

November 2015

Review

Blind Veterans UK | St Dunstan's since 1915



On the cover: Blind veteran Paul Jacobs GM with Joanna Lumley in the Review's offices at Harcourt Street.

Back page: Blind veteran Ron Skidmore presents World Cup Referee Howard Webb with a mosaic football that he made in the Art & Craft Workshop at the Brighton centre.



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Patron: Her Majesty the Queen

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Contact telephone numbers.

The Brighton centre 01273 307811.

The Llandudno centre 01492 868700.

The Sheffield centre 0114 2672550.

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

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

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

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

Blind Veterans UK Calendar

Activities from the Brighton centre.

November.

Spa Week 8th to 14th.

Amateur Radio Week 22nd to 28th.

December.

Turkey & Tinsel Week 6th to 12th.

February 2016.

Archery Club 14th to 20th.

Bowling Club 28th February to 12th March.

March 2016.

Arts Week 20th to 26th.

April 2016.

Virgin London Marathon.

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

Activities from the Llandudno centre.

November.

Military Week 2nd to 9th.

March 2016.

Health & Wellbeing Week 6th to 12th.

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

Activities from the Sheffield centre.

December.

Christmas Week 14th to 18th.

Younger Group 21st to 24th.

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.

Remembering the past, and building for the future.

Over recent months, I've had many reasons to contemplate our past.

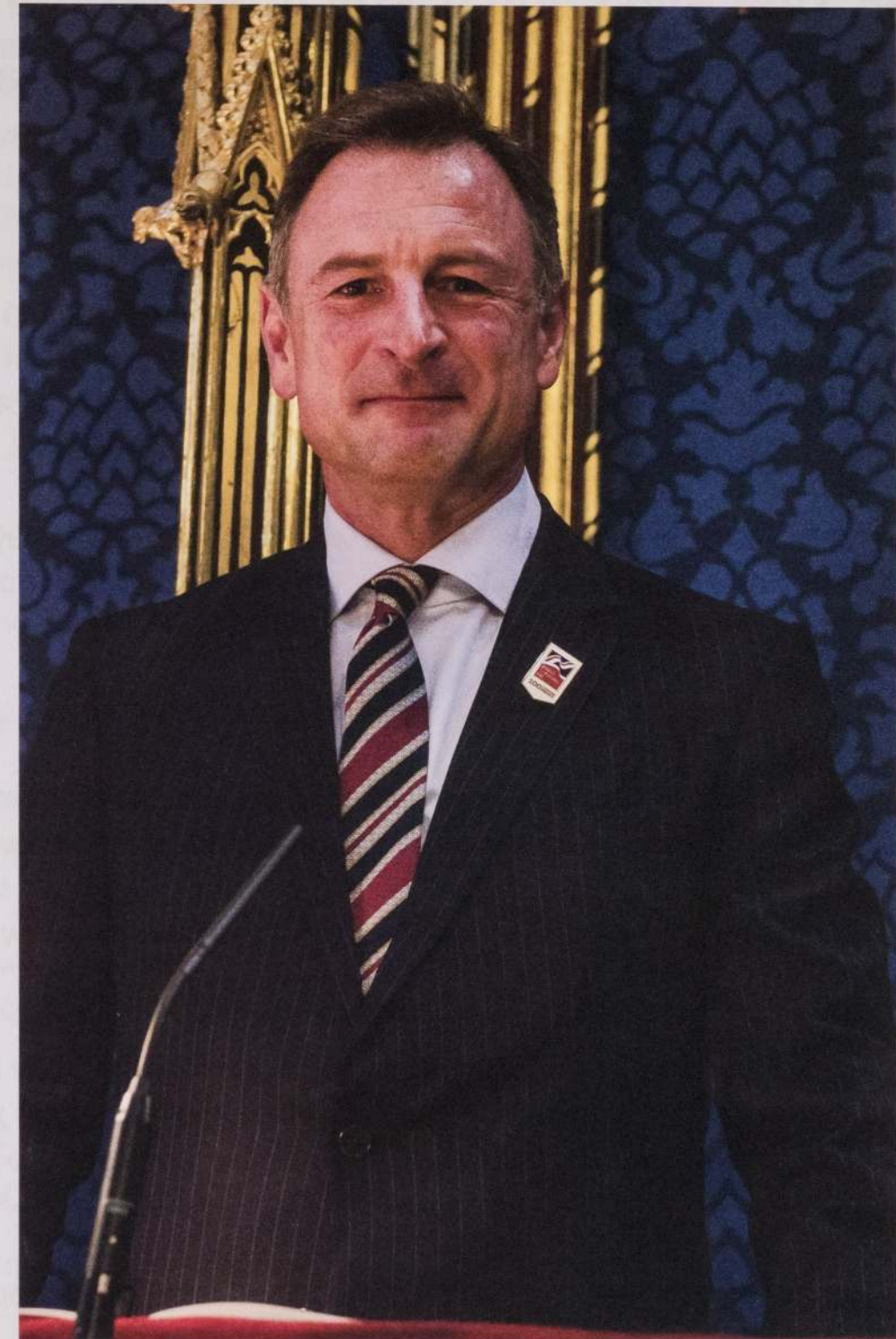
- Our centenary year has so far been a wonderful reminder of the origins of the charity, its initial focus in helping blinded Servicemen and women from the Great War, and its growth and achievements ever since.
- The original goals and vision of the organisation to inspire and support individuals to find independence, not just deal with the impacts of blindness.
- The tremendous support that the organisation has built up; from our Patron, Her Majesty the Queen, to many thousands of individuals who've given during their life and at their passing, to fund the services we've continued to deliver for a century.
- The impact the organisation has had on members throughout their lives, some who've been with the organisation for over 50 years.

Finally I've thought about what our Service men and women have done for this country; ensuring its security, helping build trade and good will around the world, and making the ultimate sacrifice.

Having done so, it's impressed on me the awesome responsibility my fellow Trustees and I have to ensure the right future vision for the organisation. We are naturally not alone; Major General Nick Caplin and his team have been working extremely hard to help us with this endeavour. Over the coming months we will be considering how to build the organisation for the future.

What I can say is we will not forget our roots, values and responsibilities. We will however be forwarding thinking about the likely changes to the numbers of blind veterans, the kinds of challenges they will have at all ages, and the changing environment we all live in.

It's an exciting time for an organisation in its centenary year that still continues to reach and help more blind veterans than at any time in its history. If you have the time and inclination, I'd love to hear your views.



Picture: The Chairman photographed as he rehearsed his reading at our Centenary Service of Thanksgiving at Westminster Abbey on 6th October. **Photo:** Keith Harness.

Noticeboard.

Dates for your diary and useful information.

Time to nominate for the 2016 Founder's Day Awards.

The Founder's Day Awards are a time for us to celebrate our charity, but we need you to nominate those you feel deserve to receive one of these highly prized Awards.

Historically the Founder's Day Awards are held on 26th March, the date in 1915 when the first 16 war blinded veterans entered the new training centre at St Dunstan's Lodge in London's Regent's Park. However, to accommodate Easter, this year Founder's Day will be held on 31st March at the Brighton centre.

The recipients of the 2015 Founder's Day Awards were featured in the May Review and if you know of someone you think would be eligible for a Founder's Day Award in 2016, please do nominate them.

The categories are:

- i) **Community Award** for the best contribution to their local community or the family of Blind Veterans UK — by a member, spouse, widow or widower.
- ii) **Training Achievement Award** for the best novice on learning new skills — members only.
- iii) **Creative Art Award** will recognise endeavour in a creative activity and encompass art, handicrafts, sculpture and music. If practical, an example should be sent with the proposal form. If not practical, then please send a photograph — members only.
- iv) **Sports Person of the Year Award** will celebrate an exceptional sporting achievement during the award year — members only.

v) **Outstanding Achievement Award** is made to a member who has achieved an outstanding level of independence via their participation in activities promoted or provided through and by Blind Veterans UK — members only.

vi) **Innovator of the Year Award.**

For a person or organisation who successfully introduces a beneficial idea or device to Blind Veterans UK.

vii) **Chairman's Commendation Award** for exceptional staff achievement.

Nominated by line managers.

For guidelines and a proposal form, please contact Jane Keane, Blind Veterans UK, Queens Road, Llandudno, Conwy, LL30 1UT. Telephone: 01492 868707 email: jane.keane@blindveterans.org.uk

Nominations are treated in confidence and discussed by Selection Committees in January 2016. Nominees are not informed that they have been nominated until the Selection Committee have reached their decision.

Review format changes.

If you would like to receive the Review in another format apart from print, it is also available in audio as an MP3CD or on a USB. Should you wish you can also receive the Review 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.

One Amazing Day. DVD of our Centenary Garden Party at Buckingham Palace.

One amazing day, the DVD of our Centenary Garden Party, is available to buy for £10, which includes p&p. You can buy it at our online shop at <http://shop.blindveterans.org.uk> or telephone 0300 111 0440 for credit or debit card orders. When you place your order please quote the reference Review. If your photograph was not included in the Buckingham Palace Garden Party special edition of the Review you could quite possibly find yourself in the DVD.

Order your 2016 VIP large print diaries.

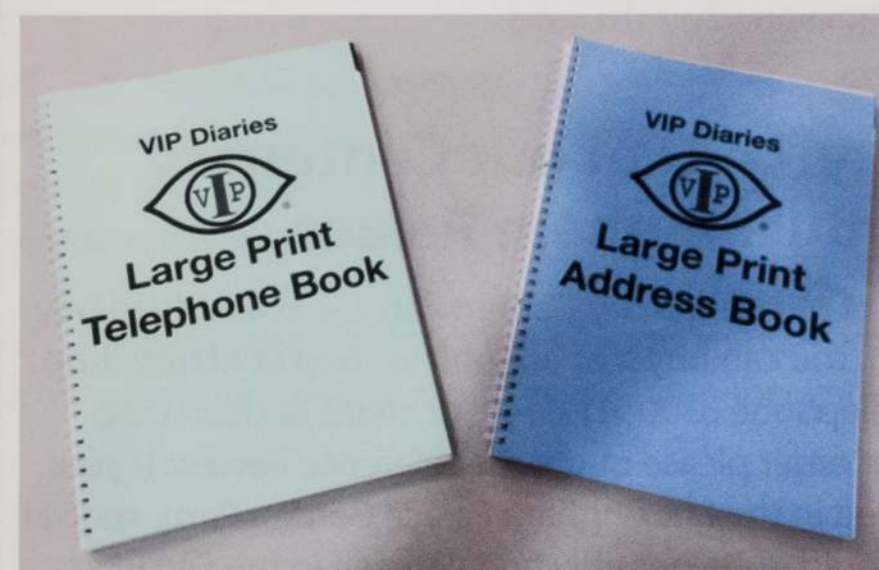
As we rapidly approach 2016 you can now place your orders for VIP calendars, diaries and address and telephone books.

- 2016 A3 Calendar £5.50.
- 2016 A4 Desk Diary £8.95.
- 2016 A6 Pocket Diary £5.15.
- VIP Address book £9.25.
- VIP Telephone book £9.25.

