

September 2016

Review

Blind Veterans UK | St Dunstan's since 1915



On the cover: Leon Groombridge, Alan Walker and Craig Brindley walk through fields in the London to Brighton 100K Challenge.

Back page: John Evans and Simon Hebson in the 100K London to Brighton Challenge.



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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 for the Brighton and Sheffield centres: To book accommodation at the Brighton and Sheffield centres telephone the Booking Office on 01273 391500. If you have care needs please first contact your Welfare Officer.

The Booking Office for the Llandudno centre: To book accommodation at the Llandudno centre please telephone 01492 868700 and ask for the Booking Office. If you have care needs please first contact your Welfare Officer.

ROVI IT Helpline: If you need to speak with the ROVI IT Helpdesk please telephone: 01273 391447 for ROVI and IT enquiries.

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.

September.

Activities Week (away) 4th to 10th.

History Week 18th to 24th.

October.

Amateur Radio Club 16th to 22nd.

October/November.

Bowling Club 23rd October to 5th November.

December.

Turkey & Tinsel Week 4th to 10th.

Activities from the Llandudno centre.

September.

Sea Fishing Week 5th to 9th.

Cycling Week 19th to 23rd.

October.

Walking Week 10th to 14th.

Photography Week 24th to 28th.

November.

Military Week 7th to 13th.

Activities from the Sheffield centre.

December.

Christmas Week 12th to 16th.

To book Themed and Club Weeks at the Brighton and Sheffield centres.

For further information and to book your place telephone the Booking Office on 01273 391500. If you have care needs please speak with your Welfare Officer.

To book Themed and Club Weeks at the Llandudno centre:

For further information or to book your place please telephone: 01492 868741 or 01492 868740. If you have care needs please speak with your Welfare Officer.

From the Chairman.

Your message from Tim Davis.

The power of "Community" can be very strong and can help groups of people bound with a common purpose or interest to achieve positive and transformational outcomes; whether it is to overcome tragedy, a significant hurdle in life, or to reach out for a seemingly unattainable goal. The consistent thread is very seldom the work of an individual, but the product of a community that acts with belief and selfless contribution.

Over the past couple of months I think we've seen plenty of evidence of different "Communities" at work, achieving some truly remarkable things. There have unfortunately been some shocking acts of terror and natural disaster, where we have seen communities provide the emotional and practical support to help those affected rebuild their lives. At the other end of the spectrum; the sheer pride and joy our Olympians have generated, who from years of work, supported by many individuals and institutions, have achieved a staggering 67 medals at Rio.

These examples serve to not only inspire, but to practically demonstrate what can be achieved. Closer to home, it's given me great pleasure to see first-hand, what our communities within the family of Blind Veterans UK have achieved. From fundraising through this year's Yorkshire and London to Brighton 100K Challenge events, to the collaboration with blind veterans in the US and South Africa through Project Gemini; and there are many more examples.

To highlight just one person, Carl Adamson, a recipient of a 2016 Volunteers Award, attributes his success to the support that he receives from his fellow blind veterans and staff.

This month I visited Newcastle to attend the Reunion lunch for blind veterans in the North East. As usual it was great to meet so many of you, to hear your stories and the positive spirit with which you tackle everything you do. It was also great to hear about the initiatives, collaboration and sharing going on with other local charities, to help our members and theirs, gain greater independence.

In July you each received a letter at the start of the four week consultation period when we invited you to contact us with your views to the proposed changes to the way the charity operates. As you still had further questions we have included a Q&A on pages 16 to 20; and with permission of the correspondents we have reproduced letters and responses on pages 21 to 27.

As the letter explained, these changes are in response to our plans to grow the number of members supported by Blind Veterans UK, which we aim to double over the next five years. As you are aware there are plans to build community teams across the country to bring our services closer to members' homes and local communities that will complement our regional centres. As your input is at the heart of our decision making should you have any further concerns or questions please do contact us.

I greatly look forward to seeing blind veterans up and down the country, working with local communities of staff, members, volunteers, families and other organisations to complement and build out the support we provide. I wish you all the best, and hope you enjoy the last of the summer weather!



Picture: A sense of community as trekkers and runners in the inaugural 100K Yorkshire Challenge are addressed by blind veteran Dennis Sarginson.

Noticeboard.

Dates for your diary and useful information.

Calling all Freemasons. Blind Veterans UK Masonic Group Cymru.

As the current Chairman & Secretary of the Blind Veterans UK Masonic Group, I am looking at expanding the group, and looking at the possibility of arranging a meeting at the Llandudno centre that is similar to the one we hold at the Brighton centre. Please don't think that the North Wales meeting would be instead of the Brighton weekend, it would be as well as, and the Brighton meeting would go on as normal.

The Welsh meeting would be in the Llandudno centre over a week. Dates to be confirmed when there would be the Masonic meeting, a superb meal and other items during the week.

I am trying to find out how many Brethren there are in the charity, and how many would be keen to attend this week. If you could please let me know if you would like to attend no later than 5th October, it would be much appreciated.

On a separate matter over the past few months, I have received many phone calls asking me if the Masonic group require regalia.

Regalia has often become available due to the passing away of a Brother, or ill health and non-activity. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your calls and your donations.

The Masonic group do not require these items, however I collect old regalia, and recycle it within my Lodge with all proceeds going to charity.

May I ask if there is anybody who has unwanted regalia, and who is willing to donate it to me so that money can be received for Masonic charities, then please contact me on the details given below:

You can contact me, W.Bro Clive Jones on mobile 07854 800256 or by email dragoneye67@sky.com

Christmas bookings 2016. By Matthew Lee, R&T Programme Manager (Llandudno).

It seems somewhat strange to be talking about the Christmas period at the height (hopefully) of our summer. However, the centre bookings teams have received a number of calls from members asking about the arrangements for booking into one of the centres for Christmas and New Year.

If you would like to put your name forward to stay in the centre over either Christmas or New Year please contact your Welfare Officer before the end of September 2016. This year the centre bookings team will not be able to take requests for Christmas or New Year stays directly.

The centre and welfare team will then allocate places in each centre for Christmas or New Year. Once the spaces have been allocated, members who have been successful will be notified as soon after as possible.

If you are offered a place but are unable to attend please let the centre know as soon as possible because we anticipate there will be a waiting list.

From previous experience, Christmas and New Year stays can be an emotive subject. Sometimes rumours pass around the country that members have been given a place before the application process has closed. Both the welfare and centre teams would like to reassure everyone that no spaces have already been allocated for Christmas or New Year stays.

I hope you all enjoy the summer and look forward to seeing you in one of the centres soon.

Submit an entry for The National Memory Day Creative Writing Competition.

The power of the written and spoken word to those with dementia and the people who care for them, will be celebrated during the first National Memory Day on 18th May 2017. This project is a flagship event of the UK's Dementia Awareness Week.

The National Memory Day Creative Writing Competition, and Memory Café, poetry activities will raise the profile of the challenges that living with memory loss can bring, not only for the individual but also their wider circle of family and friends at a time when many of them are making plans for their retirement and later life.

Entries for the creative writing competition are open for the following categories:

Best Poem £4,000 prize. Best Short Story £4,000 prize. Plymouth University Best Young Writer aged 15 to 18 £2,000 prize. Primary Carer Voice £2,000 prize.

Entries must be accompanied by an entry form. If you do not have a computer to download one please telephone 01752 585073 to request a form.

You can post your submission and completed entry form to Literature Works National Memory Day Creative Writing Competition, c/o Plymouth University, R1, Roland Levinsky Building, Drake's Circus, Plymouth PL4 8AA.

If you have a computer you can download the entry form from the National Memory Day website at www.nationalmemoryday.org.uk/competitions and submit your entry.

A year-round programme of talks and workshops with poets and writers working with the nationally successful Memory Cafés, will ensure everyone will be supported and enabled to get involved in the enjoyment and writing of memories and new creative work.

The National Memory Day project will then showcase the brightest and best of the work created at a prize-giving event at which leading poets, writers and supporters will present and read the winning entries from the creative writing competition.

The project will also raise funds to develop and grow the reach of these projects year on year, ensuring we can continue to make a difference to people's lives as they live with memory loss and underpinning medical research to find dementia therapies in the search for a cure.

The project is supported by Sir Andrew Motion, President and Angela Rippon OBE, Vice President, and the project partnership brings together a wealth of experience in working with dementia and Alzheimer's. The partnership is made up of the Alzheimer's Society, Plymouth University, The Literature Works and The Poetry Archive.

If you would like to find out more about the Memory Cafes, or the UK's Dementia Awareness Week please telephone 01752 585073 or visit website www.nationalmemoryday.org.uk

Football Weekend at the Brighton centre.

Were you a keen footballer and think you still have the legs to have a kick about? Or spend hours talking about football on the sofa and now want to actually have a kick about with your colleagues?

If yes we will run a football weekend on Saturday and Sunday 24th and 25th September.

You will get the opportunity to learn new skills and hone old skills playing blind football.

The weekend will be held at the Brighton centre when we will go to the new Brighton and Hove Football training facilities where we have organised for coaches to put on an introduction to blind football for you and of course to have a laugh that goes with playing football.

Accommodation and transport costs will be covered for this event.

So if the above is of interest to you please contact Steve Mills, Sport and Recreation Instructor at the Brighton centre on 01273 391577 or email mills@blindveterans.org.uk for further information.

You can be part of Beyond Boxes, a new Mass Observation Archive project.

Beyond Boxes is an outreach and engagement project for the Mass Observation Archive, which will enable archives at The Keep at Woollards Way in Brighton to become more accessible and enhance the diversity of the collections through working with partners from Blind Veterans UK, the Brighton Housing Trust and Lewes Prison. To that end staff at The Keep would be interested to receive personal accounts from blind veterans.

The two year Beyond Boxes project, supported by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund of £51,300, began in September 2016. It will include a range of activities and events, such as a diary day in December for International Day of Disabled People, workshops at The Keep and wider community engagement. By working in partnership with a range of groups The Keep will explore some of the challenges in using archives and enhance the content of the Mass Observation Archive by including people's stories, written by them.

Anthony McCoubrey, Beyond Boxes Project Coordinator, said: "Heritage comes in many social and cultural forms; from historic buildings, to the natural world, to individual possessions.

"But it is also tradition passed down through personal stories, experiences, or writings. Everyone should have the opportunity to contribute their personal heritage so that it is recorded, represented and made available to a wider audience through the Mass Observation Archive."

Katherine Bradley, Members Activities Manager at Blind Veterans UK says: "Blind Veterans UK is excited to be part of this project. It is wonderful that the experiences of the veterans the charity supports will be recorded and available as part of this project, and that all records will be accessible for those with a vision impairment."

Suzanne Rose, Education and Outreach Officer for the Mass Observation Archive, said: "In opening up access to the collection through outreach and in-house workshops, events and activities, we will enable participants to explore, examine, analyse, debate and learn about daily life in Britain.

"The project aims to break down the barriers many people face in trying to use

archives, be these physical, attitudinal, or educational. We want to ensure that heritage is open to all."

If you would like further information about this project or would like to get involved, please do contact us at the Mass Observation Archive.

Mass Observation was founded in 1937 with the objective of creating an "anthropology of ourselves" by a recruiting team of observers and a panel of volunteer writers to study the everyday lives of ordinary people in Britain. It now comprises more than 3,000 archival boxes of documents created by hundreds of volunteer contributors and is housed within the University of Sussex's Special Collections at The Keep, Woollards Way, Brighton BN1 9BP www.massobs.org.uk www.thekeep.info

To take part please contact Jacqui Bealing, Senior Media Relations Manager, University of Sussex on telephone 01273 678888 or email press@sussex.ac.uk

Recorded audio described guides are now available at Bentley Priory Museum, Stanmore, North West London.

Bentley Priory Museum now has audio described guides for blind and partially sighted visitors that support exploration of Bentley Priory Museum, highlighting key objects which illustrate its rich history and its pivotal role as Headquarters Fighter Command during the Battle of Britain in 1940.

For more information please contact the Museum on telephone: 020 8950 5526 or email: enquiries@bentleypriorymuseum.org.uk

Bentley Priory Museum is at Mansion House, Stanmore, North West London HA7 3RB. Sat Nav HA7 3HT.

Trial of an ad hoc clinic at the Brighton centre. By Jackie Greer, Head of Care.

We have been experiencing significant difficulty in obtaining the services of the district nurses to support members staying on respite residential care at the Brighton centre, this is not the case at the Llandudno centre.

Do you need minimal assistance when staying at the Brighton centre but find the cost of paying for care to obtain this prohibitive? Well in response to your feedback we are currently trialling a new clinic system to support members who have limited care needs by allowing members to book for a holiday and then paying a nominal charge for each care input required. This means that members who have previously had to book onto care just to receive their medications or to have their eye drops instilled will no longer have to book into residential care. Members who require insulin injections or dressings renewed will no longer have to book onto nursing care.

The charge will be determined by the level of staff required to provide the service. For input from a registered nurse the charge is £5 per action, for input from a health care assistant the cost is £2.50 per action.

Therefore a member requiring daily insulin will pay £5 x 7 days = £35 per week above the holiday rate as opposed to the full nursing charge of £553.00. A member requiring twice daily eye drops administered will pay £2.50 x 7 days = £17.50 per week above the holiday rate as opposed to the full residential charge of £413.00.

The clinic will run daily on the nursing floor from 8.15am until 8.30am for the administration of pre breakfast insulin injections only, and from 10.30am until 11.30am for undertaking other care tasks that can be provided which include dressings. You must bring the dressings with you as they are prescription only and we cannot supply them, other types of injection and the undertaking of blood tests if requested by a GP. We cannot provide any other care service at this time so those who require assistance to wash and dress must book under care.

If you want to know more please telephone me, Jackie Greer on 01273 391420 or Paul Cartwright or Sue Tansey at the Brighton centre on 01273 307811.

Blind Veterans UK Christmas cards and gifts.

It's the month of September and many of you are probably still reminiscing about your summer holidays but it is that time of the year with only 116 sleeps before Christmas that we need to start planning for the Christmas Celebrations.

