sergeant.

Penelope 'Penny' Hall of Worthing, West Sussex died on 13th October 2014, aged 62. She Served in the Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service (QARNNS) from 1970 to 1973 at RNH Haslar.

William Hall of Preston, Lancashire died on 28th October 2014, aged 86. He joined the Royal Artillery in 1946 and trained in Northern Ireland and the UK. Posted to Egypt and Palestine he completed his Service in Gaza and returned to the UK before being discharged in 1948 as a Gunner.

Cyril Harmer of Pulborough, West Sussex died on 4th November 2014, aged 94. He joined the Royal Sussex Regiment in 1940 and trained at Chichester Barracks and Arundel. He was posted to the Middle East and fought in the Western Desert before moving to Italy where he was at the battle of Monte Cassino. He was discharged in 1946 as a Private.

David Harrower of North London died on 10th November 2014, aged 92. He Served in the Royal Artillery from 1939 to 1946 in the UK, North Africa and Italy. He was discharged as a Gunner.

Geoffrey Horne of Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire died on 11th October 2014, aged 66. He joined the Royal Military Police in 1966 Serving in Germany and Libya. He was discharged as a Lance Corporal in 1970.

Dennis Jones of Newport, Gwent died on 8th October 2014, aged 85. He joined the RAF for National Service in 1947, Serving as an engineer flight mechanic on Spitfires at an air station in South Wales until discharge in 1949.

Wilfred Jones of Redcar, Cleveland died on 11th October 2014, aged 90. He joined the Home Guard in 1941 and was part of the Whitby Defence Force, based at a local farm until discharge in July 1941.

Reginald 'Reg' Lake of Dunstable, Bedfordshire died on 8th November 2014, aged 86. He joined the Royal Navy for National Service in 1947 and Served in HMS Illustrious, HMS Implacable and ashore in HMS Collingwood. He also Served at the RN Torpedo School in Chatham. He was discharged in 1949 as an Electrical Mechanic.

Joyce Lucas of Walsall died on 8th October 2014, aged 92. She Served as a Sister with the St John's Ambulance in Coventry from 1939 to 1946.

George Marcall of Crosby, Liverpool died on 11th October 2014, aged 92. He Served in the Royal Navy in 1942, training at HMS Raleigh in Torpoint.

Charles Miller of Eastbourne, East Sussex died on 7th October 2014, aged 99. He joined the Royal Engineers in 1940 and was deployed to France with the BEF where he worked with the Durham Light Infantry constructing an airstrip. He spent three nights on the beaches of Dunkirk before being evacuated to the UK. He landed on Juno beach on D-Day and moved through France, Belgium and Holland ending up in Germany. He was demobilised as a Lance Corporal in 1946.

John Moir of Farnham, Surrey died on 6th October 2014, aged 90. He began Service as a Boy Soldier with the Royal Army Ordnance Corps in 1939 and later joined the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers upon its formation on 1st October 1942. He was sent to France on D+10 and was with the Artillery through France, Belgium, Holland and finally Germany, remaining there until 1947 when he took an Artificers course, following which he was posted to Egypt in 1952. In 1955 he returned to the UK before a three month posting in Cyprus before returning to the UK and then to a posting in Singapore as a Workshop 2i/c. He was discharged as a Warrant Officer First Class in 1967.

William 'Bill' Money of Croydon, Surrey died on 3rd October 2014, aged 86. He joined the Royal Air Force for National Service in 1946. He Served with the RAF Police at RAF Staverton and London. He was discharged as an Acting Corporal in 1948.

Frederick Osborne of Daventry, Northamptonshire died on 1st November 2014, aged 91. He joined the Royal Navy in 1943 serving in the UK. He was discharged as an Ordinary Seaman in 1946.

Noel Payne of South Croydon, Surrey died on 14th October 2014, aged 91. He joined the Royal Navy in 1941. He completed his specialist training as a Convoy Signaller at Southend and initially Served in UK waters. He was then involved in the North Atlantic convoys, followed by nine months on the Arctic convoys. He was posted to South Africa before discharge in 1946.