To place your order please telephone Nathan Clements in the Procurement Office at the Brighton centre on telephone: 01273 391441.



Picture: Large print 2016 wall calendar, desk diary and pocket diary.



Picture: Large print 2016 telephone book and address book.

100 Voices thank you. By Kathryn Jones-Romain and Hattie Lockhart-Smith.

We would like to thank everyone who helped us to make the 100 Years 100 Voices oral history project. 100 Voices charts the history of our charity through the experiences of those within it, or who have strong links to the charity.

We would like to thank those who stepped in to read texts from the archives, and type up transcripts, to those who consented to be recorded talking of their experiences with Blind Veteran's UK during it's 100 year history.

You can listen to the oral histories on Blind Veterans UK website at: <https://www.blindveterans.org.uk/100-voices/>

We very much hope that the recordings convey the true spirit of the charity and of the people be they members, staff or volunteers.

Thank you to everyone who made this possible.

Kath and Hattie.



Picture: Blind veterans Cpl Billy Drinkwater and Pte Ken Facal of the Royal Anglian Regiment whose stories are included in 100 Voices.

Register at the online ballot to attend Commemorations of the Battle of the Somme.

An online ballot is open until 18th November 2015 for tickets to attend next year's Thiepval commemorations to mark the centenary of the Battle of the Somme.

Eight thousand tickets will be available to the public for the event at the Thiepval Memorial on July 1st 2016. The ballot, open to residents of the UK and Ireland, will run until November 18th 2015.

Tickets are free of charge and allocated in pairs. To enter the ballot go to: <http://somme2016.org/en/>

The French Government said: "No effort will be spared to welcome the families and descendants of those valiant soldiers of the Somme."

The First World War blind veterans of our charity included those who lost their sight on The Somme. Their number included our second Chairman, and past editor of the Review, Lord Fraser who as Lieutenant William Jocelyn Ian Fraser of the King's Shropshire Light Infantry was blinded on 23rd July 1916 during the Battle of the Somme when he was just 18 years of age. He was Chairman of our charity for 53 years.

Today's links to The Battle of the Somme include Kingsman Anthony Cooper of the First Lancashire Regiment who was blinded in Afghanistan in 2011 at the age of 24. His Regiment's Battle Honours stand at The Somme.

Next year's commemorations in France also include:

A vigil at Thiepval on the eve of the Centenary, June 30th 2016.

A small event at Thiepval each day from July 2nd to November 18th marking the 141 days of the Battle of the Somme.

Commemorations on November 18th 2016 remembering the end of the Battle.

Details of commemorative events in the UK in 2016 will be announced in the coming months. The British Government has said that it is important that everyone has an opportunity to commemorate and take part in a centenary that 'holds a particular resonance for many people in the UK'.

Commemorations are held every year at Thiepval on the anniversary of the start of the Battle of the Somme to remember all those who fell during the 1916 British offensive. But the centenary event, led jointly by the UK Government and France's Mission Centenaire, will be on a much larger scale and it is expected to attract strong public interest.

It is being organised in partnership with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), which cares for the Thiepval Memorial, and the Royal British Legion. Plans are being made to broadcast the ceremony live on big screens in towns across the Somme region and the UK.

More than 72,000 British and South African troops who have no known grave are remembered on the multiple arches of the Thiepval Memorial; the majority of whom fell in the fighting of July to November 1916.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Joe French, Vice Chairman of the CWGC, and Vice Patron of Blind Veterans UK, said: "Sir Edwin Lutyens' monument is the largest Commonwealth war memorial in the world. It is also an enduring reminder of the alliance between the British and French armies during the First World War. It is a uniquely fitting place at which to mark the centenary of the Battle of the Somme."



Photo: Younger members at the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of The Somme in 2014 at an event organised by Colin Williamson.

Tax Help for Older People.

The charity Tax Help for Older People has a website that offers just that – tax help for older people. You can access this extremely helpful website at www.taxvol.org.uk Should you wish to speak with Tax Help for Older People the telephone number is: 01355 458835.

You may wish to consider subscribing to Tax Help's monthly Tax Tips which contain topical and useful information on personal tax issues.

There are also Tax Help videos which were launched by the charity a few months ago and which provide a simple and clear source of information about the major areas of tax, and give an insight into how to deal with them.

The page includes four videos on the key areas of taxation: General Tax Awareness. Underpayments. Retirement – The Tax Implications and bereavement.

Join Blind Veterans UK Masonic Group.

For many years St Dunstan's had a weekend for those beneficiaries who are Freemasons, to get together and enjoy an annual meeting, whilst being hosted by the Temple Lodge in Brighton.

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

If you are a Freemason, and interested in joining fellow Masons for a great weekend in April each year, we invite you to join us down at the Brighton centre, where we are the guests of the Temple Lodge.

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

Please contact W.Bro. Clive Jones the group's Chairman/Secretary for more details.

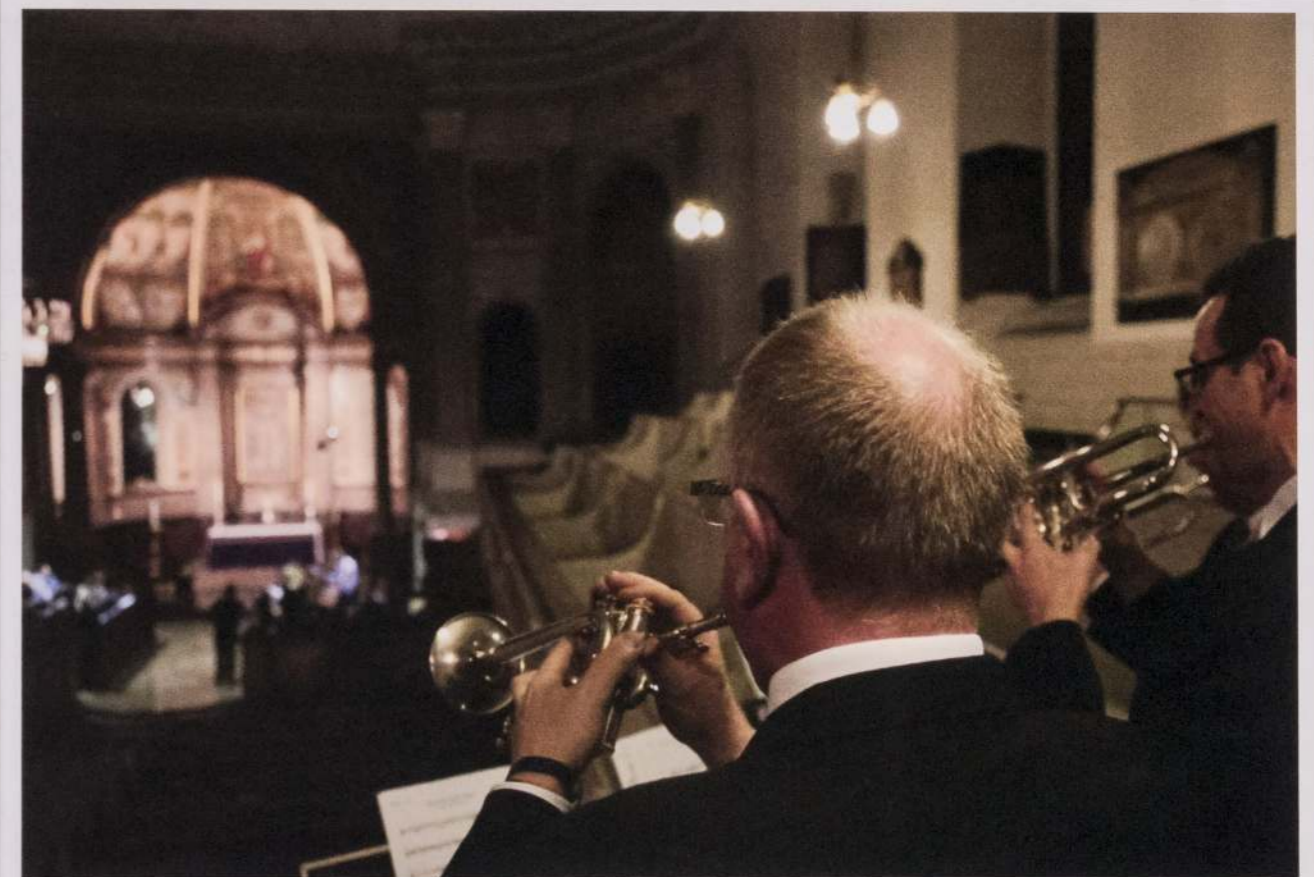
You can contact email: clivejones67@btinternet.com or telephone: 07854 800256.

Join us for our annual Christmas Carol Service on 9th December.

For the last 100 years our charity has been associated with St Marylebone Parish Church as the First World War blind veterans married there and it's where their children were christened. Once again we will celebrate Christmas there with our annual Christmas Concert. Please do join us on Wednesday 9th December for festive carols and readings and addresses by Kate Adie, Bernard Cribbins, Nigel Anthony and blind veteran Steve Evans. Music will be provided by Philsavonia — The Savage Club Brass Ensemble directed by Stephen Henderson and mezzo-soprano Sandra Porter, as well as more musical delights throughout the concert.

Doors open at 6.15pm and the concert starts at 7pm and tickets are priced at £10 for members and at £15 for non-members of Blind Veterans UK.

You can purchase tickets online at www.blindveterans.org.uk/carolconcert or telephone Jennie Chmura in Blind Veterans UK's events team on 020 7616 7959.



Picture: Our Christmas Carol Concert at St Marylebone Parish Church.

Photo: Francis J Miles.

Sign up to the Llandudno centre's Fire Walk.

Burn off your Sunday lunch, without risk of burning your soles, and sign up to the Fire Walk at the Llandudno centre on 8th November. Rather than head out for a post lunch stroll Victoria Beech, Regional Fundraiser at the Llandudno centre, would like you to sign up to the Fire Walk from 3pm to 5pm at the Llandudno centre. You will be given training to ensure it is perfectly safe and you have a great time as you walk over hot coals.

If you think you have what it takes please telephone Victoria Beech, Regional Fundraiser at the Llandudno centre on 01492 864574.



Picture: Jane Keane, Llandudno centre administrator is shown walking over hot coals in the 2014 Fire Walk at the Llandudno centre.

DVD of our Westminster Abbey Service of Thanksgiving.

As we move into November towards the end of our centenary year there is much to reflect on as we continue to celebrate 100 years of this great charity.

Margaret Waller from Preston, who attended the Service of Thanksgiving at Westminster Abbey, was moved to write: "The Service itself was memorable. The choice of music, readings and hymns were excellent, and the specially composed violin music was so poignant. The recordings of memories of some of the members was a lovely idea, and it was so moving to hear Billy Baxter recite the Psalm.

"Following the Service as we moved through to the Cloisters it was a joy to hear the bells ring. The lunch was excellent in the marquees that fitted so well into the Cloisters, and for me the finishing touch was the display of paintings and photographs by blind veterans. I am sure everyone thought it was a truly fitting occasion. I wonder what Sir Arthur Pearson thought?" I'm sure you will each agree that Sir Arthur would have been extremely proud.