You will find enclosed with this magazine our catalogue of the 2016 Gift Selection from Blind Veterans UK that includes Christmas cards and a small gift selection to include gifts for children, Christmas crackers, napkins and Christmas baubles, as shown below.

Please do feel free to share the catalogue with your family and friends, and should you require further catalogues, please telephone Glenys Balchin in the Member Services department on 020 7616 8375.

To place your order simply fill in the order form at the back of the enclosed catalogue and return it in the freepost envelope provided.

Or you may prefer to call our friendly staff at the Call Centre on 0300 111 0440 and quote CAT 16R or shop online at www.shop.blindveterans.org.uk

Your support for Blind Veterans UK is very deeply appreciated, so thank you for everything you have helped us to achieve through personal donations or purchasing our Christmas merchandise. Go on have a browse and select your Christmas cards.



Picture: This Union Flag Christmas tree bauble at £18.00 is just part of the range of Blind Veterans UK Christmas Merchandise that is in the catalogue with this edition of Review.

Letters to the Editor.

As we welcome your letters please do send them in to us. They could be in response to an article in the Review, or something you feel to be of interest to your fellow blind veterans. You can send letters by post to Blind Veterans UK Review, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD. Please mark them Letter to the Editor. Or if you prefer please email them to: revieweditor@blindveterans.org.uk

Dear Editor,

I found the articles by Hilary Brown in the June Review and by Harold Smart in the July Review, about the experiences of Charles Bonnet Syndrome very interesting. I too have Macular Degeneration. I am sure they are correct when they say the brain fills in the missing part of the scene with what information it has. The eye is more than a camera it has a brain connected to it.

Like Harold Smart, I also experience the disappearing car when crossing the road. This is obviously very dangerous and I will not cross the road without my white stick. I have often looked for the cup of tea I just put down somewhere. I can look directly at the cup and not see it, yet the background looks complete.

Also if I spot a stain on the kitchen surface and wipe it with a damp cloth the surface looks clean, but it may not be. The brain thinks it must have gone because it was wiped and the surface looks complete. I have learned to close my eyes and look again and the stain reappears.

Written information about Macular Degeneration is illustrated by a view with a black area in the middle. This is not my experience. I have painted a small picture to show how I see the world. The missing part of the scene is filled by the background colour not a black circle.

Yours faithfully,

Brian Widdowson.



Picture: Brian Widdowson's painting that shows how he sees the world.

Dear Mr Widdowson,

Thank you very much for your interesting letter and for your very skillful painting that recreates so well how you see the world. I am sure this will spark much interest and further articles and letters to the Review, which we are always keen to receive.

Yours faithfully,

Ed.

Update on the proposed changes to our charity from Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB, Chief Executive of Blind Veterans UK.

Last month I sent a letter to all members of Blind Veterans UK informing you about a series of proposed changes to the organisation. As you will remember, these changes are all about reconfiguring the charity so that we can continue to provide the best possible service to you, our members, well into the future. The changes will also enable us to make this support available to many more members. Indeed our goal is to support twice as many members by 2022 which means we need to expand our infrastructure and increase the number of staff to ensure that we maintain the outstanding level of support for which Blind Veterans UK is deservedly known.

In July we began a four-week discussion period during which we invited staff, members and volunteers to let us have their thoughts on these proposals. I am pleased to say that, as a result, a large number of staff, members and volunteers have either written or called us with their comments and feedback. We have reproduced two such exchanges, with the kind permission of the correspondents, as a way of demonstrating the wide range of views expressed by our members. Please see pages 21 to 27.

So thank you to everyone who took the time to let us know your thoughts. We have been delighted with the suggestions and feedback received and this has given us some excellent food for thought. Now that we have come to the end of this discussion period, and we have had the opportunity to review and consider the comments and feedback received from staff and members, I want to update you on where we have come to in the process.

Firstly, I'm delighted to report that there was overall support for the development of multi-skilled, community-based teams which are closer to members, so we will continue to develop this model along the lines of our original proposal.

You will also be pleased to know that with regard to further feedback, we have amended our proposals where possible, taking into account whether the suggested changes are in line with our aim to support more members, as well as being practically and financially viable.

We are now in the next stage of the process where we are talking to staff about how this impacts on them individually and discussing the range of opportunities which are available in the new community model. We will be updating all staff, members and volunteers on the outcome of this and the future direction of the charity in October, when this process has come to an end.

As I am sure you will appreciate, this continues to be a time of significant change as we make the necessary adjustments so that we can continue to provide the best possible support to you, our members, well into the future. And I am absolutely determined that we will.

I am really grateful for your continued support throughout this process.

Questions and Answers.

We were delighted to receive such a wide variety of responses from you. Due to the large number received we have not been able to reproduce all of them. Instead we have compiled the following Q&A, based on the key questions and concerns which you raised.

What is going to happen with the Sheffield centre?

It is still proposed that the Sheffield centre will close to members by the end of March 2017 after which it will be placed on the market. However, we will continue to deliver the IT/ROVI helpline to make sure that you continue to receive this valuable service without disruption.

We also want to reassure members who live in the Sheffield area that priority will be given to services in and around the area when setting up the new community teams.

We are committed to making sure that once the Sheffield centre closes, you will continue to receive high quality support through the new community teams in the local area and through our centres in Brighton and Llandudno.

Why is resource being taken from the North (proposed closure of Sheffield) and re-allocated to the South (proposal to build a residential centre in the South West)?

The original plan proposed setting up two day centres — one in the North East and one in the Midlands — plus a residential centre in the South East. This proposal was made based on research which shows that a particularly high number of blind veterans live in these areas. However, as a result of feedback from staff and members, we have now decided to allow the relevant regional teams to recommend what facilities are needed in these areas based on local need (either day or residential). Subject to approval, sufficient resource will be provided to set up these up from September 2017. We will begin by piloting the facilities and adapt and expand them in response to the needs of the regional member population.

What will the new teams look like?

From April 2017 we will be setting up 19 communities across the UK. Each community will have one Team Leader, one Community Support Worker and one Volunteer Co-ordinator.

The communities will sit within the five regions. Each of these will have at least two ROVIs, one Regional Manager and one Regional Administrator. We will also be appointing one new Member Support Worker in each region to help with the smooth transition to the new community team model. Their role will be to support all members who are in need of additional practical or emotional support during the change process.

All of the roles mentioned above will be full time positions. Additional staff will also be recruited over time to widen the range of support and activities available e.g. social events, rehabilitation in the home, IT training, etc.

Will the staff in the communities and regions be professionally qualified?

Every community will have a Community Team Leader who will be an experienced, qualified practitioner in a discipline such as Social Work, ROVI, OT or equivalent. Each community will also have a Community Support Worker who will also be professionally trained.

How will we transition training from the centres to the community, especially given the increasing demand for training and the current long waiting times?

Community teams will be established over the next two years although there will be no immediate changes to services delivered by Brighton and Llandudno. As the community teams develop, we anticipate more general training in the community and specialist training in the centres, which will result in a decrease in waiting times.

We will continue to ensure that those of you who want to attend a centre can still do so. The Brighton and Llandudno centres will work to support members who previously attended the Sheffield centre once it closes.

Is the charity becoming increasingly focussed on care for older members instead of maintaining its primary focus on VI?

This was a particular issue for members who do not fall into the working age group but are also not in their 90s. We want to reassure you that we will continue to maintain our primary focus on VI. However, we have always offered an element of care and respite in the centres and so this will not change.

Our centres will still be open to dailies and will offer themed weeks, activities and specialist rehabilitation support that will appeal to a wide range of members. With more staff on the ground, we will also be better equipped to help members of all ages and ability to participate in social activities, develop new skills and achieve greater fulfilment and independence.

Where will the new members come from?

The Engagement team will develop a strategy to reach out to more potential members and significantly increase our membership over the next five years. The advantage of community-based teams is that staff will be also able to build relationships with local organisations and raise our profile on a regional level.

How will the charity find the money to support so many new members?

The Fundraising team are developing a strategy to increase income to help fund the proposed changes and the team will also increase its community events and activities.

In addition to this the Trustees have given permission for us to use some of

the unrestricted reserves to help fund the increase in staff and the additional facilities which we are proposing.

Will members have the opportunity to get involved with the future developments and implementation of the proposed changes?

We recognise that your involvement is critical to the success of the changes to the way we deliver our services. Therefore we are actively looking at ways to increase member involvement as we develop and roll out the regional and community teams.

If you have any further questions or comments, please get in touch with Ann-Mari Freebairn, Director of Engagement at: ann-mari.freebairn@blindveterans.org.uk.

Or write to her at Ann-Mari Freebairn, Director of Engagement, Blind Veterans UK, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD.

If you would like to call with your question please contact the following number 0800 254 0410 leaving your name and number and we will get back to you very soon.

In July you each received a letter from Blind Veterans UK's Chief Executive Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB informing of plans for a new operating model for our charity. Your opinions were invited and on the following pages Nick Caplin, and Ann-Mari Freebairn, Director of Engagement, answer questions from Diane Mountford and Christine Brownlie.

Email from Diane Mountford, blind veteran, GOAL Group member and volunteer.

Dear Nick,

Thank you for your email, clarifying certain rumours regarding our organisation.

There are numerous issues that need raising here, so, in no particular order, I would like clarification on these subjects which I feel will impact directly on my associates and myself. Could you please enlighten me as to the authenticity of the market research? Please note that I have yet to encounter a single member who participated in this exercise. What Market Research organisation was commissioned to carry out the investigation? How many quantitative questionnaires were completed and by what method (i.e. F2F, telephone call, form filling?) and how was the breakdown of respondents formulated? More importantly, how many focus groups, in what areas, recruited by whom and what was the respondent criteria? How representative was it of the cross-section of members, from all levels — age, area, family status, SEG? My own personal experience does not confirm much acceptance of the proposals as presently stated.

During the many hours I give as a volunteer for Blind Veterans UK I do indeed meet with potential members who have other needs as well as sight impairment. I feel that our Welfare Officers are adequately experienced enough to address these matters and capable of referring any specialised cases to one or more of the many other organisations that support serving and veteran military and their families. Without wishing to sound opinionated, I would like to point out that too many cooks are notorious for the damage they do. I am always happy to refer enquiries regarding membership criteria to our HQ team or signposting veterans towards other organisations, military or non-military, as necessary. I am quite sure that most other membership volunteers and fundraisers will do the same.

I am dismayed that the Board suggests closing down the Sheffield centre, although I suspect the decision is already a fait accompli and no amount of protest will sway the result. The Sheffield centre is, and always has been, a completely different venue and delivers quality IT training and support as well as providing a welcome 'home from home' base for Induction Week.

The rehabilitation team are outstanding and regarded by all of us with deep affection, as indeed are all the staff there. To consider replacing it with day centres is, in my view, a total mistake. Sheffield is quite accessible by public transport for many of us. However, travelling on a daily basis to a day centre is time consuming, impractical and will curtail the wonderful camaraderie that members experience in Sheffield. And as for 'volunteers' and trained staff visiting us in our homes? Well, that is not exactly encouraging blind veterans to lead independent lives, is it? It is simply enhancing the feeling of isolation that many sight impaired people have.

The proposal to open a centre in the south west is somewhat selective. We already have two coastal centres and, should the idea of closing Sheffield come to fruition, we should be looking at another base which is accessible from all parts of the UK, including the north. To my mind this is another justification for keeping Sheffield and expanding its services.

With regard to funding research into ARMD, it is my understanding that there are already other charities who do this. And although MD is clearly the major cause of sight loss with our members, there are also many other forms of blindness presented. To support one area is, in my view, discriminatory. I would like to know where in the constitution it advises us to use funds for such a purpose.

You mention in your letter, the need to increase support to those members who are still eligible for work. This is an important issue and should be upheld. However, I would like to draw your attention to that group of us who have retired from employment and yet haven't quite reached our 90s yet. We have a lot to offer and we are also blind veterans. Unlike the staff, who are usually not working with us for the rest of their lives, we will still be blind veterans in (hopefully) twenty or thirty years time. We are here to be provided for as well. I have raised this subject directly with you before and yet I feel now that we are going to be side-lined as surplus to the long term plans. Until we become less independent and more in need of home visits, that is.

I cannot speak for the morale of other members or staff but I want you, as our CEO, to be aware that I feel very deflated and side-lined by the present proposals. Putting anything 'out into the community' smacks of social services and county charities, many of which seem to exist purely to keep themselves in

jobs. I do urge you to reconsider some of these proposals and remember that when you are no longer CEO, I shall still be blind.

Yours sincerely,

Diane Mountford.

Response from Nick Caplin.

Dear Diane,

Thank you for your very comprehensive feedback on the proposals which I laid out in my email of 20th July. I really appreciate the time that you have taken. I have addressed many of your points in my remarks that follow and, at the end of the email, I have set out a way of engaging further if this would be helpful.

The main principle underpinning our strategy work throughout has been 'Member First' and we have been determined to focus our work on member needs today and looking forward. A significant amount of study has been conducted into determining these needs, an important part of which was testing this work with our member population.

The consultation and research with members was undertaken in house and not by a market research organisation. In our face to face discussions and focus groups we spoke to a variety of members who were visiting the centres at the time of the group. These members were not specially selected in any way. The surveys which we conducted were from two specific groups of members; those who had visited centres in the last 12 months and those who had never visited a centre. We took the evidence collected from 1082 members who had completed a survey after visiting a centre in 2015/16, we spoke to 187 members by telephone after they visited a centre and then we spoke to 300 members who had never visited a centre. All of this data gave us a picture about how and why people use the centres and the common barriers for those who did not. We feel that this number and range of members surveyed was fairly representative of the membership as a whole and throughout this process, blind veterans who are members of staff and Trustees have ensured that we keep beneficiaries at the heart of our decision making.

Today, the charity provides through-life support to over 4300 members (currently aged 23 to 108) and this will continue. You will note from my email that we want to reach more blind veterans in need and the Trustees have set the challenge to double in size to 8000 members by 2022, ensuring that quality is maintained throughout. To do this we need to move to an operating model that is genuinely scalable, and this will require change.

