

December 2016

# Review

Blind Veterans UK | St Dunstan's since 1915



**On the cover:** The Blind Veterans UK contingent stand on Whitehall on Remembrance Sunday ahead of the march past the Cenotaph.

**Back page:** Dave Bryant, Art & Craft Instructor at the Brighton centre, with former Royal Marine Steve Nixon who placed one of the wreath's at the base of the centre's War Memorial on Armistice Day.



Dec 2016 | No 1076

**Contact:** Review Editor, Catherine Goodier 020 7616 8367  
Email: [revieweditor@blindveterans.org.uk](mailto:revieweditor@blindveterans.org.uk)



**Patron: Her Majesty the Queen.**

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

**Useful 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.

## Season's Greetings

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

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



# From the Chairman.

## Your message from Tim Davis.

This year, the 101st since our charity was formed, has been a very significant year on so many fronts, and I am very grateful to blind veterans, staff, volunteers, supporters, and Trustees for all that has been done and achieved.

As a charity that is focused on helping all men and women who have served in the Armed Forces to overcome the challenges of vision impairment, a great deal has been done to continue the work necessary to build and establish a truly national organisation. With many who served in National Service, and life expectancy fortunately continuing to extend; there are growing numbers who are also suffering the effects of vision impairment, veterans like you that we want to offer our support to. Our age mix is also broadening and the average age is significantly increasing. It is our absolute aim to support a greater share of this cohort, as well as continue to help those younger members who have been blinded as a direct consequence of active service. It is likely this trend will continue over the next decade, before we start to see a decline in the total population of blind veterans overall.

That is why over recent years we have scaled the organisation to meet this need, enhanced our operating model to build on what we have, and extended the number of field staff. As you are aware, those we help live in all corners of the UK, and we recognise the increasing challenges of mobility as well as blindness. Our aim is help more and do so closer to where, you, the members of Blind Veterans UK live. Much has been done to step up to this challenge, but this is just the start. During 2017 we will see a substantial increase in field based staff, we will also build on our centres in Llandudno and Brighton, and open new residential and day centres in the future to meet this need.

We will also work closely with those innovating ways to overcome and even cure some causes of blindness to bring the latest and best to those it will help. I was excited to hear of new spectacles with an integrated camera that is able to read and interpret text and speak to the user. Paul Jacobs, one of our young war blinded members has started to use these. This of course is just one example.

On a different note, I was very touched by the huge turn out on Remembrance Sunday of both the veterans and public, who gathered to remember those

who have sacrificed, particularly those who lost their lives in the First World War and the Battle of the Somme, which reached its bloody end 100 years ago. Remembering and learning from the lessons of history to avoid such conflicts in the future is truly a worthy cause.

On a final note, my wife Lyn and I wish you all a very happy and peaceful Christmas and a great start to 2017. The year for us has flown by, but has also created great and enjoyable memories generated from the warmth, positive spirit and inspiring stories of the blind veterans I have been fortunate to meet, and all those who work as part of Blind Veterans UK. My very best wishes to you and your families.



**Picture:** A light hearted moment as they stand on Horse Guards' Parade ahead of the march past the Cenotaph. From right to left our Chairman Tim Davis with President Ray Hazan OBE, Paul Palmer blind veteran and Trustee, our Chief Executive Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB, Craig Lundberg, Mark Abel, Brigadier Johnny Walker OBE DL, Shaun Stocker, Mark Lovatt Director of Operations (East) and Kenneth Godfrey.

# From the President.

**Your message from Ray Hazan OBE.**

We are on the verge of a major change in the way we carry out our service delivery. We shall all benefit and so I urge all blind veterans to pitch in and help to make it a success. I have no doubt our founder, Sir Arthur Pearson would approve.

This is the last Christmas letter I shall write as your President. I feel the time is right, after 13 years in post as President, to stand aside and let others take up the challenge.

My wife Roberta joins me in sending Christmas greetings and we wish you a healthy and enjoyable year ahead.



**Picture:** Ray and Roberta Hazan.

# From the Chief Executive.

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

It hardly seems possible that 2016 is almost at an end. It has gone past in a whirl and every day seems to have been busy and different. Indeed one of the wonderful aspects about working with Blind Veterans UK is that no two days are the same. There is always plenty to do, plenty of challenge and plenty of opportunity. If there had been a thought that 2016 might be a bit dull following our Centenary year, nothing could have been further from the truth.

One of the main features of this year has been the work on the new strategy that was recently announced. Work on this scale has been likened to redesigning the aircraft whilst it is in flight and I know what they mean! We have arrived at important conclusions and decisions, the details of which have been covered elsewhere, but I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members, volunteers and staff who have helped us in this work and played their own part in helping to shape our future. It has been an extraordinary all-round effort.

Whilst working on the plans for the future, our prime focus has been to meet the needs of you, our members, today which is where the real joy sits. I have enjoyed meeting so many of you, your families and supporters across the country and in a variety of settings and I am always amazed and inspired by your progress and achievements. A number of particular memories stand out for me as I look back. Our new Life Skills Centre at Llandudno has come to life and we have started work with some of our younger members to help them deal with particular challenges that they face. I remember the immense pride that I had in showing a video to members of the Lloyds Charities Trust in the Lloyds building in London. It showed Tom Boal and Anthony Cooper as they were put through their paces during RESET Week. Some of our other younger members have benefited this year with preparation to set up their own business, and it was amazing to see two younger members beginning their careers as masseurs, following in the footsteps of the early St Dunstaners, and two breaking new ground as professional photographers.

There were sad moments too, and I reflect on the particular memory of Grenville Davies, a former Prisoner of War who was part of the Long March from Poland, and who has entertained us regularly with his stories and poetry

over the years. Grenville struggled with ill health throughout the year but was determined to make the annual POW Reunion at the Brighton centre in the summer. And he succeeded. Grenville, who sadly passed away in September, was a marvellous man, a wonderfully warm character, and such an example and inspiration.

2016 has been a key year of Remembrance and I was privileged to attend a visit to the former battlefields of the Somme and Ypres with blind veterans from across the country. Our party included Scott Leng, our youngest veteran and Bob Irons, a Lancaster engineer who turned 90 this year. Our veterans gained so much from being able to reflect on the sacrifices and lessons of history and from the opportunity to pay their respects. Leading the ceremony at the Menin Gate on behalf of the hundreds gathered there was especially poignant. And this trip served to remind me of the special bond that exists between our veterans, regardless of their age.

The Remembrance Weekend was another special memory and I was honoured to accompany Craig Lundberg at the Cenotaph and to hear about Craig's achievements. Blinded in Iraq, Craig has made extraordinary progress and is now a successful businessman and father based in Merseyside. Those who followed the Cenotaph events on the television will have seen another of our inspirational young men. Simon Brown, who is recovering from a facial reconstruction operation following injuries sustained in Iraq in 2006, was interviewed by four separate national media programmes over the weekend. Together with his colleague who had helped with his recuperation and had also subsequently been injured, Simon gave a compelling account of the challenge of sight loss and the importance of working hard to discover life beyond it. Sir Arthur Pearson would have been so proud of these young blinded veterans who have worked so hard to accept, adjust and achieve.