If you would like to buy the DVD of the Service of Thanksgiving at Westminster Abbey it is available from 23rd November for £10, which includes p&p. You can buy it at our online shop at <http://shop.blindveterans.org.uk> or telephone 0300 111 0440 for credit or debit card orders.



Picture: The DVD of the Service of Thanksgiving will be available to buy from 23rd November at our online shop or telephone.

A centenary story in our centenary year. Ron Skidmore recalls. By Catherine Goodier.

"I take it that the three officials are now dressed?"

Those words were spoken by HRH The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. They were the words that turned Ron Skidmore and his fellow Linesman and Referee bright red in front of 600 guests at a grand banquet at Cutler's Hall in Sheffield.

The date was Tuesday October 24th 1957, the date of the centenary match between Sheffield Football Club, the oldest Football Club in the world, against Queen's Park, Scotland's oldest Football Club, at Sheffield FC's Bramall Lane ground. Here, Ron from Conisbrough, who joined Blind Veterans UK in 2008, takes up the story.

"It was a 2.45pm kick-off and I was Linesman with my pal Jim Carr, and Jim Powell was the referee. It was a huge honour to be asked to run the line for that match, as it was a centenary match which is rarer than a Cup Final, as it was the centenary match of Sheffield Football Club, the world's oldest football club. Prince Philip spoke with me on the field as he greeted the players and officials ahead of the match and I had my dinner jacket ready for the post-match black tie banquet.

"As I wanted to be properly turned out in front of the Duke and dignitaries I had borrowed a dinner jacket from a chum, but on the actual day I couldn't have been more improperly turned out for that first post-match meeting with His Royal Highness!

"Let's go to after the match. Jim Carr, the other Linesman and Jim Powell, the Referee, were in the bath. It was before the days of showers and they're in this communal bath. I'm at the side of the bath with just my socks on, ready to take them off and get in when there was a knock at the door.

"What would happen if I opened the door in my state of undress? The hundreds of people who were standing outside in the street to get a glimpse of Prince Philip would see a lot more than they bargained for! My immediate reaction was to put my hand on the door and just open it a little bit to find out who wanted to come in. I did that and who was waiting there but the Duke of Edinburgh, Sir Stanley Rouse, who was President of FIFA at the time, and Joe Richards, President of the Football League. They all wanted to come in.

"I thought quickly and realised that if I wanted to get on in football I'd better let them in. I stood behind the door and opened it sufficiently wide for the Duke to come in. He came in, looked at me and then looked at the two in the bath. He turned to Sir Stanley Rouse and Joe Richards and said 'Look at these three!' Sir Stanley then handed him the first of three tankards, and the Duke, still with a lovely smile on his face, said: 'I've come to give you a memento of this momentous occasion. Here you are.'

"One of the players later asked how I received the tankard in one hand, shook the Duke's hand with the other and held onto a towel. He presented the trophy to the other two who were still in the bath. So that was my second meeting of the day with Prince Philip and the tankard has enjoyed pride of place in my cabinet at home ever since.

"Anyway flash forward to the banquet when various speeches were made. The Duke of Edinburgh stood up, and as Cutler's Hall is a big place, he looked around and said: 'I take it that the three officials are dressed?' That comment brought the house down and the three officials were bright red. If no one knew where we were they could easily have found us by the heat from our blushes.

"When I was younger I didn't really think much of this when it happened. It's only looking back that I think 'My gosh what an occasion.' I was 25 and as time went on realised it was something that I would remember for the rest of my life, and at 83 years of age it is. I remember the phone call from the Secretary of the Football Association at Sheffield and Hallam to invite me to run the line at the centenary match. I remember how nervous my fellow linesman and I were to preside at such a historic match. I still have the programme and the menu for the banquet, and as you've guessed, the memories."

"I started as a referee as I was a keen football fan, growing up the team I supported was Rotherham United, and I used to think — well if I can't do better than these referees. So I took the referees exam in Sheffield in February 1948 when I was still 15, as I didn't turn 16 until March. It was an oral exam and at the end the examiner gave me the exam sheet and I could see I'd scored 99% and written underneath it was written 'an excellent youngster'.

"I took the sheet of paper into the secretary of the Football Association who had to make a record. As I handed it to him he looked up and said 'How old are you?' I said 15 sir. 'Oh you can't take the exam he said you're too young.' I told him that I'd just taken it and he had the result in his hand. Glasses were moved

to the end of his nose and he said: 'Well let it be known young man you're the youngest referee in this country. That was in 1948, of course there are lots of younger ones now, but then it was a record.'

Ron started as a referee at Mexborough and District and the photograph below was taken by his best pal Alan Miller at the first match Ron officiated at. Halfway through the season he extended his limits to Rotherham, the team he had supported as he grew up, and became a member of Rotherham referees in 1948, and he remains a life member.

Ron continues: "There was one ref who was my hero in those days, and if I knew he would referee I'd always go to his matches. That man was Arthur Ellis, AE Ellis from Halifax. He introduced the white cuffs. In the days before floodlights he refereed matches in the dark and his wife who came to watch said 'I couldn't see you when you were signalling. I'm going to give you some cuffs.' So she got some nurses cuffs, the plastic ones that you just slid on and that started the craze. In those days you couldn't buy an official uniform so those shorts were my Scout shorts.



Picture: Ron Skidmore in his referee kit, complete with cuffs.

"So I refereed local matches and for the first year they only gave me junior matches and what they call intermediate matches for players under 18. When I turned 17 they said I was good enough to take the senior matches, so I did and that was the start of it all.

"At 19 I joined the Army, as up to then I had been in an exempt occupation with the Coal Board, but all my pals were in the Services, including my best pal Alan, who was in the RAF. I thought there's more to this surely and one day I was standing outside a little Chapel in Doncaster that at the time was used as a recruiting office. The chapel is still there and if I pass it today I just stand and remember the day in 1950 when I stood outside and thought 'Well shall I or shan't I?' Anyway I plucked up the courage and went in and asked the recruiting Sergeant if I signed on could I choose the occupation I wanted. He asked what I wanted to be and I told him that I was a mine surveyor and would like to continue as a surveyor. Come in he says the Royal Engineers are just the job for you. And that was it, I signed up for 3/4 and never regretted it. I then became a full-time referee and a part-time soldier, but don't tell the Army!"

After a spell at the School of Military Survey in Hermitage in Berkshire Ron married his fiancée Irene on 27th December 1952 and in January 1953 he was posted to Egypt, followed by Iraq.

"I was posted to Iraq, attached to RAF Habbaniya, 50 miles south of Baghdad and I refereed all the matches on the camp, which was mostly RAF, but being Army I was neutral. One of the first big matches I refereed was the RAF side against the Iraq National 11.

"So the day came for the Iraq National 11 versus the RAF representative side at Baghdad Stadium. We were told that we would meet King Faisal before the match, but about a quarter of an hour before kick-off the Prime Minister, Nuri Al Said, came into the dressing room and said 'I've come to apologise to you as the King won't be here today. As he's not very popular in Iraq we advertise that he will attend a certain function so that all the anti-Royalists go to that venue. I have to tell you that today he's gone to the races.

"I asked if that meant we had the rebels, he replied yes, but told us not to worry as they had armed horsemen on duty. At that age you don't worry about it. I refereed and the half time score was Iraq 0 RAF 3. I thought 'Oh my gosh we're not going to get away alive.' The second half started and Iraq turned out a much better side and they scored a goal and of course the crowd invaded the

pitch and it took almost 10 minutes to clear them from the pitch. The horsemen came on with their swords drawn and they stabbed anyone, hitting them with the flat of the swords.

"Eventually they got them off and the score went up to 2-3, 3-3, and each time the Iraq national team scored a goal there would be another pitch invasion that would last for 10 minutes. Under normal circumstances I would have abandoned the game but I thought if I did we definitely wouldn't get out alive. So we carried on and the final score was Iraq 4 RAF 3.

"A couple of weeks later the Commanding Officer caught me to say that he'd had the Iraqi FA on as they'd like me to referee a match. I agreed on the condition that I could take my own Linesman. I asked what the match was and he said Iraq v Iran! As I was going through the door he said 'Oh just a minute, I really should tell you that they tried to play this match about three weeks ago and they had to abandon it as the crowd came over and attacked the referee. I thanked him for telling me! But English referees were gold dust as we couldn't be bribed, although people did try.

"I got my Linesman sorted and a week before the match the Commanding Officer called me in again to say he'd seen that I married only a week before being posted abroad and he would post me to married quarters in Cyprus. I said that would be smashing. He came back a week later to tell me it was fixed for Cyprus. I said 'oh but I'll miss the big game.' He said well you can stay here if you like but you won't be going to Cyprus. I knew what I wanted and went off to Cyprus. I never found out what happened to the Iran v Iraq match. I refereed in Cyprus and after one nasty pitch invasion, when they kicked me in the leg, I had to wear a bandage round my leg at the following days match and that photo made it into the Sunday People, and to my mother's notice, back in England.

"I was demobbed in late October and the following year started in the Yorkshire League, which was the predominant league at the time. My first game on the Yorkshire League as a Linesman and guess who I was running a line to? My hero Arthur Ellis. I thought that all of my birthdays had come at once. You're a Linesman for a year or two before you're promoted to the refereeing panel, and as I'd been overseas I had to start afresh in the Yorkshire League. I later became a Football League Linesman and was with Arthur on another couple of occasions on Football League matches."

Ron continued to referee and he can lay claim to the fact that he gave World Cup Referee Howard Webb his first break.

"I joined Blind Veterans UK as I have macular degeneration and the support and training that I've received at the Sheffield and Brighton centres has been incredible. Blind Veterans UK has been a God send and I'm honoured to be a member. When I first came to the Brighton centre I asked Phil Rawson, an instructor in the Art & Craft workshop, if I could make a mosaic football. Phil made a round piece of wood that he marked out with the panels of the football. I asked if it could include the initials HMW for Howard Melton Webb. It must have been about the year that he refereed the World Cup Finals and as I've known Howard since he was a boy I wanted to present the mosaic to him. In fact I gave him [Howard] his first assessment for the Rotherham Association League in 1991 when he was 17. I wrote on his assessment 'You want stronger elastic (see your mother)'. When he started he'd pull his pants up all the time. I later recommended him for the Northern Counties League and the rest is history. The newspapers covered the presentation of the mosaic football to Howard, who said he was honoured to receive it.

"I relished my days as Linesman and Referee and still yearn for them, but today I relish my time with Blind Veterans UK, and look forward to speaking for our charity at the National Memorial Arboretum on 9th November. I've enjoyed our centenary year, just as I enjoyed the centenary year for Sheffield FC, of course without any nudity in front of HRH The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh."



Picture: Holding the tankard that was presented to him following Sheffield FC's centenary match against Queen's Park, a suitably attired Ron Skidmore demonstrates how he accepted the tankard from HRH The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh on Tuesday October 24th 1957.

