

April 2015

Review

Blind Veterans UK | St Dunstan's since 1915



On the cover: Blind Veterans UK Chief Executive Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB presents blind veteran Gerry Grant with the Ushakov medal in recognition of his service on the Arctic Convoys during WWII. Photo: Mark Wheeler.

Back page: Blind veteran Tom Cull at the Russian Embassy in London seated front row at the left as he waits to be presented with the Ushakov medal.

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



April 2015 | No 1057



Patron: Her Majesty the Queen.

Blind Veterans UK Review is published monthly by Blind Veterans UK, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD www.blindveterans.org.uk A company limited by guarantee No. 189648, registered in England. Registered Charity No. 216227 (England & Wales) and SCO39411 (Scotland). ISSN 2050-1404. Printed by Newnorth. All content © copyright Blind Veterans UK. All rights reserved.

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.

Blind Veterans UK Calendar

Activities from the Brighton centre.

May.

Adrenaline Weekend 1st to 4th.

Writers' Forum 16th.

Archery Club 24th May to 6th June.

Widows' Week 10th to 16th.

Golf Weekend 16th and 17th.

June.

Gardening Week 14th to 20th.

Ex POW Reunion 25th to 29th.

Writers' Forum 20th.

Golf Weekend 27th and 28th.

July.

Writers Weekend 2nd, 3rd and 4th.

Golf Weekend 18th and 19th.

Get Fit for Life Week 5th to 11th.

Centenary Week 19th to 25th.

To book your place at the Brighton centre please telephone the Booking Office: on 01273 391500.

Activities from the Llandudno centre.

May.

Potting & Plants Week 3rd to 9th.

Wood Week 24th to 30th.

History Week 10th to 16th.

June.

Welsh Water Week 7th to 13th.

Next Level Fishing Week 21st to 27th.

July.

Music Week 5th to 11th.

Recreation Taster Week 26th to 1st August.

Fishing Taster Week 19th to 25th.

For further information or to book your place at the Llandudno centre call 01492 864580.

Activities from the Sheffield centre.

May.

Younger Week 4th to 8th.

August.

Gardens Week 10th to 14th.

Photography Week 31st August to 4th Sept.

For further information please telephone the Sheffield centre on 0114 267 2550. Or to book your place please telephone the Booking Office on 01273 391500.

From the Chairman.

Your message from Tim Davis.

As I write these comments we are all now starting to experience the first signs of spring, whether it's the blossom appearing, our garden bulbs shooting up, or the feeling of warmth from a walk on a sunny day.

It's always a time of year that I think brings a tremendous feeling of hope and positive attitude, as we look forward to longer daylight, summer holidays and generally being able to enjoy the outdoors. I was similarly stirred with a tremendous sense of hope as I listened to many of the war veterans who attended the Service of Remembrance at St. Paul's earlier in March. Among them were blind veterans Ken Facal and Paul Jacobs GM.

This Service was an appropriate service to remember the 453 Service men and women who sacrificed their lives, and the many others who have suffered terrible physical and mental injuries. Most fitting was the support by HM The Queen and HRH Prince Philip the Duke of Edinburgh, along with the heads of Government, our heads of the Armed Services, and countless others, who each paid tribute and remembered the tremendous sacrifice that so many made. Combined with this though was the reflections of those who had served and returned; the hope they inspired by reflecting on the difference their efforts have brought to our security and the security and rebuilding of a nation; Afghanistan. Nobody pretends that the problems are over, but it is a good example to see the positive spirit of those who played their part and the positive outlook they have, despite the injuries they may have suffered.

It is also 'hope' that I see our organisation bring to life. Not only through the opportunities that the organisation enables, but also the positive and sometimes quite perky attitude of our members. You all set a wonderful example to those who may have recently suffered some form of vision impairment, showing others what can be achieved and the positive impact on member's lives. We continue to explore more and more ways to develop the services and reach of the organisation to make this possible.

This year more than ever we have the opportunity to 'tell our story to others' as we have many events to mark our centenary not least of all the Garden Party at Buckingham Palace and our Thanksgiving Service at Westminster Abbey.

Answers to your questions for the Buckingham Palace Centenary Garden Party.

We have received enquiries from you seeking further clarity on a number of points relating to our centenary Buckingham Palace Garden Party on 4th June. In answer to your questions we have set out the answers over the next few pages.

When will I receive my formal invitation?

Your formal invitation to attend the Buckingham Palace Garden Party will be with you approximately six weeks before the event at the end of April. Please put the invitations somewhere safe, they are issued directly from the Buckingham Palace printers and cannot be reprinted or re issued. You will need your personal invitation card to be able to gain access to the Garden Party on the day.

Can I have more information about my Parking Pass?

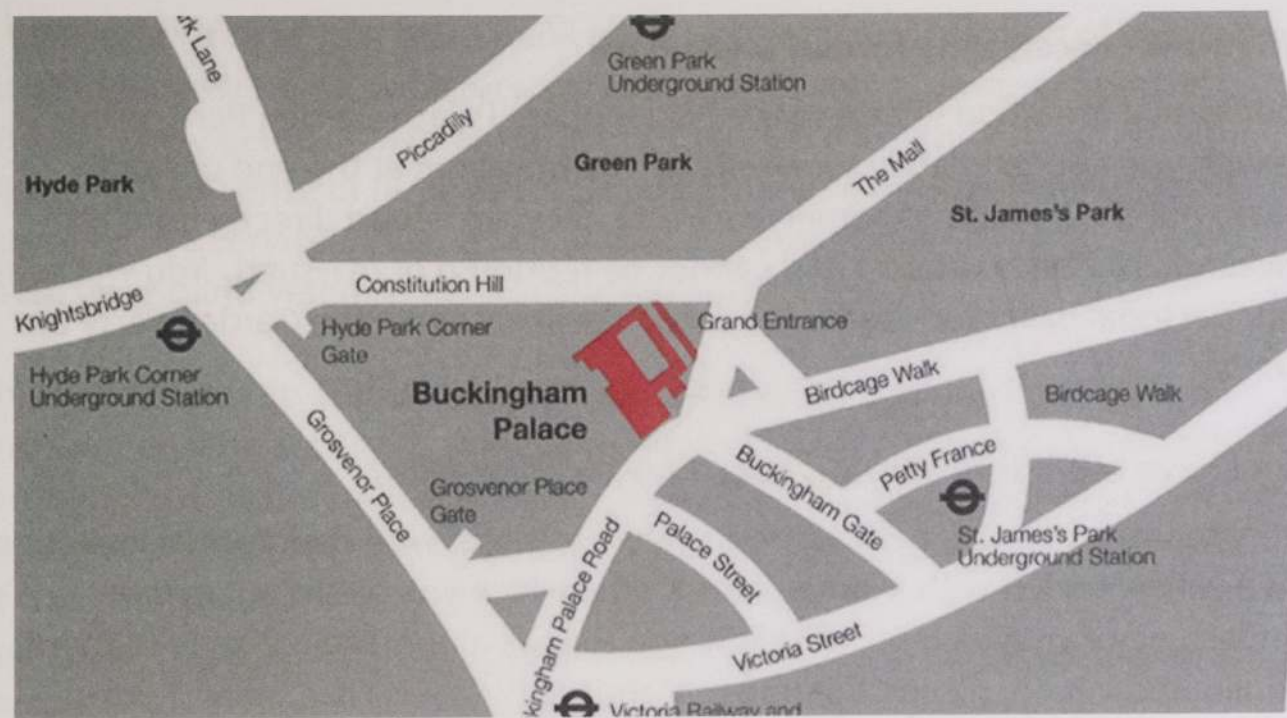
Everyone will receive a parking pass in the envelope with their formal invitation. It is a yellow sticker with a large black X on it which you are to put in the windscreen of your car as it will allow you to park along The Mall where there is unlimited parking. Blind Veterans UK shuttle buses will run up and down The Mall on the day of the Garden Party to help you from your car to the Buckingham Palace Grand Entrance Gates. They will also get you back to your car when the Garden Party finishes so that you do not have to walk very far. Our shuttle buses will stop at pre-designated pick up and set down points along The Mall that will be clearly marked as Blind Veterans UK shuttle bus stops. Please also use your yellow car park sticker if you are arriving by taxi or coach.



Picture: An example of your parking pass.

Please just ask the driver to put the sticker in their windscreen and the police will allow access close to Buckingham Palace.

For those of you who require a Blue Badge disabled parking space you should make your way to Constitution Hill where disabled parking spaces are available. Please see map as below.



Do I need a Blind Veterans UK ID card?

Blind Veterans UK ID cards can be used as your photographic identification for the Garden Party if you do not have any other form of photographic identification. Most people will have a passport, a bus pass (with photo) or other form of photographic identification but if you need a Blind Veterans UK identity card please contact the Grants Team on 020 7616 7928 between 09.00 – 4.30 Monday to Friday.

What will the weather be like on the day?

We are of course hoping for a fine June day but in case it rains it is suggested that you bring an umbrella with you as there is limited shelter available. You may also wish to check the BBC weather in the days leading up to the Garden Party.

Where can I get the new Blind Veterans UK has a new tie from?

We would be delighted to see you wear our new design Blind Veterans UK ties at the Garden Party. They and other items useful for the day such as Blind Veterans UK umbrellas can be found for sale on our website at <https://www.shopblindveterans.org.uk/>

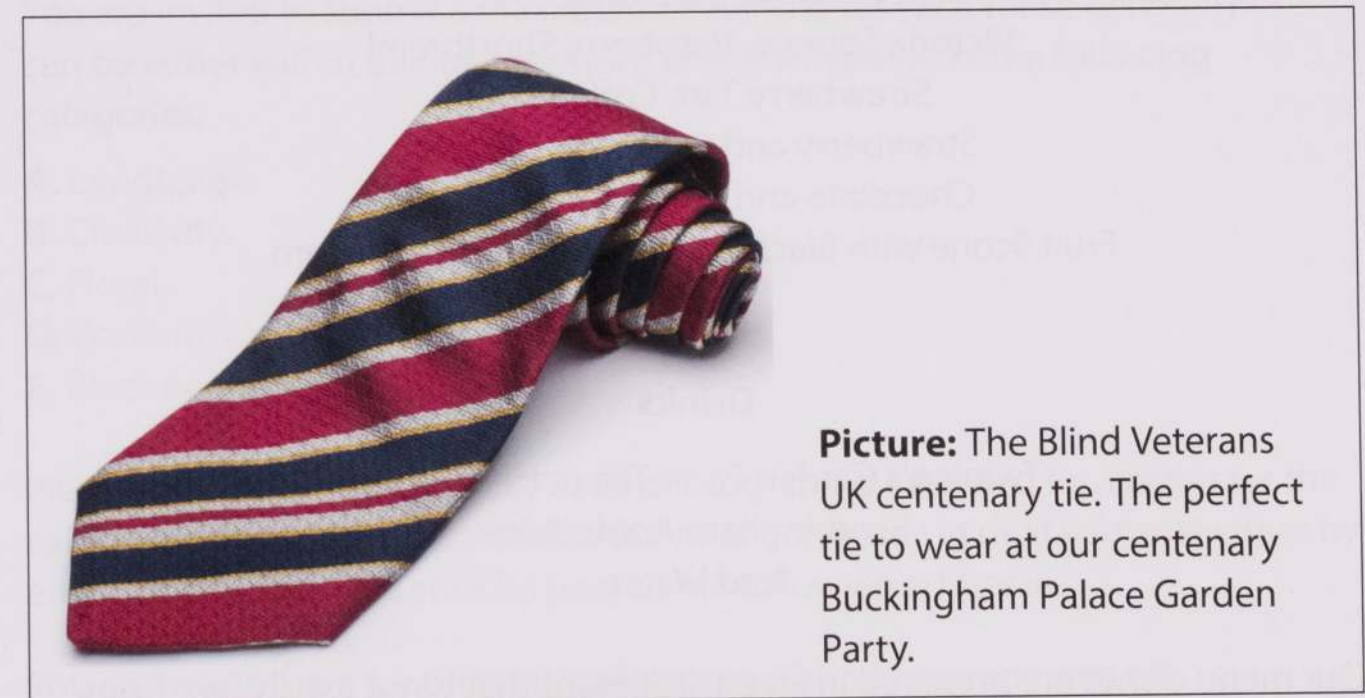
What bands will play at the Garden Party?