This journey, of veterans who have lost their sight and who are determined to battle their new-found blindness, was perfectly described by the amazing statue that was loaned to us for our Centenary Service of Thanksgiving at Westminster Abbey last year. I am very excited to say that the artist, Johanna Domke-Guyot, has gifted this statue to the Charity for it to be cast into Bronze. The seven figures, blinded by gas, shot and shell and leading each other to a better place, have begun their journey. The 'Lads', as we have come to know them, entered a Foundry this month to begin their journey. And in 2018 we will

unveil this inspirational bronze statue as a national memorial to blind veterans and to their journey to accept, adjust and achieve. It is a very exciting project and we will give you updates through next year as it develops.

Our 101st Year has therefore been a rich and memorable year. I would like to thank members, staff and volunteers alike for making this charity what it is and for continuing to provide inspiration to others.

Wherever you are this Christmas I hope that you are able to enjoy a special time with family and friends. Isobel joins me in wishing you a most Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.



**Picture:** Their Name Liveth For Evermore. Standing at the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme during the battlefield tour that was attended by blind veterans and led by the Llandudno centre and our great friend Brigadier Johnny Walker OBE DL. Nick Caplin is pictured on the right at the end of the row.

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

At Remembrance-tide behind each poppy stands a person. At the Armistice Day Service at the War Memorial in the courtyard of the Brighton centre 250 people stood unseen, their presence felt by those in whose hearts they live. At 11am on the 11th of November as the Armistice Day Service took place the sun settled on the 250 hand-crafted ceramic poppies that adorned the War Memorial. As they glistened in the sun it was as though the person they represented quietly spoke the words: 'I'm here'.

For the third year since the War Memorial was unveiled the service was devised and led by Bill Lyth, Head of Security and Nigel Whiteley was the Standard Bearer. The dedication was made by John Cunnington and Mark Lovatt recited The Poppy. Wreaths were placed by Alan Cade and Steve Nixon. As he placed his wreath former Royal Marine Steve Nixon thought of his grandad and his friend Jack Gallagher, a St Dunstaner he met in 1992 when he came to the charity. At the end of the service wooden crosses were placed at the base of the memorial in memory of the centre's residents who had died during the year.

It was a service that could not have been improved upon as during the two minute silence blind veterans, their families, and staff thought of the enormity of war and the impact it had on so many lives. Cadets attended from Longhill School Combined Cadet Force, Sea Cadets from TS Brighton, and Roedean Fire Station was represented.



**Picture:** Bill Lyth, standing right, leads the Armistice Day Service with John Cunnington left and Steve Nixon who is shown holding his wreath.

The War Memorial was a team effort, but the concept for its design came from Dave Bryant, Art & Craft Instructor. Here Dave talks about that. "I initially came up with the idea about five years ago when a number of our members, who weren't in the best of health, were unable to attend the Remembrance weekend at the Cenotaph in London. I thought it would be good for them to have a place here where they could remember their comrades and pay respect. I copied an idea from Leigh Gibbins who also works in the Art & Craft Workshop as he had built a water feature at a care home in Southwick. Our memorial is made of new railway sleepers to represent a First World War trench and water runs down the memorial to show the conditions that the soldiers faced with the continual rain and mud. That to me made it come alive and it has become a living monument. To represent the present day conflicts I wanted something modern, and stainless steel bars are set in between the wooden sleepers, as the juxtaposition represents the coming together of the past and present wars and conflicts. It is a memorial for all generations, including future generations. We're very proud that it is a registered War Memorial and this year it was adorned with 250 ceramic poppies that were made here in the Art & Craft Workshop."



**Picture:** Alan Cade, a resident at the Brighton centre places the wreath.

## **Ceremony of Remembrance for Sir Arthur Pearson Bt, GBE. The leader of the blind. By Catherine Goodier.**

### **In Memoriam "C.A.P."**

You would not have us grieve at Fate's fierce blow,  
You who turned blindness to a braver cause,  
But glory in the tributes we may show  
To one who triumphed over Nature's laws  
And said: "I will not own that I am blind  
Whilst I have will to work; and brain to will;  
Whilst I can prove man's eyes are in his mind,  
No man my faith shall break, my purpose kill".

Pity the blind! You turned that cry to scorn,  
And gave us sight to see your flaming creed;  
So that, in place of Pity, there was born Deep Understanding  
Pity's fruitful seed.

In pride we watched you,  
When the god of war flung on Life's shore his wreckage,  
Maimed and blind,  
Build a great Lighthouse;  
There from near and far came young men broken sore in limb and mind.

Pity the Blind! You gave them, laughter, life,  
New hopes, new aims a path of work again;  
You gave them weapons for their gristly strife,  
That each who would, might victory attain.

We must not grieve for you, we will not weep,  
But rather hide our grief with smiling eyes;  
So that, when to us all comes our Last Sleep,  
We too may say: "The ways of God are wise."

**E Le Breton Martin.**

In Memoriam "C.A.P." was written following the sudden and tragic death of Sir Arthur Pearson Bt, GBE on 9th December 1921. It featured in the Sir Arthur Pearson Special Memorial edition in the Review.

Each year, during the Remembrance Weekend, a very special Ceremony of Remembrance is held at the graveside of Sir Arthur Pearson at Hampstead Cemetery. In 1921 the Battalions of the Blind travelled from all parts of the country and in total 3,000 people formed the great congregation at the cemetery. As is our tradition, this year we celebrated Sir Arthur's life and as we stood below the skies above did not break with their tradition, as rain fell upon all present. Perhaps, rather than rain, they were the tears shed by the Battalions of the Blind, as looking down they recalled that day in 1921 and the loss of such a great man.

Our Chief Executive, Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB presided at the service, which began when he introduced The Venerable Air Vice-Marshal Jonathan Chaffey, Chaplain-Chief, who gave the opening prayer. In it he honoured the vision shown by Sir Arthur Pearson for his work with those blinded in the service of their country, and the 15,000 blind veterans who have passed through the charity since its inception in 1915.



**Picture:** The Venerable Air Vice-Marshal Jonathan Chaffey, Chaplain-Chief and Chief Executive Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB at Sir Arthur's graveside.

Nick then introduced our President Ray Hazan OBE who said "May I add my welcome and I knew you'd be terribly disappointed if it didn't rain today, as we're so used to it now. Any organisation worth its salt is always looking ahead from five to 20 years and we're no exception, but we must remember that the foundations of the past were literally that for the present. I have this mental image of Sir Arthur Pearson smiling and very much approving of all that's being done and I know that he'd be grateful for your presence here today."



**Picture:** Blind Veterans UK President Ray Hazan OBE speaks. Included in the picture are Mark Lovatt Director of Operations (East), John and Janet Evans and Margaret and Brian Eldridge.

Rob Baker, Blind Veterans UK's Archivist read extracts from a speech that Sir Arthur gave at Baltimore in 1919. He pointed out how modest Sir Arthur was when he wrote of himself, but how effusive when he trumpeted the work of the charity he had founded, and the people he helped through it.

The first part of the speech was about losing his sight, and how he had come to feel about that. The second part related to sight and how he had a clearer idea in his mind of the people he had met since his loss of sight than he did before. How he encouraged the fellows to go out on their own to unknown places, so that like him they too could paint a picture in their mind.

Rob closed by reading how Sir Arthur thought of St Dunstan's as the Aladdin of the modern world. Rob read "In the way that Aladdin went through the streets of old Baghdad offering new lamps for old, so it is with St Dunstan's. The men

come to us with their battered, broken life lamps and are given new ones. These new lamps are kept filled with the oil of contentment, the wicks of endeavour are well trimmed, and the light from these lamps has illuminated the whole wide world of the blind."