A key part of our strategy work focused on the Total Qualifying Population: that is, an estimate of the number of vision impaired veterans that exist in the country today by location, mapped forward to the year 2040. This work, which was completed with support from both RNIB and RBL, has informed us on likely centres of gravity for the charity into the future and indicates the need for more facilities in the North East, in the Birmingham area and the South West. We will develop this thinking to find the optimum solutions over the next couple of years. I should add that it is highly unlikely that we will want to build a facility in the South West: rather, we would want to explore opportunities to exploit existing facilities.

I understand your dismay at the proposal to close the Sheffield centre, not least as the centre provides excellent training and is valued by the members who use it. But it is constrained and has challenges. Our strategy work looks forward 25 years and we are keen to ensure that the organisation as a whole is fit for purpose for the future, providing tailored and relevant support to each and every member across the country to promote life beyond sight loss. We are keen to discuss this further with the members who use the Sheffield centre to help shape the new support model, the aim being that each and every member will be better supported in future.

The GOAL (Get Out And Live) Group of members are very important to us and I can reassure you that we are by no means side-lining those aged between 60 and 90. Indeed we are determined to meet the needs of all of our members and whilst it's important that we cater for the ageing population we will also provide social and practical support for the more active and able. Our aim with the new strategy is to be better able to do this in community or regional settings making it accessible to interested members closer to home and not only when visiting a centre. And we will have even more talented staff better able to help us do this in future.

You raise an important point about Research. Our Member Trustees have been keen to stress that we should not simply accept blindness, rather we should seek where possible to reverse blindness. This is a significant challenge, but a challenge nonetheless. The sad reality nationally is that AMD is a low priority for medical research funding. Major public funders of research do not currently prioritise AMD and the largest charities in the sight loss sector in the UK choose not to fund medical research. Given that two thirds of our members suffer from AMD today, and that this is forecast to rise, the Trustees have decided that it would be positive for us to engage in this area, in collaboration with Fight for Sight and the Macular Society. Our contribution, which is consistent with our charitable objectives, will be modest but focused on raising significant funding from elsewhere towards finding a successful early intervention. If this, in the round, means that there will be veterans in the future who do not need to join the charity that indeed would represent a Victory over Blindness. But I should emphasise that this is not our only area of research interest and we are in the early stages of exploring other ideas, not least technology and innovation.

In summary, our proposals are formed as a result of extensive study over the last 18 months and are focused on providing the best quality support to an expanding membership base, meeting their holistic needs over the years to come. It involves change, but I am both determined and confident that this will be very positive change for all our Blind Veterans UK family.

I do hope that this addresses some of your concerns. If you would like to have a one to one meeting with management to give further feedback we would be keen to do this.

Many thanks again for getting in touch.

Kind Regards,

Nick.

FROM: Christine Brownlie to Ann-Mari Freebairn, Director of Engagement.

Dear Ms Freebairn,

I would like to thank you for the letter received from Blind Veterans UK re the review. My only comment is that I think it is an excellent idea to try to move into the community a bit more. When my husband's Ophthalmologist told us about St. Dunstan's, as it was then named, we were amazed about what it offered in support. Guy benefitted greatly from the training week at the Brighton centre and the help he received as a result but more important the fact that he met so many nice people and discovered that people were interested in helping him was a real lift to his life. Welfare Officer Allison West was a fabulous visitor and he loved her visits as did I.

I know people love the Sheffield centre as some of the people we met at Brighton told us all about it, but I am sure that once they realise how many more people will be helped all around the country they will understand why the move to a more community minded service will be good. We managed to get to the Llandudno centre and had a wonderful week.

I apologise for any mistakes I have made. My family has just given me a present of this laptop and a printer but as my glaucoma is a little worse and I am not technically minded, being 80 years I cannot correct any mistakes I may have made.

I wish you well with the changes and God Bless.

Christine Brownlie.

Response from Ann-Mari Freebairn, Director of Engagement.

Dear Christine,

Thank you very much for taking the time to respond to the recent letter from Blind Veterans UK. I very much appreciate your kind words and your expressions of support for our proposed changes.

It is also so lovely to hear that your husband Guy benefitted from the training week at the Brighton centre and the support that followed on from this.

I hope you enjoy using your laptop and printer. What a wonderful present!

With very best wishes,
Ann-Mari.

Orcam. By Jo Sinkins. ROVI Brighton centre.

Every year there are new devices available and we are always keen to explore how they may be of benefit to our members. One such device is the Orcam, an intuitive portable scanner with a smart camera mounted on the frame of a pair of glasses, connected to a small portable processor with the speech fed through a mini speaker near your right ear. This was of particular interest as many of our members already use text to speech scanners very successfully.



Picture: Mark Threadgold shows Jane Collins the Orcam during Technology Week from the Brighton centre.

The Orcam was launched in January this year and Blind Veterans UK was very pleased to participate in the UK pilot.

There are two different versions, the Orcam My Reader and the Orcam My Eye. The Orcam My Reader can read printed text. You can read newspapers and books, signs, labels on consumer products, and even text on a computer or smartphone screen. Perfect for use at home and on the go.

The Orcam My Eye has additional functions of being able to be taught and store known faces. Stored faces are identified and announced upon entering the camera's view. It can also be taught to recognise specific products around you. We have now issued the Orcam My Reader to around eight members. It has been used to read a menu at a café, address labels on post, to read error messages on a computer screen, which the screen reader software does not read out, to identify Talking Book CDs at the library and shop and street signs.

We have received some really positive feedback from members: 'It does what it says on the tin and does its job very well. I use it every day to scan my mail which means I can easily identify junk mail and then, where necessary, use my scanner. My father said it was the best thing I had tried and he has seen me try very many gadgets.'

The Orcam My Reader has been the device we have favoured over the Orcam My Eye as reading text has tended to be the priority for our members and the other features of face recognition and product recognition have not been needed as much.



Picture: Mark Threadgold, who is totally blind, uses the Orcam My Reader to read the door sign.

Another member said 'If you are interested in reading magazines or newspapers then it's great. I use it every day and it's given me a new level of independence with reading text.'

Prospective Orcam users need some training, and a degree of perseverance initially, as the device doesn't always get it right first time. The great benefit is that it is quick, portable and can be used easily away from the home. It can be activated by pressing a trigger button or using a finger point gesture and it takes a bit of practice to get this right. Also, text that is of poor contrast or in an unusual font can prove difficult for the Orcam and it does need good light to work effectively.

If you want to know more about the Orcam and whether it could be of help to you, please call the ROVI-IT Helpline on 01273 391447 or ask to try one next time you visit a centre. We are always happy to talk through it and, if we think it could

be the right scanner for you, we will arrange to carry out a practical assessment. The Orcam is a fantastic reading aid, but it's not the best option for everyone. There may be something more suited to you and it's really important we work together to identify the equipment, training or strategies which will best meet your needs.

Sporting ace David Cranson delivers a heartfelt speech.

At the Durham Reunion on 17th August sporting super star David Cranson gave a moving speech to the assembled guests when he said: "It is an honour to meet Nick Caplin and receive this latest Certificate of Fundraising. Blind Veterans UK rescued me way back on the 13th June 2007 and changed my life. It's been a journey through the three As and I am so very grateful to my Welfare Officer Elizabeth Dodds. And to the Sports & Rec staff who have guided me to complete seven Olympic distance Triathlons, tandem rides, the London and Brighton Marathons, the Brighton Half Marathon and three Great South Runs. As well as walking the South Downs Way from Winchester to the Brighton centre over five days, although I did hobble for the final 16 miles! The Sheffield centre is also a very special place to me as it is where I learnt IT and Independent Living Skills and met Mr Blunkett when he visited. Blind Veterans UK is so special to me. Thank you."

So what's next for David? The Royal Parks Half Marathon on 9th October.



Picture: David Cranson accepts his latest Certificate of Fundraising from Blind Veterans UK Chief Executive Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB.

Photo: Elizabeth Dodds.

My family and Blind Veterans UK make my life worth living.

Blind veteran and former Leading Aircraftwoman Marjorie May, who served in the WAAF during WWII, was delighted to have won the flowers at the Eastbourne Reunion. A keen dancer Marjorie said: "I sat with my Welfare Officer Debbie Martin at the Reunion and it was a very happy day, superb in fact, with a delicious meal and good company. I love Blind Veterans UK and with my family it makes my life worth living. I go to the Brighton centre once a week and enjoy holidays at both the Brighton and Llandudno centres. I always enjoy the Band of the Royal Marines Concert at the Brighton centre. In fact I enjoy life!"



Picture: Marjorie May with her beautiful flowers.

The 100K London to Brighton and the 100K Yorkshire 2016 Challenge.

In 2011 a London to Brighton 100K Challenge fundraising walk was introduced, and it has since become a hugely important and popular fixture in our annual sporting calendar. Over the weekend of 2nd and 3rd July, 185 people took part to trek or run from London to Brighton. This year the inaugural 100K Yorkshire challenge walk took place and interest has already been received from blind veterans, members of the public and the Armed Forces who want to take part in both in 2017.

Distance walking events are not new to Blind Veterans UK, in fact they are an important part of our heritage as the First World War blinded veterans would compete in race and distance walks. In 1922 the inaugural London to Brighton walk took place and our then Chairman Lord Fraser wrote in the Review of the time:

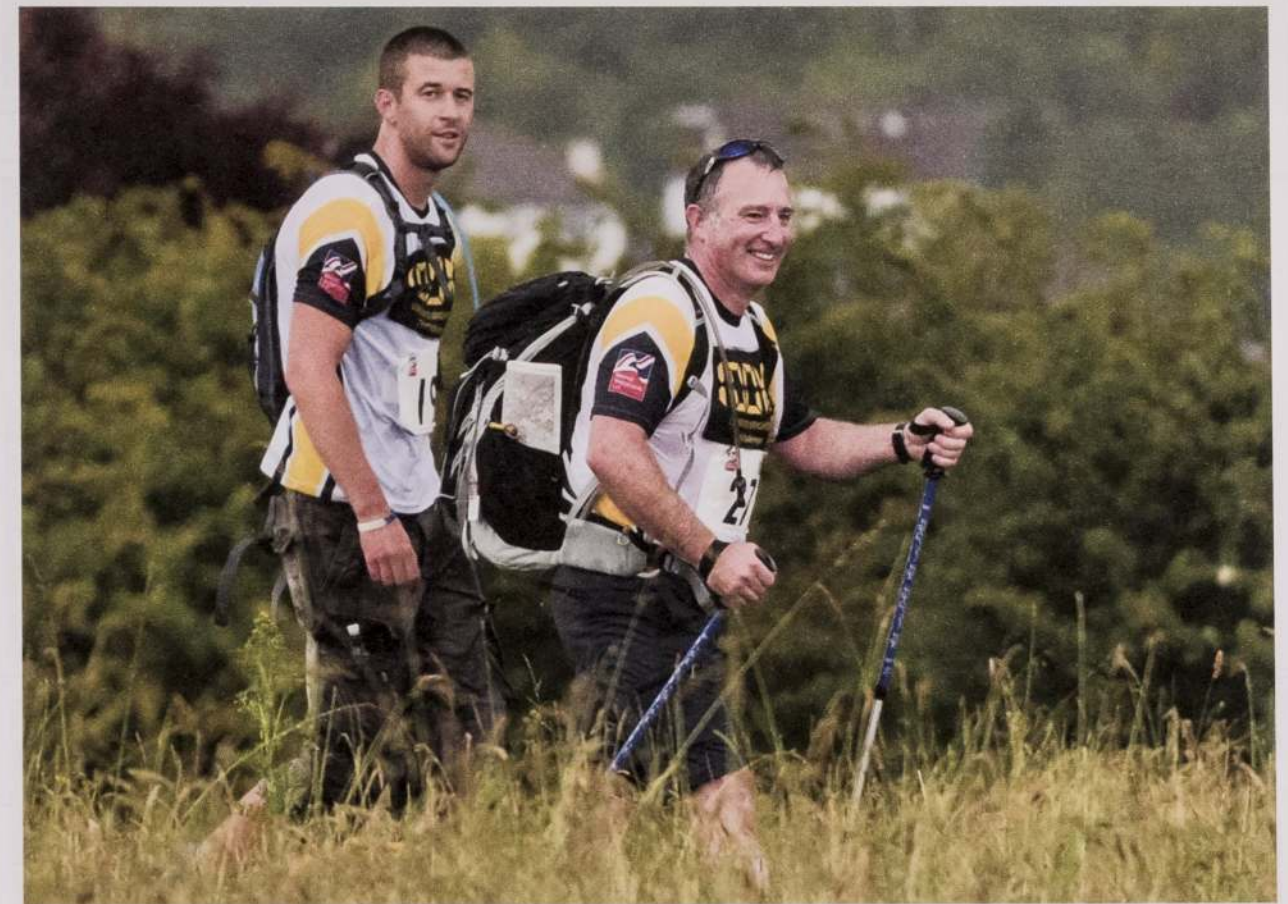
'Someone suggested a competitive walk from London to Brighton, on the same lines as walks held by the big clubs. Padre Williams, our Sports Captain, was sceptical about the probable response, but tremendous keenness was shown. That was all very well, but the Padre rightly decided that would be entrants would have to pass a stiff test before they were allowed to attempt the 52 miles to Brighton. Training for this began at once, and in October a test walk was held. It was three times round the Outer Circle [at Regent's Park], nearly nine miles, and it had to be completed in 1¾ hours. Fifteen men entered and they all passed the test. The following month the first London to Brighton Walk was held.

'The Surrey Walking Club put off a special walk and at 5am the 15 men, followed by a great crowd of supporters, set off from Big Ben. Each walker was accompanied by a cyclist and guide, with whom he maintained contact by a tape tied lightly to the wrist. It was a great event, without precedent in the blind world. People turned out to cheer all along the route.

'Not all the men finished the course. Some had to retire through foot trouble, others because of their old wounds. One man covered 46 miles before his weak ankle gave way. Yet eight men finished the course, and the winner, F.H. Cassidy, took only a shade over 10¾ hours. My wife and I held the tape when he was cheered home by an immense crowd. That gave our organisation walking fever.' And that walking fever continues today with the London to Brighton 100K Challenge and now the Yorkshire 100K Challenge.