The remarkable and beautiful Joanna Lumley. By Paul Jacobs GM.

As the Gurkhas mark 200 years of service I had a chat with the beautiful and very wonderful Joanna Lumley in the Review's offices at Harcourt Street.

Review: Miss Lumley growing up in an Army family and working with the Gurkhas have you experienced courage and bravery in your life?

JL: Yes Paul I have through my father, who was an Army Officer, and through the Gurkhas and looking at our Armed Forces and understanding what's asked of people who serve and have served this country, and indeed any country. It's something that I don't think people understand, I think there's a big gap. We see guys in uniform looking very good and handsome. You see them marching smartly and they seem to be on top of the world and we don't really follow up the extraordinary test that is put on these human beings. They know every day when they get up, particularly people like you serving in Afghanistan, or in the past in Northern Ireland or wherever conflict is, that every day it might be their last day. That they might lose their sight or their limbs or watch their best buddy die. Every single day they've got to face that, whether it happens or not, and the courage that it takes to continue doing that day after day after day, the bravery that it takes to face that and then to come back to this civilised world where people don't understand and they have to keep going and not be completely insane, I think is just awesome. So yes I've met courage and bravery in my life.

Review: Has that example of bravery helped you in your professional life?

JL: I think it has and funnily enough in the feeblest way. When you're nervous before going on stage you realise that everybody is nervous, as people are nervous before some great sortie is going to take place or some ghastly midnight event when you've got new equipment and you're not sure how it works. First nights in theatres are always much the same as that. You've practiced what you're going to do, you've got all your people around you, ie your cast. Paul in your case your fellow soldiers. You know sort of what's going to happen — ours of course has no danger attached to it, but it does have a certain tiny degree of courage. Yours is all courage, all bravery.

Review: It's something sweet to see the white cliffs of Dover again if you come

back by ship, just as the chaps did during the First and Second World War and the many campaigns that have taken place over hundreds of years. I don't know what that's like for the Gurkhas as they have two Mother Lands.

JL: They have and they're so proud of that. Paul as you said they have two, I can't remember how they put it, but they said something like 'England is our home and Nepal is our Mother Country.' They couldn't love this country more. Now this year we're celebrating 200 years of the Gurkhas serving the Crown and it's really touching to see them when they swear their allegiance to the Crown and to the Queen.

They are the most loyal and extraordinary people and the only reason we had this big thing where we had to have the Gurkha Justice Campaign was that they're not part of the Commonwealth. They're the only serving soldiers in this country who are not part of the Commonwealth because Nepal had this bizarre thing when out of a really terrible conflict in 1815 these Nepalese hill boys as they were, the tribesman, they still like to call themselves the hill boys because that's exactly what they are from the highest Himalayas, were fighting the British who were in India at the time. They both admired each other's method of fighting so much, and the courage, the skill and the bravery, that the Nepalese men said 'We'd like to come and fight with you would that be ok?'. I should think Britain hardly able to believe its luck, said yes come and be with us. And that's where it started and they've never failed us at all.

Review: I've been with them in campaigns and they're remarkable, absolutely remarkable fellows. The politest soldiers I've ever met.

JL: You served in Northern Ireland didn't you, because I think that's the only place where the Gurkhas never served Paul and it was because they saw that Northern Ireland was part of Britain and that they didn't want to fight there in case they killed who they considered to be British citizens. So they withdrew from there.

Review: To a lot of people, not just in Britain, but in Nepal and around the world you're known of the Daughter of Nepal. How does that make you feel?

JL: It's honestly one of the proudest things that I could ever have been called.

I feel so humble, so humble. A lot of Gurkha wives and daughters and people who I am in contact with call me Didi, which is the Nepalese word for sister and I love that. I'm their Didi and I'm also a daughter of Nepal.

Do you remember those photographs Paul of me with the two Ghurkha veterans in wheelchairs? That was Mr Tul Bahadur Pun VC [awarded the VC while serving with 3rd Battalion 6th Gurkha Rifles in Burma in 1944] and Mr Lachhiman Gurung VC [who won his VC while serving with the Gurkha Rifles in Burma in 1945], both now joined the majority and gone on to the great beyond.

I'd never met Tul Bahadur Pun who'd served with my father as a Chindit in Burma in 1944 and they were from the same Regiment, from the 6th Ghurkha Rifles, and Tul Bahadur Pun was just outstandingly brave in one of the great and dreadful battles, which was at Magoung and Michael Ormond who was killed was awarded a posthumous VC. I'd never met Tul Bahadur Pun but my father had shown me a photograph of this very handsome young Ghurkha soldier when I was about seven and I never forgot this handsome, handsome, handsome man's face and thought would I ever meet him.

I never met him and life went on and time went on and suddenly the first time I ever met him was in the Gurkha Justice Campaign, by which time he was in a wheelchair, and I'd taken him a present, a little silver Gurkha piper. You know how they play the bagpipes it was a little figure of a silver piper which had belonged to my father. I wanted Tul Bahadur Pun to have it so I went up and crouched by his chair. My dad had just died and I gave Tul Bahadur Pun this silver piper, he put his hand on my head and said 'you are my daughter now and you're a daughter of Nepal.' That was something.

Review: I think that will give everyone who listens to that a chill.

Review: Miss Lumley will you tell us something about your documentaries and what you love about making them?

Well the thing is Paul having been born in India and brought up in the Far East, first of all in Hong Kong with the Gurkhas, and then in Malaysia, I had itchy feet, I had that suitcase sense that you must never really settle down, I was always waiting to look for somewhere else. And long after I'd grown up and been a model, been acting, doing stuff, I suddenly had a chance to make a documentary.

The first one was something to do with following in my grandfather's footsteps across Butan, which is a country he'd visited as a diplomat in 1930. From there I did the white rajas of Sirawack, I translocated giraffe in Kenya, I worked with orangutangs in Indonesia, went up to the Northern Lights and saw that extraordinary Aurora Borealis in the north of Norway. I became absolutely addicted because what I wanted to do was to go to places and to see things that people at home may not have the money or the time to do. I wanted them to experience these exceptional things that I saw. So I thought I'll be their friend, they can come with me, they are my travelling companions, everything I do I'll be doing it for them as it were. And I've had a fantastic time following the Nile and looking for Noah's Ark, and the most recent documentary, which was the Trans-Siberian Railway. It started in Hong Kong where I was as a little girl and all the way up through China, Mongolia, Siberia, and right across Russia and into Moscow, which I'd only visited once before in the grip of the Cold War when I was about 19 or 20.

Review: That was when you were a model? And how beautiful you were then and still are today.

JL: Well I'm very, very touched by that, but I do love doing documentaries. I mean I love acting, nothing will ever change that, but documentaries are a lovely thing to do. We don't live forever Paul and you just have to take this beautiful one life we have and make it the best you can.

Review: Amen.

Review: If there was any acting role you could play what would it be?

JL: Funnily enough I've only ever done Shakespeare in an amateur way. I've done it at schools, I think my nose is the wrong shape to be a Shakespearean actress, so I've missed all the Shakespeare parts for young girls. But I think at the moment, particularly seeing Benedict Cumberbatch doing Hamlet and Anastasia Hillard, who's a friend of mine who's playing Gertrude, I've always rather thought I would love to be Gertrude, the Queen of Denmark, who when her husband was killed married the younger brother.

And I've got an idea Paul, I don't know whether you'd go along with this, but I think the first King Hamlet, Hamlet's father who was killed, I think he was quite an old man and I think that Gertrude might have been a bit of a trophy wife. And I think that the King's youngest brother was miles younger and not much

older than Hamlet. So I think that Hamlet was terribly jealous of his uncle, who his mother so suddenly and swiftly married after his father's death. Anyway there's where I'm going and I think it would be fascinating, and I'd love to do it and I wouldn't mind Leonardo DiCaprio being Hamlet. Is that too big an ask?

But funnily enough looking at him because he's got German ancestry, we all know his name is Italian, but I did a film with him, *The Wolf of Wall Street*, and when we were sitting talking I said Di Caprio is completely an Italian name but you don't look very Italian, your bone structure is not Italian. He said it is because his mother is German, and he was brought up until he was about 14 in Germany and speaks German. So I just thought that because I've got Danish in my blood as well he looks as though he could be my son, he's the right age he could be my son. Anyway he clearly wouldn't choose me, but I would choose him! So I'd like to do Hamlet, I'd like to do Gertrude in Hamlet.

Joanna Lumley to Paul Jacobs – Do you act?

Review: I can do. I'm taking singing lessons at the moment.

JL: Did you act when you were a kid? Did you act in school plays and things?

Review: No I actually want to be an extra on *EastEnders*.

JL: I think that would be great.

Review: It's pushing the boundaries for Blind Veterans UK and it says to other members of the charity who come up behind me, hopefully no other [young war blinded] members come up behind me, but if any do I can say to them — you can climb the highest heights, mentally and physically, just find your talents and push them. Go from being an Infantryman to become an extra on *EastEnders* or whatever it is you have a passion for.

JL: Why not absolutely.

Review: I'm actually taking singing lessons at the moment.

JL: Good. Paul this is terrific, I couldn't agree more and I think it's something you must do. Just do it, just focus on it, see that goal and get there. I'll have a word

with *EastEnders*. As if I knew them, but look why not!

Review: Miss Lumley what qualities do you admire in other people?

JL: Paul I suppose I love people who are funny and courteous and all kinds of things and people who are brave, but I think what I love best of all is people who are kind. I think kindness is the thing. We talked about this you and I were both brought up as Church of England and Christianity teaches kindness, but I am very interested in comparative religions and seeing what each religion holds up as its tenant of faith. I'm very taken by the Buddhist tradition, and having met His Holiness the Dalai Lama several times, and interviewed him rather as I'm sitting with you. He's the most remarkable man, extremely good humoured, wise and kind, and do you know he said all religion is just this, be kind, that's all, there's almost no other message there is in life.

And from that stems everything else that comes with it. So I think that is what I most admire and look for in people. And I think that if you're looking for a partner for life, or somebody to work with, or somebody to share an office with, somebody to train with, whatever you're doing, look for somebody who's kind, who's got kindness. And look at yourself and make sure that you're being kind as well.

I have a terrible failing, which is that I'll say almost anything to make people laugh, and sometimes afterwards I go back and think — that was a bit cruel actually. So just iron out anything horrible and just be kind.

Review: Joanna Lumley, the beautiful, honourable Joanna Lumley, [Police sirens in the background].

JL: That's my police car that's come to take me away!

Review: Thank you so much for coming into Blind Veterans UK's Review studio. Who knows some of the members listening to this may have served with your father.

JL: Paul it's been such a pleasure, thanks so much, and see you in *EastEnders*.

The interview is contained in the Talking Review and it will be broadcast on RNIB's Insight Radio.

Blind veteran Bunty Misra scores a centenary in this centenary year. By Indira McKenzie.

Isabel Rennie Misra nee Crombie, commonly known as Crumb or Bunty, celebrated her 100th birthday with her family on October 3rd.