The Standard was lowered by Brian Eldridge as blind veteran Ron Wyman placed the wreath on Sir Arthur's grave.



**Picture:** The wreath is placed by Ron Wyman as Brian Eldridge stands with the Standard lowered and Sir Arthur's lasting legacy is felt by all present.

Nick Caplin read the St Dunstan's prayer by Alfred Noyes (1880-1958) and The Venerable Air Vice-Marshal Jonathan Chaffey, Chaplain-Chief read The Blind Veterans UK Prayer that was written by Christopher Stoltz for our centenary.

O God, our creator and our life, you have fashioned us as your people, and you love all that you have made. We thank you for the blessings you give us, for healing and wholeness, and for the invitation to share in your abundant life. Bless the work of Blind Veterans UK, its leaders, and all who find health and hope through its service, and finally draw us to yourself in that heavenly kingdom where death and crying are no more, and where we shall see you face to face; through him who is the resurrection and the life, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



As the Ceremony of Remembrance would not be complete without the tears from heaven, it would also not be complete without Abide With Me, a hymn that was written by Sir Arthur's great-grandfather the Rev. Henry Francis Lyte. Below we bring you an article to its origin that is taken from the pages of the March 1926 Review.

As one of the few living descendants of the author of the hymn "Abide With Me," which nightly thrills the great audience in the Wembley Stadium, I have been greatly interested in the correspondence in The Times. It is only those who know the tragic circumstances under which this beautiful hymn was written who can explain the inner meaning of the words "Fast falls the eventide."

My great-grandfather, the Rev. Henry Francis Lyte, the author of the hymn, was vicar of Lower Brixham, in those days a picturesque little fishing village on the shores of Torbay. He was the author of numerous poems and hymns, some of which are in "Hymns Ancient and Modern." During the latter part of his life he devoted himself to the service of the humble fisher folk of Brixham, among whom were many of his best friends. His labours undermined his health, but he persisted in his noble work until his health broke down completely under the strain and his doctor told him he must go abroad at once. He was then dying of consumption. He preached his farewell sermon the following Sunday evening at Lower Brixham Church and after the service, walked slowly home to the house at Berry Had. It happened that on that night there was one of those glorious sunsets which are sometimes to be seen at Torbay. The sun was setting in a blaze of glory and the purple hills of distant Dartmoor stood out darkly against a flaming sky. In the foreground was Brixham harbour like a pool of molten gold. Several times on the way home he stopped to rest and to gaze on this wonderful manifestation of nature. We can well imagine his feelings. He had just said "Good-bye" for the last time to his parishioners and he knew that he had only a few weeks at most to live. The setting day reminded him insistently of his life, which was drawing swiftly to its close.

It was during this walk that he prayed that before he died he might be allowed to write one message of consolation to humanity which would endure for ever. On arriving home he went to his study and there and then wrote the immortal hymn which has enriched our language and brought comfort and consolation to millions. His prayer was, indeed, answered. No one who knows the circumstances under which the hymn was written can sing it without feeling

some of the emotion which inspired the poet as he wrote about the eventide of his own life.

The final verse, which is perhaps, the finest and most beautiful of all, represents the triumph of faith and hope over despair.

"Hold Thou Thy Cross before my closing eyes,  
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies,  
Heaven's morning breaks and earth's vain shadows flee,  
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

Yours faithfully,  
W Maxwell-Lyte.

With emotions stirred, and spirits raised, and the bond of the family of Blind Veterans UK felt, Bugler Adam Stockbridge of The London Military Band played The Last Post before the one minute silence, and after it, Reveille.



**Picture:** Hilary Fox, Blind Veterans UK Member Services Manager who was responsible with her team of Abby Tarrant, Akvile Jukneviute, Alex Batt, Amarah White, Jenny Barley, Kate Benson and Suzanne Walker for organising the Remembrance Weekend, shields Bugler Adam Stockbridge from the rain. It is the conclusion of a moving Ceremony to honour a great man. C.A.P. The Chief. Our founder.

## **We Will Remember Them. By Catherine Goodier.**

Spirits warmed by shared laughter with pals on Horse Guards' Parade and cups of tea laced with something bracing. Then the subtle mood change as ranks are formed and the march onto Whitehall begins and the precision of keeping in step is once again second nature. Standing before God, The Queen, and the Cenotaph the field gun announces the great silence, and the only sound among thousands comes from the startled seagulls overhead. A veil has fallen, as below it men and women who left the Armed Forces 70 years before slip into their old posture, stand to attention, stand tall. Family, pals and comrades are remembered and thanks is given for new friends and for the family of Blind Veterans UK. It is as though an angel has passed through the massed ranks evoking the pledge, 'We Will Remember Them'.

The air splits as a second roar from the field gun announces the end of the great silence, and the start of the march past the Cenotaph. The veil is lifted and it is an end of silent communion that has for some been in part painful, and in part heart-warming. As the time of reverie is put aside those remembered remain in the heart. A nation watches. It is time to march as one in homage for the Fallen, and in honour of the Crown, as Her Majesty the Queen, our Patron, stands before the Cenotaph.

Standing in the place of honour, only a few yards behind the Royal Family, the 189 strong Blind Veterans UK contingent was led by President Ray Hazan OBE and Chairman Tim Davis, Chief Executive Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB, Craig Lundberg, Kenneth Godfrey and Mark Lovatt, Director of Operations (East). Roger Hammond escorted blind veteran Roy Valentine to place the first wreath.

Some of you shared your thoughts with the Review of those you remembered. Carl Williamson, ex-RN, said: "The Ode that sends a shiver down my spine is 'At the going down of the sun and in the morning we will remember them.' The verse is taken from the famous Great War poem The Fallen. I then reflect on those courageous men and women who sacrificed their lives for our freedom that we take for granted today. As many veterans probably do on parade I pray that ours and future generations will not have to suffer the terror of war.

"I then reflect on the first St. Dunstaners I met when I went through rehab at Ian Fraser House, and whisper silent thoughts and memories of those gentlemen like Lionel Scott, as well as my own father, who have since passed on.

"I think about our serving Armed Forces all over the world whilst I stand shoulder to shoulder with my parade escort, fellow blind veterans and other loyal supporters of the charity. Inspirational people, who have helped me on the way, including my former surgeon commander from HMS Daedalus, the late Derek Day, who took me under his wing when I was first diagnosed. The odd hip flask before on Horse Guards' and after parading on Whitehall are medicinal to help balance my emotions."



**Picture:** Sue Eyles, James King and Carl Williams march towards HRH Prince Charles The Prince of Wales who took the salute.

In the week leading up to Remembrance Sunday, and on the day itself, a series of interviews took place when blind veterans were reported on in their regional press and on national television. Simon Brown, Communications & Engagement Officer in Blind Veterans UK's No One Alone team was interviewed on ITV's Daybreak and national news on Friday, and on Whitehall by Sophie Raworth for the BBC. For the first time Simon was joined by Warren Ward, a colleague who Simon says saved his life in Iraq in 2007 when he was shot by a sniper's bullet.

Introduced by Sophie Raworth Simon said: "We were in Iraq and we were attached to recover a vehicle under heavy fire with six on-board. Fortunately we got everybody out but as we left the combat zone I was shot in the face. A bullet went in here [points to cheek] and came out here [points to other cheek] and made a bit of a mess. Fortunately I wasn't knocked out and I was able to do

a bit of first aid as it was almost 25 minutes before Warren got me to Basra Palace. I woke up 25 days later on Christmas Eve to find that I'd lost my sight and the world was going to be very different for me. I was very fortunate on the day that Warren was there and how calm he was and sensible to get me out of there."