The Band of the Coldstream Guards and the Band of the Queen's Division will play at the Garden Party.

Will there be a DVD produced of the Garden Party?

We have employed the services of the Palace approved production company, British Ceremonial Arts. On the day of our Garden Party we will have six camera operators filming at various locations around the Palace grounds and gardens. They will end up with around 14 hours of footage which they edit down to create a 30 minute commemorative film. It then takes four to six weeks to produce the final DVD ready for sale. As soon as it is ready we will offer the DVD for sale on our website shop at <https://shop.blindveterans.org.uk/>

You can find further Blind Veterans UK centenary goods on pages 30 and 31 of this edition of the Review.



Picture: The Blind Veterans UK centenary tie. The perfect tie to wear at our centenary Buckingham Palace Garden Party.

Will food and refreshments be available at the Garden Party?

Food and refreshments will be served in the tea tents and we have reproduced the menu on the following page. There will also be gluten free alternatives.



Buckingham Palace

Thursday 4th June 2015

Menu

Sandwiches

Cucumber with Fresh Mint & Sea Salt
 Free Range Egg Mayonnaise with Cress
 Gammon Ham, Tomato & Wholegrain Mustard Mayonnaise
 Chicken Mayonnaise wrap, chopped Asparagus & Baby Spinach
 Smoked Scottish Salmon & Crème Fraiche, Fresh Dill Bagel



Cakes

Lemon Tart, Dundee Cake
 Victoria Sponge, Raspberry Shortbread
 Strawberry Tart, Coffee Éclair
 Strawberry and Cream Battenberg
 Chocolate and Praline Croustillant
 Fruit Scone with Blackcurrant Jam & Clotted Cream



Drinks

Twining's Garden Party Tea or Iced Coffee
 Sandringham Apple Juice
 Iced Water

Our menu dishes are prepared in an environment that is not totally free from allergens. Our hygiene practices are designed to reduce the risk of allergen contamination and our catering teams receive training about the ingredients in our dishes. If on the day you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask a member of our catering team who will happily assist you.

Noticeboard.

Blind Veterans UK Centenary Photography Exhibition.

"One doesn't stop seeing. One doesn't stop framing. It doesn't turn off and on. It's on all the time." Annie Leibovitz

During 2015 there are a number of events planned at our centres to celebrate the centenary of Blind Veterans UK. One of these events that we are delighted to share with you is an open photography competition and exhibition.

We invite both the experienced and budding member photographers to submit images to the exhibition. The culmination of this will be an exhibition of images, selected by a panel of judges (to be announced) highlighting photographic achievements of our members, demonstrating what can be achieved with sight loss. The exhibition will tour a variety of venues, showcasing your photographic talents to a wide audience. We see this as a real opportunity to highlight your achievements in the field of photography. Good luck!

You are invited to submit a maximum of five images each for selection. These can be either within a single category, or within several of the following categories:

- A. Landscape.
- B. Creativity.
- C. Floral.
- D. Portrait.
- E. Black and white.

Please indicate which category each photograph is intended for. Entries for the exhibition should be forwarded to the selection panel in digital format either by email, or on CD or USB stick by post to the following addresses:

You can email them to: photographycomp@blindveterans.org.uk

Or post to Chris Clark, Centenary Photography Exhibition, Blind Veterans UK, 276 Fulwood Road, Sheffield S10 3BN. If you would like any further information please telephone Chris Clark on 01142 672565.

Submission form to exhibit your work in the Blind Veterans UK Centenary Photography Exhibition.

During 2015 there are a number of events planned at our centres to celebrate the centenary of Blind Veterans UK. We invite both experienced and budding member photographers to submit your photographs to the exhibition.

As previously stated the culmination of this will be an exhibition of images that highlight your photographic achievements, demonstrating what can be achieved with sight loss. The exhibition will tour a variety of venues, as it showcases your talents to a wide audience. We see this as a real opportunity to highlight your achievements within the photography field.

We must ask therefore that you only submit images for exhibition, which have been captured since your vision impairment.

After submission these will then go through a selection process by an appointed panel until they have reached the final 100 best entries. These will then continue in the selection process until the top 20 images have been selected and placed in order.

All of the top 100 images selected by the panel will be displayed in the exhibition, with the top 20 images displayed as 42 x 29.7 cm (A3) prints, whilst the remaining 80 images will be presented as 29.7 x 21 cm (A4) prints.

Entry is open to all members of Blind Veterans UK regardless of age, or photographic ability. We encourage you to get involved and have a go! Why not give it a try?

Simply complete the entry form on the following two pages and forward your images in digital format to the selection panel by either email, or with the images on CD/USB stick by post to the addresses given below, accompanied by your entry form and signed declaration.

Forename	
Surname	
Contact phone number or email address	

Number of Images. Maximum of five per member.	
Method of Submission. Email, CD, USB, post.	

Image file number and name	Image exhibition name	Brief description of the image	Category A, B, C, D, E.

Declaration

I hereby give consent for Blind Veterans UK and directly related companies to use copies of the aforementioned images, submitted by me as part of the Blind Veterans UK centenary photography exhibition. To use these images for the sole purpose beneficial to Blind Veterans UK, whether by means of promotion, advertising or the raising of funds through the sale of merchandise.

Signature.....

Dated.....

Entries should be sent to the panel via:

Email: photographycomp@blindveterans.org.uk

Post: Chris Clark
Centenary photography exhibition
276 Fulwood Road
Sheffield
S10 3BN

Checklist, please complete.

I have attached the required details.	
I have attached/inserted my image files along with this submission form.	
I have completed the declaration.	

Review short story competition: Regent's Park 1915.

They say that 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 veterans 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 Catherine Goodier, Review Editor, Blind Veterans UK Review, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD by 30th April 2015.

Change of date for the Manchester Reunion.

The Manchester Reunion will take place on 5th August 2015 at The Place Aparthotel, Ducie Street, Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 2TP.

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

If your enquiry relates to the Review but is not format related please telephone Catherine Goodier on 020 7616 8367 or email: revieweditor@blindveterans.org.uk

Biennial Satisfaction Survey.

Every two years Blind Veterans UK has commissioned an independent survey by Clariant Research to monitor our services and seek views and comments from our members and other beneficiaries.

If you do not wish to be considered to take part in the next survey, which commences in May would you please phone Kelly Spruce, PA to Welfare on 020 7616 7922 and leave your name. Alternatively email kelly.spruce@blindveterans.org.uk

Interviewees are selected by Clariant Research at random so you may not be selected. As it is a telephone survey, the researcher from Clariant will contact you by phone. They will ask a series of questions to find out how you feel about our services as this will help us to evaluate our performance to ensure we meet your needs and that we maintain our high standards.

Each telephone interview will last for approximately 15 to 20 minutes and will take place in June. All information gathered is confidential and anonymous to Blind Veterans UK and comments will not be attributed to individuals. Results will be published in the Review in the autumn. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

Cheerers needed to give their support to our London Marathon runners.

This year 19 runners, including our members Kelly Ganfield (nee Hart), Steve Parnell, Charlie Parkinson, Andy Leitch, Paul Jacobs GM and Alan Lock, will run in the London Marathon for Blind Veterans UK. Please get in touch if you have any time on Sunday 26th April from 10.30am to 1.30pm and would like to volunteer at our cheer point on the route in Westferry, East London.

You can phone Jennie Chmura on 020 7616 7959 or email: fundraising@blindveterans.org.uk

No experience is necessary you just need to cheer loudly and have a happy disposition.

The annual concert by The Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines Collingwood at the Brighton centre on 15th July 2015.

It is approaching that time again when we will soon have the pleasure of the company of The Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines Collingwood at our Brighton centre.

We at Blind Veterans UK are privileged each year to experience the magic of this concert; a day which is always immensely enjoyed by all. This special event is a highlight amongst our annual programme for local and visiting members. However hosting this event also provides an opportunity to invite and give something back to our volunteers, VIPs and supporters and to demonstrate our ongoing connection with this group of people.

As you are aware it is a popular event and we only have a limited number of seats available for local members and their spouses. If you wish to apply for a place, please contact Leigh Hart on telephone: 01273 391412.

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

Unfortunately lunch bookings cannot be taken on the day except for those already staying in house. We look forward to enjoying the concert with you.

Order of events for the afternoon:

1330	Pimms served in the Inner Garden
1400 – 1515	Royal Marines Band concert
1520	Afternoon tea in the Inner Garden
1600	Guests depart

Centenary fundraising activities for Blind Veterans UK.

With our centenary year in full swing and lots of activities planned, we've no doubt 2015 will be a year to remember. If you are planning to organise any fundraising activities during the year in your local area, we'd love to hear from you. We can support you along the way and provide you with an array of materials to help make your activity look fantastic.

Please get in touch with Aaron Tillyer in the fundraising team on 020 7616 7927 or email fundraising@blindveterans.org.uk

Blind veteran Gerry Grant presented with his Ushakov medal. By Mark Wheeler, PR Officer.

A World War II veteran and member of Blind Veterans UK has finally been awarded a medal recognising his bravery over 70 years ago.

Gerry Grant, 91, from Lytham St Annes, who has been a member of Blind Veterans UK for 15 years, was presented with the Ushakov Medal, awarded to sailors who have displayed courage in the course of defending Russia or its interests, because of his role in what has become known as the Arctic Convoys of World War II.

Gerry served as a Petty Officer of the Watch in Naval Communications throughout the war, including on the HMS Jamaica Cruiser as part of the Arctic Convoy. After joining the Navy at 16, he celebrated his 21st birthday on one of the many trips around the Arctic.

Gerry was awarded the medal last year but was unable to attend to receive it in person. He instead asked Blind Veterans UK to collect the medal on his behalf.

After collecting the medal from the Russian Embassy in London it was presented to him at his home by our Chief Executive Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB.

Until 2013, the Foreign Office did not allow Russia to honour veterans like Gerry as it broke the rules on foreign medals. The Arctic Convoy was made up of vessels which travelled from Britain to Russia to keep the Soviet Union supplied with vital goods and weapons during World War II.

The Arctic route that ships like Gerry's took was described by Churchill as the "worst journey in the world" and, by the end of the war, more than 100 ships and 3,000 allied seamen were lost.

Gerry has received support from Blind Veterans UK since 2001 after losing his sight overnight due to what is known as an "eye stroke".

Gerry said: "Churchill's description of the journey was exactly right. It was the toughest challenge of my life. The ships could get very iced up at times and that could lead to them getting top-heavy. We also had the constant threat of German U-Boats.

"I'm so pleased that Major General Caplin presented me with this medal. Blind Veterans UK has been such a help to me since I lost my sight. I don't know where I would be without them as the training and equipment I have received has been nothing short of life saving.

"It is an honour to receive this award. After the war, a lot of the group that made up the Arctic Convoy formed the 'North Russia Club'. I was wearing my club tie when I was presented with the medal and I was collecting it on behalf of all of them, many of whom are sadly no longer here to pick up their own."

Chief Executive of Blind Veterans UK, Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB, said: "It is only right that the brave Arctic Convoy veterans like Gerry should be recognised for the incredible sacrifice they made in World War II.

"The influence of those valiant sailors cannot be overstated, which is obviously why the Russian embassy still wishes to recognise the bravery they showed after 70 years.

"It is a great honour for Blind Veterans UK to play a part in Gerry's special day."



Picture: Gerry Grant with his proud family as he displays his Usakov medal.
Photo: Mark Wheeler.

I never cared for the cold. Tom Cull remembers the Arctic Convoys. By Catherine Goodier.