The first person to cross the finish line in Brighton was runner Tony Bennett, who completed the 100K in just 14 hours, 25 minutes and 5 seconds. Hot on his heels in second place was runner Paul Wright in just 14 hours, 25 minutes and six seconds. In third place was Sarah Kerr who ran across the finish line in just 15 hours, 12 minutes and six seconds.

The fastest blind veteran to take part was 29 year old Darren Blanks from Cumbria, who walked the 100K with Chris Butler, completing the course in just 21 hours, 29 minutes and 57 seconds. They finished just behind a very aptly named Nigel Mansell!



Picture: Darren Blanks and guide Chris Butler.

Maria Pikulski came in next from the blind veterans who took part as Maria and fiancée Richard Hughes crossed the finish line at 23 hours and 12 minutes. They were followed by Pete Walker who took part with his son Stuart, and together they crossed the finish line in 23 hours and 21 minutes. Next it was Colin Penaluna with guide Russell Deamer in 24 hours and 29 minutes. They were followed by John Evans with guide Simon Hebson in 25 hours and 57 minutes and then Alan Walker with guides Craig Brindley and Leon Groombridge in 25 hours and 25 minutes. Charlie Parkinson and guide Richard Kilby finished in 26 hours and two minutes.



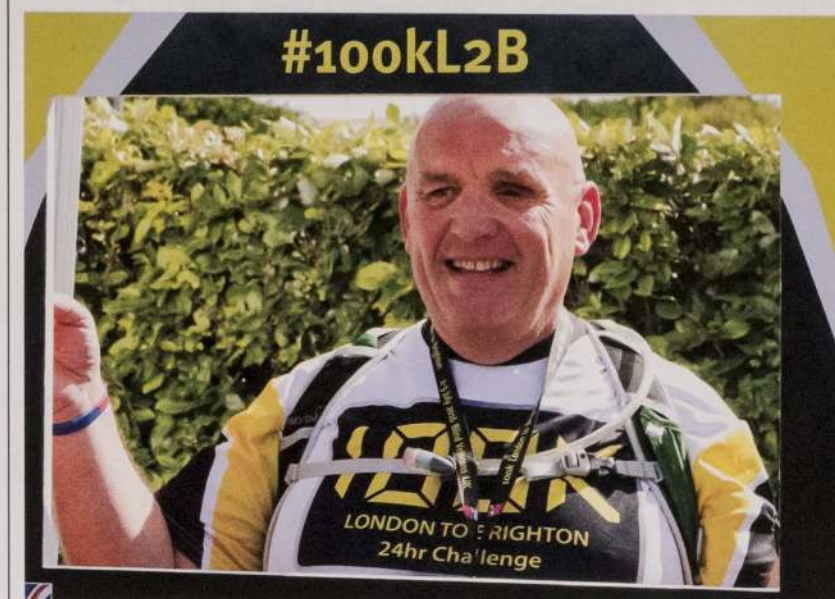
Picture: Maria Pikulski and fiancée Richard Hughes crossed the finish line in 23 hours and 12 minutes.



Picture: A happy Pete Walker and son Stuart after crossing the finish line in 23 hours and 21 minutes



Picture: John Evans with guide Simon Hebson and John's guide dog Johnny who joined them for the final kilometre. John and Simon crossed the finish line in 25 hours and 57 minutes.



Picture: An elated Alan Walker who crossed the finish line in 25 hours and 25 minutes with Leon Groombridge, Craig Brindley and Theresa Farley.



Picture: Charlie Parkinson and guide Richard Kilby who finished the 100K in 26 hours and two minutes.



Picture: Undeterred by the rain blind veteran Dave Woolett, who with the Brighton centre's Curstie Watts and her partner Scott, finished the 50K in 10 hours and 54 minutes.

Blind veterans who completed the 50K challenge walk were Dave Woolett, who with the Brighton centre's Curstie Watts and her partner Scott, finished in 10 hours and 54 minutes. The next blind veteran to complete 50K was Jeff Stockwell, who with grandson Aron Searle, finished in 11 hours and seven minutes.

John Evans from Exeter said: "This was my second year taking part and the second time that I had walked with Simon. Last year Simon completed the first 50K and met me at the half way point and we completed the final 50K together. This year we did the entire 100K and we were joined by my guide dog Johnny for the final kilometre. Next year I'm tempted to do both the London to Brighton and the Yorkshire 100K Challenge walks. Simon and I trained together when we could, but as he's still serving that wasn't always possible. I took part in Theresa Farley's February training week and the June training weekend at the Brighton centre and that really helped me to prepare. What also helped was one of the My Guides from Guide Dogs, a retired Policeman who answered my request for someone where I live to do training walks. After that we walked all over the place. He was brilliant and I'm so grateful to Blind Veterans UK, Guide Dogs My Guide and of course to Simon for their support."

While blind veterans no longer have to qualify to take part in the 100K London to Brighton and now the 100K Yorkshire there is a lot of support to ensure they are ready for this tough challenge event.

Mark Hollis, the Activities Team Leader at the Llandudno centre ran training weeks and weekends at the Llandudno and Sheffield centres for the 100K Yorkshire and Theresa Farley, a Sports & Recreation Instructor at the Brighton centre, ran training weeks and weekends at the Brighton centre.

Speaking of these, Theresa Farley said: "The 100K weekend is so much fun and it's something that I really look forward to. It was great working with everyone during the training weeks and weekends in February, April and June. The first training week included a 6½ mile hill walk, a 15 mile walk through the Downs and town, and a 10 mile seafront walk. There was a bag and boot fitting with Cotswold Outdoors and a talk on nutrition and hydration that was followed by a pool session. The April training weekend included a three mile night walk, a 20 mile walk on various terrain and a 16 mile walk along the seafront. For the final training weekend in June we completed a 30 to 40 mile walk around the centre on 10 mile loops. It was great and I'm already looking forward to next year!"



Picture: Blind Veterans UK Chief Executive Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB leads the way.

Our very own Chief Executive, Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB, completed the London to Brighton event. Speaking after the event Nick said: "This event showed the Blind Veterans UK family at its best: serious achievement by all who took part, especially our amazing members, excellent organisation, outstanding support from volunteers and the warmest of welcomes at the Brighton centre."



Picture: Another member of staff to take part was Amy Hall (right) who works for TnS Catering at the Brighton centre. Amy regularly gives up her time to help out and was a key member of the Project Gemini team in 2015.



Picture: The unstoppable Shaun Stocker completed part of the 100K London to Brighton for his Stocker's Striders. He is shown walking with Mark Hollis, Activities Team Leader at the Llandudno centre. We will feature Shaun, and his many achievements, in the special edition January 2017 Review.



Picture: Cath Higgins, the widow of former Royal Marine St Dunstaner Thomas Higgins, punches the air as she sets off in London for Brighton.

We would like to thank everyone who took part and look forward to welcoming even more people in 2017.

If you would like to register your interest for the 100K London to Brighton or 100K Yorkshire Challenge go to blindveterans.org.uk/events or call the Events team at Harcourt Street on telephone 020 7616 7959 or email: fundraising@blindveterans.org.uk



Picture left: Another ultra marathon success for Joey Sharma as she runs to cross the finish line at the Brighton centre. **Picture above right:** Powering to the end of the London to Brighton 100K.



Picture: A little post 100K nap.

Photos: Phil Meech.

Our Chief Executive Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB answers the Review's 10 questions.

1. Where was the most exciting place that you served?

Difficult to answer, as there are many to choose from. But if pressed, it would have to be Kosovo in 2009/10.

2. What's your favourite memory?

A recent memory: my Daughter's wedding

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

To be yourself.

4. What makes you happy?

Many things: Seeing people thrive, being with my family, being on the hill or on water, listening to Bach.

5. What qualities do you admire in others?

Courage, commitment and a positive spirit.

6. What's your irrational fear?

Eating mushrooms.

7. What would you change in the world?

To get people talking — to talk is to begin to understand.

8. What's the meaning of life?

Gosh, that's deep. Love.

9. What's your favourite place?

The Hebrides

10. What three things could you not live without?

Marmite, Bach and my iPad.



Picture: Shaun Stocker receives his Points of Light Award from Nick Caplin at the end of the London to Brighton 100K Challenge. Points of Light are outstanding individual volunteers, people who make a change to their community. Every week day the Prime Minister recognises an inspirational volunteer with the Daily Point of Light Award. Shaun's inspirational story will feature in the January special edition Review.

"I now have two families." Alan Walker 2015 Founder's Day Award winner, fitness instructor and 100K finisher.

As so many of you speak of the importance of sport and taking part in events and activities as you work with the Sports & Rehab teams at the Brighton and Llandudno centres we bring you an interview with Alan Walker, who, since joining Blind Veterans UK has retrained as a fitness instructor. A former chauffeur bodyguard Alan joined Blind Veterans UK three years ago after, in his own words, he experienced six months of misery as he tried to adjust to sudden sight loss. Like so many of you he has since turned his life around.

When the Review sat down with Alan and Shirley Walker, Alan attributed his success to those around him, saying: "I've been lucky as my wife Shirley is my rock, Jo Fishwick my Welfare Officer has been brilliant, she's a Florence Nightingale, and Craig Brindley dished out torture in the gym."

Alan's words about Craig Brindley, Rehabilitation & Training Support Supervisor at the Brighton centre, were spoken in jest by Alan as Craig's particular brand of torture has meant that Alan achieved a series of fitness goals that he initially didn't think possible. Working with Craig they went on to set series after series of fresh goals that Alan completed. It is a winning partnership as Alan was presented with the Sports Person of the Year Award at the 2015 Founder's Day.

Alan humbly said of his successes: "I met Craig in October 2013 when I went for the gym induction and Craig was then a Sports & Rec Instructor in the gym at the Brighton centre. I told him what I wanted to try and achieve and he put me on the cross trainer and I think that I lasted for two or three minutes before I was absolutely shattered. Now I do over an hour on the cross trainer, swim a mile in the pool and the latest event we did together was the London to Brighton 100K walk.

"To do the London to Brighton 100K was great, but one of my fondest memories is running the Great South Run with Craig. The furthest we had run before the actual event was six miles. When we completed six miles we high fived as we ran along, and every subsequent mile we completed we did a high five as it was a new area for us. The hardest part was the last 800 metres. That was really painful, but we beat Peppa Pig, that was the main thing, and we've gone from strength to strength. Working with Craig I've achieved something I wouldn't have believed possible a few years ago. I owe Craig so much."

Since joining Blind Veterans UK and regaining his fitness levels Alan has retrained as a fitness instructor and worked at his local gym with disabled and blind people. He hopes to one day work in the gym at the Brighton centre, as that will mean that he can truly give something back to Craig, his Welfare Officer Jo Fishwick and Blind Veterans UK.

In his own words: "There are so many people within our charity who deserve to be recognised. Not just the people who do the marathons, but people in their 90s who come into the gym, those who use a computer and send an email for the first time, and people who go out and about on their own after sight loss as that takes masses of courage. This is a fantastic organisation and I'm privileged to be a blind veteran."

The last word goes to Alan's rock, his wife Shirley: "I'm so proud of Alan and everything that he has achieved and it was wonderful when he crossed the 100K finish line and met another goal. Alan's sight loss was so sudden and I felt as though I'd lost my husband. When he joined Blind Veterans UK I got my husband back and we take dealing with his sight loss one day or a week at a time. Like so many people we meet at Blind Veterans UK Alan has shown that you can't sit around and mope, you just get on with it. Alan's a strong man and he doesn't let anything stand in his way. As he says he has two families now. The one we have together and the one he has with Blind Veterans UK. We say that he's achieved more in his life since sight loss than he would if he was still in Civvie Street working as a chauffeur bodyguard. He'd probably still be 23½ stone, but now he's the lightest he's been in the 24 years that we've been together, he weighs what he did when he served in the Falklands."



Picture: Shirley and Alan Walker stand behind the shorts Alan wore before he entered the gym at the Brighton centre and regained his fitness. They are held by his Welfare Officer Jo Fishwick and Craig Brindley, Rehab & Training Support Supervisor (Brighton).

Blind Veterans UK and Guide Dogs 100K Yorkshire Challenge.

A Grade 3 trek, the inaugural 100K Yorkshire Challenge was a resounding success, when 193 people took part over the weekend of 18th and 19th June. Trekkers and runners set off from West Yorkshire's Denby Dale to Holmfirth, into the Moors and the western edge of the Pennines, and then onto the flatter paths south to Sheffield. They walked day and night, mainly across grass, gravel paths, pavements, canal towpaths, and some hills, to finish at our Sheffield centre.



Picture: Doing well across hills and steps.

Billed as a non-competitive event, participants were encouraged to go at their own pace, with an estimated finish time at the Sheffield centre in around 30 hours. Perhaps the first three to finish didn't get that particular memo, as the first to cross the finish line was James Bolton in just 13 hours, seven minutes and 9 seconds. He was followed by runner Sarah Attwood in second place at 14 hours, 13 minutes and three seconds, and in third place runner Barbara Lowndes completed the course in just 14 hours, 13 minutes and 6 seconds.

After months of following a training programme with staff from the Llandudno centre's Sports and Rec department the Llandudno centre's team of blind veterans John Cantwell, Carl Adamson and Stephen Thomas with Mark Hollis and Lisa Taylor finished in a highly respectable 23 hours and 40 minutes.



Picture: Under grey skies the Llandudno centre's team pause for a photo opportunity. Third in Steve Thomas, Gareth Hall (Care), Mark Hollis, Carly Sparkes (RGN), Carl Adamson, John Cantwell, Kelvin Davies (volunteer) Lisa Bowen (Activity Team) and Kelvin's sister.



Picture: Charlie Eastwood teamed up with the unstoppable Capt Rebecca Pogson-Hughes-Emanuel, OC LAD, 4 SCOTS, The Highlanders, 4th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland, to finish in 23 hours, 2 minutes and 23 seconds.

Our Chairman Tim Davis with Trustees Colonel Mike Brooke OBE and Sarah Lucie Watson joined with Camilla Marshall, blind veteran Paul Jacobs GM and members of his former Regiment, 2nd Battalion The Rifles, to form Paul's People. In the process they raised a massive £15,000 for our charity.