Bunty was in her last year at Art College in Liverpool when war broke out and interrupted her plans — as it did the plans of so many people. She worked in the drawing office at the Wellington Bomber factor near Chester, before joining up in Liverpool. She was sent to the Barracks of the Yorks and Lancs and eventually joined a Royal Artillery battery on the Kent coast, where she spent the next few years.

In May 1945 she was sent out to South East Asia Command in Army Intelligence. She sailed East in a large liner that had been commandeered as a troop ship. There were 2000 men and 10 women on board. Bunty remembers that in the ferocious heat of the Red Sea, the army served up rice pudding.

On the ship Bunty met — and instantly fell in love with — a young Indian officer, Sharda Kant Misra. He had come to England to continue his education, but had instead joined the RAF. While Bunty had been giving the orders to fire at the German bombers coming over to bomb London, Sharda had been flight engineer on the path finder planes in Bomber Command. Their romance was played out against the background of the war with Japan and the momentous, turbulent history of the sub-continent during the years of independence and partition, and became fatally entwined with it.

Bunty and Sharda snatched a couple of days' leave and were married up in the North West Frontier in Pershwar in March 1946. In December she gave birth prematurely to a baby girl. She was driven to the British Military Hospital in Calcutta in an army jeep with an armed guard through a riot between Muslims and Hindus.

Bunty and Sharda had a brief but wonderfully happy time as a family, planning their life together in independent India after demobilisation. Their happiness was cut short brutally when he was shot on emergency duty during the terrible riots that broke out over partition. He had been seconded temporarily from his new position in the IAS.

Broken hearted, Bunty returned home with me to her parents in England in the freezing winter of 1947. She never remarried.

Back in England as a widow with a baby, Bunty needed a secure job. She did a teacher training course and became a primary school teacher in Somerset and eventually a headmistress. Although it was not her chosen career she enjoyed it greatly. She also wrote and illustrated a very successful series of children's books about growing up in different countries.

On retirement she moved to Cambridge so that she could be closer to my family and see her little grandson. She had an active and busy retirement. When her eyesight deteriorated because of macular degeneration, she heard about St Dunstan's, as Blind Veterans UK was then called. The charity became a hugely important part of her life; she had holidays at both the Brighton and Llandudno centres, and made many friends there as well as locally through the regional office. She particularly loved the military connections Blind Veterans UK made possible. Bunty still remains sociable and creative and enjoys talking to anyone from anywhere about anything.



Picture: Sharda and Bunty.



Picture: Bunty Misra.

Younger members' conference September 2015. By Colin Williamson.

Over 100 beneficiaries, carers and members of staff gathered at the De Vere Staverton Park Hotel in Daventry, Northamptonshire over the weekend of 11th to 13th September to participate in the inaugural Blind Veterans UK Younger Members' Conference and what a fantastic event it turned out to be.

The hotel, set in 150 acres of stunning countryside in the heart of England, was an ideal venue for the event boasting various sized conference rooms, elegant dining areas, bars and leisure facilities including a spa, swimming pool, gymnasium and golf course. The hotel staff made us all feel very welcome and certainly played their part in making it such a successful event. Praise also must go to staff members Kevin Alderton, Tom Williams, Esther Freeman and Fran McSweeney for all of their hard work in organising the conference.

The majority of attendees arrived on the Friday afternoon and after settling into their rooms made their way to the bar to meet up with old friends and to make some new acquaintances; some also took the opportunity to have a chat with staff members before heading for the dining area to enjoy a splendid buffet dinner. After dinner many took advantage of the hotel's policy of a late bar on Friday evenings!

In his opening remarks the following morning our Chief Executive Nick Caplin firstly warmly welcomed everyone to the conference, especially our president Ray Hazan OBE and his wife Robbie before introducing some new members of staff to the audience including our new Head of Welfare Policy Julie McCarthy. He also updated everyone with some key internal role changes which sees Fran McSweeney become our Head of Rehabilitation Policy and Steve Boswell the new Llandudno Centre Manager. Nick went on to explain how instead of replacing former Director of Welfare Services Barry Porter the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) opted to split the country in half and appoint two directors, one of whom is Nicky Shaw, our new Director West and former Llandudno Centre Manager Mark Lovatt, who becomes Director East.

He also spoke confidently and concisely about the need to fully engage with the younger members and commented "you are the future of the charity and it is vital that we address your needs and desires". He then went on to host a question and answer session with some pertinent questions being asked

regarding the many issues and concerns faced by younger beneficiaries and he was ably assisted during this session by members of the SLT and various members of staff. It was explained that those questions that required further investigation will be answered at a later date.

Throughout the day beneficiaries were invited to visit the exhibition hall where assistive technology companies and support organisations had their stands. The following companies and organisations were represented at the conference. Optalec, MOD Welfare Services, RNIB Counselling services, RBL Industries, The Poppy Factory, Royal National College for the Blind, Royal British Legion, British Blind Sports, SSAFA, Computer Room Services, Dolphin, Vision Aid Technology Industries, Synaptic, Give Vision and the RNIB Legal Rights Service. There was also the opportunity to book one-to-one sessions with benefits advisors, welfare officers, ROVI's, an Employment and Law solicitor and IT trainers. A representative from Combat Stress was also on hand to answer any questions and provide information about their services.

Members of the Sports and Recreation Team were present and invited beneficiaries to have a go at various challenges throughout the day such as the press-up challenge (won by Darren Blanks who managed to achieve a magnificent seventy press-ups before collapsing in an undignified heap) and a session on the golf driving range where Jamie Cuthbertson managed to somehow drive the ball backwards which resulted in the cry "Incoming" which was the signal for everyone to rush to the shelters. They also had a Gurning competition which was won by Alan Holderness who hadn't entered the competition but just happened to be walking past at the time.

On Saturday evening everyone dressed up in their finery for the Gala Dinner and we were presented with a very nice meal indeed. We were also entertained by the guest speaker for the evening, BBC War Correspondent and former politician Martin Bell who gave us all an insight into the various wars and conflicts (18 in total) that he had covered during his time at the BBC. He also recited some of his poems which were very well received, especially the ones that lampooned officers, much to the delight of the lower ranks. Here, by kind permission from Martin, are a few lines from one of his poems that he recited on the night, taken from his book 'The End of an Empire' published by Pen and Sword in June 2015.

"It isn't wise in matters regimental
To be too much in awe of the brass and the braid and Generals in the great
parade, with gleaming gongs in rows and rows of OBEs and DSOs.
The Army's run by its NCOs:
The officers are mainly ornamental."

We were also marvellously entertained by our band for the evening, Mike and the Meerkats, fronted by our very own Dave Stretton, a Welfare Officer based in Woodingdean close to the Brighton Centre who said about themselves; 'The band was formed in 2009 through a mutual love of music and a realisation that there were not enough groups out there named after small but interesting mammals'.

Kevin Alderton showed that he is a man of many talents by sitting in for the drummer for a couple of numbers which prompted President Ray Hazan to swiftly turn off his hearing aid and on one particularly loud cymbal hit rumour has it that Steve Sparkes's false teeth shot out and took a man-sized bite out of a strawberry cheesecake two tables away!

It was a fantastic night and a really enjoyable and informative conference; many thanks to everyone involved for making it such a success and in Nick Caplin's words addressed to the gang of four who organised the event, "it wouldn't have happened without all of your hard work and commitment".



Picture: Sue King, Senior Community ROVI SW carries out demonstrations.



Picture: Colin Williamson, Billy and Karen Baxter, Robbie and Ray Hazan and Jamie Cuthbertson are some of the delegates shown listening intently in one of the lectures.



Picture: Martin Bell addresses the Younger Member Conference. **Photos:** Mark Pile.

Blind Veterans UK Summer Camp — HMS SULTAN 2015. By Dave Burrows.

At the beginning of the year, I launched myself into the tried and tested planning procedure working with our committee to arrange the camp. I realised things might not be so straight forward with the 100 year celebration of the charity and many events taking place throughout the year and when people started to withdraw their applications, it didn't come as a surprise. This happened up until the very last day before camp when we were left with 15 Blind Veterans UK members, no reserve list and fingers crossed that no more dropped out. That said, with all the preparations completed we ended up with a smaller group but still had a great week. This is how it all went:

Friday 31st July.

Day one of Camp finally arrived and as old friends and new friends meet it doesn't seem like it has been a year since the blind veterans were here. This year, our usual accommodation was not available and so thankfully, the WO and SNCO's Mess President offered us extended use of one of his blocks. So we settled into Exmouth Blocks single cabins and learned how to navigate around the building, soon everyone had found their feet and the first meal of camp was underway. This was followed by a welcome brief from WO Dave Lloyd and a brief run through the programme for the week presented by Andy Salter. Dave brought his nine year old son to assist during the week and Ruben was introduced to the campers and now formally now known as a new 'puppy'.

Saturday 1st August Gosport Cruising Club.

Our relationship with the club is 20 years old and Iris Davis and her crew at Gosport Cruising Club surpassed themselves yet again by hosting Blind Veterans UK members and their 'dogs' for a morning of sailing. With skippers and support crew willingly turning up in support of the event, we were allocated boats with military precision and proceeded into Portsmouth harbour and the Solent, some even managed to catch some mackerel whilst others had an opportunity to put the sails up and do some proper sailing.

Gliding.

We were again hosted by the Royal Naval Gliding Club and sponsored by pilot Dave Howell. Ten campers and some of the 'Dogs' managed to get airborne and with high clouds and light winds this provided perfect flying conditions.

With circuits over the former Daedalus airfield and surrounding area, it was also an opportunity for Ruben to experience an open top glider for his first trip. The happy faces on their return said it all and after a busy day there was a quiet evening to allow people to catch up with the day events, have a few beers and relax.

Sunday 2nd August.

We are invited each year to attend the Church Service at HMS Sultan and warmly welcomed by everyone. This was a special occasion for me as I have read the St Dunstan's Prayer ever since taking over the role of Organising Secretary from the Late Elspeth Grant MBE in 2004. However, to the surprise of everyone who knew her, I played a recording of Elspeth reading the prayer which was specially recorded for her Memorial Service. After a few hesitant moments with the software, her beautiful voice once more filled the church in a heart rending recital, her voice softening with emotion as she neared the last verse, leaving many people visibly moved. My thanks are extended to her nephew Michael Herbert for authorising the reading, it was much appreciated. Campers who did not attend Church went for a walk along Stokes Bay at Gosport. The sun shone and the clear skies provided an excellent view of the Isle of Wight. The campers even managed to stop off for the mandatory ice cream before making their way back to HMS Sultan.

Archery.

Sponsored once again by the Havant and Hayling Bowmen, they set up the targets and established safety boundaries in readiness for the competition. With weather conditions almost perfect, the campers took part in individual events with scores for 'inners/outers' and balloon bursting, made for a fun day. I have to report that when the 'Dogs' had a go, they were all soundly beaten by our new 'puppy' Ruben who was instantly christened 'Ruben Hood'!

Gliding.

Sadly, due to the strengthening wind across the runway it was decided that 26 knots of wind was out of safety limits for our group. Nevertheless, we express our thanks for all those who gave their time in support of this popular serial.