Tom Cull has never been able to bear the cold so perhaps it is unusual that he looks back on his service as a gunner in the Royal Navy, and in particular on the Arctic Convoys with great fondness. As he reminisces Tom doesn't dwell on the battles, or the sub zero temperatures, but remembers only the good times and the fun that he shared with the lifelong friends he made onboard HMS Obedient. When it is mentioned that those who took part in the Arctic Convoys served in the hardest naval fighting area of the world — the bitter waters of the Arctic — he shrugs and dismisses it, stating that it was an adventure.

Tom who had always wanted to join the Royal Navy, volunteered as soon as he turned 18. He served onboard HMS Obedient from 1942 until 1946, one of eight ships of the 17th Destroyer Flotilla, when he did 15 trips on the Arctic Convoys. As Mr Alexandra, First Lord of the Admiralty said: 'Each destroyer could tell a story of heroism and unflinching devotion to duty.' Led by HMS Onslow, in which Captain Sherbrook won the VC, it was the first destroyer flotilla to complete 1,000,000 miles of war time steaming.

During his service onboard HMS Obedient, Tom took part in the Battle of the Barents Sea when the destroyer sustained damage and casualties from heavy return fire. He also served in the Atlantic, Normandy for the D-Day Landings and in many actions against U and E boats.

In recognition of his service on the convoys he was presented with the Ushakov Medal at the Russian Embassy in London by the Ambassador of the Russian Federation to the UK, His Excellency Dr A Yskovenko, who said: "The Arctic Convoys were brilliant and one of the toughest operations in the allied effort to bring about Victory. It is a huge privilege for me to thank veterans who served on the Arctic Convoys on behalf of the Russian Government for the invaluable contribution you and your comrades in arms made to the defeat of Nazi Germany."

The Medal of Ushakov was a Soviet military award created on March 3, 1944 by decision of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. It was named in honour of Russian admiral Fyodor Ushakov who never lost a battle and was proclaimed patron saint of the Russian Navy.

Sitting with his wife Jean in the living room of their house in Derby, Tom spoke of the day he received the Ushakov medal. "I was absolutely thrilled as I appreciate the Ushakov medal greatly as the Russians realise what it's like in their country and how cruel those waters are. As the Ambassador presented it to me I silently accepted it on behalf of my friends who are no longer with us. They rushed into my thoughts as I was taken back 70 years in an instant. When I look back on those times I think of the chaps I worked with and the fun we had. I don't really dwell much on chipping the ice off the gun barrels and things like that. It was just fun as I remember when we would play tombola and go ashore and have a sing song and just laugh and enjoy life.

"I thought of one funny incident when my mate could have been put on a charge. We were told never to take our gloves off on the upper deck while we chipped the ice off as you'd be put on a charge. I can picture quite clearly my mate when we got a ladder to the A gun up the top, as without thinking he took his glove off to grab the ladder, and his hand stuck to it. When we pulled it away his palm had gone black. He was lucky not to have been put on a charge for disobeying orders. He didn't go to the sickbay to treat the burns he just suffered in silence.

"I went on my first convoy onboard HMS Obedient, an O Class destroyer, in 1942 and during that first convoy we were engaged in the Battle of the Barents Sea. We were saved when HMS Sheffield and HMS Jamaica came up just out of gun range. I was on the stern gun onboard HMS Obedient and I was looking through my telescope when we got hit. They [the Germans] started ranging the guns on us and we were straddled with shrapnel all round the bridge and the funnel. The stern gun I was on didn't have a weather shield like the other guns as they would lift the gun off when we laid a minefield as we were a mine laying destroyer. At that time there would be mines in a line on the port and starboard pathways of the ship leading to the stern where the mines were dropped from.

"The ship that was with us wasn't of our class, it was the A Class Destroyer HMS Achates that was built in 1929 and it was sunk, as was a German ship. We brought onboard as many people from HMS Achates as we could but I think they lost half the crew. One chap we brought back had been in the sick bay at the time and when the action broke out he was wearing only vest and pants. When the order came to abandon ship he put his socks, trousers and jumper on and struck out to swim the 50 or 60 yards to the rescue trawler. He said that he went past his mates who were asking for help but he couldn't help them as

he could feel the cold getting into his bones. He thought that not wearing his heavy sea coats or Arctic clothing helped him to swim to the trawler.

"He got to the rope ladder where the trawler was and a chap picked him up by one arm and lifted him onboard. He was saved but he said he thought of his mates who wanted him to help them but he couldn't because if he had stopped he wouldn't have been able to start again and they would all have died. We all knew that he couldn't have saved anyone but it was something that tormented him. No one could save someone in those waters as it was way below zero with ice everywhere.

"I thought of that when I received the Ushakov medal as it takes your mind back to times like that, which I don't really like to think about. Thankfully as time progressed whenever we were in dangerous waters the Captain would know as he had secret information from the Enigma Machine that showed which convoys would be targeted by German U Boats.

"It could be tough but I believe that the troops who served in the Far East had a much harder time than we did as they really went through hell."



Picture: Tom Cull poses for a photo with his pals onboard HMS Obedient. Tom has his arms crossed.



Picture: Jean and Tom Cull stand in front of a painting of HMS Obedient as Tom displays the Ushakov medal in recognition of his service on the Arctic Convoys during the Second World War.

Tom and Jean met in 1942 at a dance hall on London Road in Derby but they didn't start dating until the end of the war and they married in 1946. During the war years Tom called at Jean's house when he was on leave to find when her brother Donald Barber answered the door that she had gone out. Jean recalls how Tom asked her brother to join him for a drink and ended up getting him very drunk. Her brother had a great time and it was just the tonic he needed as he'd been wounded overseas and had just come out of hospital.

Tom and Jean both asked to finish the interview with a thank you to Blind Veterans UK for everything the charity does for them.

The memorial bench for Robert Leader DL is unveiled at the Brighton centre.

St Dunstan's Chapel at the Brighton centre was close to Robert Leader's heart and it is a fitting place for his memorial bench where people can sit beside the Chapel and enjoy the lower field and Sussex Downs and listen to the sea. At the ceremony to unveil the bench that was attended by Robert and Sue Leader's family and friends, Barry Porter, Director of Welfare Services spoke of Robert:

"Robert had a love of wood. He started his working life in the furniture trade and he continued a keen interest throughout his life collecting furniture. This is the first of three lasting tributes to Robert. At our Llandudno centre we have also had a bench created that is made from Welsh slate and it sits in front of the centre. At our Sheffield centre we will put in a copper and steel sculpture in front of the centre that's actually a bird bath. It acknowledges Sheffield's heritage and that Robert was from Sheffield and also his interest in ornithology.



Picture: Sue Leader and her family listen as Barry Porter speaks of our former Chief Executive Robert Leader DL at the unveiling of the memorial bench at the Brighton centre that is a permanent tribute to Robert.

"I want to thank Nicki Turnbull, EA to Robert, who has played a wonderful role in leading all the creative thinking, co-ordination and arrangements for each of these tributes. It was of course with the full approval of Sue Leader that these lasting memorials were chosen.

"Robert had great affection for Ovingdean and it's fitting that we place this lasting tribute here. I think he would have approved of the location, and we can be absolutely sure of one thing, he would have had an opinion. I'm also very pleased that one of our very long standing members, Norman Perry, who has been blind for 70 years and who is a highly distinguished physiotherapist and archer came down a few weeks ago to run his hands over the piece and he declared everything absolutely fine."

As Barry concluded his speech he presented Sue Leader with a pair of scissors. Sue cut the cord to release the red velvet curtain that had shrouded the bench from the guests to reveal the beautiful oak piece that was created by Lewes based sculptor Karl Smith of Carved Oak. The bench is inscribed: In memory of Robert Leader Chief Executive. A delicate dragonfly that is Karl's trade mark sits on the top left hand corner of the bench's seat. Quite unaware of this Sue Leader wore a silver dragonfly brooch to the unveiling.



Picture: From left to right: Joss Kemp - Robert's sister and Steve Kemp his brother in law, Glen Swire, Sue Leader, Nicki Turnbull and sculptor Karl Smith.

Robert's memorial bench was the result of a serendipitous meeting between Robert and Sue's friend Glenn Swire who visited Karl's workshop in Lewes. It resulted in Glenn and Caroline Swire commissioning Karl to make a set of handrails that are outside the lounge at the Llandudno centre. Karl met Robert when he came to his workshop to see the handrails.

A true artist Karl spoke of making the bench: "As I worked on this I spent a lot of time just sitting on the bench with my eyes shut as I wanted to make sure that every time you put your hands down there was something of interest to feel — hence the contours in the bench. It's not a flat seat because when you sit down you naturally put your hands down or you might crook your arm over the back of the rail.

"I spent hours with my eyes shut just feeling and sitting in different places on the bench. And also working with texture as when I first finished it was quite smooth but I knew that the texture of the wood would open up and become rougher. Aluminium runs down through the posts and that will give different temperatures. It's something that initially might not be noticeable but the more you sit and feel the aluminium down the side strips they feel smooth against the coarseness of the grain but they will also feel cold against the warmth of the wood as well. I took all of that into consideration when putting it together so that people could feel the bench and understand it.

"The bench weighs just over a tonne and the oak comes from a wood seven miles from my workshop. It is from two trees that had died naturally due to a lack of sunlight as they'd lost the fight for the canopy but they were still standing. I was able to gently winch them out of the ground, thereby saving a lot of the root structure that you can see."

The happy occasion was attended by Sue Leader and Kate Leader (Robert and Sue's daughter in law) with son Bert, Phip and Mark Crowther, Robert's sister and brother in law. Joss and Steve Kemp, Robert's sister and brother in law.

Friends who attended were Glen and Caroline Swire, Andrew and Caroline Lewis, Major General Christopher Elliott and Annabelle, Tim Hough, Nigel Wilson and Sue Baker and Christopher and Susanna Hall.

Great friends of Robert and Sue and of Blind Veterans UK who attended were Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox OBE RN Vice President and ex-Chairman of Blind Veterans UK who appointed Robert as Chief Executive. Jeremy and Sally Hinton. Woppy Keeling and Major General Andrew Keeling CB CBE RM Vice President and former Chairman of Blind Veterans UK and Trustee Tim and Marylyn Bacon.

Robert's bench was declared quite perfect by everyone and we are sure that it will be enjoyed by everyone at the Brighton centre.



Picture: Bert Leader in his pram, Kate Leader, Robert and Sue's daughter in law, Joss Kemp, Phip Crowther and Sue Leader.

The Memorial Portrait of Sir Arthur Pearson Bt, GBE. Its unveiling at Headquarters in 1923 by His Royal Highness the Duke of York.

The portrait of Sir Arthur Pearson Bt, GBE that featured on the front of the commemorative centenary edition of the Review, is the memorial portrait that was unveiled at our Headquarters in St John's Lodge on February 27th 1923 by HRH The Duke of York. Below we bring you the article from the March 1923 Review:

An event which will always rank as one of the most interesting and notable in the annals of St Dunstan's, took place on Tuesday, February 27th, when His Royal Highness the Duke of York unveiled, in the presence of a large and distinguished company, the memorial portrait of Sir Arthur Pearson.

Every St Dunstaner has been kept fully advised, by previous articles in the columns of the Review, of the steps which have finally led to perpetuating the memory of St Dunstan's great Chief in this form. It may be briefly recalled however, that the painting of this memorial portrait is the outcome of a universally expressed desire on the part of the officers, NCOs, and men of St. Dunstan's to provide for posterity a memorial which should express their own deep personal affection for and gratitude to the great leader who, by force of his own noble example and his unflinching energy, led them to "Victory Over Blindness."

It was with the full approval also of Lady Pearson that the decision was come to that the memorial should take the form of a portrait, and as the result of Lady Pearson's personal influence one of the most famous artists of today — Sir William Orpen, RA, undertook the painting of the portrait at a fee, it may be mentioned, far below that which his great reputation usually commands, thus bringing this portrait memorial within reach of the limits of the fund raised for the purpose.