Sophie Raworth asked "Today you've been brought together and for the first time you are going to march past the Cenotaph what does that mean to you?"

Simon answered: "It's the first time in 10 years that we're together marching. As Warren was later wounded and paralysed for 18 months, who would have thought that both of us would make it, let alone march together. I'm incredibly proud to represent everyone we do, but to be with this man, someone who was with me in combat, and with me in recovery, I'm very emotional and very proud. I come back to the Cenotaph every year as I'm fortunate to march with a comrade or a friend and when you march out of those gates to all these wonderful people it makes you proud to be British. The day the hairs on my neck don't stand up walking out that gate is the last time I'll do it. The support from the public is amazing. They applaud the veterans all the way round and when we go to silence it's just amazing. During the silence I think of the brotherhood of the military, but especially Garrett, a close colleague that I lost. The poppies to us have names."



**Picture:** Simon Brown, Warren Ward and Shaun Stocker.

Roy Valentine, a former Corporal in the Royal Engineers who joined Blind Veterans UK in April 2014, was escorted by Roger Hammond to place the first wreath. "It's something I've wanted to do for the past 60 years in honour of two young men who were killed. Men who were then the same age as me, young men who will never grow old, two men whose names I never knew who gave their lives for mine. I was an electrician in a railway unit for the Royal Engineers and when we got to Port Said in Egypt the need for electricians was realised as there were so many refrigeration units to be maintained. The units contained enough food to feed 80,000 troops at any one time. We had a big Army and it needed feeding. Because of the temperature I always had units to repair. The Railway Police and the Army Police were always nice to me as they'd say, 'The fridge isn't big enough we don't have any cold beer'. And I'd laugh and tell them I could sort that out.

"It was serious work and 24 hours a day we had part of the brigade protection to stop it being blown up, robbed, smashed or stolen. I was the one who had to go out and into the Messes to make sure the refrigeration units were working. If I wasn't on night duty that's what I did during the day. I had a two man guard as I only had tools, I didn't have a gun, so they were my protectors.

"One morning I was ready to go and usually I'd meet the two men and they'd ask 'Where are we going today Roy?' As I headed towards the gates one of the Army Police asked me to report to the Adjutant who told me to go back to my unit as he might want me for something else. I found out that the night before the two boys from brigade protection had been captured and killed in the most evil, painful, terrifying and barbaric way. I don't want to say how they were killed as my fellow blind veterans can imagine. We had to bury them and I never knew their names.

"Every year since then when I've been home on Remembrance Sunday I've always placed my own wreath with the message 'For the two lads who died so that I could live.' That's why I wanted to place a wreath at the Cenotaph in front of the Queen and the Royal Family. I wasn't the only person who cried. I can cry just thinking of it. It is something that ordinary people don't understand.

"You make the best friends in the Army, they are the best friend you ever have as there is a bond between soldiers that doesn't exist in any other business. I've always wanted to go to the Cenotaph. I was humbled that those two young lads put their life on the line so that I could live. I owe them a debt."

The second wreath was placed by Maria Pikulski who joined Blind Veterans UK in 2004. An ECLLO Maria has been responsible for introducing many veterans to our charity. Speaking of the honour Maria said: "My thoughts were with the men and women who were killed and injured in wars and conflicts. I felt so proud to represent the second contingent on parade in Whitehall as I stood with my fiancée Richard Hughes, blind veteran Kelly Ganfield, and the many thousands of veterans".



**Picture:** Kelly Ganfield (née Hart), Richard Hughes and Maria Pikulski.

Kelly Ganfield (née Hart), pictured above, attended the Cenotaph for the second time, and as she stood on Whitehall during the great silence she thought of the late Colwyn Lloyd, one of the first blind veterans she met when she became a member of our charity in 2005.

It wasn't just people that were called to mind during the two minute silence. Brian Eldridge who attends the Cenotaph each year with his wife Margaret thought of the loss of lives of the animals of war. Both Brian and Margaret served in the Royal Army Veterinary Corps.

"A lot of people don't think about the horses or the dogs that have died. And also the pigeons that were in the bombers. People never think of those, but

they were there to be released if the plane crashed, and in every aircraft there were two pigeons to bring the messages home."



**Picture:** Margaret and Brian Eldridge and behind them snowdrops Colin Denley and Tony Harbour, who is also a blind veteran.

Mark Brewin spoke of his thoughts and feelings on Whitehall. "It kicks off as the hairs on the back of my neck stand up when the gun goes off and the area falls silent. I tend to think about my Mum, as the parade usually falls on her birthday and she passed away five years ago. Then I think about friends and anyone who is ill or who has passed away over the last 12 months. Then I think of those I know, who may be out on active service somewhere in the world. I then think of happier things and reflect on the year in general and the shared camaraderie, usually experienced with the friends standing with me on parade. And on the magnitude of the day, the number of people out on the streets, the numbers in the columns, and the reasons why we are there."

Tom Clough, a former Sergeant in the Royal Artillery who served from 1945 to 1977 in Germany, Korea and the UK attended the Cenotaph for the first time. Speaking of that Tom said "My guide Dennis Grogan and I were very, very impressed by the organisation and everything that took place over the weekend. I was very proud to be a small man amongst hundreds who marched past the Cenotaph and of course the Queen. At the end of the march we walked past and saluted Prince Charles. Thank you for this very special opportunity."



**Picture:** From left to right Tommy Clough (seated) with Dennis Grogan, Niki Kokonas, Bill Lyth and Samantha Bromley with Vera Brooks.



**Picture:** Alan Holderness, Stan Bowers, Norman Sharples, Diane Mountford, Ian Sheriff and Steven Moseley.



**Picture above left:** Eric Brotherton and Nigel Whiteley.



**Picture above right:** Pete Walker, Shaun Stocker and Brigadier Johnny Walker OBE, DL.

The December 1919 Review reported on the first anniversary of the Armistice.

### **St Dunstan's Homage to the Fallen.**

On the anniversary of the Armistice Day, November 11th, about seventy five men of the House and Annexes marched to Birdcage Walk to join the Comrades of the Great War in their procession to the Cenotaph in Whitehall, to pay homage to those heroes who made the great sacrifice. The procession was headed by Mr McClellan and Mr Vaile and proceeded via Portland Place, Regent Street, Haymarket, Trafalgar Square, and The Mall. The Mall was lined on both sides by troops as the King and President Poincare were passing that way on their journey to the City.

When we arrived at the east end of the Birdcage Walk we found the Comrades of the Great War awaiting our arrival. St. Dunstan's was given the place of honour next to the band at the head of the procession. The band struck up Colonel Bogey and the procession started off past the Admiralty and down Whitehall. As we passed the Cenotaph the men smartly turned their heads to the left and removed their hats. We were then halted and drawn up on the south side of the Cenotaph. There were thousands of people there, and the whole scene was most impressive.

The flowered memorials carried by the Comrades were very beautiful. In one case it took the form of a monster Chaplet of Laurels, with the inscription "In Remembrance — The Comrades of the Great War.

As the band struck up Chopin's Marche Funebre two of the Comrades mounted the steps and placed the laurel wreath facing towards the south, after which many other beautiful wreaths were placed on the steps.