Quiz.

The infamous Sammy's Sunday evening quiz proved as popular as ever and provided an opportunity to get the grey cells working, and by heck they needed to work in round 1! The quiz was won by team '5 a day', albeit a narrow margin win, but fun was had by all. A mutiny was averted when told there was

no prize, but an anonymous donor came forward and saved the day.

Monday 3rd August. Sports and Recreation Centre (SARC) - Sports morning.

The morning began with an address by the Executive Officer, Commander Sophie Shaughnessy RN. She welcomed the campers and helpers to HMS SULTAN and confirmed that the future for SULTAN was secure which bodes well for the future of the summer camp.

The morning also provided an opportunity for Blind Veterans UK Chairman Tim Davis and Chief Executive Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB to visit for the first time. They were introduced to the EO and I briefed them on the history of the camp to understand our aims and objectives. The program of activities was discussed and I think they didn't quite expect to see such a variety of social and physical events. They fully embraced the opportunity to talk to the campers about their week at HMS SULTAN and spent a great deal of their valuable time with us.

Marty Webb (PTI) ensured that the morning was full of fun with light hearted events to engender a competitive edge, that included a walking race around the sports field. It was good to see Blind Veterans UK Sports & Rec Manager Louise Timms again who has been a regular visitor over the years.

Conservative Club (Lee on the Solent).

The Chairman Mrs Pat Homer and the members of the Court Barn Conservative Club in Lee on the Solent hosted us for the annual quiz evening and provided a superb buffet. Yet again the blind veterans succeeded in retaining the trophy in a close fought battle, with the event raising over £180 for camp funds by proceeds of a raffle organised by Dorothy Thompson. The evening was brought to a close with a good old sing along led by Dave Daiper on guitar, yet another lovely group of people who have supported the camp for many years.

Tuesday 4th August Diving Museum Stokes Bay.

This is the first time we have visited the Diving Museum which is now well established as a tourist attraction in the area. In the five years since it opened, Dr John Bevan and his team of volunteers at the Museum have assembled a truly unique and rare collection of diving equipment that ranges from diving bells to the first helmets and breathing apparatus worn by diving pioneers. They provided a very informative explanation of diving, its history and personal achievements, especially within the Royal Navy Clearance Diving Branch.

Feedback from this visit was immediate, we all loved the manner in which the guides described the museum and all its exhibits. Humorous when appropriate and pretty serious when describing some of the casualties of this hazardous occupation, they were genuinely pleased to see us and have already said we are welcome next year. By the way, we even had a 'Tot' of the dark stuff to end the tour. I must thank everyone concerned with this event and it was the best two and a half hours I've ever spent in a museum. I genuinely recommend this venue to anyone visiting this area, please note its opening times advertised on their website: www.divingmuseum.co.uk

Rowner Bowls Club.

This has not been in our program for many years, but at the request of the campers at our last AGM, we managed to persuade the club to let us loose on their hallowed turf. On a scorching hot afternoon, the sponsor and club fixture secretary Charlie Fitzgerald welcomed us and supplied all the equipment we needed. It is true to say that everyone enjoyed it, even the Royal Navy drivers who ferried us around all week had a go and were offered membership forms, such was the skill level.

BBQ in the WO and SRs Mess.

As it was the end of term at HMS Sultan a BBQ was laid on for Mess members and we were invited to join them. Some took the opportunity to explore the local area but those who stayed in the Mess enjoyed the food and the entertainment provided. I have to add that the foam bath, wet slide and plunge pools were not used by us on this occasion but we did have 'Tot Time' sponsored by the Fleet Air Arm Field Gun Crew Association and dispensed by the Association Secretary Jimmy Andrews. Live music played well into the night and the serving Service personnel enjoyed meeting and talking to our group. Another great night!

Wednesday 5th August Adventure (Crazy) Golf.

This is when the competitive streak comes out in many campers. The recently refurbished Adventure Golf in Stokes Bay opened up early especially for us to clear the course before the public arrived. I have never seen so much cheating in my life, but what a fun morning that was with plenty of laughter and banter flying about. After much discussion, it was decided it was a draw between Brian Durber and Ken Storey. On Completion, we all gathered at the Conservative Club once more for lunch and a chance to talk with some of the members. A vote of thanks was made to the catering staff who are always reluctant to 'take

a bow' but who thoroughly deserved it, BZ ladies.

Canoeing.

Open Canadian canoes were hired along with the services of an instructor and safety number from Phil Oats and his team at the QE2 Activity Centre, Bursledon. Members Kevin Beahan and Bill Burrage were supported by our helpers Tony Atkinson, Popeye Law, John Bryson and Ruben with his Dad, in a well planned and executed trip on the Hamble, taking in a cream tea and stopping at the 'Jolly' for light refreshments. What happens on canoeing trips, stays on the trip so I'm told (I must get on next years to find out what that means?).

Wardroom Quiz.

As guests of the President and Officers of the Wardroom HMS SULTAN, we were met on arrival and made to feel really welcome. Following a few drinks and dinner, we gathered into teams and were treated to a great evening, where young Officers under training formed part of each team and looked after the members and helpers, making for a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.

Thursday 6th August.

Warrant Officer Dave Lloyd arranged a couple of tours to the Engineering Training facilities here in HMS Sultan. The Air Engineering Training School has many buildings, but we visited Newcommen Hangar to find out what type of training is undertaken and meet some students. Sea Kings, Merlin, Lynx the odd Wessex V and Harrier are used to teach engineering principles....all very informative and well delivered.

Another tour was arranged to the Marine Engineering Training School in HMS Sultan, this time in Watt Hangar. There we saw propulsion machinery from different classes of surface vessels and auxiliary workshops such as the 'Outboard Motor Workshop'. The instructor couldn't do enough for us, answered all our questions and even explained (using training rigs) how diesel engines are constructed and operate.

Presentation Evening.

This year we once again welcomed by Captain and Mrs Trevor Gully RN who presented the prizes during the evening, it was also our pleasure to see Blind Veterans UK's Mike Purse and his wife Vicky in attendance for their second visit. This is an important occasion in our week, an opportunity to invite representatives from the Clubs, Societies and Individuals who have contributed

towards the success of the week. We were delighted that The Havant and Hayling Bowmen, The Gosport Cruising Club, The Court Barn Conservative Club and families and friends of the helpers could join us.

Friday 7th August.

This year the Royal Marines changed the date of the much loved 'Band Concert' at the Portsmouth Guildhall and consequently we couldn't attend. This created a gap in the program and so Arnold Thompson managed to secure a special visit for the Blind Veterans UK group to visit the Mary Rose Museum in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard at very short notice. It was another popular visit, with a 30 min 'hands on' brief by the curator followed by a tour of the spectacular exhibition. If you have not visited this attraction, then please do so and see history come to life.

We held our Annual General Meeting in the afternoon where we review our Constitution by bringing up to-date newly elected members of the committee and removing those no longer serving. This year we said goodbye to Billy Miller who stepped down after 14 years as the Blind Veterans UK representative, well done Billy for all your hard work. Following a close ballot, Gerry Jackson was elected as his replacement, welcome on board.

The evening was a quiet affair with families and friends calling in to say farewell and to experience one last treat! Tasty Smith and three members of the local 'Rose & Thistle Pipe band' arrived and performed three sets for us, all voluntary and a quite brilliant way to bring the week to a close.

Saturday 8th August.

Following an early breakfast it was time to collect our luggage and assemble at the pick-up point ready for departure, for some it was a car journey to the railway station and a long ride home, for others it was collection by family or friends. Those that remained were collected by transport provided by Blind Veterans UK and taken to either Harcourt St for onward transfer via rail at Kings Cross or to the Brighton centre where other arrangements would be in place.

Always a sad time when the camp breaks up, with new friendships formed, old ones deepened and much back slapping and stiff upper lips holding it all together. But isn't that the way with life in the Military, hello's and goodbyes at frequent intervals but friendship remains wherever you are. I hope you enjoyed telling your families and friends all about this slightly crazy group of people who meet in HMS Sultan every year, until next year.



Picture: Reuben 'Hood' Lloyd shows his Archery medal.



Picture: Kevin Beahan receiving the 'Don Minter Memorial' Trophy from Captain Trevor Gully RN.



Picture: Everyone who took part in HMS Sultan Summer Camp 2015.

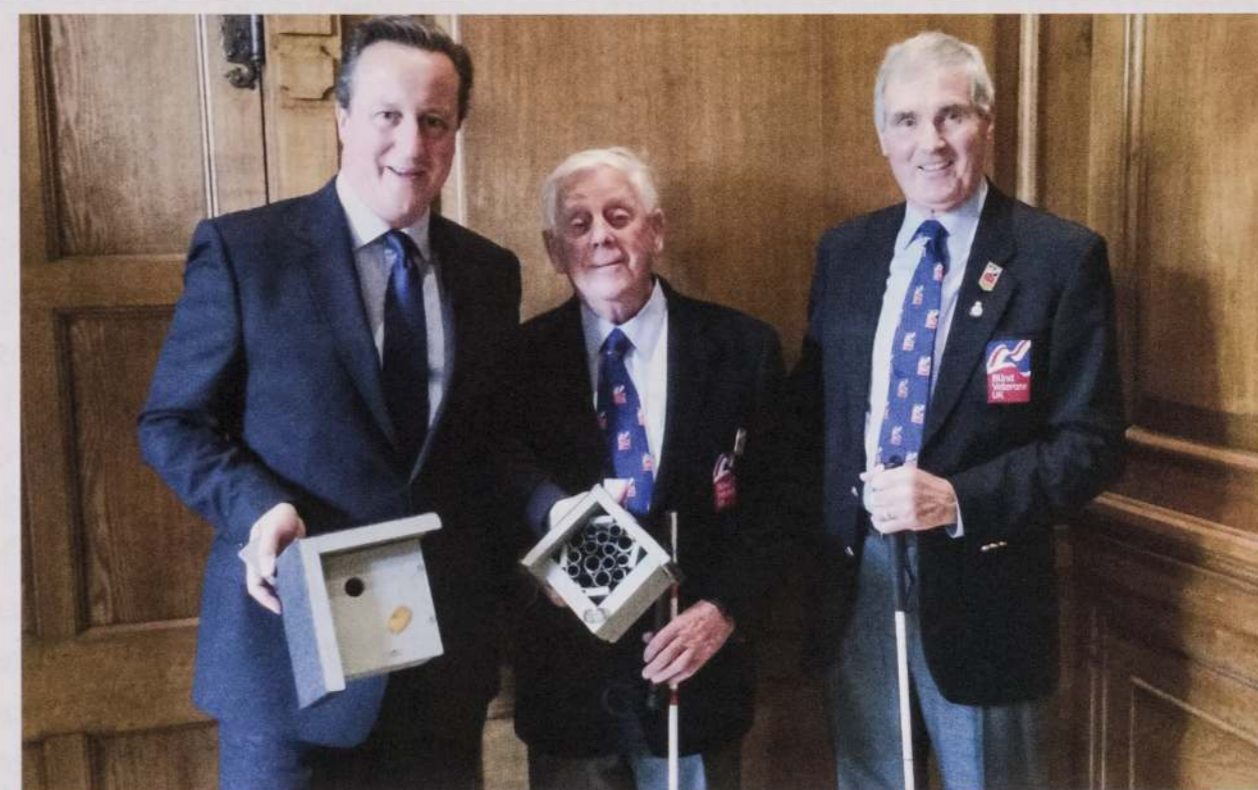
When Bert Hallett met Prime Minister David Cameron. By Judy Gillingham.