The portrait, which, for the unveiling ceremony, was hung in the main lounge at headquarters, is a most striking and life like presentment of Sir Arthur. It bears, on the bottom of the frame, two small tablets, one reading:—

"Sir Arthur Pearson, Bt, GBE. Born 24th February 1886. Died 9th December 1921. Founder of St Dunstan's Hostel and After Care Organisation for Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen blinded in the Great War."

While on the other tablet is the inscription:—

"This portrait by Sir William Orpen, RA, the gift of nearly 2,000 Officers, Non Commissioned Officers and Men, is presented in affectionate memory of the Chief who led them to Victory over Blindness."

Major Sir William Newenham Montague Orpen, KBE, RA, RHA (27th November 1878 — 29th September 1931) was an Irish artist who worked mainly in London. William Orpen was a fine draughtsman and a popular, commercially successful, painter of portraits for the well-to-do in Edwardian society. During World War I, he was the most prolific of the official artists sent by Britain to the Western Front. There he produced drawings and paintings of privates, dead soldiers and German prisoners of war along with portraits of generals and politicians. Most of these works, 138 in all, he donated to the British government and they are now in the collection of the Imperial War Museum. His connections to the senior ranks of the British Army allowed him to stay in France longer than any of the other official artists and although he was made a Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire, KBE, in the 1918 King's birthday honours list and elected a member of the Royal Academy of Arts, his determination to serve as a war artist cost him both his health and social standing.

On the occasion of the unveiling the lounge was packed to its uttermost capacity nearly half an hour before 11 o'clock, the time fixed for the ceremony. Past and present St Dunstaners, many accompanied by their relatives, formed a large proportion of the company, and there were also present most of the leading members of the staff at the headquarters and annexes. In addition there was a distinguished gathering of invited guests, among those being Lord Richard Neville, the Hon Mrs Lionel Guest, Lady Mond, Lady Hulton, Lord and Lady Invernairn, Mr & Mrs Knowles and Col Stanley Barry.

On arrival at the Hostel, His Royal Highness, who was accompanied by Wing Commander Louis Greig, was received by the President of St Dunstan's, Lady Pearson who presented Captain Ian Fraser (Chairman), Sir Neville Pearson and Sir Washington Range (Vice Presidents), the Mayor of St Marylebone (Alderman AE Hughes, JP), Mr FR Anderton (Chairman, LCC) Mr Howarth, Mr Kessell, Mrs Fraser and Mrs Chadwick Bates.

The appearance of His Royal Highness in the main lounge, where the unveiling took place, was greeted by the singing of the National Anthem.

Captain Fraser said: "Your Royal Highness, there is probably no country in our great British Empire where there is not a blinded soldier, sailor or airman who has passed through St Dunstan's. I think there is scarcely one of my comrades, numbering nearly 2,000 officers, non-commissioned officers and men, who is not thinking today of your kindly act in coming here to unveil this memorial for us, and thinking, too, of the man, Sir Arthur Pearson, whom it represents.

"It is not the time nor the place for me to speak of Sir Arthur Pearson, for there is no audience to whom it is less necessary, than an audience of blinded soldiers, to make remarks about him.

"This portrait is a very personal memorial from these men, having been subscribed to from all parts of the British Empire. It is our hope that at an appropriate time it may find a place in the National Portrait Gallery, where we think it might fittingly be displayed.

"It may seem strange to you that we should have chosen as our Memorial something which we cannot see. My explanation is that it is our wish that posterity should know what our Chief was like, while for ourselves nothing in the nature of a reminder is necessary. [Applause]. The affectionate regard in which Sir Arthur Pearson held us and in which we held him, his character, and all of his great personality, are indelibly written upon our hearts, and there is no need for us to see likenesses of him, or read inscriptions about him to remember him.

"On behalf of the men of St Dunstan's; on behalf of our President, Lady Pearson, and on behalf of our Committee, I welcome you to St Dunstan's, I tender our most cordial thanks for your kindness in graciously honouring us by joining in paying the tribute which we are about to pay to our Chief, and if I may make a person observation I tender to you and to Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon our congratulations, and our cordial good wishes for your future happiness."

In reply, His Royal Highness said: "Lady Pearson, Captain Fraser, Ladies and Gentlemen, we are today honouring the memory of a great servant of humanity, whose work for his fellow men will live for all time as an inspiration and example to us, and to those who come after. During the war Sir Arthur Pearson made the welfare of all the men from the Mother Country and the Dominions, who had been blinded in the war, his special solicitude. He founded St Dunstan's as an organisation for their training, settlement and after care, and by his humane and enheartening work in this place, his name throughout the

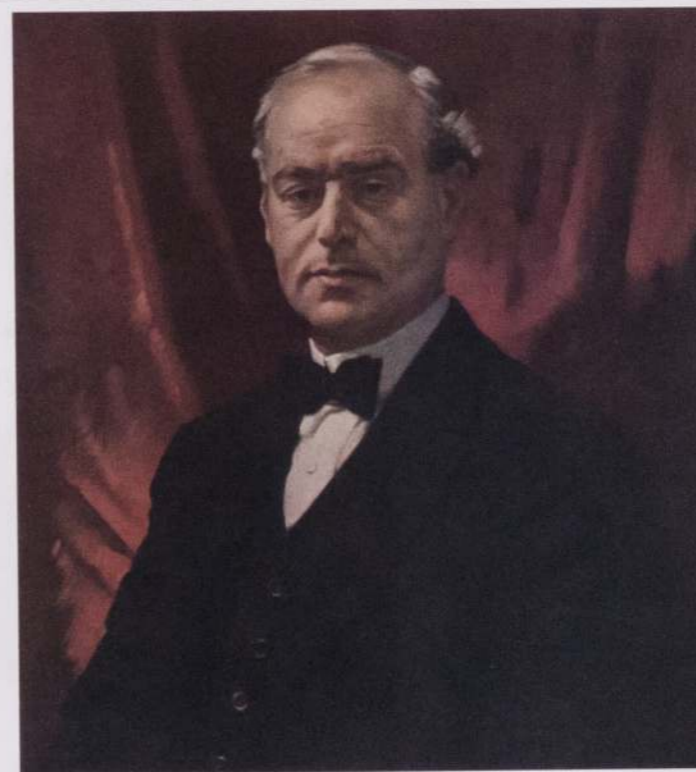
civilised world will be honoured for ever. [Applause].

"Our hearts go out to those, whom he has helped, and I wish them good luck in the professions and handicrafts whereby they are learning to become useful citizens. I trust that an ever generous public may continue to support this great work which Sir Arthur Pearson began. By so doing they can pay no better tribute to its founders, nor one more worthy of his memory."

His Royal Highness then drew aside the Union Flag veiling the portrait, and after giving opportunities for photographs to be taken by the large number of press photographers present, presentations were made of the leading members of the staff. These included Mrs Arnold, Mrs Bannister, Mrs Menzies, Miss Love, Miss Pearson, Miss Power, Miss Thellusson and Mr Askew. The Duke then started an exhaustive tour of the workshops and classrooms, where he showed the keenest interest in the work of every department.

Lady Pearson received, shortly after the ceremony, the following telegram from Her Majesty Queen Alexandra:

"Am deeply interested in knowing that the portrait of your dear husband, by Sir William Orpen, was unveiled at St Dunstan's this morning by my grandson, the Duke of York, and to realise the fact that the picture was subscribed for by over 2,000 blinded officers and men as their loving and grateful tribute to his memory — ALEXANDRA."



Picture: The Memorial portrait of our founder Sir Arthur Pearson Bt, GBE by Sir William Orpen RA.

Blind Veterans UK centenary merchandise.

To celebrate our centenary and 100 years of proud service the Blind Veterans UK centenary logo is featured on a range of new merchandise that includes clothing, umbrellas, paperweights, tie and lapel badges, passport holders, a commemorative medal and blazer badges. We have included examples of the centenary merchandise below and you can also visit our online shop at <https://shop.blindveterans.org.uk> Or phone 0300 111 0440 for credit or debit card orders.



Picture: Blind Veterans UK 100 Years of Service blazer badge.

Wear your badge with pride, a colourful and impressive piece of embroidered red, blue, white and gold with black lettering. 100% full stitch count cut to chevron shape. Size 58 x 100mm.

Price: £10. **SKU:** CM15030.

Picture: The Blind Veterans UK centenary fibrestorm auto umbrella features a black handle and double logo print that opens at the touch of a button. Colour: White, scarlet and navy panels and two panels are printed with the full colour centenary logo. It will keep you dry should it rain at our centenary Garden Party. **Price:** £35. **SKU:** CG15006.



Picture: From the opposite page the Blind Veterans UK 100 Years of Service baseball cap.

Blind Veterans UK baseball cap in French navy 100% brushed cotton twill with 100 years of service lettering on the back. **Price** £10. **SKU:** CM15025

Picture: The Blind Veterans UK tie pin is a great way to show your support in a smart and sophisticated way. Looks great with one of our 2015 ties!

Price £4. **SKU:** CM15029.



Picture: Blind Veterans UK centenary tie. Celebrate our centenary in style by wearing this silk, non crease striped Blind Veterans UK 100th Anniversary tie with gold detailing. It would be the perfect tie to wear to our centenary Buckingham Palace Garden Party. It is also a great way to raise awareness of Blind Veterans UK as you travel around town from the Palace, drawing attention to the tie and perhaps answering questions about Blind Veterans UK. **Price:** £20. **SKU:** CM15027.

Fred Jefferies launches Love Bites at the Brighton centre.

Love Bites is based around the theme of love and it takes a light hearted look at the most wonderful joy that can happen to everyone. A professional cartoonist for more than 50 years, Fred Jefferies put away his pen when his eyesight deteriorated and he was registered blind in 2001. Ten years on, he found the courage to try again and has produced Love Bites, a delightful collection of humorous observations on love in all its guises in a charming old school style.

Born in the slums of Paddington in 1929, Fred grew up in relative poverty until, when evacuated at the age of 11, he discovered a talent for drawing, and a kindly sponsor in the form of a wealthy Major who paid for art lessons. Fred then attended St Martin's College of Art and became a freelance cartoonist. He is a member of the Cartoonists Club of Great Britain and the Professional Cartoonist's Organisation and lives in Tring, Hertfordshire.