The Chaplain-General then gave a short address, after which a piper of the Scots Guards played the Lament, and then the Last Post was sounded by four buglers. We then marched back to the Horse Guards' Parade, where all the Comrades of the Great War formed up while the band played the National Anthem, after which we were dismissed and marched back to St Dunstan's.



**Picture:** Old friends were reunited when Inderpal Kallah, second from left, joined Blind Veterans UK contingent with Carl Adamson, Mick Scanlon and Eamon Costello.



**Picture:** Peter Olney with Jey Muir. For many years Jey marched with former submariner the late Tony Eldridge DSC.



**Picture:** Peter Price and Jeremy Hinton.



**Picture:** Falklands veterans Gary Steele and Steve Tuffen.



**Picture:** The guide dog contingent with John Evans on the right.



**Picture:** John Cantwell, Dawn Brown, Thomas Bryden, Charlie Eastwood, Neil Graham and Billy Black.



**Picture:** Louise Collins, Kevin Rixon and far right in red coat Linda Brotherton.



**Picture:** Eyes right as HRH Prince Charles The Prince of Wales takes the salute.

In closing we remember some of our dear friends who have this year journeyed into the great beyond. They are Wallace Burnet-Smith, Grenville Davies, Joe Bennett, Ernie Bignell, Rose Shed, Henry Frank Cosgrove, Jean Williams, Harry Beevers, Irene Skidmore and Jo Revis.

## London Poppy Day.

For the past six years blind veteran Carl Williams has sold poppies in the locality surrounding his offices at Portland Place. This year the Review bought their poppy from Carl on London Poppy Day when his area collected £13,000. A great achievement.



**Picture:** Blind veteran Carl Adamson ex Royal Navy, AET Michael Collins Fleet Air Arm, Jenny Barley Blind Veterans UK Member Services and Katie Mullings Atos.

## Audio CD from the phone-in with Chief Executive Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB.

This month's Talking Review includes a phone-in when our Chief Executive, Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB, answered questions from four blind veterans that related to the changes to our charity. If you do not receive the Talking Review, but would like to listen to the phone-in on an audio CD, please contact Hazel Buckthorpe to request a copy.

The first question was posed by Louise Collins when she asked.

I would be grateful if you could please explain how the new system will work for welfare now that the Welfare Officers and Assistants are being made redundant?

The second question was posed by Tony Grant when he asked.

This is more of a perspective than a question, but I would like to see that the organisation and reorganisation is committed to direct support, rather than the arm's length obscurity that it sounds like to me.

The third question came from Richard Haynes when he said.

An issue yet to be addressed is the lack of clear conduit for members to voice their views and concerns.

The fourth and final question came from Paul Meredith when he asked.

Why is the Sheffield centre closing?

To receive an audio CD of the phone-in with Nick Caplin's answers please telephone Hazel Buckthorpe on 020 7616 7963 or email Hazel at [hazel.buckthorpe@blindveterans.org.uk](mailto:hazel.buckthorpe@blindveterans.org.uk)

## One Families Tribute. By Vic Ashlee to his uncle.

Thomas Wyles Ashlee was born in 1893 to Merci and Thomas Ashlee in Borden, a small village close to Sittingbourne in Kent. In the family's smithy he was taught the trade of Blacksmith by his father. In the early 1900s he tried to join the local Royal West Kent Regiment but was turned down as he was under age. Not to be outdone he waited a year and tried again, this time with the South Staffordshire Regiment. He was accepted into their 2nd Battalion and stationed at Aldershot.

He became a Farrier and on 13th August 1914 sailed to Le Havre and on to the Western Front where he saw action in a number of battles that included Mons. He rose through the ranks to become a Sergeant, but he did not live long enough to take part in great Somme Offensive as he was killed and buried in the Loos British cemetery, Loos En Gohellerly on the 16th May 1916.

One hundred years later on a bright spring day, five of us, my wife Heather, daughter Christine and two sons Peter and Andrew set off for Sittingbourne where the memorials to those who died in the Great War are located.

The tree lined Avenue of Remembrance is set off the High Street, and on each tree is a plaque at its base with the name and rank of a serviceman from the area who died during the Great War. There is also an area around the main War Memorial with plaques that cover the many other conflicts that have taken place since then.

We split up in search of our plaque, which are all in alphabetical order, and finally found our Uncle Tom's tree complete with its plaque. Peter had brought a small wooden cross and I had typed and encapsulated a tribute, both of which were to be fixed to the tree.

Unfortunately we hadn't brought either a nail or a hammer to do the fixing! However Christine came to the rescue when she found a nail in a tree further up the avenue, whilst the rest of us looked for, and found, half a brick that had been left in the gutter! She also waylaid a passer-by and coerced him into taking multiple pictures with our cameras!

To finish our mission we drove the few miles to Borden, the village now considerably larger than when Tom had known it all those years ago. The

family's Smithy has been closed and now serves as a small hall where local clubs can hold committee meetings. A fitting end we thought.

However, the local pub, The Maypole, still looked much the same as the old sepia photographs I had seen. It was open for business and just waiting for us to reminisce over the family history we had been told by our other uncles and, of course to drink a toast to Tom and the other Ashlees, wherever they may be.



**Picture:** From left to right: Heather, Christine, Peter, Andrew and blind veteran Vic Ashlee.

Vic, a former Lance Corporal in the RAF, joined Blind Veterans UK in 2014.



**Picture:** Tom Wyles Ashlee.



## Vic Ashlee's answers the Review's 10 questions.

### 1. What was the most exciting part of your career?

Being posted to Central Signals Stanbridge. At that time in the 1950s it busy 24 hours, seven days a week as it had circuits to RAF stations all over the world.

### 2. What's your favourite memory?

Riding through the night on a 250 miles in 24 hours cycling event and hearing all manner of birdsong just as dawn breaks — fantastic.

### 3. Describe yourself in seven words.

An introvert, shy at starting a conversation.

### 4. What qualities do you admire in others?

People with the ability to immediately take charge but make those of us who are just helping feel equally important.

### 5. What three things could you not live without?

My CCTV viewer for enlarging the mail etc. My audio book player for relaxing with a good book, and the radio to keep me in touch with the outside world.

### 6. What's your irrational fear?

Of drowning!

### 7. What makes you happy?

Getting the computer to do what I asked it to do; something that doesn't happen very often.

### 8. What would you blind self tell your sighted self?

"Don't just sit there, work it out for yourself."

### 9. What's the biggest challenge you've overcome as a blind veteran?

I haven't attempted anything really challenging, but perhaps something will come up which I won't be able to resist.

**10. What is the most useful piece of training or equipment from Blind Veterans UK?** Without a doubt my CCTV viewer. It not only enlarges print but can also put two lines on the screen for me to write along them, making my writing a bit more legible!

## Ced Hollands receives the Legion d'honneur.

In recognition of the part he played in the liberation of France in 1944 Ced Hollands was presented with the Legion d'Honneur by Honorary French Consul Mr James Ryeland at the Cricket Club in Ashford on Friday 11th of September.

Ced served in the Royal Navy from 1939 until 1954 in the North Sea, Atlantic, Mediterrean and Indian Ocean. He joined Blind Veterans UK in 2008.



**Picture:** Chevalier de l'Ordre National de la Légion d'Honneur Cedric Hollands with Honorary French Consul Mr James Ryeland



**Picture:** Eddie Gaines stands on the spot in Ewhurst, Surrey where we believe Richard J Vine, a First World War St Dunstaner, was photographed on the 1918 Armistice.