Picture: Camilla Marshall and Trustee Colonel Mike Brooke OBE hold the banner as honorary Rifleman Rory Thomson, Paul Jacobs GM, RQMS J Moncho CGC 3rd Battalion The Rifles, Brigadier Rob Thomson CBE, DSO late of The Rifles, Trustee Sarah-Lucie Watson and our Chairman Tim Davis cross the finish line at the Sheffield centre. The team raised £15,000 for Blind Veterans UK.

100K Yorkshire fever also caught on at Harcourt Street when the Blister Sisters, a team of past and present staff of Ella Campen, Jyoti Chand, Leigh Hesketh, Caitlin Dunham, Kat Evans and Joanna Kingsbury completed the 100K.

In total both the 100K Yorkshire Challenge and the 100K London to Brighton Challenge raised £186,000 and congratulations must go to the Events team at Harcourt Street who organised and managed both events and the many volunteers who helped. And of course a very public thank you to everyone who took part to make these two challenge events such a magnificent success.

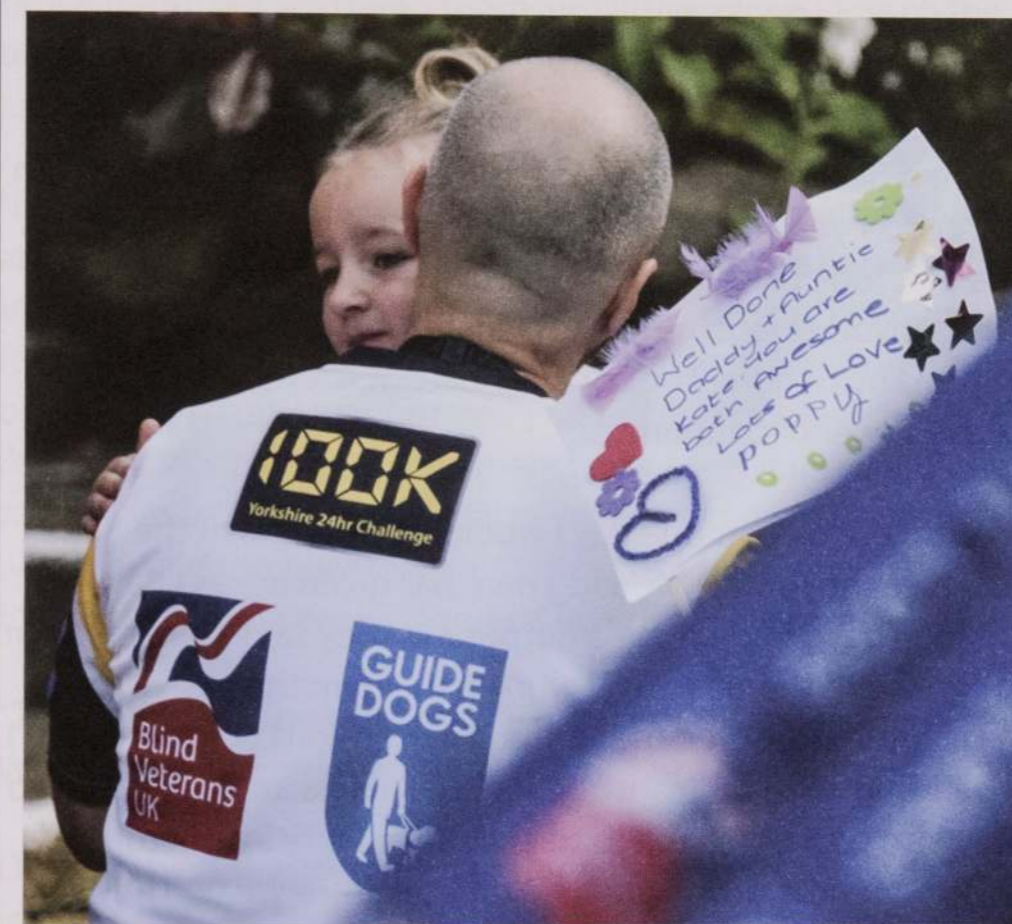
If you would like to register your interest for the 2017 100K London to Brighton Challenge or the 2017 100K Yorkshire Challenge go to blindveterans.org.uk/events or call the Events team at Harcourt Street on telephone 020 7616 7959 or email: fundraising@blindveterans.org.uk



Picture above left: Dancing enroute to make the night walk pass faster.



Picture above right: The Blister Sisters with Dennis Sarginson and guide dog from left to right Ella Campen, Jyoti Chand, Leigh Hesketh, Caitlin Dunham, Kat Evans and Joanne Kingsbury.



Picture: The picture and message say it all. Hugs at the end of the hugely successful inaugural 100K Yorkshire Challenge.

Carl Adamson, 100K Yorkshire trekker and winner of a Blind Veterans UK Volunteers Award speaks about the charity that means so much to him. By Catherine Goodier.

"When I was first injured I hid myself away as I was frightened and I wouldn't come out for anyone. Now I go around as bold as you like as I've got my confidence back. This charity [Blind Veterans UK] has given me the confidence to go back out into the big wide world and accept what happened to me and move on with life.

"If you embrace everything that the charity has to offer then you have a great chance of making it. If you don't then you'll always be up and down. I moved to Llandudno in 2014 and before I made the move I was concerned that people wouldn't help me, but I couldn't have been more wrong as they can't do enough for me. I've made a great home for myself and now work in the gym at the Llandudno centre and run an Archery Club with Mark Hollis and Andy Gillam. The Archery Club meet on Wednesday evening twice a month and Mark and Andy give up their time to make it possible for myself, Dave Greenwood, Trefor Selway and John Moore to learn how improve our archery skills. Mark Hollis and his team worked with me and other blind veterans for months to ensure that we were ready to take on the 100K Yorkshire Challenge. That's the commitment shown by the staff here."

Those words were spoken by Carl Adamson, an inspirational younger member of our charity who joined Blind Veterans UK after a horrific accident in Northern Ireland when he was just 24 years old. Carl was one of the winners at this year's Volunteering Awards that took place at the Tower of London. Nominated by Colin Williamson for his involvement in Project Gemini, Carl was thrilled to be presented with his award by General The Lord Dannatt GCB, CBE, MC, DL in his role of Constable of the Tower of London.

"After I was injured I didn't think that one day I would work in one of the Blind Veterans UK centres. I love the routine working here has given me as I have something to get up for. They've given me a purpose as they said 'Here are your tools Carl. Now you work with them.' When I work in the gym they leave me to get on with it, as the charity sponsored me to study at Hereford College where I gained a Level 3 Qualification in Fitness Instruction, so I'm just another qualified member of staff. They also sponsored me to train as an archery instructor and I do archery with the new members who are here on their Intro Week. They've

given me a platform to express myself and its brilliant. Taking part in the 100K Yorkshire Challenge and receiving a Volunteering Award was something very special that I never expected."

Carl describes the accident that ended his career in the Cheshire Regiment just a week before he was due to return from a two year tour of Northern Ireland.

"I joined the Cheshire Regiment in 1995 and served in Germany and Belize. I was involved in a road accident on patrol in Northern Ireland when a Land Rover overturned onto me just a week before I was due to return from a two year tour. I was part of the Quick Reaction Force. We were in the middle of the Irish Hills where we'd put a road block onto a car to stop it crossing the border. The accident happened as there were five of us but the Land Rover was only fitted with four seats. I had to sit on the plastic partition between the seats so when the Land Rover went over everyone else was wearing their seat belts, but as I didn't have one I was flung off the plastic partition and through the top of the Land Rover and into the ditch. I looked up and watched as the Land Rover rolled down and on top of me and a wire cutter dug into my face.

"It didn't just damage my eyes it broke every single bone in my face, not just broke them, but shattered them into little pieces. I lost all the muscle and fat out of the back of my eyes and my eyes sank into my brain as there was nothing to control my eyes. My face just disintegrated as it dropped to my neck.

"I could see little blue lights in the distance and that must have been the ambulance coming. Next thing I collapsed on the paramedics and when I woke up I had tubes coming from every orifice. I put my hand on top of my head and felt that my head had been shaved and I could feel inside my head where it had been stitched up. I was terrified and as I was pumped full of drugs thought that I'd been kidnapped. I asked where I was. I was injured in County Tyrone and I was 250 miles away in hospital in Belfast and my parents were there. Doctors were shining the blue torch into my eyes to find out if I could see. I could see the light but not very well and I was a complete mess.

"The accident happened on 27th March 1997 and I remember it like it was yesterday. It seems like it was yesterday not 19 years ago."

Over the next few years Carl underwent a series of gruelling operations and recovery.

How did you become the person you are today?

"I don't know. I think that it's inside you. I didn't want to be injured. When it first happened people would stare at me and I'd feel insecure but now I don't really care. I think it was about a year or two after the accident that I came to St Dunstan's as it was then, as it had taken that long to get my eyes stabilised. I can't remember who introduced me but I still wasn't ready as I wanted to run away and hide.

"Thankfully Ian Hebburn who was a ROVI at the Brighton centre wouldn't give up on me and he convinced me to go down there and bit by bit over the years I became more and more confident and now I'm at the stage that I feel like part of the family, the Blind Veterans UK family.

"I'm now confident to travel on my own to Younger Group events that mean taking a train by myself from Llandudno to Brighton, or elsewhere in the country. When I first joined I was really edgy about doing anything like that but now I'm really relaxed, it's like popping out to the shop, I don't give it much thought. Working at the centre and with the younger group I meet people who are in the same position that I was in all of those years ago so I understand how they're feeling and I can try to help them.

"The great thing about our centres and the staff is that they are so friendly and that gives you the confidence to move forward with your life as you feel that you are part of something. If the staff weren't as good as they are it wouldn't work, but they all pull in the same direction to help you.

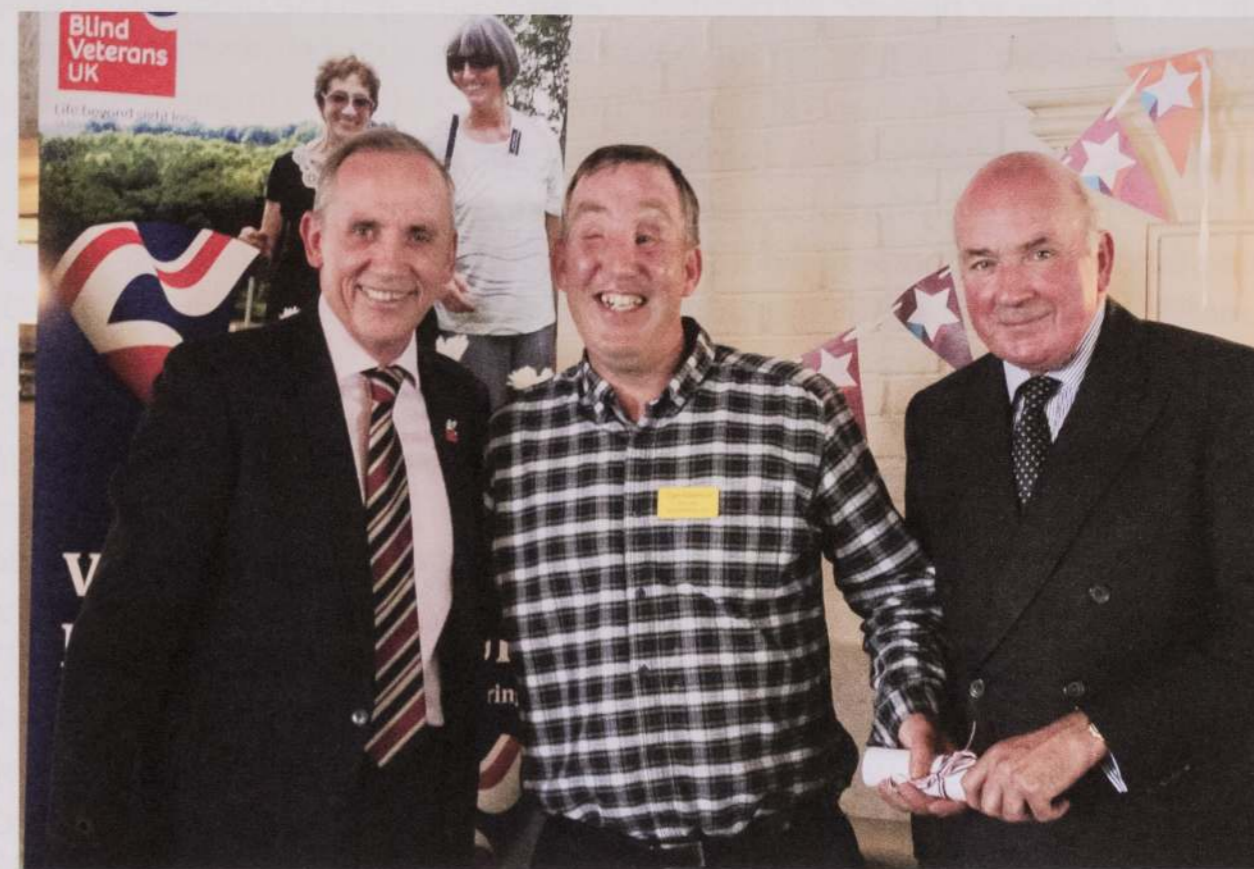
"Colin Williamson included me in Project Gemini and that was wonderful to meet veterans from America and South Africa in this country and then travel to America. It was a proud moment to act as an Ambassador for our charity."

What would your message be to people who are coming in and aren't ready for Blind Veterans UK or they're scared?

"I'd tell them that they must give it time and they have to understand that the staff and their fellow members are trying to help. There's no negativity, everyone is trying to do the right thing for you and if you go in the direction they want you to you can achieve. In fact you will achieve things that you didn't

think possible. There are three stages of recovery. The first is acceptance and that leads to the determination to succeed as you adapt to a new way of life. This organisation will pull you in all kinds of directions but you have to trust what they do as they know what will work and it does. Just trust and work with them as you'll get to where you need to be. Then you're in the third and final stage — achievement.