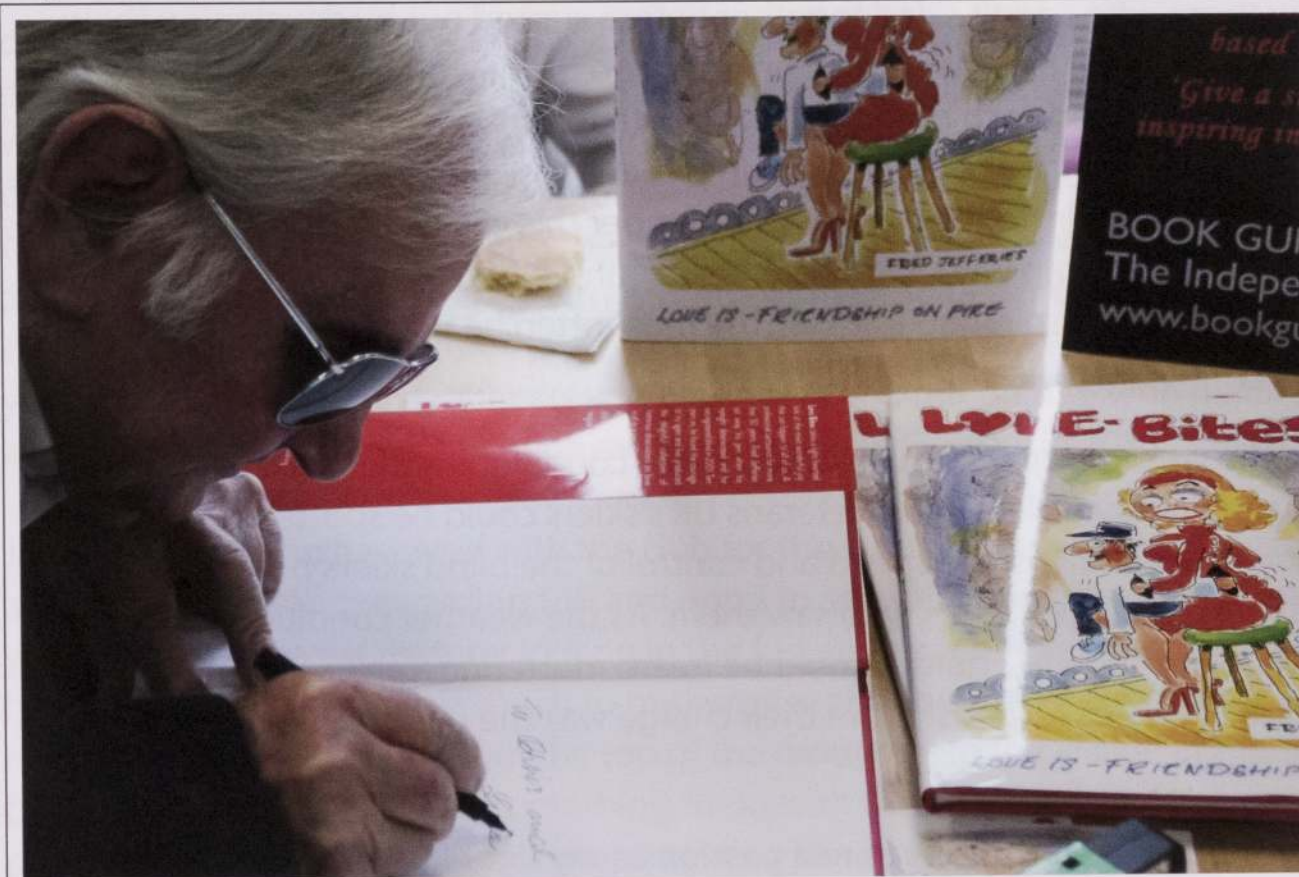
Fred, who was registered blind in 2001, joined Blind Veterans UK in 2011. It was following his introduction week at the Brighton centre that he started to draw again and now he finds it hard to stop.

Speaking of the launch of Love Bites Fred said: "I would like to thank Graham Robson of Book Guild Publishing and Blind Veterans UK for arranging such a great turn out of members of the press at the Brighton centre for the launch of Love Bites on 25th February. It's my first book and the resulting articles, especially one in The Jester, have been quite incredible to read. My wife Nora and I would like to thank my fellow blind veteran Elizabeth Sharpe Nelson and ROVI Paul Hartley. We want to thank Elizabeth as she took us to St Dunstan's Chapel where we met Father Morgan who said that Love Bites had inspired him to make a sermon about love over the weekend. It was so lovely to have that very special religious connotation put to the book and that really made the week for me as Love Bites is about the importance of love.

"I was told that I was going blind in 2001 but it was a decade before I came to our charity. It was through a chance meeting with a lady who was nearly 100 years old that I was introduced to Blind Veterans UK. She had been an RAF Plotter during the Second World War and she introduced me to the charity that has changed my life and helped me to get back to doing what I love.

"During the Introduction Week at the Brighton centre in 2011 ROVI Paul Hartley took Nora and I around the Art & Craft Workshop and I did a few drawings for Paul which they put on the wall at the centre and that started me cartooning again. I have to use a magnifier now but I'm drawing on a regular basis — in fact I have a job to put the pen down. I have another book ready to do as I can't seem to stop. As I said to Father Morgan when he asked where I get my inspiration from I have angels in my head who whisper to me. My wife tells everyone that I draw from the heart. Of course with the help of my angels."

Paul Hartley said: "Fred is one of those rare people who are able to make a living out of a talent that he is passionate about. On retiring he had continued to draw but this was clearly becoming more challenging, I noted in Fred's Introduction Week in 2011: 'A cartoonist, Fred was also able to sketch using the Electronic Magnifier: up to this point he has had to draw larger than usual and then have it downsized.' At the end of the week I was touched to receive a Fred Jefferies original featuring his interpretation of my dog Dasha. Fred has demonstrated that with appropriate support and individual determination it is possible to reignite old passions and indeed to find new ones through Blind Veterans UK."



Picture: Cartoonist Fred Jefferies signs Love Bites, his first book, at the Brighton centre on 25th February 2015. Published by Book Guild it is available at £9.99 in hardback A4.

From the slopes of Canazei, Blind Veterans UK Ski Club report 2015.

To kick off this year's ski report Tony Whitelaw wrote: "It started as the sun went down behind the Gatwick control tower: the 2015 gathering of the Blind Veterans UK Ski Club. There was a fond and characteristically boisterous welcome to friends old and new as we met in the Travelodge prior to flying to Canazei in Italy the following day. In total the group consisted of more than 40 people including 13 blind veterans and 14 guides, together with friends and family.

"On arrival at the hotel El Ciasel, and after a warm welcome from our hosts who have come to know us well over the years, we were quickly equipped with our distinctive jackets, skis, boots and communication equipment in preparation for the next day's 9am start on a nearby quiet slope. I was paired with Rick Jones, who I had skied with the previous year. Guides and members are paired for the week to enable a mutual understanding to build between them. On the first day those who hadn't skied together before started out by developing their communication and guiding techniques and those who had skied together before reminded each other of the importance of knowing left from right. One of the great things about the ski club is that it welcomes blind skiers of all skiing experience: for instance our newest member this year was Danny Lee. At 82, this was his first ski trip with Blind Veterans UK and his first time skiing with a guide. Danny was an inspiration to us all, the most often heard comment of the week being 'I hope I'm like that at 82!'

"As the week progressed, with good snow conditions and the ski pairs developing their skills Blind Veterans UK's skiers could be spotted on pistes all over the mountains, the speed and control of the blind skiers bringing much respect from other skiers who saw them. As the weather conditions closed in with heavy snowfall, guides could be heard muttering 'can't see a thing!' — to which the usual response from their charge was the predictable — welcome to the club!

"For me skiing has become a real passion as my sight has deteriorated: it is hard to describe the sense of freedom gained from putting aside one's white cane, donning skis and hurtling down a slope, with speed and control (well sometimes!) with the sound of one's guide over the head set comms providing

safe guidance and information on the snow conditions. Skiing for us is about confidence and technique, while the technique may be variable (certainly in my case) the constant for us is the confidence provided by the guides.

"Over the many years that the Blind Veterans UK ski club has operated it seems that it has always embraced one ethos: it is a place for any member who is fit enough and has the desire to ski, either as a novice or as a returnee to skiing following sight loss. This is enabled by those who organise and those who are able to give their time to guide us: without them there would be no club, so thank you all. In particular a great friend of the Blind Veterans UK ski club moved on from her post at Blind Veterans UK, the one and only Barabara Sweeney. We thank you Barbara for all you've done to support and help the ski club."

Danny Lee, a first time skier with the Blind Veterans UK Ski Club wrote: "One, I made enquiries about joining the Blind Veterans UK Ski Club and two I found myself being guided (using head set comms) around the ski slopes above Canazei. My poor vision made moving around the mountain very challenging and I could not have done it without my guide Tom Paterson. But it was definitely enjoyable! The week was a blur of ski runs, interrupted only by our morning, lunch, and afternoon breaks at various mountain restaurants, where we met up with other members of our group. These days were followed by equally enjoyable evenings in our hotel. Everyone in our large group, too many to mention by name, was friendly, helpful, and a pleasure to be with. However, all too soon, it was time for the journey home at the end of a great week. My confidence, despite poor vision, refreshed. To finish I must say a very big thank you to our Blind Veterans UK hosts and organisers and our guides, who made it all possible. I hope to meet up with everyone again in Canazei in 2016."

John Cantwell who has skied with the club for the last few years wrote: "It was a very enjoyable and rewarding trip and good to see some new members, both young and somewhat maturer joining in the fun and experience of skiing in a beautiful location. This year, much to my surprise and the encouragement of my instructor Taffy, I skied from the top of the mountain to the village at the bottom. This could have had something to do with the fact that I was being pursued by a large, hairy Welsh man, and not a sheep in sight. Seriously Taffy, thank you for all your help over the week. It was also good to see snowboarding still on the rise."

The annual Blind Veterans UK ski week from Canazei is thoroughly enjoyed by the guides. Rob Caldecott wrote: "I have been privileged to have been invited to act as a ski guide for Blind Veterans UK's ski club for the past four years. As a newcomer (some like Peter Zamudio have been doing this for over 30 years) I have been honoured to partner three veterans over the four years. So every January we troop off to Italy through the hard work of Mark Brewin, Carl Williams, Jamie Weller and Louise Timms and form the guides in Canazei in the Dolomites to hit both the slopes and the bar with equal fervour.

"My first partner was Brian Head who had never skied before and (as I am sure he won't mind me telling) was 77 years old. As a guide your primary concern is for the safety of your charge and to ensure that they are able to enjoy the skiing. I needed to teach Brian to ski and as this was my first time I also had to learn how to work with blind and vision impaired skiers. Brian was very determined and keen to learn and we formed a bond of trust which is vital to both parties. By the end of the week Brian was able to ski down safely with me taking him down under his own steam.

"My second partner over two years was Alan Lock. A remarkable character who has two world records to his name. Alan is younger than Brian by some 40 years and is incredibly keen. I had to adjust my guiding style for Alan who likes to follow his guide and be talked through and made aware of issues around that may be a problem. Another concern for guides is to gauge the ability of the skier and match it to their enthusiasm. Alan is extremely enthusiastic and I had to suggest (politely) that 10 minutes for lunch was too short and that we both needed a rest. I formed a strong friendship with Alan; I think all guides do with their charges, and we were able to stretch ourselves without over egging it. By the second year we were (and are) a close team.

"My third partner was Kerry Levins. Kerry is a very competent skier who wanted me to follow him and talk him down the mountain while trying to improve his technique. This was the first time I had taken this approach which was different from leading as you have to look ahead of your partner to gauge when and where to make the turns, slow down and avert any danger. Kerry, like Alan, is incredibly enthusiastic and makes the most out of his week but ensures that he knows what he is capable of.

"Three very different skiers with different requirements; one to tech, one to

follow and one to lead. As a guide you have to ensure you do your best for your blind veteran and you must be able to adjust your guiding style to the requirements of your partner.

"I have recently retired from the Army and my Corps (unofficial) motto is Nothing Is Impossible. This is borrowed from the Glider Pilot Regiment and this motto sums up the approach, enthusiasm, courage and strength of the men and women of the Blind Veterans UK ski club."

To finish, the Blind Veterans UK Ski Club Committee wrote: "After 12 months of planning and preparation ski week was very quickly upon us once more and it very quickly became another fantastic year on the slopes of Canazei, Italy.

"This year we welcomed a new member to our ranks, Danny Lee who at 82, soon proved to show us all up as he was as fit as a fiddle and game for anything. Our timing was just right this year as our arrival was preceded by a good dump of snow, which had been lacking by all accounts up until that point. The outcome — perfectly groomed slopes for our first day to get our 'legs back'. The rest of the week saw snowfall at night followed by perfect ski conditions the next day, result!

"We have a great relationship with the hotel and this year Mara let us take over the kitchen and direct her staff in the art of making haggis! Thursday night is typically gala night. However, this year we took over the dining room and created our own Burns night celebration. The staff and fellow guests who were wide eyed really enjoyed the evening's entertainment and the night was a great success. The committee would like to say a huge thank you to Poggy for organising, galvanising and enabling the night to become the success that it was. Thanks also to Big Cam for getting us into the spirit with his bagpipes and his fiery address, Shakey and Stew for their dits, to Christine Tilt for giving the ladies reply, and finally to Tip Top Tom for being able to 'explain' to the Italian border control people what the mysterious packages of haggis were!