George Pope of Seaford, East Sussex died on 4th October 2014, aged 88. He joined the Royal Navy in 1943, Serving in the Mediterranean, Pacific and home waters. He was discharged as an Able Seaman in 1946.

Bernard Rigby of Wigan, Lancashire died on 31st October 2014, aged 84. He was called up for National Service in 1948 and signed on for a five year engagement with the Army Catering Corps. He was posted to the Royal Pioneer Corps then sent as a Corporal to a Royal Artillery Regiment. He was later posted to Hong Kong and then Korea. He was discharged in 1960.

John Rimmer of Liverpool, Merseyside died on 3rd November 2014, aged 82. He joined the Royal Signals for National Service in 1951 and Served in Catterick, Chepstow and Preston. He was discharged as a Lance Corporal in 1953 but remained on part-time National Service until 1957.

George Rostron of Durham, County Durham died on 15th October 2014, aged 89. He joined the Royal Navy in 1943, training at HMS Collingwood in Fareham. He specialised as a wireman and Served in a rocket launching vessel prior to taking part in the D-Day invasion. He was medically discharged in September 1945 after his vessel hit a mine and sank.

Elsie 'Brenda' Scott of Watford, Hertfordshire died on 31 May 2014, aged 89. She joined the Women's Royal Naval Service in 1943, Served in Edinburgh and was discharged as a Wren in 1946.

Norman Sheldon of Consett, County Durham died on 27th September 2014, aged 89. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1943 Serving as a Fitter on various aircraft types in West Africa, Inverness and Southern France. He was discharged as a Leading Aircraftman in 1947.

Grace Smith of Liverpool, Merseyside died on 2nd November 2014, aged 88. She joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service in 1942 and trained at Wrexham prior to being posted all around the UK. Her task was plotting for the Royal Artillery Air Defence. She also spent some time in Luton Hall near Bedford and was discharged as a Private in 1946.

Richard Smith of Chichester, West Sussex died on 7th November 2014, aged 91. He joined the General Service Corps in 1944 and transferred to the Royal Army Ordnance Corps in 1945. He Served in the UK, mainly Northern Ireland and was demobilised in 1947 as a Lance Corporal.

David Spencer of Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands died on 8th October 2014, aged 85. He joined the General Service Corps in 1947, transferring to the Royal Army Pay Corps. He Served in the UK and was discharged as a Lance Corporal in 1949.

Margaret Swain of Ferndown, Dorset died on 10th October 2014, aged 91. She joined the Women's Royal Naval Service in 1942 and trained as Teleprinter, Serving in the UK and East Africa. She was discharged as a Wren in 1946.

Donald Terry of Royston, Hertfordshire died on 7th October 2014, aged 86. After a month's training with the General Service Corps he joined the Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Regiment in March 1946. He was with the 4th British Division in Macedonia delivering rations in the mountains. The regiment disbanded the following year and he transferred to the Royal Signals in Tripoli in 1947, eventually being discharged as a Private in 1948. He also Served in Egypt, Malta, Greece and Palestine.

Allan Vidow of High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire died on 15th October 2014, aged 95. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1939 and was a flight engineer on Lancaster and York Bombers, based at RAF Fiskerton. Involved in the Berlin airlift in 1947, he was discharged in 1950 as an Aircraftman.



For ever blessed

SIR CYRIL ARTHUR PEARSON
FIRST BARRONET OF ST DUNSTON
BORN FEB 24th 1886
DIED DEC 31st 1931

AND HIS WIFE ETHEL MAUD
BORN NOVEMBER 31st 1870, DIED
A LOVING WIFE AND MOTHER

SIR NEVILLE ARTHUR PEARSON
BORN FEB 14th 1880 DIED 1931
AND HIS WIFE ANNE
BORN AUG 21st 1880 DIED 1931

Blind Veterans UK