"I still have my moments but working with staff here I'm better qualified to understand that even though there may be dark days there's always hope and with Blind Veterans UK you have a future. I'm in a very privileged position and tell everyone how great the charity is and how special each of our centres are as they are all different. I think it's the best organisation in the world. I want to thank Sharon Gradwell, my first Welfare Officer, as she never gave up on me. Not ever."



Picture: Introduced by our Chief Executive Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB a very proud Carl Adamson receives his Blind Veterans UK Volunteering Award for his work with Project Gemini. He is presented with his certificate by General The Lord Dannatt GCB, CBE, MC, DL in his role of Constable of the Tower of London.

Leo Neasham Return.

In the July and August issues of Review we included the first two parts of Leo Neasham's account of his time fighting in The Somme Offensive. We ended when he wrote of his arrival at the casualty hospital. Here we continue.

Two bumps on the side-supports of the stretcher under the shoulders and near the feet brought me back to awareness — it seems to resemble a trestle like formation, presumably to lift me from the floor and to avoid the need for the medical examiners to bend down so low.

'Stick it mate! Don't worry. You'll be all right. Wish we were coming with you, to get out of this bloody lot. Remember us to Blighty.'

Another voice, with echoes of Dorset or perhaps Devon. 'Anything you want mate?' 'A little water please?' 'I'll get it. Be careful you'll spill the bloody lot. Lift up your head a bit.'

Another voice, female this time, coming from behind me. I felt the softness of a female hand on my forehead, perhaps looking at the eyes. It was understandable that this lady would avoid coming too near me, because of the abundance of lice that were enjoying themselves chasing each other over my birthday suit, avoiding the wet mud which now must be fairly soaked. 'Admit this man, Sergeant. Remove all his clothing. See that he is well covered with blankets. Try to wash his face, but do not touch the eyes.' 'Yes Sister.' Oh, from now on I know who it is.

With this painful operation concluded I tried to settle into a restive mood. 'Alright mate?' Dorset again. 'Yes, thank you. What hospital is this?' 'This ain't no bloody hospital. It's a bloody big tent.' I suppose he meant a marquee. Interesting to imagine it, with a large red cross emblazoned on the side. It's hardly feasible that it would be covered with red blood, as he so aptly described it.

'I'm off duty tonight.' 'Oh, that's good.' 'I'm going into the town to get some bloody booze. I'll take my billy can and fill it for you.' 'Is drinking allowed in here?' 'No, but I'll put it in a mug and bring it for you. It'll be all right. The old cow won't be here again tonight.' 'Who's that?' 'The Sister. She ranks as

a Captain in the nursing service. You need to be careful when she's about. Women in power!' 'You're very kind, but I don't want any beer, I don't drink it.' 'Rightho I'll see you. All the things out of your pockets are in this bag. Feel it all right? I'll hang it on the end here.' 'I had a five France note is it there?' 'Some b*****d has had that.'

'Thank you. Don't worry about it.' Interesting. Royal Army Medical Corps. RAMC on their epaulettes. Rob All My Comrades we would say. And so they did. But of course I must accept it. I suppose in truth so must men of each other wherever they are. Anyhow that was exactly what happened, I am afraid RAMC meant that on that occasion.

During the march I mentioned we suffered the indignity of a pay parade. Now this was really something. Having been herded into a stubble field we were formed into a three sided square. This gregarious interlude, for whimsical it was, gave full vent to the company Sergeant Major's dissertation, which was actually a frivolous interlude for us, as he spluttered out his attempts in encouraging our bodily movements. The vaudeville emphasised his weaknesses, as he contorted his face, showed his teeth and barked like a mad alsatian dog.

'Your equipment will be off.' He means removed. 'Rifle on it. Behind him in a straight line. I said straight line. Forget about the shape of your mother. No mother would want to know any of you bloody lot.'

At that moment a GS wagon, General Service, was backed in. The old horse was released from the shafts and staked down on a leading rein, given a nose bag of hay with which to amuse himself. Inside sat the Quarter Master Sergeant with a long sheet of paper which it could be supposed carried a list of names. The young officer who jumped out remained standing. The Sergeant Major's face went red as he yelled 'Attention.' He marched across to the 2nd Lieut. to announce all present.

'Allow your men to stand at ease Sergeant Major. There can be no excuse for causing them unnecessary discomfort.'

He marched back with his face now turning a deep purple. 'When I call your name you must spring smartly to attention, march towards the officer, all three paces, in front, and salute. When he hands you your pay, step smartly three

paces, take it in your left hand (if you know which is your left hand), step back three paces, salute, about turn, march smartly back to your place.'

And so this carousel continued its merry go round until all names had been called and the GS wagon rode away. I was the proud possessor of a five France note — roughly about two shillings in exchange value in England at that time, (though now it's 10p). The lads soon lost theirs in gambling. Now I've lost mine, and I so much wanted to give it to Dorset. Soft footsteps. No speech. I feel a warmth near my cheek, smell paraffin or is it acetanilide. Perhaps a light being carried. A firm voice, 'Base'.

A female voice, 'Attend to the dressing Sergeant. Soft pads on the eyes with tight bandage.'

'Yes Sister.' All this completed in a few minutes. The eyes less painful, probably because I cannot now move the eyelids up and down. I am lifted again. 'You're going with the train mate. Inside no talking. Remain silent and you'll be all right.'

It seems I was on the floor. I could feel the sides of this smelly place and supposed it a cattle truck. Soon I sensed movement and the rumbling sound of train wheels. I know not how long this journey was and have no memory of it. I revived when being lifted and carried to a kind of motor vehicle, thence to a soft bed which covered my painful shoulders and buttocks, after so many hours on the canvas of a stretcher. A young female voice, 'I want to wash you and I'll be as gentle as possible. I must try to remove some of the dirt before the medical officers visit you.' 'Thank you. Are you a nurse?' 'Yes' 'Where am I?' 'At Boulogne. In hospital. You must remain quite still. After I've completed the dressings, nurse will bring you some food.'

It was so peaceful there. It did not seem that anywhere could ever be peaceful again. Nobody's speaking. Perhaps it's night. I wondered how the lads had fared in the redoute. What had happened to the Germans? Did Dorset have his booze?

'Up you go lad.' 'What's happening?' 'Oh, you're going for a ride. Not far.' 'The conveyance was hand propelled, and I could discern the discussions of several men. The soft hands of a female, presumably a nurse, removed all the dressings without speaking. The male voices nearer, presumably doctors. Not much

conversation, I could not decide how many constituted this group. Occasional touches by male hands around my various wounds.

A loud voice, 'Anything else?' Flesh wound on the abdomen. Nothing can be done. That leg and an arm, they must come off. What about you?'

A younger sounding voice this time, 'Well Sir I've considered both eyes. The left one is completely destroyed, the right one indicates possible vision, if an early operation could produce some improvement. I would like this case to be sent to the 3rd London General for consultation by Sir Hubert Parsons.' Heavy voice again, 'Those amputations are urgent. If I'm to do them I must do them now, because I'm going on leave at noon.' 'Yes sir, but I'd submit that if we'd send this case for Sir Hubert's special attention, the amputations could then be done by London.' 'All right, have it your way. Make sure that all the information is clearly stated on the patient's identity label. You may perhaps get him away tonight.'

And so they left me to my thinking, my trepidation, tremulous agitation, apprehensions of the possibility of losing a leg and an arm. But I must not fall to. I must have confidence and gratitude that the voice of hope had rescued me with mightier dominance, in hours to pass, to the care of a famous ophthalmic surgeon. Could anything be more wonderful? Did I realise the magnitude of such happiness? Of course not. It was years later, after visiting opticians that I noticed shelves of the great teaching volumes of this man, that I could forever count the blessing of this moment.

I remembered the steep hill from the docks, the little motorised perambulator I was in, (having first been strapped to the stretcher against the momentum of the ship) danced wildly on its solid tyres as it proceeded to descend. Suddenly it overturned. Fortunately I fell to the left, minimising the painful discomfort of the wounded leg and arm. The strap around me held firmly. Much shouting and soldierly language, then all's well till the hospital ship. We were quiet, peaceful and reasonably comfortable. The only noise came from the throbbing of the engines.

Soft female voice enquiring. Me, 'Something to drink please.' 'I have some beer, we'll send you some.' 'No thank you, I don't drink it.' 'Some water then, but don't take too much in case you're sick.' 'Here you are, son. Sister sent this. I'll hold it. This bloody ship is pitching.' 'We're not going straight over.'

'Submarines, subs about. Captain, he's taking a zig-zag course up the Channel. It'll mean twelve hours instead of two. All right lad?'

I was brought ashore and laid somewhere on the dockside. There was much movement of feet. Some while after I heard a train moving out. A strange voice, 'Why is this man left here?' 'Oh he's for the London train.' 'Cannot he be taken to the waiting room?' 'Well the door's a bit small and narrow to get this stretcher through to the third class waiting room. Anyhow there isn't a fire there.' 'In the first class waiting room there's a lovely fire. It would be warm for him there.' 'No Mister, he can't go in there. He's not an officer.' Another voice suggesting a sanctimonious air, 'I'm from the local church, from your label I see you are of the Church of England.' 'Yes I am.' 'Have you been confirmed?' 'No I haven't.' 'Then you are an imposter.'

And he walked away without further speaking. I thought, what a terrible thing for a church leader to utter, a malediction with thunders of the vatican, however could he sink so low? After the terrible days on the Somme, the uncertainties of yesterday, the predicament I was in at the moment; it brought a stinging truth to how the lads felt in the trenches, that the British did not want us to come back, that the war should go on — they continue with their high wages and high living, making munitions. I was back in my homeland, and in the first few minutes, a church leader, a supposed Christian teacher had shut the gates of mercy and designated me an outcast. I resolved never to enter a church again.

I was overwhelmed by a mixture of sadness and bitterness, and scarcely realised another speaker near to me. Introducing himself as Steve, 'My name is Steventon,' I think that was correct. 'You may call me Steve, don't worry to remember names. I am the Secretary of the London Society of East Anglians. I see you're a Norfolk Regiment, do you like in Norfolk?' 'Yes, Norwich.' 'Oh, that's wonderful. You are awaiting the London train, for the 3rd London General Hospital. I know it well. It's in Wandsworth. I will come to see you when I return to London in a few days. Have you any parents or relatives?' 'Yes.' 'Would you like me to write to them?' 'Yes, it would be very kind. Write to my mother. Don't give details of the eyes, only mention the leg and arm, if you wish.' 'Give me the address, I will write at once.' 'Thank you, it will make me very happy. You could contact my father in Aldershot, he's serving with the King's Dragoon Guards on remounts. If he's abroad, his friend in the office, Lieutenant J. Burley may help.' 'Your train will be in soon. Don't get concerned, and I will visit you.'

I was lifted and carried, I suppose into the train. Door bangs, the train moves. 'All right lad? I'm the guard. You'll be all right. I shall be in and out all the while.' A Londoner I thought. He spoke very kindly as he came in banging the door, after stopping the train and restarting en route. And so, after much carrying, buffeting and conveying eventually I was again in a hospital bed with the necessary nursing service, very quiet and cared for, during a spell of two or three days.

Then nurse says very quietly, 'I'll remove your dressings on your eyes, Sir Hubert Parsons is in the ward and will come to examine you.' And so the great man came to me silently examining the eyes. I confess to feeling nervously excited. After a few breath taking moments, which I found difficult to control, he spoke in a soft deep tone of voice. 'I'm sorry lad, you've lost the left one. I cannot do anything for that. The right seems more hopeful, and I will try to save that, I'm not promising anything, and if not more, you will have some sight in it.' I went from dejection to elation. A few days later a surgeon, of whom I had no knowledge, speaking with a rough voice said, 'I'll have you in and clean up those wounds of yours. I think I can save the leg, it may be stiff, you won't be able to walk. The arm should be useable but the use of your hand shall be limited to the thumb and forefinger. You're a very lucky lad.' And so, torture became a delight as darkness heralded a new dawn.

In the months that followed I was overjoyed at welcoming several visitors. Burby came and informed me he had contacted my father who would be visiting as soon as he returned from abroad. Steve came frequently during my stay in London hospital. He was always a joy, so cheerful full of optimism and encouragement. Of course my father, almost always anyway, came weekly, unless he was away taking drafts of horses to the front. He had to wear a Corporal's tunic as commissioned officers could not be permitted to propel a wounded soldier in an invalid chair into the grounds of the hospital. Sister Sharp would often remark on how many visitor's I had. Hospital life I found was very disciplined, but very happy. In February 1919, after two years and four months, I was released from hospital and discharged from the Army.

Fourty years on in 1959, the abdominal wound that he been ignored in the beginning, gave trouble, revealing that the shrapnel had secreted itself in the bladder. A surgeon in a private operation and with great skill, removed this, at the same time extracting the largest of the seven pieces of shrapnel from

the leg, allowing for full movement and releasing from many years the painful stiffness. A minor operation on the arm cleared the bullet wound and full movement of the fingers returned. In the same year an ophthalmic surgeon did another private operation, extracting the shrapnel splinters that had worked through from the back of the right eye, though too late to improve the vision, freed the eye from discomforting unhappiness and distress that had been a major concern for so long. The offending metal responsible for destroying the left eye remains to this day firmly embedded in the cheekbone.

Leo Neasham joined the Royal Norfolk Regiment on 7th October 1914. He was wounded on the Somme in October 1916 when he lost his left eye and sustained shrapnel wounds to his right eye. He went on to run a very successful gentlemen's clothiers. He came to St Dunstan's in 1985 when the sight failed in his right eye.

Family News.

Congratulations to:

Births:

Harry and Joyce Howell on the birth of their great granddaughter, Georgina Emmerline, on 16th July to their grandson Ross and daughter in law Janie Howell.

Birthdays:

Walter Sharpe who celebrated his 102nd birthday on 7th August.

Walter Pritchard who celebrated his 100th birthday on 14th September.

Michael Roberts who celebrated his 100th birthday on 21st September.

Anniversaries:

Platinum (70th):

Noel & Madge Bracewell of Preston, Lancashire on 21st September.