"A big thank you to all the guides who very kindly gave up their time, took leave and generally enabled the trip to take place. Without the guides, put simply, the trip wouldn't happen and all the club members greatly appreciate your support.

"And finally, we'd like to extend a special thank you to Barbara Sweeney, an

unsung heroine of the organisation of the trip. Hopefully by now Barbara, you are enjoying your new life in Italy, but thank you for all your efforts over the past years and helping us organise so many successful trips.

"If you would like to find out more about the Blind Veterans UK Ski Club please contact us at email bvuk_skiclub@yahoo.co.uk.

The dates for 2016 are Saturday 16th to Saturday 23rd January.



Picture: Charlie Daly and Peter Zamudio who have skied together as veteran and sighted guide since 1985.

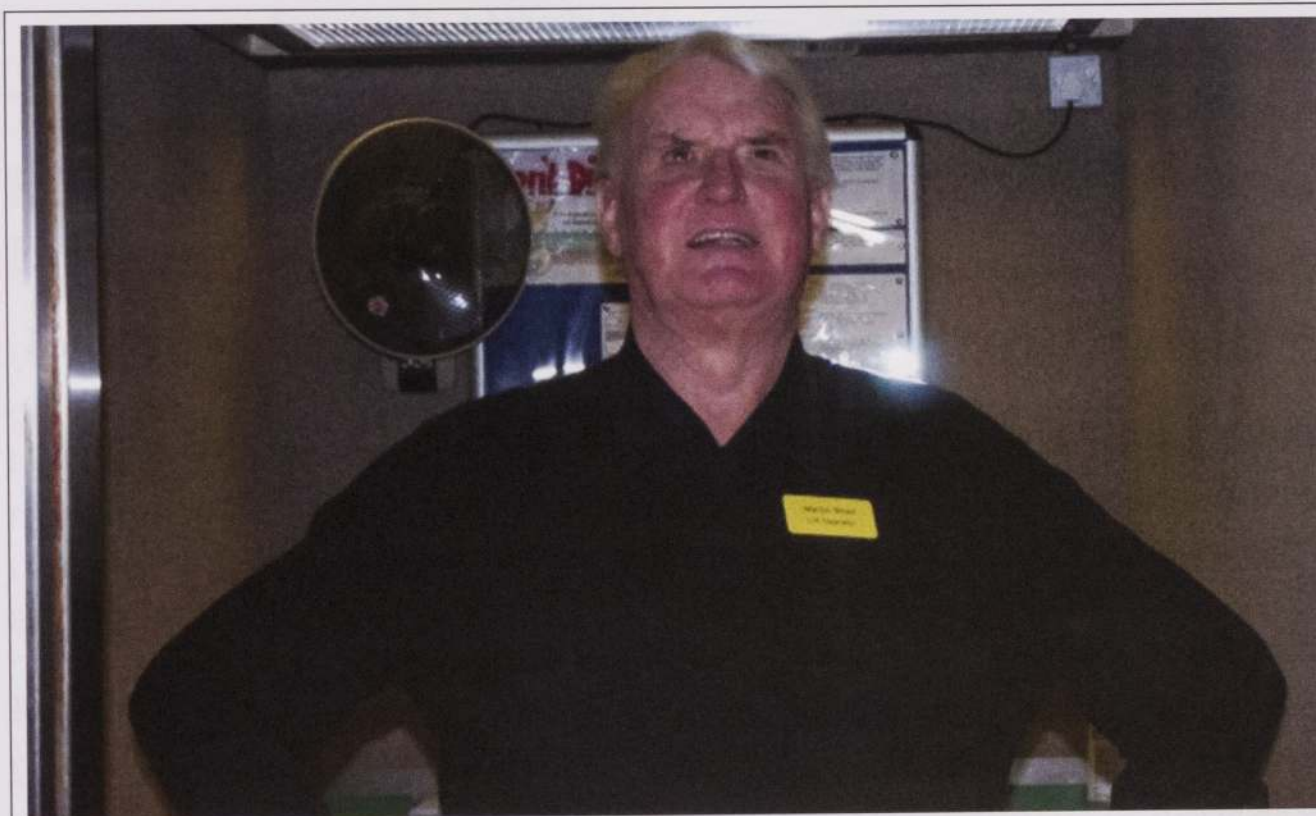
Five members to abseil down Brighton's Grand Hotel.

Martin Shail, whom so many of you know as he was your first contact when you entered the doors of the Brighton centre, thinks that he's going for a leisurely stroll along Brighton's seafront on Sunday 14th June. But he's in for a surprise as those scamps at the Brighton centre have arranged for him to join in our centenary abseil!

Martin and four of his fellow members Tony Harbour, Alan Saunders, Matthew Rod and David Yeoman, and 14 members of Blind Veterans UK staff, will each step off Brighton's Grand Hotel to draw attention to our centenary and raise money for the charity that is so dear to them.

Each person who takes part in the abseil will set out to raise a minimum of £100 for Blind Veterans UK. If you would like to sponsor Martin Shail his Justgiving page is at: www.justgiving.co.uk/martinsgrandabseil

Or you can telephone Rachel Chitty, Regional Fundraiser based at the Brighton centre on telephone 01273 391455 or email: rachel.chitty@blindveterans.org.uk We wish them great success in their abseils.



Picture: Martin Shail in the lift at the Brighton centre. Photo Steve Jannering.

Kelly Ganfield (nee Hart) answers the Reviews 10 questions.

What's your favourite memory?

Representing the Army playing football against the RAF and Royal Navy and scoring the winning goal.

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

Not to take anything or life for granted.

How do you unwind?

It used to be kicking the football around, now it's going for a run.

What qualities do you admire in others?

There are a few, but loyalty and honesty.

What would you change in the world?

This isn't meant to be funny but to have world peace! Which can't happen.

What's the meaning of life?

Love, being able to reproduce, family, generation and fulfilment whilst you are alive and knowing that you've left a piece of your life within society.

What makes you happy?

Knowing that I'm no longer existing, I'm contributing and living as good a life that I could ever have imagined possible.

What would your blind self tell your sighted self?

Keep calm, carry on, believe in yourself, carry on doing and being who you are!

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

To be proud and patient with myself so that I can be patient with others and continue to be the best for myself and those who know me.

What is the most useful piece of training or equipment?

To be honest I believe the training you receive in the Forces and the self preservation that you instil in yourself gives you the survival drive to go on and really live.



Picture: Kelly Ganfield (nee Hart), who joined Blind Veterans UK in 2005, and Caroline Williams completed the Plymouth half Marathon in 2 hours and 5 minutes on Sunday 15th March 2015.

ROVI on Duty Service for faulty ROVI equipment. By Stuart Penfold, ROVI.

Very occasionally equipment that has been loaned to you by the ROVI team goes wrong. Our policy is to make sure you have the piece of equipment that meets your needs and continues to do the job it is intended for, so in most cases we can offer a replacement or repair. A repair would usually be undertaken by one of our recommended suppliers. It's really helpful if you keep all the boxes and packaging.

Reading aids.

CCTVs and scanners are major pieces of equipment. These are very reliable machines but occasionally a bulb will go, the unit will not turn on or there is a power fault. We would advise you to try turning the machine on and off to see if

that resets the machine. It may also be worth checking all leads are inserted and plugged in fully.

As these machines are on loan from us, we would ask you to call us in the first instance on 01273 391447. Our R&T Logistics Co-ordinator will speak to you and try to diagnose the fault. If it cannot be rectified, we may arrange a collection from your home by one of our Transport team or a courier. Unfortunately this may mean you will be without the equipment for a time, but we will do our best to ensure the problem is rectified and the machine sent back to you as quickly as possible.

Talking books.

There has been a big change in the RNIB talking book service and there is no facility to repair faulty talking book DAISY players. However, we may suggest sending the machine to our R&T Logistics Co-ordinator at Brighton who will have a look at it. If a repair is possible he'll undertake this and return the machine to you, otherwise a ROVI will call you to discuss the most suitable talking book service and machine.

Magnifiers.

Hand held magnifiers are well used for many reading tasks. The sturdiness of the magnifiers has improved but occasionally they do break. We will replace any broken magnifier we've provided like for like. If you think you'd benefit from a stronger model, you'll need a re-assessment from a low vision professional. Please remember you can get a low vision service from your local hospital, local sensory social services team, voluntary organisation or your Blind Veterans UK ROVI.

Milestones.

Any faults with these should be reported to the ROVI on Duty service. We will try to help over the telephone and if this doesn't solve the problem we'll ask you to send it to us for testing or repair.

Watches.

Please be aware of the service the Talking Watch shop provides. It can change batteries on a variety of watches that have been issued by us. Please avoid sending watches to Blind Veterans UK as we are unable to change batteries or straps. Once the watch has been issued the strap and battery changes are the responsibility of the person it was issued to.

Talking Watch Shop, Verbalise Ltd, Room 5, Business First, Amy Johnson Way, Blackpool FY4 2RP. Telephone: 03303 500678.

Mobile phones.

If returning a mobile phone, please remove and retain the SIM card if you're able to and unlock the keypad.

Warranty.

If the equipment is less than a year old you will need to send it back in the original box with any leads and extras that came with it. This means we can claim back the cost of the faulty item from the supplier.

General tips before calling the ROVI on Duty service.

For equipment such as a mobile phone, portable CCTV or Boombox, it may be worth changing the batteries or charging the unit fully before reporting a fault.

Have you made sure all leads are plugged in fully?

Can a family member check what's wrong with the equipment?

Is the fault a one off or does it happen all the time?

Sometimes faults happen only once, and when the equipment is reset it's alright again.

You can contact the ROVI on Duty service on telephone 01273 391447.

If the equipment problem persists, please call the ROVI on Duty service rather than wait for your Welfare Officer to visit.

You will need to leave your name and a short message about the fault, and we will ring you back and advise you on the best course of action. Please note this is not an emergency service and it may be several days before we're able to contact you, depending on current demand. You may be asked to send the equipment back to us for checking, testing or for replacement and we will do this as quickly as possible.

100k 24 hour London to Brighton Challenge Walk or Run.

Already 188 people have signed up to take part in our 100k 24 hour London to Brighton Walk or Run on 6th and 7th June. Training is well and truly underway as boots are broken in and sweat soaked Blind Veterans UK 100k t-shirts are put into the washing machine throughout the week. To help training Theresa Farley, Sports & Rec Instructor at the Brighton centre, will run three training weeks with the next scheduled to take place from 6th to 10th April.

Part of the training for the 100K challenge is to complete a 40 mile walk from 10am on 9th April to 2am on 10th April. Or if you are there to train to walk the 50k the shorter training walk will start at 10am and finish at 10pm. It's a great way to get used to walking long distances and also to walking at night.

As so many blind veterans are up for a challenge Chris Nowell, Charlie Parkinson, Kev Alderton, Steven Evans and Maria Pikulski have all signed up to complete the 100K with John Evans, Dave Blagg and Chris Strudwick completing 50K. You can also enter as a relay team, and, if like Charlie Parkinson, you want to become an ultra marathon runner you can run the route.

The 100k London to Brighton Walk or Run will start in London at Hurlingham Park in Putney. From there you will cross Surrey into Sussex to finish at our Brighton centre where you can celebrate your success. There will be refreshment points enroute where you can stop for food and essential foot admin.

Chris Nowell signed up to take part with his brother Jimmy, a WO1 in the King's Royal Hussars, and their friends Chris and Lucy Downing. It will be the longest distance Chris has walked since he left the King's Royal Hussars after he was blinded in Afghanistan in 2007.

Speaking of his training Chris said: "I started training with a battle rope that I use for an hour every day and each Monday I go for a very long walk that's at least 22k as I have the Derbyshire Dales on my doorstep. I have to be careful how I plan a route for safety reasons taking traffic or roads into consideration. As I can walk 22k without any problem I'm upping the training walks to 40k. I've booked into the training week in April when we do 40 miles in the evening in the dark so that we know what to expect of the actual walk. My brother who is

based at Bovington has taken leave to come on the training week so we'll both get a good idea how we have to work together during the walk. I do a training walk on Tuesday and Thursday with Bella our family dog, but I also use that time to take landscape photos."