Blind veteran Bert Hallett's daughter Judy Gillingham told the Review: "When my dad Bert stepped inside the Art & Craft Workshop at the Brighton centre a few years ago he was encouraged to try his hand at a little carpentry.

"He tried his hand at making bird boxes and he now has the moniker of 'Bird Box Bert' as a result of his prolific output of bird boxes and bug hotels. With his fellow blind veteran John Cantwell he travelled from his Oxfordshire home to 10 Downing Street to meet with his MP and the country's Prime Minister, David Cameron.

"He later told me that when he presented the PM with a bird box and bug hotel he was assured that one would go up in the gardens of No 10 and the other possibly in the garden of his home in Dean. They had a chat about Blind Veterans UK and the PM seemed very impressed with the charity's work."

The Prime Minister gave a very moving centenary message earlier this year that is still on the charity's Facebook site at: www.blindveterans.org.uk/about-us/birthday-wishes/



Picture: The Rt Hon David Cameron MP with Bert's birdbox, Bert Hallett and John Cantwell from Oxfordshire.

Photography Week from the Sheffield centre. By Keith Harness.

During the course of the morning those members taking part in the photography week activities started to arrive at the Sheffield centre, eager to share with both myself and other members of our group some of the many things they had done since we last met at the Brighton centre during the spring. This continued, as light chatter through lunch, with many members of the group discussing the things they had done and the cameras they used that they thought might help others members of the group.

The week's activities got underway with a brief introductory session and then, as a group, we set about capturing an array of different portrait images of each other using just natural light. These were done in a number of different ways, with options of placing the subject close to a window, or in front of white or black backgrounds.

Dependent on the camera they were using this produced a number of different effects, with some members able to throw the background totally out of focus, any creases would go unnoticed in the final image. However for those capturing on compact or bridge cameras and tablets it was clear they would have to be careful to capture their subject in front of a black velvet background with far less creases, as they effectively had far less control over the image they'd produced.

Wednesday morning started with the option to capture a selection of still life, close up, or from a distance, ranging in size, shape and texture, from everyday items found in the home, or garden, giving us the option to capture these items from a more creative point of view as abstract subjects, either in black and white with limited side lighting, or in colour.

Following on from the morning break we made our way to Sheffield city centre where we firstly visited Sheffield Cathedral with its high vaulted ceilings and large array of vast open spaces that gave us the opportunity to capture images that showed the Cathedral's internal glory. This allowed us to show the depth of the arched entrance and walkways found throughout the Cathedral. These, along with just some of the architectural detail found in abundance throughout the Cathedral gave us the opportunity to produce some excellent images. Departing the Cathedral we made our way across to café Eten, a small café

housed over two floors found adjacent to the Cathedral, where our centenary photography exhibition was being shown to members of the public. As some members of our group hadn't had the opportunity to view their images in the exhibition, although a little apprehensive about how they thought these images would look, they were very keen to head straight up to the first floor to view the exhibition, examine the prints and take in how their image looked amongst the others.

With a slight sense of pride they moved between the different images taking in the depth detail and clarity found within these quality prints, before starting to view the charity stand that included members biographies with their photographs, stating how they had become interested in photography. A photo book contained images which previously had been entered into the exhibition selection process, but not made the final selection stage. Moving back outside we finished off our time in the city centre with some spare time, allowing us to capture street scenes, taking in the surrounding architecture, passers-by, or people waiting for approaching trams.

As we headed back to the centre talk had changed in small groups discussing what they thought of each other's exhibition images and the details they had seen and about the buildings and external venues the photography exhibition will be displayed in throughout the UK.

Thursday morning began with some members watching short films on macro (close up) photography, whilst others continued to view the images they had already captured, starting to make any small light changes to the images they felt may be needed.

After any final preparations we set out on our second field trip of the week to the South Yorkshire Aircraft Museum in Doncaster where we were able to photograph a large number of aircraft that ranged in age from models of some of the first aircraft, through to modern day military jets, and helicopter's which had been used in search and rescue roles over a number of generations. These ranged both in size and colour with some offering visitors to the museum the opportunity to take a seat inside their cockpits for a more detailed view of their instrument panels and controls, whilst others offered a more external overview of the aircrafts mechanics with sections cut out of their exteriors giving us the opportunity to view the overall working mechanics of these helicopters, as we passed between the exhibits.

Though conditions at first seemed to be challenging, with the low light levels inside the hangars and sheds we soon managed to make the necessary camera adjustments needed to bring more light into the images, with many members going on to produce some excellent images in a variety of styles that ranged from HDR images, taking in the full light spectrum, to contemporary abstract views of engines and grills.



Picture: Photograph by blind veteran Nick Barber taken at the South Yorkshire Aircraft Museum in Doncaster.

Following on from our packed lunch at the museum, we headed only a short distance around the corner to the second stop on our field trip to a large lake with wildlife in abundance where we were able to capture both close up and distant images of the lakes wildlife as we wandered along a nearby pathway, running along the lakes shore. This produced images not only of the lake itself, but a number of images of the swans as they made their way along the shoreline towards those birds seeking to be the first for food, as passers-by stopped with their children to throw bread to the wildlife on the lake.



Picture: By blind veteran Will Phillips.

Back to the centre for a well-deserved afternoon break after which we turned our hands to portraits in low light situations, taking into consideration that not everyone has access to either a home, or rented studio when capturing portrait images of friends, family, or clients. As a group we looked into the various options available to us when capturing portrait images within an enclosed, low light environment aided by either a single off camera flash, or by using one of several different kinds of reflectors, helping to bounce what available light we had on to the subjects face at an angle, adding fill light to areas of the face which were thrown into shadow by bright overhead lights. This effectively demonstrating to members of the group who are interested in portraiture that they do not need to have lots of money, or a well-equipped studio to produce portrait images within these kinds of environments.

This led us during the evening to begin to view our images from the weeks activities so far, looking to choose our five best images, however with the option of initially choosing more and editing these either alone, or as a group during the remainder of the evening, with the intention of us each producing five final images we would be happy to submit from the week's activities.

Friday morning seemed to approach faster than normal due to the bank holiday, but during the course of the morning whilst several members of the group were still choosing their five favourite images others were beginning their checkout and feedback sessions with the support staff.

These final images were then displayed on the Palmer Room screen for all to see and we set about discussing each of the images in more detail, looking closely at their finer points, such as the individual image's composition, orientation, were applicable the camera settings which had been used and what each member was looking to show within each image. To finish off the week Mark led a short demonstration on how we use social media to promote not only our personal photography but also that of the members achievements throughout the photography themed weeks. This would be using both Facebook and Flickr to draw attention to this and the way that even though the week may be coming to a close we can continue these discussions online with members uploading their future achievements to the closed group on Flickr when we can continue to provide support were needed and discuss future events.

We would like to thank staff at the Sheffield centre for their support during the week and all involved with making these events the great success they have become. Blind veterans who took part in the week were Nick Barber, Bob Beck with his wife Meryl, John English, me Keith Harness, Mark Pile, Eddie Taylor, Will Phillips.

Other examples of the images produced by the group can be found on the following websites:

<https://www.facebook.com/blindveteransukphotography>

<https://www.flickr.com/groups/blindveteransuk-photography/>

Family News.

Congratulations to:

Birthdays:

Joan Trench who celebrated her 108th birthday on 16th October.

Ernest Frobisher who celebrated his 102nd birthday on 31st October.

Bunty Misra who celebrated her 100th birthday on 3rd October.

Bryan Clowes who celebrated his 100th birthday on 9th October.

Ron Freer, who celebrated his 100th birthday on 21st October.

Edith Vickery who celebrated her 100th birthday on 30th October.



Picture: Blind veteran Bunty Misra is shown celebrating her 100th birthday in this photograph by her daughter Indira.

Anniversaries:

Platinum (70th):

Wallace & Jean Burnet-Smith of Brighton, East Sussex on 3rd October.

Michael & Sadie Martin of Bridgend, Mid Glamorgan on 13th October.

Les & Joyce Grimes of Etwall, Derby on 20th October.

Blue Sapphire (65th):

Tony & Sheila Hughes of Windermere, Cumbria on 21st October.

John & Jack Worthing of St Ives, Cambridgeshire on 28th October.

Lorraine & Bernie Ponting of Seaford, East Sussex on 28th October.

Diamond (60th):

Geoff & June Carey of Bexhill On Sea, East Sussex on 8th October.

Maurice & Joan Redgers of Newton Abbot, Devon on 22nd October.

Ruby (40th):

Paul & Pauline Palmer of Chippenham, Wiltshire on 11th October.

Pearl (30th):

Steve & Tracey Moseley of Bristol on 12th October.

Gordon & Janet Jones of Ellesmere Port, Cheshire on 28th October.

Silver (25th):

Ray & Robbie Hazan of Seaford, East Sussex on 6th October.

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.

Joy Allport who died on 25th September. She was the wife of George Allport.

Avis Atkins who died on 2nd September 2015. She was the widow of the late Ivan Atkins.

Dorothy Barrett who died on 1st April 2015. She was the wife of James Barrett.

Maisie Edwards who died on 1st January 2015. She was the widow of the late Paul Edwards.

Catherine Newman who died on 6th May 2015. She was the wife of Alan Newman.

Lissi Wilkinson who died on 7th September 2015. She was the wife of Desmond Wilkinson.

Hazel Whatling who died on 1st August 2015. She was the wife of William Whatling.

Welcome to Blind Veterans UK.

Frank Aplin of Mansfield, Nottinghamshire served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Artillery from 1942 to 1947.

John Arnold of Liverpool served in the Royal Corps of Transport from 1963 to 1967.

Arnold Bailson of Neath, West Glamorgan served in the Coldstream Guards from 1944 to 1972.

Robert Beadle of Carnforth, Lancashire served in the Royal Engineers from 1962 to 1968.

Thomas Bell of Newcastle Upon Tyne served in the Royal Navy from 1945 to 1947.

Stanley Bishop of Gloucester served in the Royal Air Force from 1950 to 1953.

William Bulbeck of Uxbridge, Middlesex served in the General Service Corps and the Lancashire Fusiliers from 1942 to 1947.

Frank Covill of Coningsby, Lincoln served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1941 to 1946.

Lance Cruse of Folkestone, Kent served in the Royal Armoured Corps and the Royal Army Service Corps from 1956 to 1967.

James Dauncey of Ruthin, Clwyd served in the Royal Artillery from 1939 to 1946.