Blue Sapphire (65th):

Harry & Joyce Howell of Blackpool, Lancashire on 29th June.

Alfred & Bet Llewellyn of Bexleyheath, Kent on 8th September.

Ken & Daphne Connelly of Staines Upon Thames, Middlesex on 15th September.

Eric & Dorothy Dyson of Blackpool, Lancashire on 20th September.

Beryl & Arthur Wilson of Steyning, West Sussex on 22nd September.

Diamond (60th):

Vic & Heather Ashlee of Sidcup, Kent on 1st September.

Robert & Dorothy Walker of Glasgow, Lanarkshire on 6th September.

Bill & Barbara Johnson of Basingstoke, Hampshire on 8th September.

Bob & Pat Hewson of Newcastle Upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear on 8th September.

George & June Mordaunt of Ormskirk, Lancashire on 8th September.

John & Rosemary Covey of Fordingbridge, Hampshire on 15th September.

Peter & Anne Bradshaw of Bearsted, Kent on 22nd September.

Ruby (40th):

Ron & Linda Hutchinson of Carlisle, Cumbria on 19th September.

John & Pat Edwards of Faringdon, Oxfordshire on 26th September.

Silver (25th):

Doug & Chris Jones of Luton, Bedfordshire on 6th September.

Ernest & Arlene Hosick of Lisburn, County Antrim on 21st September.

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.

Betty Broomhead who died on 17th July 2016. She was the wife of Philip Broomhead.

Pamela 'Pam' Catling who died on 7th July 2016. She was the wife of Peter Catling.

Lily Corbett who died on 25th June 2016. She was the wife of Frank Corbett.

Dolores Fawkes who died on 19th April 2016. She was the wife of Reginald Fawkes.

Gwendoline Field who died on 12th October 2015. She was the wife of Robert Field.

Hilda Greasley who died on 31st July 2016. She was the widow of the late Herbert Greasley.

Maisie Land who died on 21st July 2016. She was the partner of Frank Smith.

Erlinda 'Linda' Martin who died on 9th July 2016. She was the wife of David Martin.

Winn Reed who died on 23rd May 2016. She was the widow of the late William Reed.

Iris Sharp who died on 29th June 2016. She was the wife of Ronald Sharp.

Irene Thorpe who died on 13th July 2016. She was the wife of Herbert Thorpe.

Marjory Tindall who died on 8th July 2016. She was the widow of the late Douglas Tindall.

Kathleen 'Molly' Vernon who died on 24th May 2016. She was the wife of Patrick Vernon.

Welcome to Blind Veterans UK.

Arthur 'Nigel' Adams of Grantham, Lincolnshire served in the Royal Artillery from 1952 to 1954.

Joyce Adams née Few of Wakefield, West Yorkshire served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force in 1942.

Paul Ayshford-Sanford of Moreton In Marsh, Gloucestershire served in the Royal Armoured Corps and the 9th (Queen's Royal) Lancers from 1949 to 1967.

Alwyn Baines of Kirkby In Furness, Cumbria served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1952 to 1964.

Thomas 'Tom' Balshaw of Bootle, Merseyside served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1951 to 1952.

David Bangs of Uckfield, East Sussex served in the Royal Air Force from 1957 to 1959.

Derek Bass of Old Coulsdon, Surrey served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Engineers from 1944 to 1959.

Martin Baxter of Lymington, Hampshire served in the Royal Engineers from 1960 to 1965.

Cyril 'Harry' Beacock of Staines Upon Thames, Middlesex served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

Doris Benson née Buck of Fulwood, Preston served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1943 to 1945.

Frank Bishop of Wokingham, Berkshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1973.

Kenneth 'Ken' Bissell of Skegness, Lincolnshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1950 to 1952.

Dennis 'Den' Bliss of Brighton, East Sussex served in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1946.

Ronald Butler of Catford, London served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

George Brice of Liverpool, Merseyside served in the Royal Artillery from 1948 to 1950.

Francis 'Frank' Byrne of Ellesmere Port, Cheshire served in the Royal Signals from 1952 to 1957.

David Chamberlain of Nuneaton, Warwickshire served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Armoured Corps from 1944 to 1954.

Thomas Clarke of Llandudno, Gwynedd served in the Royal Navy from 1948 to 1950.

Christine Collins of Pickering, North Yorkshire served in the Women's Royal Air Force from 1977 to 1984.

Ronald Condon of Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Artillery from 1946 to 1948.

Jacques Crighton of Livingston, West Lothian served in the Royal Air Force from 1959 to 1979.

John Cruickshank of Aberdeen served in the Gordon Highlanders and the Royal Artillery from 1940 to 1946.

Dennis Cruwys of Southampton, Hampshire served in the General Service Corps, Royal Hampshire Regiment and the Royal Signals from 1947 to 1961.

Bernard Davies of Llandrindod Wells, Powys served in the Royal Air Force from 1952 to 1954.

Desmond Davies of Haverfordwest, Dyfed served in the Royal Artillery from 1956 to 1958.

Bertram 'Ted' Dobbs of Felixstowe, Suffolk served in the Queen's Royal Regiment, Royal Army Service Corps and the Sherwood Foresters from 1945 to 1951.

John Donoghue of St. Helens, Merseyside served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

Brian Driscoll of Farnham, Surrey served in the Royal Air Force from 1946 to 1948.

John Dunlop of Grangemouth, Stirlingshire served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1956 to 1964.

Ronald Duxbury of Blackpool, Lancashire served in the Royal Artillery from 1957 to 1960.

Kenneth 'Ken' Eckersley of Walton Le Dale, Preston served in the Royal Engineers from 1942 to 1947.

Gordon Edwards of Prescot, Merseyside served in the Royal Air Force and the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1954 to 1957.

Donald Evans of Abergele, Clwyd served in the Royal Air Force from 1946 to 1948.

Carl Farthing of Tywyn, Gwynedd served in the Royal Navy from 1948 to 1978.

Rosemary Fleet née Barkus of Newport, Gwent served in the Auxillary Territorial Service and the Women's Royal Army Corps from 1948 to 1951.

Joan Fowler née Davies of Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire served in the Auxillary Territorial Service from 1944 to 1945.

John Fudge of Bodmin, Cornwall served in the Royal Navy from 1942 to 1946.

Alfred 'Alf' Gibbons of Newport On Tay, Fife served in the Royal Navy from 1961 to 1985.

Geoffrey Goodenough of Clitheroe, Lancashire served in the Royal Engineers from 1958 to 1960.

Frederick 'Fred' Griffiths of Ingol, Preston served in the Cheshire Regiment and 17/21 Lancers from 1940, later training troops for the Korean War.

David Hamilton of Swindon, Wiltshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1950 to 1960.

Peter Haskell of Haslemere, Surrey served in the Irish Guards from 1943 to 1947.

Michael Hawley of Dudley, West Midlands served in the Royal Signals from 1955 to 1964.

William 'Peter' Heath of Brent, London served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1946.

Cedric Herbert of St. Helens, Merseyside served in the Royal Air Force from 1950 to 1953.

Eric Hickford of Worsley, Manchester served in the Royal Marines from 1943 to 1946.

Winifred 'Win' Hill of Liverpool served in the Royal Air Force from 1944 to 1947.

Thomas Hodgins of Southport, Merseyside served in the King's Regiment from 1951 to 1957.

James Hotchkiss of Stalybridge, Cheshire served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Signals from 1942 to 1947.

Kenneth 'Ken' Huckerby of Doncaster, South Yorkshire served in the General Service Corps, Royal Engineers and Royal Artillery from 1945 to 1959.

Leslie 'Les' Humphreys of Hartlepool, Cleveland served in the Royal Navy from 1942 to 1957.

Robert Iddon of New Longton, Preston served in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve from 1942 to 1946.

Stanley 'Stan' Irwin of Clayton Le Woods, Leyland served in the General Service Corps, Royal Signals and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1944 to 1958.

George 'Gwynne' Jones of Welshpool, Powys served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Artillery from 1947 to 1959.

John Kelsall of Stockport, Cheshire served in the Army Catering Corps from 1953 to 1964.

Michael Lally of St. Helens, Merseyside served in the Royal Artillery from 1949 to 1951.

Ernest 'Tony' Lane of Gloucester served in the Army Catering Corps from 1953 to 1955.

John Leslie of Borehamwood, Hertfordshire served in the Royal Artillery and the Army Catering Corps from 1941 to 1946.

Mavis Linfoot née Wallace of Macclesfield, Cheshire served in the Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps from 1957 to 1961.

Michael Litchfield of Bramcote, Nottingham served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers from 1944 to 1948.

Joanne 'Jo'Long of Inverness served in the Royal Navy from 1961 to 1985.

Florence Mahoney of New Malden, Surrey served in the Women's Axillary Air Force from 1943 to 1946.

John Marcel of Newmarket, Suffolk served in the Royal Marines from 1944 to 1965.

Terence 'Terry' McCarthy of Littlehampton, West Sussex served in the General Service Corps and the Queen's Royal Regiment from 1944 to 1945.

Alexander 'Alec' McGhee of Blackburn, Lancashire served in the Royal Pioneer Corps from 1964 to 1981.

William 'Bill' McGlasson of Poole, Dorset served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1957 to 1961.

John Menon of Brecon, Powys served in the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1950 to 1954.

Frederick Mundy of Maldon, Essex served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1945 to 1948.

John Murphy of Maghull, Liverpool served in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1947.

Leslie Nicholass of Colchester, Essex served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1944 to 1958.

Leonard O'Connor of Liverpool served in the King's Own Royal Regiment, South Lancashire Regiment and the Liverpool Scottish Regiment from 1953 to 1959.

Peter Oliver of Bournemouth served in the Royal Air Force from 1946 to 1949.

John Parkin of Hexham, Northumberland served in the Royal Air Force from 1956 to 1959.

David Parry of Liverpool, Merseyside served in the Light Division and the Royal Green Jackets from 1981 to 1997.

Gordon Pickering of Llanrwst, Gwynedd served in the Royal Air Force from 1951 to 1954.

Louie Prada of Northampton served in the Royal Air Force from 1945 to 1948.

Archibald 'Martin' Reid of Maidenhead, Berkshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1956 to 1968.

Robert 'Bob' Reid of East Kilbride, Glasgow served in the Merchant Navy from 1944 to 1951.

George Richardson of Middlesbrough, Cleveland served in the Merchant Navy from 1942 to 1945.

Peter Robinson of Rugby, Warwickshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1949 to 1951.

John Rook of Enfield, Middlesex served in the Royal Air Force from 1953 to 1958.

Leslie Round of Evesham, Worcestershire served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1946.

David Rutherford of Raskelf, York served in the Royal Air Force from 1959 to 1973.

Margaret 'Peggy' Scott of Solihull, West Midlands served in the Auxillary Territorial Service from 1941 to 1946.

Leslie 'Les' Shears of Hampton, Middlesex served in the Royal Air Force from 1945 to 1948.

Roy Sinton of Liverpool, Merseyside served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1946.

Ethel 'Peggy' Sleeman of Salterton, Devon served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1942 to 1946.

Francis Stewart of Blackpool, Lancashire served in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1946.

James Sutton of Tarleton, Preston served in the Royal Signals from 1941 to 1946.

Christopher Van Zeller of Hassocks, West Sussex served in the Royal Air Force, General Service Corps, Royal Fusiliers and the Somerset Light Infantry from 1941 to 1945.

Colin Wakeham of Bristol served in the Royal Air Force from 1954 to 1956.

Clifford Wallis of Worcester served in the Suffolk Regiment from 1942 to 1947.

Norman Walters of Burntwood, Staffordshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1946 to 1948.

Bertram Watterson of Great Wyrley, Walsall served in the Royal Artillery, Royal Army Ordnance Corps and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1939 to 1946.

David 'Davie' Weir of Bathgate, West Lothian served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1951 to 1955.

Reginald 'Reg' Wilkes of Tipton, West Midlands served in the General Service Corps and the Worcester Regiment from 1945 to 1959.

Cyril Williams of Port Talbot, West Glamorgan served in the Royal Welsh Fusiliers from 1955 to 1964.

Hetty Williams née Moss of Highbury, North London served in the Auxillary Territorial Service from 1943 to 1945.

Leslie Wilton of St. Helens, Merseyside served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1947.

Harold Witcherley of St. Helens, Merseyside served in the Royal Air Force from 1947 to 1949.

Thomas 'Tommy' Wood of Barnsley, South Yorkshire served in the Royal Signals from 1939 to 1946.

Alan Woodward of Farnworth, Bolton served in the Royal Air Force from 1948 to 1950.

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.

Trevor Bainbridge of Keighley, West Yorkshire died on 24th July 2016, aged 79. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1958 for National Service when he served in the UK and Cyprus and was discharged as a Junior Technician in 1960.

Betty Bateman of Crawley, West Sussex died on 5th August 2016, aged 93. She joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service in 1944 and served in the UK as a Lance Corporal until 1947.

Bernard Baldwin of Halifax, West Yorkshire died on 16th June 2016, aged 91. He joined the General Service Corps in 1943 transferring to the Royal Artillery training as a Wireless Operator. Having joined the 26 Field Regiment, he deployed on D+7 to Normandy and then moved through Europe to Germany. He was then posted to India and discharged as a Lance Bombardier in 1946.

John 'Jack' Barnes of Birmingham, West Midlands died on 18th July 2016, aged 94. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1941, serving in the Middle East until discharge as a Leading Aircraftman in 1946.

Joan Bower née Scott of Colchester, Essex died on 26th July 2016, aged 92. In 1942 she enlisted in the Army as a Private in the Auxiliary Territorial Service Ordinance Core and was stationed in London at Woolwich Dockyard. By the time of her discharge in 1946 she was a Lance Corporal.

Daphne Brock née Woolley of Heathfield, East Sussex died on 16th July 2016, aged 92. She volunteered for the Royal Air Force in 1942 and spent her service at RAF Benson in the Meteorological Office. She was demobbed as a Leading Aircraftwoman in 1945.