If you would like to sponsor Chris and his team you can go to: <http://www.justgiving.com/Chris-Nowell212>



Picture: Chris Nowell strides along as he trains for the 24 hour 100K London to Brighton walk or run challenge.

The event is a tough personal challenge for anyone who wants to take part; experienced walkers, recreational strollers, or beginners who want to do something great for themselves and for Blind Veterans UK. You can take part as an individual and tackle the whole 100k course, or you could take part as a team relay. A team of four can each complete 25k or a team of two can complete 50k each.

John Evans from Talaton in Devon attended the first 100k training week at the Brighton centre in January and he is looking forward to his return for the second training week in April. John a former member of the RAF who joined Blind Veterans UK in 2013 said: "Fitness is something that I let slip when I left the RAF as I used to play rugby, squash and take part in tug of war and cross country running. It was thanks to Craig Brindley that I got back into fitness when I visited the gym at the Brighton centre during my introductory week and I am grateful to the gym staff for that. I've signed up to walk 50k and must say that I thoroughly enjoyed the first practice week at the Brighton centre in January. It was Theresa Farley's first day and she ended up being lumbered with me as we walked from Devil's Dyke. I hope that as she's still there as a Sports & Rec Instructor it can't have been that bad! The training week was tougher than expected, especially as it was January and we walked in the pouring rain and wind, but it was also enjoyable.

"My original guide had to drop out and my new guide is ex Royal Marines who

now teaches British Military Fitness. I will meet him for the first time on 18th March and I've no idea what to expect but as he's also coming to Brighton for the April practice week we will learn how to work together as a team, as he will obviously have to guide me. Training is going well and I'm very fortunate as where I live there is a large estate nearby with several private footpaths that they let me use so that I can stay off the road and the local farmers let me use their fields too. It just means that I have no excuse not to train!

If you would like to sponsor John please go to www.Justgiving.com/john-evans35

Steven Evans who joined Blind Veterans UK in 2014 is also training for the 100k. He runs his own physiotherapy clinic — Avenue Physiotherapy — in Camberley, Surrey which is now in its 15th year. When he's not working he's busy training for the 100k London to Brighton Walk. Steven's current walking partner is his Swiss white German Shepherd dog Sookie. However he is due to meet his two legged guide Joey in the near future who he is looking forward to training with. Steven says, "I was so impressed by the care and commitment on my first visit to the Brighton centre on my induction and it was a total revelation. The attention to detail and level of support by the staff was marvellous. By taking part in the 100k walk and raising funds and promoting awareness for the charity is my small way of thanking Blind Veterans UK and helping them to continue their outstanding work."



Picture: Steven Evans and Sookie ahead of a training walk.

If you would like to take part the registration fee is £50 for the 100k or £35 for the 50k distance for an individual or £100 per relay team (£25 each). Individuals need to raise £300 for the 100k and £200 for the 50k and relay teams need to raise £500. For further information or to sign up go to: www.blindveterans.org.uk/100k/events or email fundraising@blindveterans.org.uk or telephone 020 7616 7966.

Elspeth Grant MBE.

On 17th February 2015 a very dear friend of our charity, Miss Elspeth Grant MBE, died at the age of 96.

In 2005 she received an MBE for her services to us and in particular for all of her help in organising the Summer Camps at HMS Daedalus and HMS Sultan, which she organised on a voluntary basis for 31 years until 2004. The camps were started by her cousin Avis Spurway in 1920. Elspeth was made a Governor of Blind Veterans UK in 1995 and up until a few years ago she attended the Cenotaph weekend.

When she was notified of her MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2005 she said: "It came totally out of the blue. I thought why me, all the other people deserve it? I went to stay at the camp one weekend and I was hooked."



Picture: Dave Burrows who organises HMS Sultan Summer Camp escorted Elspeth Grant to Buckingham Palace when she collected her MBE. They are pictured with Mrs Bridget Reed, a very dear friend and helper at the Summer Camps at HMS Daedalus and HMS Sultan.

Family News.

Congratulations to:

Jonathan Hiam, the grandson of Margaret Cross, who will pass out from Sandhurst in April.

Birthdays:

Archie Cooledge who celebrated his 102nd birthday on 5th March.
Jeanette Goodman who celebrated her 100th birthday on 22nd March.

Anniversaries:

Platinum (70th):

John & Edna Pearson of Hampton, Middlesex on 24th March.

Blue Sapphire (65th):

John & Grace Ward of Lichfield, Staffordshire on 18th March.
Israel & Ruth Singer of Edgbaston, Birmingham on 22nd March.
George & Rita Prest of Eston, Cleveland on 25th March.
Kenneth & Jean Dolan of St Helens, Merseyside on 25th March.
Douglas & Joan Simonite of Nottingham, Nottinghamshire on 25th March.
Frank & Marge Walker of Matlock, Derbyshire on 25th March.

Diamond (60th):

John & Elizabeth Hogan of Bootle, Merseyside on 5th March.
George & Rosemary Wilson of Chelmsford, Essex on 5th March.
Lex & Helen Park of Coatbridge, Lanarkshire on 18th March.
Reg & Barbara Ayers of Brackley, Northamptonshire on 23rd March.
Harry & Doreen Stevenson of Washington, Tyne and Wear on 26th March.
Maurice & Margaret Heslop of Stockton On Tees, Cleveland on 26th March.
Tom & Ena Hemsley of Newcastle Upon Tyne on 26th March.

Golden (50th):

James & Stella Clarke of Barnet, London on 6th March.
Gordon & Angela Abbott of Ascot, Berkshire on 6th March.
Julian & Daphne Zwierzchowski of Hove, East Sussex on 20th March.
Tony & Jean Crouch of Ipswich, Suffolk on 20th March.
Lawrence & Nairi Johnson of Lochardil, Inverness on 24th March.
Rusty & Brenda McKinley of Birkenhead, Merseyside on 31st March.

Ruby (40th):

Frederick & Georgina Wheeler of Telford, Shropshire on 22nd March.
Douglas & Zelma Hobbs of Rushden, Northamptonshire on 26th March.

Pearl (30th):

Ron & Olwyn Wyman of Honiton, Devon on 28th March.

Silver (25th):

Ron & Kathy Morris of Crawley, West Sussex on 9th March.

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

Eileen Harden who died on 25th January 2015. She was the widow of the late Mark Harden.

Doris Legge who died on 12th February 2015. She was the widow of the late James Legge.

Barbara McCarter who died on 21st December 2014. She was the wife of Bernard Marsden.

Patricia 'Pat' Mills who died in 2015. She was the widow of the late Ronald Mills.

Joyce Perry who died on 23rd February 2015. She was the wife of Robert Perry.

Martha Robins who died on 14th January. She was the wife of Frederick Robins.

Margaret 'Peggy' Upcott who died on 18th February 2015. She was the widow of the late Douglas Upcott.

Welcome to Blind Veterans UK.

George Adam of Carluke, Lanarkshire served in the Royal Signals from 1940 to 1946.

Samuel Adams of Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk served in the Royal Artillery, the Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regiment and the Royal Signals from 1943 to 1947.

Geoffrey Alvey of Belper, Derbyshire served in the Royal Artillery from 1947 to 1949.

Kenneth Baker of Liverpool served in the Loyal Regiment and the King's Regiment from 1951 to 1956.

George 'Arthur' Barnes of Woodford Green, Essex served in the Queen's Own, the Queen's Royal Regiment and the Royal Artillery from 1940 to 1946.

Adrian Batchelor of Kings Langley, Hertfordshire served in the East Anglian Regiment and the Royal Anglian Regiment from 1963 to 1975.

Ronald Bentham of Southport, Merseyside served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

Robert Bishop of Worcester served in the South Staffordshire Regiment and the Royal Artillery from 1949 to 1964.

William Brant of Stoke-On-Trent, Staffordshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

Brian Brown of Brandon, Suffolk served in the Royal Artillery from 1953 to 1958.

George Chandler of St. Martin, Guernsey served in the Royal Navy from 1952 to 1964.

Bernard Coker of North Walsham, Norfolk served in the Royal Air Force from 1943 to 1947.

Arthur Dixon of Milton Keynes served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1950 to 1955.

John Dobbins of Birkenhead, Merseyside served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1954 to 1957.

Kenneth Dowdney of Walton-On-Thames, Surrey served in the Queen's Royal Regiment and the Royal Fusiliers from 1952 to 1974.

John Edwards of Tuffley, Gloucester served in the Royal Signals from 1947 to 1949.

Evan Evans of Fishguard, Dyfed served in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1941.

Henry Flowers of Falmouth, Cornwall served in the Royal Air Force from 1939 to 1946.

Lt.Cmdr Derek Ford MBE DSC of Castel, Guernsey served in the Royal Navy from 1940 to 1962.

Harry Furness of Clevedon, Avon served in the Royal Artillery, the Royal Norfolk Regiment and the Yorkshire and Lancashire Regiment from 1943 to 1947.

Geoffrey Gent of Darlington served in the Royal Air Force from 1946 to 1949.

Jack Graham of Holbury, Southampton served in the Royal Marines and the Royal Air Force from 1943 to 1953.

Roy Grigg of Swadlincote, Derbyshire served in the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1953 to 1958.

Alan Harper of Northampton served in the Royal Navy from 1948 to 1950.

Alan Hartley of Pickering, North Yorkshire served in the Royal Navy from 1951 to 1970.

William Hassack of Bassingham, Lincoln served in the Royal Artillery from 1940 to 1946.

Raymond Higson of Accrington, Lancashire served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1946 to 1948.

Robert Hill of Chorley, Lancashire served in the Merchant Navy from 1943 to 1947.

David Hogan of Bournemouth served in the Royal Hussars from 1941 to 1947.

Jeffrey Holdgate of Stockport, Cheshire served in the Border Regiment and the King's Own Scottish Borderers from 1940 to 1946.

William Hopkins of Ashford, Middlesex served in the Royal Navy from 1954 to 1978.

Stanley Hunt of Solihull, West Midlands served in the Royal Air Force from 1948 to 1950.

Ralph Jones of Sevenoaks, Kent served in the Royal Navy from 1942 to 1965.

Robert Keenan of Stockton-On-Tees, Cleveland served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1952 to 1957.

Ruth Kendall of Yeovil, Somerset served in the Women's Royal Air Force from 1947 to 1965.

Melvin King of St. Sampson, Guernsey served in the Royal Navy from 1939 to 1979.

Enid Lander (nee Wildman) of Seaford, East Sussex served in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1946.

Ernest Lester of Nottingham served in the Home Guard from 1942 to 1945.

George Lewis of Aberystwyth, Dyfed served in the Queen's Dragoon Guards from 1955 to 1958.

Ronald Ludford of Halesworth, Suffolk served in the Royal Air Force from 1947 to 1949.

Patrick Mann of Llandudno, Gwynedd served in the Royal Air Force from 1945 to 1948.

Kenneth Mardling of Swindon served in the Royal Engineers from 1956 to 1962.

Roy Markham of Seaton, Devon served in the Royal Navy from 1941 to 1967.

Leon McGuire of Newton-Le-Willows, Merseyside served in the Royal Artillery from 1945 to 1972.

Dennis Munro of Rushden, Northamptonshire served in the Northamptonshire Regiment, the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment and the East Anglian

Regiment from 1956 to 1962.

Bernard Muscat of Abbeymead, Gloucester served in the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1966 to 1988.

Kenneth Newbery of Covent Garden, London served in the Royal Air Force from 1949 to 1954.

Percy Oliver of Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk served in the Royal Air Force from 1946 to 1956.

Lawrence Onions of Willenhall, West Midlands served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1948 to 1949.

Clifford Peace of Barrow-In-Furness, Cumbria served in the King's Own Royal Regiment and the Border Regiment from 1945 to 1948.

Colin Penaluna of Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk served in the Queen's Division and the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers from 1977 to 1986.