## A magnifier and skills learnt at the Brighton centre help Eddie Gaines solve a Review mystery. By Catherine Goodier.

"Do your best. Do what you're told. And come back safe."

Proudly holding Pip, Squeak and Wilfred, his father's Service medals, Eddie Gaines recalled those words of advice from his father when he joined the Royal Navy in 1943. "I can still picture my dad giving me that advice when I told him I'd joined the Royal Navy, and then later, when I told him I would be part of the Second Front. My dad knew about war as he was in the Northumberland Fusiliers in the First World War. He was wounded in the Battle of the Somme when he was shot through the shoulder, but he would say that he was one of the lucky ones as he got a Blighty, although he had to go back. I've got his medals, a postcard from the trenches, and a card from the Union Castle Line as he sailed back to England on HMHS Gloucester Castle. They had a terrible life in the trenches. That was worse than anything. Nothing could compare to that. He was eventually demobbed in 1922 and I was born in 1925 at No 40 Molyneux Street in Marylebone, just around the corner from where Blind Veterans UK's HQ is today. As a kid I thought it was exciting that my dad had a bullet wound and remember bringing a school friend home and asking my dad if he would show us his wound. As he never spoke of the war my dad said no and not to ask again! Like many of the veterans who were too old to fight in the Second World War he joined the Home Guard and became a Sergeant.

"Some years after the First World War he became a lamplighter in Battersea and on the morning of D-Day he was up the ladder doing the lamps, cleaning the little mirrors in it, when a bloke said to him: "Have you heard? Have you heard? Isn't it exciting they've landed in France. The invasion has started!" My dad looked down and said to him "It's alright for you but my son's out there in it."

"At the time we knew that the Second Front was coming, but we didn't expect D-Day. Ahead of D-Day we laid in Poole Harbour for weeks in our converted Thames barge, there were hundreds of them, and we had a bulldozer on board and 30 tonnes of TNT! The only gun we had was a Lewis anti-aircraft gun that was from the First World War. We loaded up on the 3rd and 4th, and as it was all due to happen on the 5th all the boats were underway, so when it was cancelled until the following morning we just went slower. It was an incredible sight going across as one of 5,000 boats. We had some compositions, but as we were transporting 17 Americans we scrounged food from them.

"We went in at 0830 on D-Day and just before the American soldier in charge of the bulldozer went ashore he gave me a letter as he thought I would return to England that day. I wasn't down to go back for some months and gave the letter to someone who did. I looked on the beach at Omaha for several weeks but never found him. I think he was just wiped out in the American slaughter. People would ask if we were afraid, but we were 19. You're not afraid at that age. We didn't care. If anything happened with that load of explosives on board it would be quick. When you're 19 you live for the day.

"We were back and forth to the beaches and when we landed we'd drop the landing ramp, and the one thing I remember is the bodies of the American soldiers, as we'd have to put the ramp on top of them for the bulldozer and troops to come off. I remember the tears came to my eyes as I thought these chaps are many thousands of miles from home and there they are. This is as far as they got. It was terrible. I hated that. Hated it. I'd look down at these chaps and think, you poor things, you're thousands of miles from home, and this is where you've finished up.

"For years I had nightmares about the American slaughter that went on. It was terrible. Three thousand men wiped out before they got off the beach. Wiped out on the first morning. I stayed on Omaha for about three weeks as we worked the coast of Normandy with the Americans. The American troops we took over were the African American troops who were there to clear the bodies of the dead. Most of them were drivers on the bulldozer and some drove the big ducks. One of the barges that went over was chockablock with flat coffins that they assembled on the beaches and they dug a massive great hole on beach number seven and buried the men there.

"We were with them for such a long time that we started to speak like them. Even George the Coxon who was skipper of a tug called the Chicken out of Woolwich. The Coxon's were all Lightermen who had served their seven-year apprenticeship on the Thames. The American troops would ask if we'd been to Liverpool and when we said yes, they'd ask if we knew Mary. We'd never been to Liverpool and didn't know Mary but we said we did. We all got along and they liked us because we included them and chatted and laughed together.

"At the end of the war the bodies of the men were exhumed and their relatives given the choice to take them back to America, or for them to remain in France

and be buried in the American cemetery at Colleville-sur-Mer. I've since been back and 19,000 men are buried there.

"After D-Day we kept going back and forwards to troop ships and to the Channel port of Le Harve where we were the first boat in as the Germans had sunk two boats across the harbour. We went alongside a jetty and were pelted with bricks. Our Coxon got some tins of corned beef and we chucked those at them. And because they were starving they stopped. They'd pelted us because HMS Warspite had been laying off the coast and had continuously shelled them. Then the Americans had come over and bombed the area before it was taken by the 51st Highland Division. But of course, having had the Royal Navy shelling them all the time night and day they weren't happy to see us. As service people know there were lots of light hearted moments as we were always ready to laugh, so when our skipper was Mentioned in Despatches we made him a putty medal.

"We stopped in Normandy until Christmas eve and then came back to England, had 10 days leave, then did a crash course on the engines for the American boats LCILs — that's Landing Craft Infantry Large. We went out to the Far East, Rangoon, Singapore and then Hong Kong. We took the prisoners out from Changi Goal to the hospital ship. That was a heart-breaking sight, and as much as we wanted to give them food, you couldn't give them anything. Then we went up to the Philippines, Civic Bay and across to Hong Kong where we spent about six months. Then I came home and was later demobbed as a Stoker First Class in 1947."

After the war Eddie married, raised a family and had a successful career. As is now the case with so many blind veterans, as he enjoyed retirement and time with his family, he developed age related macular degeneration and darkness started to consume his world. He was registered blind in 2010 but in his own words had six lost years as he didn't hear of Blind Veterans UK until 2016.

"I found out about Blind Veterans UK from the traveller in Guildford when I asked about the cost of a magnifier and was told that as I am a veteran I should get in touch with Blind Veterans UK. That was the first I'd heard of the charity and I haven't looked back. The induction week at the Brighton centre was fantastic. I learnt a lot, made new friends, and am really looking forward to going back for IT training. The magnifier has changed my life as I can read

mail and magazines and write letters. As I six lost years when I could have been a member of Blind Veterans UK I want to tell everyone about the charity. My family were fantastic with the sight loss, but you also need professionals to get you through. The staff have helped to change my life through training, and the centres are a great place to meet and learn from people in the same situation."

The Review has a lot to thank Eddie for, as using the CCTV magnifier that he was given on his Intro Week, he has solved a mystery put forward in the October 2016 Review. It was a call to anyone who might know of Richard J Vine who was blinded on 1st July 1916 at Fricourt on the first day of the Battle of the Somme, and, who after training at St Dunstan's returned to Ewhurst in Surrey. In the two photographs shown on the facing page one was taken taken in Ewhurst to mark the 1918 Armistice and it shows the men from Ewhurst who fought in the First World War. The second shows the First World War St Dunstaners training as poultry farmers.

Speaking of his sleuthing Eddie said: "My son John and daughter in law Dawn live in Ewhurst and each year John and I go to a Remembrance meeting in the village on Armistice Day. One year I spoke of the time I cycled with my future brother in law from Battersea to Cudham in Kent, and accidentally into the Battle of Britain. A German plane hedge hogged woods we were in and it was so low we could see the nose gunner looking at us. It had dropped some light bombs on the camp site my sister was at, but thankfully when we got there none of them had been hurt. They were understandable hysterical, but safe.