Ivor Edwards of Aberystwyth, Dyfed served in the Royal Artillery from 1952 to 1957.

Peter Fearn of Alvaston, Derby served in the Royal Signals and the Royal Corps of Transport from 1971 to 1975.

Leonard Garner of Ross On Wye served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1946.

Henry Groom of Stourbridge, West Midlands served in the Royal Artillery and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1939 to 1946.

Kenneth 'Ken' Hibberd of Spalding, Lincolnshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1959 to 1961.

Desmond Holmes of Horncastle, Lincolnshire served in the General Service Corps and the Irish Fusiliers from 1942 to 1947.

William Hughes of Blaenau Ffestiniog, Gwynedd served in the Royal Welch Fusiliers and the Welch Regiment from 1944 to 1948.

John Isaacs of Worthing, West Sussex served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1947 to 1949.

Colin Jasper of Tipton, West Midlands served in the Royal Air Force from 1947 to 1949.

Jean Marshall (née Millar) of Guildford, Surrey served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1943 to 1946.

James Martin of Inveraray, Argyll served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1951 to 1959.

Ronald MacFarlane of Newcastle Upon Tyne served in the Royal Air Force from 1954 to 1956.

Alan McDonald of Arbroath, Angus served in the Black Watch and the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders from 1952 to 1963.

John Milligan of Newcastle Upon Tyne served in the Royal Navy from 1945 to 1948.

Ian Ogston of Blairgowrie, Perthshire served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1943 to 1946.

Edward 'Eddie' Piper of Broughty Ferry, Dundee served in the Royal Navy from 1963 to 1965.

Derek Pollard of Chelmsford served in the Royal Engineers from 1952 to 1957.

Geoffrey Redfern of Ovingdean, West Sussex served in the Royal Marines, Buffs, Queen's Royal Regiment and Royal Signals from 1943 to 1947.

John Russell of Bedford served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1947.

Jean Selwyn Smith of Hastings, East Sussex served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1942 to 1946.

Ronald Scott of Mapperley Park, Nottingham served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1950 to 1966.

Philip Shaw of Doncaster, South Yorkshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1945.

Edward Sherman of Tring, Hertfordshire served in the Royal Marines from 1942 to 1945.

Henry Smith of Saltburn By The Sea, Cleveland served in the Royal Air Force from 1938 to 1947.

Gerald Spencer of Rugby, Warwickshire served in the Royal Navy from 1948 to 1955.

James Stevenson of Cumbernauld, Glasgow served in the Lowland Brigade from 1965 to 1977.

Thomas Strutt of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire served in the Royal Navy from 1942 to 1946.

Julian Tallents of High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire served in the Fleet Air Arm from 1947 to 1954.

Norman Taylor of Wolverhampton served in the Royal Artillery from 1940 to 1946.

Richard 'David' Wallis of Weymouth, Dorset served in the Royal Air Force from 1951 to 1977.

Hubert Walpole of Stockport, Cheshire served in the Royal Marines from 1939 to 1949.

Samuel Williamson of Derby, Derbyshire served in the Royal Lincolnshire Regiment from 1950 to 1952.

Lionel Wilson of Aldershot, Hampshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1953 to 1956.

Robert Wilson of Thornton Cleveleys, Lancashire served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1939 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.

Sydney Bailey of Woking, Surrey died on 2nd October 2015, aged 94. He joined the Devonshire Regiment in September 1940, later serving in the Corps of Military Police and the REME. During WW2 he served in the Middle East, Italy and Yugoslavia. In Palestine he was one of the last servicemen to leave Jerusalem and later was amongst the last group to leave India after independence in 1947. He was discharged as a Sergeant in 1959.

James 'Bob' Barrett of Downham, Market, Norfolk died on 10th September 2015, aged 93. He joined the Home Guard at the start of the war. He was employed on his uncle's farm where he was responsible for the equipment and general labour requirements on the farm. He remained in the Home Guard until it was disbanded at the end of the war.

William 'Bill' Boulton of March, Cambridgeshire died on 14th June 2015, aged 79. He joined the electrical branch of the Royal Navy in 1952 and subsequently served in HMS Boxer a converted tank landing craft before joining the cruiser HMS Newfoundland in 1955 in the Far East. Failing eyesight and exposure to asbestos led to his discharge in 1960 as a Leading Electrical Mechanic, following which he served in the Merchant Navy.

Ronald Buffee of Poole, Dorset died on 5th October 2015, aged 95. He joined the Royal Navy at Chatham in 1940. Following a draft to the depot ship HMS Badger he served on North Atlantic convoys in the ocean going trawler HMS Lancer before discharge as a Signaller in 1945.

William 'Bill' Cantwell of Southport, Merseyside died on 30th September 2015, aged 91. He joined the Merchant Navy in 1943, qualifying as a chef. He served on the Empress of Scotland and the Athlone Castle which were both troop ships. He was serving on an Egyptian hospital ship on VE Day and then on the El Nil in August 1945, bringing troops back from the Far East. After the war he stayed in the Merchant Navy until 1969 and served on the Queen Mary, Scythia, Ascania and Sylvania.

John Carter of Kidderminster, Worcestershire died on 7th October 2015, aged 95. He joined the Worcestershire Regiment in 1940. He served as a driver for a Quartermaster in the UK and Europe and was discharged as a Lance Corporal in 1946.

Peter 'Pete' Cluness of Broughty Ferry, Dundee died on 1st October 2015, aged 54. He joined the Royal Navy in 1978. He served in the UK and Gibraltar on weapons electronics until his discharge as Petty Officer in 2000.

Mary Corran of Tamworth, Staffordshire died on 1st October 2015, aged 94. She joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force in 1941 and served at RAF Wellesbourne and RAF Honiley. She was discharged as a Leading Aircraftwoman in 1946.

Thomas Davies of Stroud, Gloucestershire died on 28th February 2015, aged 93. He joined the 1st Battalion Welsh Guards in May 1939. He served in Normandy, Belgium, Holland and Germany and was involved in the liberation of Brussels. He was discharged in 1946 as a Quartermaster Sergeant Major.

Daniel 'Danny' Doherty of Barrow On Trent, Derby died on 2nd October 2015, aged 81. He joined the Irish Guards in 1952 and served in Germany and Aqaba in the Middle East. He was discharged in 1955 as a Guardsman and went to Ireland to join the Irish Army for 7 years. He was posted to Egypt during that time.

Paul Edwards of Willerby, Hull died on 1st October 2015, aged 84. He joined the Royal Navy in 1949 and served as a seaman onboard ship and was discharged in 1951 in the rank of Able Seaman.

John Glynn of Swindon, Wiltshire died on 28th September 2015, aged 85. He served with the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1952 to 1961 in Japan and Malaysia leaving as a Staff Sergeant.

Martival Hazlerigg of Brighton, West Sussex died on 6th October 2015, aged 88. His service with the Royal Navy, Fleet Air Arm began in March 1945. He completed his technical training at Melsham and qualified as an Air Mechanic (Electrical). He served in the UK and Northern Ireland and was discharged in 1947 as a Leading Air Mechanic, 1st Class.

William 'Bill' Hearn of Teignmouth, Devon died on 27th September 2015, aged 94. He joined the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers in 1941. He fought in the North African and Italian campaigns before discharge as a Driver in 1946.

Ronald Howard of Peacehaven, East Sussex died on 1st December 2014, aged 89. He joined the Irish Guards in 1944. After the Normandy landings he fought through Belgium, Holland and into Germany before being discharged in 1946 as a Guardsman.

Kenneth Leigh of Dunfermline, Fife died on 28th September 2015, aged 69. He joined the Royal Navy in 1967 and specialised in mechanical engineering. He volunteered for submarine duty serving in HM Submarines Onyx and Otter. He spent the majority of his service in Faslane and was discharged as a Mechanic 1st Class in 1977.

Samuel Mellor of Uddingston, Glasgow died on 27th September 2015, aged 101. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1940 serving as a wireless mechanic in the UK, France and the Middle East. He was discharged as a Flight Sergeant in 1946.

Robin 'Bob' Mills of Plymouth, Devon died on 28th September 2015, aged 83. He joined the Royal Artillery in 1950 and served in the UK, Cyprus, Malta, Kuwait, Korea, Australia, Caribbean, Malaya, Singapore, Aden, Bahrain and Cyprus until discharge as a Warrant Officer 2nd Class in 1986.

Dora Minney of Birmingham, West Midlands died on 13th July 2015, aged 94. She joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service in 1941. She trained in Wrexham and was posted to Whittington Barracks, Staffordshire and later to Prestatyn where she worked with the Royal Signals. She was discharged in 1942 as a Private.

Mercia 'Griff' Nesbitt of Prestatyn, Clwyd died on 4th October 2015, aged 97. She joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service in 1942 and later transferred to the Women's Royal Army Corps and served in radar support for heavy artillery in Belgium and Germany. She also worked as dog handler and a PT instructor. She was discharged as a Staff Sergeant in 1956.

Gerald Openshaw of Bury, Lancashire died on 6th September 2015, aged 95. He joined the Royal Signals in 1942 and because of his prior knowledge of Morse Code, was seconded to and served at Bletchley Park as a Morse operator in the Listening Service. He was discharged as a Corporal in 1946.

Hylton Overton of South Shields, Tyne and Wear died on 26th September 2015, aged 83. He began his National Service with the Royal Air Force in 1950 and after training at RAF Padgate was posted to RAF Duxford and RAF Wattisham. He was discharged in 1952 as a Leading Aircraftman.

Jack Pentelow of Kettering, Northamptonshire died on 1st October 2015, aged 91. He joined the Northamptonshire Yeomanry (TA), a Tank Regiment. He landed in Normandy just after D-Day with the tanks and did the assault across the Rhine. After the war ended he was sent to the Royal Armoured Corps training school at Belsen and was discharged as a Lance Sergeant in 1947.

Ernest Robinson of Chesterfield, Derbyshire died on 23rd August 2015, aged 96. He trained as an accountant before he joined the RAF in 1939, training in Rhodesia as a pilot. He flew Wellington bombers from the UK, Italy, Greece and the Middle East until his discharge in 1946.

Grace Rodman of Sheffield, South Yorkshire died on 1st October 2015, aged 89. She served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1944 to 1947 in the UK, leaving as a Wren.

Alexander 'Alex' Ross of Woodford Green, Essex died on 1st October 2015, aged 94. He joined the Royal Marines in 1940 and served in the UK as a field cook and was discharged in 1946.

Robert Russell of Colne, Lancashire died on 1st October 2015, aged 93. He joined the Duke of Wellington's Regiment in 1939, transferring to East Lancashire Regiment in 1941 and later to the King's Regiment in 1943. He served in the UK and fought in France, Sicily and Italy, losing a leg at the Battle of Monte Cassino. He was discharged as a Private in 1945.

Alan Walker of Brighton, West Sussex died on 10th October 2015, aged 92. He enlisted in the Royal Air Force in 1941 where he was in telecommunications, serving in the Middle East. He was discharged as an Aircraftman First Class in 1946.