David Pendry of Attleborough, Norfolk served in the Queen's Regiment from 1983 to 1984.

Donald Pimperton of Ruddington, Nottingham served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1947 to 1949.

Leslie Powles of Birmingham served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1946.

John Price of Doncaster, South Yorkshire served in the Middlesex Regiment and the Royal Fusiliers from 1944 to 1952.

William Raison of Bexley, Kent served in the Royal Navy from 1940 to 1952.

Elizabeth Ray of Hove, East Sussex served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1944 to 1945.

Eric Roberts of Cowbridge, South Glamorgan served in the Royal Air Force from 1948 to 1950.

Hugh Robertson of Preston, Lancashire served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1943 to 1947.

Dennis Robinson of Totton, Southampton served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1945 to 1948.

David Sawyer of Halesworth, Suffolk served in the Royal Artillery from 1956 to 1958.

Lt. Col Robert 'Bob' Skipp of Haywards Heath, West Sussex served in the Royal Engineers from 1943 to 1982.

Alan Smith of Balerno, Midlothian served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers from 1947 to 1949.

James Taylor of Carnforth, Lancashire served in the Border Regiment and the Army Catering Corps from 1951 to 1953.

David Thomlinson of Watford served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1955 to 1961.

Ronald Thompson of Walsall served in the Royal Warwickshire Regiment and the Northamptonshire Regiment from 1942 to 1947.

Andrew Thorburn of Fareham, Hampshire served in the Royal Navy from 1954 to 1956.

Donald Turner of Ipswich served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1949 to 1953.

Michael Turner of Sheffield served in the Prince of Wales's Own Yorkshire Regiment from 1951 to 1965.

Frank Vobe of Ammanford, Dyfed served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1947 to 1948.

Desmond Wilkinson of Stanley, County Durham served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1948 to 1957.

John Williams of Penarth, Glamorgan served in the Royal Navy from 1940 to 1946.

Aubrey Williamson of Downham Market, Norfolk served in the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1943 to 1946.

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.

Reverend Philip Addison of Beverley, North Humberside died on 16th February 2015, aged 85. He was called up for National Service in 1947 with the General Service Corps and trained with the Royal Lincolnshire Regiment. After training he was transferred to the Royal Artillery in 1947 and was with the 38th Field training regiment at Barnard Castle. He was then posted to the Far East and joined 54th Battalion and the 25th Field Regiment in Hong Kong where he completed his service in 1949. He then joined the clergy and was ordained in 1962. He joined the Royal Navy as a Chaplain in 1966, serving with the Royal Marines. After relinquishing his commission in 1970 he became a priest at a variety of parishes.

Arthur Askin of Blackpool, Lancashire died on 20th February 2015, aged 94. He joined the Royal Artillery in 1939 and served in the Middle East and Italy. He lost his right leg below the knee in action and was medically discharged in 1945.

Henry Bloor of Stafford, Staffordshire died on 28th September 2014, aged 89. He joined the Royal Navy in 1943 and after training at HMS Raleigh, he was drafted to HMS Sandown for general seamanship duties. He was involved with the maintenance of landing ship tanks and he took part in the D-Day Landings at Juno beach and was eventually discharged as an Able Seaman in 1946.

Eric Bolton of Harrogate, North Yorkshire died on 9th February 2015, aged 94. He joined the Lancashire Regiment in 1940 and after training was deployed to the Isle of Wight on Coastal Defence Duty. He transferred to the Royal Armoured Corps in 1941 and landed at Arromanches Beach, moving through Normandy where he was medically evacuated to the UK. On recovery he was deployed to Egypt, Palestine and finally Syria prior to discharge as a Corporal in 1946.

Ernest 'Ernie' Brown of Birmingham, West Midlands died on 14th February 2015, aged 91. He joined the Royal Irish Fusiliers in June 1942 and after training in Omagh transferred to the Royal Engineers in September 1942. He returned to England and was subsequently posted to Freetown, Sierra Leone for 18 months. He then took part in the invasion of France on D+28 and later was in the Suez Canal Zone. He was discharged in 1947.

Myra 'Bobby' Cater of New Milton, Hampshire died on 30th January 2015, aged 96. From 1942 she served in the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service at Brookwood Hospital, Goodward and was later posted to a field hospital in Burma prior to discharge in 1946 as a Sister.

Derek Final of Chelmsford, Essex died on 11th February 2015, aged 86. He volunteered as a boy seaman at 17 and was later called up for service with the Royal Navy in 1945. He qualified as an Air Mechanic (Ordnance) and he was posted to the naval air station HMS Goldcrest where he was employed in the explosives magazine. He was later sent to Ceylon to serve at HMS Bambara, also a naval air station before discharge in 1948.

George Gibbons of St Albans, Hertfordshire died on 16th February 2015, aged 89. He joined the Royal Army Service Corps in 1943 and qualified as a driver, serving in Northern Europe, Greece, Palestine and Egypt. He transferred to the Essex Regiment in 1945 and was briefly in the Suffolk Regiment in 1947 before his discharge.

Wilfred Gough of Chester, Cheshire died on 9th February 2015, aged 89. He joined the General Service Corps in March 1944. A month later he transferred to the Royal Signals and after training was subsequently posted to Yorkshire. He later served in Norway, did two tours of Germany and was in Holland when the war ended. He was discharged as a Lance Corporal in 1947.

William 'Bill' Haines of Solihull, West Midlands died on 7th February 2015, aged 89. He joined the Royal Navy in 1943 where he served as an ASDIC operator in Coastal Command and the Pacific Fleet before discharge as an Acting Able Seaman in 1947.

Colin Harrison of Hartlepool, Cleveland died on 17th February 2015, aged 52. He joined the Royal Engineers (TA) in 1979. He trained at Easington Road, Hartlepool, completed his annual camp in Germany and did a number of courses around the UK before being discharged as a Private in 1981.

Edward Hartley of Colne, Lancashire died on 8th February 2015, aged 87. He joined the General Service Corps in August 1946 and transferred to the Loyal Regiment a month later. After training in the UK he was posted to Bielefeld in Germany. He later served in France, moved through Holland and was eventually discharged as a Lance Corporal in 1948.

Kenneth Henson of Norwich died on 29th January 2015, aged 95. He enlisted in the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps in 1940. Serving in the UK and fighting overseas in North Africa, Italy and with the 2nd Punjab Regiment in India, he was a Captain by the time of his discharge in 1946.

Llewelyn Jones of Llangollen, Clwyd died on 21st January 2015, aged 89. He joined the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm in 1943. He was a radio mechanic at a Naval Air Station in Londonderry until discharged in 1946. He was recalled in 1951 for the Korean War and served in the UK. He was finally discharged as a Petty Officer in 1952.

Thomas 'Tom' Kerr of Lisburn, County Antrim died on 19th February 2015, aged 84. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1948 and after training in Blackpool served at RAF stations in Aldergrove, Chigwell and El Hamra in the Middle East. He was discharged as a Leading Aircraftman in 1953.

Vernon Marsh of Braintree, Essex died on 15th February 2015, aged 90. He joined the General Service Corps in November 1942 and after training transferred to the Royal Armoured Corps in February 1943. He was part of the D-Day Landings on Gold Beach and moved through France, Belgium, Holland and finally Germany. He completed his service in 1947.

Major Cyril Mathews of Llangefni, Gwynedd died on 1st February 2015, aged 93. He joined the Royal Engineers in 1939 and served in the UK, France (Normandy), Belgium, Syria and India. He was discharged as a Major in 1955.

Joyce More of High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire died on 12th January 2014, aged 90. She joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service in 1941, directly from school. Serving in Worcester, Waybourne and Reading she met and married her husband in Sheffield in 1944, just before he went off to D-Day. She was discharged in 1945.

Eileen Perrins of Abergele, Clwyd died on 14th February 2015, aged 95. She served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1942 in Kidderminster with the Royal Army Pay Corps until discharged as a Private in 1945.

Irene Quested of Leicester, Leicestershire died on 1st March 2015, aged 94. At the outbreak of war she joined the Land Army and worked at Mouts near Canterbury. She later joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force in 1941. She initially spent her time fixing the fabric for Spitfire rudders before being transferred to a Barrage Balloon unit in Coventry. Her balloon unit successfully brought down a German Dornier bomber aircraft. As the war effort progressed she was transferred from the balloon unit to clerical duties. She then served at a variety of RAF stations ending up at Tangmere as a clerk. She met Douglas Bader and was told to 'b****r off' when she offered to help him up when he fell over! She was discharged in 1946 as a Leading Aircraftwoman.

Edward Rayson of Littlehampton, West Sussex died on 7th February 2015, aged 90. He volunteered for the Royal Navy and joined underage in March 1942, qualifying as a telegraphist. He served in all sizes of warships ranging from landing craft and minesweepers to an aircraft carrier. He spent much of the war on the Eastern US seaboard and was discharged in 1946 as a Telegraphist.

Arthur Skinner of Inverness, Inverness-Shire died on 21st February 2015, aged 95. He joined the Royal Navy in 1939 and specialised as a medic. He served on a variety of vessels in the Atlantic Convoy route. He also spent some time in the Thames Estuary on Barrage Duty vessels providing Ack Ack cover to London during the Blitz. He left the Royal Navy in 1946.

Gregor Stewart of Stirling died on 10th February 2015, aged 86. He joined the Royal Air Force for National Service in 1947 and served at various UK air stations before discharge as an Aircraftman First Class in 1949.

Ernest 'Arthur' Taylor of Sandbach, Cheshire died on 24th December 2014, aged 96. At the outbreak of war he enlisted in the Royal Engineers and was sent to France as part of the BEF. He was evacuated from Dunkirk and returned to the UK via Falmouth. After a period in the UK he was sent to the Middle East. In Egypt, he worked in the GHQ and remained in North Africa until he was repatriated to the UK. He then spent a period in Holland and Germany before discharge in 1946 as a Warrant Officer Second Class.

Kenneth Thompson of Bishop Auckland, County Durham died on 4th February 2015, aged 87. He joined the Royal Artillery in 1946 and served in the UK as a Gunner until July 1948.

Cyril Turberfield of Tenbury Wells, Worcestershire died on 9th December 2014, aged 93. He joined the RAF in 1941 and following training in Filey he was posted to India and Burma. His last job was guarding Lord Mountbatten's residence in Singapore. He was discharged in 1946 as a Corporal.

Roger Turner of Uttoxeter, Staffordshire died on 11th February 2015, aged 90. He joined the General Service Corps for training in March 1943, transferred to the Cheshire Regiment four months later and was posted to North Africa. He transferred a year later to the Royal West Kent Regiment in 1944 and fought in Italy and Greece. In 1945 he moved to the Hampshire Regiment and was finally discharged in 1947.

Leonard Wiles of Winscombe, Avon died on 25th February 2015, aged 90. He joined the Royal Navy in 1943 and served as a telegrapher on River Class frigates on the Atlantic Convoys and then served in Burma on the coastal protection force. He was discharged in 1946 as a Leading Telegraphist.

George Williams of Thorton Cleveleys, Lancashire died on 26th February 2015, aged 84. Called up for National Service he joined the Army Catering Corps Training Centre in January 1949. Training at Aldershot and Litchfield he transferred to the Royal Army Service Corps in March that year. Subsequently posted to Yeovil as a driver he was discharged in December 1950.

Patrick Wood of Wallingford, Oxfordshire died on 5th January 2015, aged 81. He joined the Merchant Navy and served on the QE2 as a bellboy, then as a chef. He later joined the Royal Air Force in 1952 where he served as an Aircraft Crash Fireman at RAF Wyton and RAF Benson until 1956.

John Yorke of Hull died on 3rd March 2015, aged 90. He joined our charity at Church Stretton in 1944 at the age of 20 after he was blinded in an accidental explosion by a hand grenade in the UK while serving in the 6th Bn. Highland Light Infantry. He also sustained serious injury to his left hand and knee.