"This year I spoke about Blind Veterans UK and John read The Eve of Call Up, Richard J Vine's poem that featured in the Review. When I read the appeal for information about him I was certain that we could trace him. Using the magnifier I was able to look at the faces of the men of Ewhurst who returned from the war as they were included in the 2014 Ewhurst village calendar and shown standing on the village green in 1918. I used the magnifier to look at the faces of the men of Ewhurst and then the faces of the St Dunstaners at Regent's Park who trained as poultry farmers that was in the November Review. He has a fine set of moustaches the fashion of the day. John agreed with me that the man at the poultry farm and the man standing on the village green could well be Richard J Vine. This year for Remembrance I thought of Richard J Vine, as well as my dad, and the lads from my days in the Royal Navy."



**Picture:** Could this be Richard J Vine shown in the first photograph fourth row fifth from the right and above third in line.

## Tom Boal reports on RESET Week at the Llandudno centre.

RESET — Push the button, I did.

RESET is a week in which to reflect, evaluate and take forward control of your life. You are mentally and physically challenged, stripped to the bone and given the building blocks to create change and enhance your life.

The Regain instructor opens the mind to your thought patterns and thinking process that we all go through on a day to day basis. This is to help us develop a coping mechanism for the future ahead. You discover your 'chimp paradox'. We had some interesting names for our 'chimps' that week. Mine is called 'Goldie'.

Reset realised my 'inner caveman', remember the Royal Navy don't use face camouflage or start fires — well this I did. The sense of achievement I got making my first fire from scratch was amazing, that's what team work does, as well as instilling confidence.

Putting trust in others is pushed upon you too, with thanks to Phillipe, from Blind Veterans UK Llandudno. He was my 'eyes' for the 10k tandem bike ride. I started off wobbly but once on the open road, with my confidence growing as we whizzed along at speed, the sense of freedom was amazing feeling the wind whistling past, something I had I not experienced since last on a bike as a child.

End of the week you're mentally and physically exhausted but there's one more challenge, 'Can't cook, Won't cook', yes the staff and chef put confidence in us as a group to cook dinner. As a team we survived, no lost fingers in the chicken curry, all thanks to chef Andy's instruction.

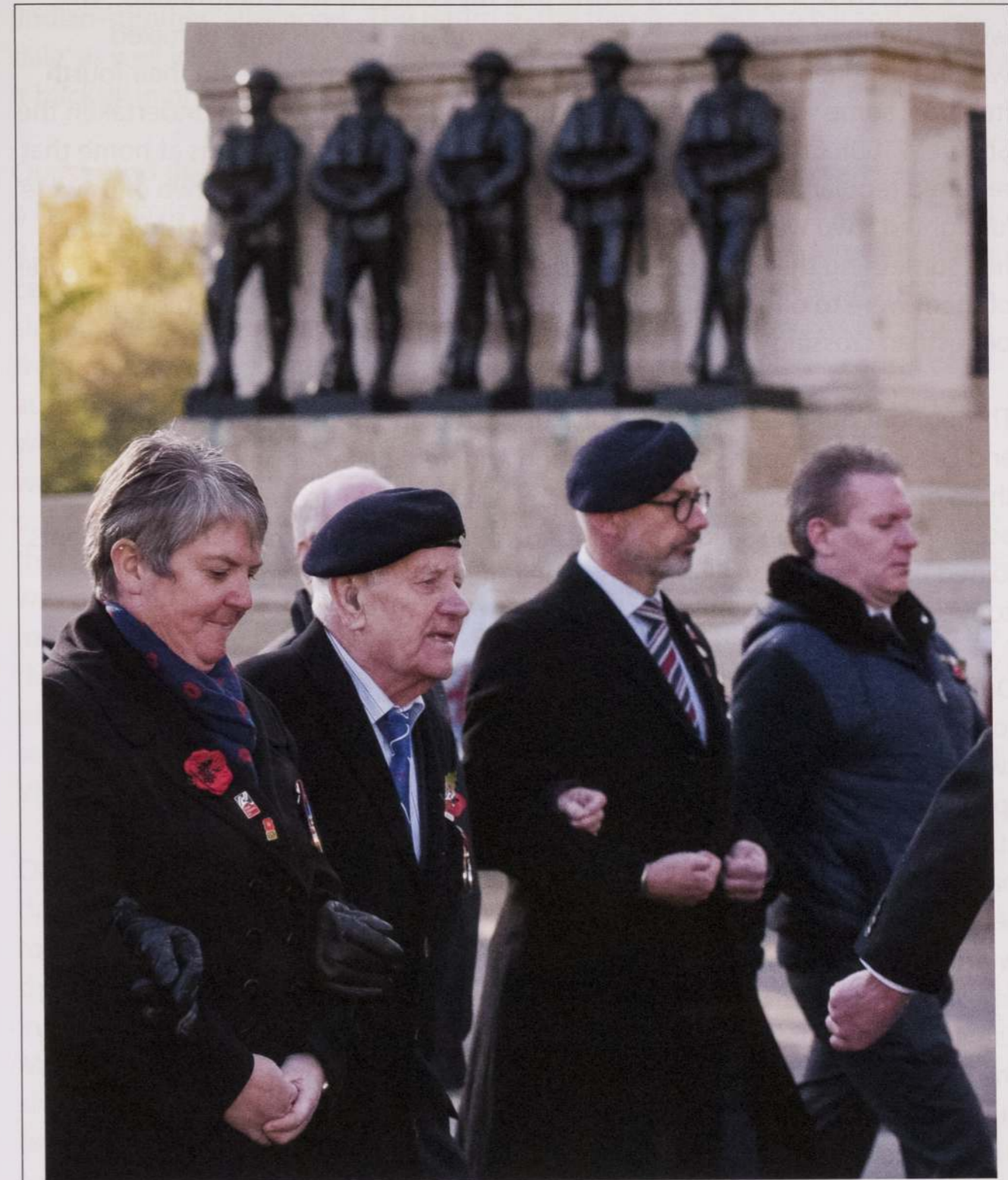
By Friday I feel that I had changed and had a solid future pathway ahead, the tools given during RESET created this.

I asked the other RESET participants to use one word to describe RESET. The words they used were, "transitional, inspirational, aspirational." The word I used was "metamorphosis".

Reset is an awesome week that allows us all to change direction, set new goals, build and enhance our confidence to go down new exciting pathways.

Push that reset button, I did.

If you are of working age and would like to take part in a future RESET Week at the Llandudno centre please speak with your Welfare Officer.



**Picture:** Tom Boal far right marches beside Welfare Support Officer Jason Scott.

## There Be Dragons Up There In Them Hills. Llandudno Walking Week October 2016. By Richard Haynes.

There was an element of trepidation when I put my name down for 'Walking Week' but I discovered on my arrival that my concerns were unfounded. We were a group of seven members, one accompanied by his wife, of mixed walking experience, fitness and vision impairment. Some were on their fourth iteration, some were members of local walking groups, two had undertaken the Sheffield 100K Challenge earlier in the year whilst others had dogs at home that required regular exercise. From a vision impairment perspective two of us were 'unsighted', two were supported by guide dogs — more later, and three of us had something that could be describes as a visual capability, however if any one of them were to offer to help you across the road, the advice would be "find a pedestrian crossing"!