Lionel Broughton of Rugby, Warwickshire died on 1st April 2016, aged 93. He enlisted into the Royal Engineers and was posted to Stanraer in Scotland where he was involved with military trains as a guard. He was later transferred to other locations in the UK until discharged as a Corporal in 1947.

Joseph 'Joe' Burgess of Leyland, Lancashire died on 1st December 2015, aged 104. He joined the Royal Army Service Corps in 1942. After training at Hadrian's Camp, Carlisle, attached to the 15th Scottish Infantry Division, he served in the UK as a driver. He landed on Arromanche Beach on D+8 and moved through France, Belgium and Holland to Germany, discharging as a Private in 1946.

Robert Butchard of Liverpool, Merseyside died on 9th July 2016, aged 86. He joined the Royal Army Service Corps in 1948 for National Service and trained as a driver at Aldershot. He served in the UK at Yeovil, Colchester and Folkestone before discharge in 1950.

Nora Coates née Bell of Alston, Cumbria died on 7th July 2016, aged 94. She served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1942 to 1945, discharging as a Leading Aircraftwoman.

Francis 'Frank' Colley of Thornton Cleveleys, Lancashire died on 14th August 2016, aged 89. He enlisted into the Royal Navy in 1944 at the age of 18 as an electrician's mate, a wireman. He served in the Far East on mine sweepers and his last ship was HMS Wave when he was discharged in 1948 as a Wireman.

George Collins of Horsham, West Sussex died on 18th July 2016, aged 77. He served in the Irish Army before joining the Queen's Regiment in 1961. He was posted in the UK and Germany before discharging as a Sergeant in 1978.

Queenie Davies née Stevenson of Brighton, East Sussex died in 2016, aged 91. She joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service in 1943 and served in London. She was discharged as a Private in 1945.

Ernest 'John' Dearing of Lewes, East Sussex died on 17th July 2016, aged 96. He joined the Royal Signals in 1940 and was posted to North Africa. Captured in Greece in 1941 he was a Prisoner of War for four years in Stalag 18a. A regular escaper he was successful on the fifth attempt and was repatriated. Discharged as a signaller in 1946 he did a period in the Royal Signals (TA) Emergency Reserves from 1958 to 1967 and left as a WO2.

Ronald Delaney of Olton, Solihull died on 22nd July 2016, aged 67. He joined the Merchant Navy working for an Irish shipping line. He then joined the British Merchant Navy, serving initially in a coaster. He left there around the time of the seaman's strike in 1966 and joined the Royal Armoured Corps and trained

as a PTI. He went to Sennelager and then Aldershot and joined the freefall club. He was a Chieftain tank driver and was injured in an accident with a thunderflash in his tank which damaged his left eye that eventually affected both eyes.

Raymond Dodd of Petersfield, Hampshire died on 18th July 2016, aged 96. He volunteered for the Royal Air Force in 1939 and served in the UK until discharged as a Corporal in 1946.

Malcolm Douglass of Middlesbrough, Cleveland died on 12th July 2016, aged 79. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1955, serving as an RAF Policeman until discharge as a leading Aircraftman in 1957.

Sarah 'Sadie' Evans née Cameron of Birmingham, West Midlands died on 23th July 2016, aged 93. She joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force in 1942 and trained at RAF Bridgnorth before serving at Morecambe and Castle Kennedy in the Isle of Man. She was discharged as a Leading Aircraftwoman in 1945.

Mansell Everett of Thetford, Norfolk died in 2016, aged 91. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1943, he was in 233 Squadron Transport division and went to Burma and India before being discharged in 1946 as a Leading Aircraftman.

William 'Bill' Feasey of Portsmouth, Hampshire died on 8th July 2016, aged 95. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1941 and after training served in Egypt and Germany. He was discharged as a Corporal in 1950.

John Fulton of Ashford died on 19th July 2016, aged 77. He joined the Royal Air Force Police in 1957 for National Service. He served at Wilmslow, Cheshire, Market Drayton and Northolt prior to discharge as a Corporal in 1959.

Norman Gore of Gloucester, Gloucestershire died on 13th July 2016, aged 92. He enlisted into the Royal Marines in 1942 fighting in North Africa, Tripoli, France and Belgium. He was discharged in 1946.

Edward Harris of Kingston Upon Thames, Surrey died in 2016, aged 87. He joined the Royal Navy in 1947 for National Service. Based at Chatham he was discharged as an Able Seaman in 1949.

Alfred Hill of Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire died on 13th July 2016, aged 93. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1941, served in the UK and Egypt and was discharged as a Leading Aircraftman in 1946.

Harold Hillary of Goole, North Humberside died on 12th July 2016, aged 90. He joined the King's Royal Rifle Corps in 1944 and served in Italy, Austria and North Africa. He was discharged in 1946 as a Rifleman.

Hilda Humphries née Diprose of Hailsham, East Sussex died on 10th February 2016, aged 89. She joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service in 1944 and carried out her training at Burnham Beeches and Fleet. She specialised as a vehicle driver, ranging from small cars to half tracks. She was discharged in 1946.

Joan Jones née Groves of Merthyr Tydfil, Mid Glamorgan died on 4th July 2016, aged 96. She joined the Women's Royal Naval Service in 1941, serving as a visual signals officer in London and Scotland and was discharged as a Petty Officer Wren in 1945.

Victor Jones of Birmingham, West Midlands died on 1st June 2016, aged 88. He joined the Royal Navy in 1946 and served in HMS Brides Bay stationed in the Mediterranean on Palestine patrol. He was discharged in 1948 as a Writer.

James Kramer of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire died on 5th July 2016, aged 94. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1941 and served in India and Burma bringing back POWs from the Far East in Sunderland flying boats. He was discharged as a Leading Aircraftman in 1946.

John Lakin of Chorley, Lancashire died on 26th July 2016, aged 88. He joined the General Service Corps in 1946 and transferred to the Royal Armoured Corps two months later. He served in the UK and Germany before discharge as a Trooper in 1948.

John Lord of Lytham St Annes, Lancashire died in 2016, aged 62. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1971. He served in the UK prior to discharge in 1972 as a Senior Aircraftman.

Kenneth Marsden of Haverfordwest, Dyfed died on 11th July 2016, aged 93. He joined the Royal Marines in 1942, after training at Deal he served afloat in the Far East, discharging as a Marine in 1946.

John 'Jack' McMahon of Cramlington, Northumberland died in 2016, aged 86. He joined the General Service Corps in 1947. Following training and a transfer to the Royal Signals in 1948, he was billeted in Eaton Place and initially served as a telephone operator at the War Office in Whitehall and later at Fontainebleau, the NATO HQ in France. He was discharged as a Lance Corporal in 1949.

Lesley Milne of Lee On The Solent, Hampshire died on 2nd August 2016, aged 74. As soon as she was old enough she joined the WRNS. She did her training at HMS Dauntless in Reading. She served around the UK and worked in the motor pool. She was driver to the captain of HMS Excellent. She served from 1959 to 1961 leaving as a WREN.

George Minnikin of Durham, County Durham died on 31st July 2016, aged 80. He served in the Royal Army Service Corps as a driver for National Service from 1955 until he was discharged as a Lance Corporal in 1958.

Joan Morgan née Creamer of Rottingdean, East Sussex died on 19th July 2016, aged 93. She joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force in 1941 training at Gloucester and later went to Ruislip. She worked in the south of England at a variety of locations on clerical duties leaving as a Leading Aircraftwoman in 1944.

Colin Noy of Papplewick, Nottingham died on 17th July 2016, aged 87. He served in the Royal Air Force for National Service from 1947 to 1949, discharging as a Leading Aircraftman.

Geoffrey Orton of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire died on 8th July 2016, aged 79. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1955, serving in Cyprus, Germany and the UK as an RAF Policeman. He was discharged as a Corporal in 1971.

Arthur 'Ken' Palmer of Merstham, Surrey died on 27th June 2016, aged 92. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1942 and trained as a radio direction finder. He was discharged in 1947 but re-enlisted in 1949 to serve in Gibraltar, Malta and Germany before discharge as a Corporal in 1953.

Gerald Ranson of Axminster, Devon died on 26th July 2016, aged 95. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1941 and served in Rhodesia and South Africa. He was discharged as a Leading Aircraftman in 1946.

Philip Shaw of Doncaster, South Yorkshire died on 5th August 2016, aged 96. He enlisted in the Royal Air Force in 1940. He served as an electrical fitter on Lancasters until VE Day when he transferred to the Fleet Air Arm and was eventually discharged as a Leading Aircraftman in 1945.

Charles Shipley of Selby, North Yorkshire died on 13th July 2016, aged 87. He joined the Royal Air Force for National Service in 1950 and served in radar stations until discharge as a Leading Aircraftman in 1952.

James 'Gordon' Sims of Nottingham, Nottinghamshire died on 10th August 2016, aged 96. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1940 and served as a wireless mechanic in Malaya, Java, Ceylon and the UK until discharge as a Corporal in 1946.

Albert Simpson of Middlesbrough, Cleveland died on 18th July 2016, aged 93. He joined the Leicester Regiment in 1941, serving briefly in the UK before going to India and Burma in the Chindits. He was demobilised as a Corporal in 1946.

Patrick 'Paddy' Skilton of Swindon, Wiltshire died on 19th July 2016, aged 94. He joined the Royal Engineers in 1938 as a boy from school and was stationed with a searchlight unit in Sussex at the beginning of the war. Transferring to the Royal Artillery in 1940 he trained for the Northern Europe invasion and landed on Sword Beach in Normandy for D-Day, fighting through to the River Elbe. He was discharged as a Sergeant in 1946.

George Slater of Leyland, Lancashire died on 12th August 2016, aged 90. He served with the Merchant Navy for three years before he joined the General Service Corps in 1945, transferring to the Black Watch in 1946 when he was posted to Duisberg in Germany. He was discharged in 1949.

Joseph 'Harry' Symn of Lockerbie, Dumfriesshire died in 2016, aged 91. In October 1943 he joined the Royal Air Force as a technician, qualified as a flight engineer and served in Singapore, the Azores, the Bahamas and North Africa. He was discharged in 1947 as a Flight Sergeant.

Roy Thomas of Ellesmere Port, Cheshire died on 14th July 2016, aged 91. He served in the Merchant Navy as a deck boy before joining the Border Regiment in 1941. He then transferred to the South Lancashire Regiment, later to the

Lancashire Fusiliers, and finally the Parachute Regiment in 1944. He served in North Africa, Sicily, Italy, Greece, Egypt, and Palestine before discharging as a Private in 1947.

Joan Trench of Pershore, Worcestershire died on 30th July 2016, aged 108. She left school at 16½ years of age having achieved matriculation. She went to Tenerife where she learned Spanish and then lived in Spain, in San Sebastian where she taught English to Spanish people. She returned to the UK and married in 1934. During the Second World War she served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1942 when she was employed around the UK. She completed her training at the Royal Naval College in Greenwich and achieved her commission. She was discharged as a Second Officer.

Peter Wagerman of Hendon, London died on 14th July 2016, aged 84. He commissioned into the Royal Air Force Dental Branch in 1956. He served at RAF Benson, RAF Uxbridge and RAF Changi, Singapore and was discharged in 1959 as a Flight Lieutenant.

John Ward of Lichfield, Staffordshire died on 11th July 2016, aged 89. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1945 and served as a clerk in North Africa and Malta until discharge as a Leading Aircraftman in 1948.

Julia 'Julie' Waters of Haywards Heath, West Sussex died on 30th December 2015, aged 91. She joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force in 1942 and was a driver throughout her service when she would drive Group Captain Leonard Cheshire. She was discharged in 1945, leaving as an Aircraftwoman Second Class.

William Wathen of Brentwood, Essex died on 29th July 2016, aged 100. He enlisted into the Royal Engineers in 1940, training in Liverpool and Halifax. He was classified Grade 3 and remained in the UK on bomb disposal and beach mine clearance, receiving a General Officer Commanding's commendation for his work. He was discharged as a Lance Corporal in 1946.

James 'Jim' Whyte of Felixstowe, Suffolk died on 15th August 2016, aged 83. He joined the Royal Air Force for National Service in 1951 and served as an engine mechanic in the UK until leaving as an SAC in 1953.

Derek Wilde of Selby, North Yorkshire died on 1st July 2016, aged 91. He joined the Royal Armoured Corps in 1943 training as a gunner operator in tanks. He then completed infantry training, transferred to the Wiltshire Regiment and was posted to Italy where he volunteered for the Long-Range Desert Patrol Group. After returning to the UK with the Wiltshire's he was deployed to India and was discharged as a Private in 1947.

William Wild of Bath, Somerset died on 11th July 2016, aged 98. He joined the Royal Navy engineering branch in 1934 and served in several ships operating mainly in the Mediterranean and Atlantic. He discharged as a Chief Engine Room Artificer in 1948.

Jean Williams née Donaldson of Fleetwood, Lancashire died in 2016, aged 91. She volunteered for the Women's Royal Naval Service in 1942 and completed her training in Dunfermline, specialising in communications. She served at HMS Jackdaw and was later sent to HMS Assegai in Durban, then HMS Nile in Alexandria. She was discharged as a Leading Wren in 1945.

Leonard Wood of Halesworth, Suffolk died on 22nd July 2016, aged 90. He enlisted in the Royal Air Force Police in 1943. Posted to the UK and Germany, he was a Corporal by the time he discharged in 1948.

William Wraith of Crook, County Durham died on 11th March 2016, aged 97. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1938 and carried out his training in Gloucestershire, specialising as a flight mechanic. He later became a fitter and served in the Western Desert, Sicily, Italy and Egypt. He also served in a variety of locations in the UK before discharge in 1945 as a Corporal.

Astley Wylde of Richmond, Surrey died on 16th July 2016, aged 98. He enlisted with the Royal Signals in July 1939 and was posted to the Middle East in 1942. Having served in Iraq, South Africa and Egypt, he was discharged in 1959 as a Sergeant.

Frederick 'Alan' Yardley of Plymouth, Devon died on 9th July 2016, aged 77. He enlisted in the Royal Navy in 1955, posted to the Far East he was a former member of the Devonport Field Team from 1965 to 1968 prior to being discharged as an Able Seaman in 1969.