Throughout our week we were ably supported and herded by Dewi, Lisa and Lee from the Sports and Recreation and Rehabilitation Team as well as three great volunteers; Bill (RM/Fireman), Gron (RAF/Police) and John (an accomplished ocean sailor). In addition, members of staff from all departments joined us on various walking days. Their guidance, encouragement and conversation made every day a wonderful and rewarding experience.

Our first day's walking was above Conwy. What started off as a gentle rise towards Conwy mountain, soon became a steeper climb to those of us on two legs. Some would have questioned whether Romeo was tethered to Bob (perhaps I should mention at this stage that Romeo is a guide dog and not a star-crossed lover) merely to guide him or to pull him up the more awkward parts of the path. The same could not have been levelled at Nimbus, (our second canine companion and not a "dark cloud" although he was a bit of a whirlwind) who was let off his leash and immediately found some heavenly smell to rub behind his ears. As we rose up the slope the vista over the Conwy Estuary opened up below us but was quickly lost as the showers rolled in from the East, we were in Wales so we had come prepared for inclement weather. Lunchtime saw us at the Druids Circle, surrounded by sheep, huddling against a dry-stone wall as we climbed into waterproofs and ate our packed lunches. Despite the pleading eyes of both dogs, sausage rolls, sandwiches, cake and crisps soon disappeared and we were on our way again, this time heading to one of the best kept secrets in North Wales, the Church of St Celwynin, with

its healing well, at Llangelynin. We traversed some interesting fields where thistle abounded and climbed some steep stiles, well Romeo only after he had suffered the indignity of being lifted over a five bar gate. The 12th century church was incredibly serene and unusually warm, perhaps the Saint was smiling down on us as the weather had cleared and we were enjoying an 'Indian-summer' afternoon. The return to the transport was 'up hill and down dale' as well involving a struggle up a very over grown bridle path, but we made it back all in one piece and apparently blister less; not a bad start.

Our second day saw us heading out to the Glyder Range and Ogwen Valley for a longer day's walking — of approximately eight miles. We started at Tregarth; a small village which was founded by the striking quarry workers in early 19th century and past buildings and narrow gauge railway lines that supported the slate industry that once was the mainstay of the local economy. As we strolled through the woods that were beginning to change colour with the onset of autumn, the sound of babbling streams was ever present. We stopped on a well-worn stone bridge for a well-earned cup of coffee and looked down, we were advised, into gin clear waters. We set out once again, but this time into open countryside as we skirted the vast spoil heaps of the slate quarries. Given that North Wales roofed so much of the World it beggars belief how much slate was quarried and dispatched to every point of the compass. The tracks and minor roads made for good walking and we kept up a brisk pace as we rose up the Valley mirroring Telford's mail coach road, the A5, to Holyhead. The lunch break was shorter than the previous coffee stop, the wind was beginning to strengthen. At the end of a strenuous eight miles we ended at the Lon Ogwen Visitors Centre in Tregarth, all very proud of our achievement.

On our third day, whilst the distance was considerably less than the previous day, the vertical height climbed was a strain on the feet, legs and lungs. Our route ran parallel to Offa's Dyke, an incredible engineering feat undertaken on the orders of the 10<sup>th</sup> century Mercian King, as we headed up from the car park in the wood line in Bwich Penberras to the Jubilee Tower, spot height 554m, on Moel Fanau. On the way, there were but a few occasions to strain to view the shape of the undulating, farmland below. When we did stop it was to suck in badly needed oxygen and to readjust our clothing and rucksacks. Lisa led us to the summit whilst we were guided and supported by many volunteers and member of staff. The Jubilee Tower was a surprise. Built initially to celebrate George III's fortieth anniversary of his Coronation it fell into disrepair before

it was resurrected for the Queen's Jubilee, when beacons were lit across the Country. Trying to eat our crisps below the Tower was not easy, but both Nimbus and Romeo were delighted to act as the group's litter pickers and hoovered up the odd crisp that was blown from either the hand or packet. The return journey was accomplished in half the time and we took some comfort that we were not the only ones to find it a struggle to reach the top, as other walkers wheezed their way past us. On our return to base we decided that we ought to undertake a survey of the local hostelries, for the benefit of all members who pass through Llandudno centre's doors you will understand. If you enjoy real ale and have a spare evening, then make your way to The Albion in Conwy. Selling ales from four local microbreweries it is an 'old-fashioned' pub. Roaring fires, bench seats and outstanding beer — well worth a visit.

It had always been the plan to tackle Snowdon, not necessarily to reach the summit. So, as Thursday dawned yet another fine and dry day we set off for the car park below the Rangers Path. Given the variety of visual capability in the group it soon became obvious that our two unsighted members would struggle with the very worn track and they peeled off and walked around a nearby lake. Once through the first damaged section of the route, the path opened out and we could stride out as we endeavoured to keep in touch with Lisa, who once again carried the medical pack, which appeared to be the size of an MFO crate. As we turned our sight towards the Summit all we could make out was mist, or was that smoke from the dragon's breath? Three quarters up and a halt was called for lunch and a review of progress. The last hour had been tortuous, the path had been washed away and despite Lisa advising us what to be aware of progress had slowed to a snail's pace. As we sat out of the breeze, eating our inevitable ham and cheese sandwiches and sausage roll a mountain biker appeared above us and in a trice, had passed us and was well below, an extreme sport for the fully sighted as was walking the route for us, the vision impaired.

If we had pressed on to the summit and its beckoning cafe it was highly likely that we would have been walking the lower reaches of the path in the gloom. It was too risky so wisely it was agreed to turn back. Despite there being some disappointment we all accepted why the decision had been made. So to drown our sorrows the majority took up John and Gron's kind offer to join us for drink after supper. Our first port of call was the Liverpool Arms on the Quayside at Conwy and then back to the Albion for, we hoped, more Snowdonia Ale; such

was its popularity that the barrel was dry and we were 'forced' to sample yet more fine ales!

Our last day's walking saw us on the Coastal Path. Starting at Colwyn Bay, our aim was to walk back to the centre in Llandudno, stopping for a bite to eat on the way. Once again the weather was very kind to us and we rattled, or should that be tapped, along keeping the sea on our right. Whilst it was the longest walk of the week it was the easiest, predominately flat and trip hazard free. Had it not been for some of the slowest service any of us can remember at lunch we would have made it back to the centre on foot, regrettably we fell a couple miles short, which demanded another expedition out in the evening, this time to the Albert in Llandudno. I am beginning to wonder if, for some of us, the drinking was more important than the walking!

So what was achieved? Five great days walking, covering some 35 miles and climbing approximately 4000ft. New friendships were established, camaraderie developed between members, volunteers and staff, but above all we all enhanced our independence skills, got a little fitter and grew in confidence. Now surely that is a great recommendation for an activity week?

## **Blind Veterans UK Amateur Radio Society 2016. By Edna McGoff QSL Manager.**

On 17th October 2016 we held our annual A.G.M. in the Trophy Room at the Brighton centre. There was quite a good turnout of members that included three new members to the Amateur Radio Society, Victor Seaman, Jim Parker and Jim Dunn.

It was reported that since our last meeting Dennis Dawson had gone silence key and Jackie Ward, the wife of Don our net controller for a number of years. A minutes silence was held in remembrance of them.

Our Chairman Ray Peart reported apologies for the absence of some of the widows of our founder members, who are now not able to come due to old age. Rose Shed celebrated her one hundredth birthday in June and Joyce (Flossie) Morgan will be one hundred in February what a wonderful age. Best wishes to them both and to Elise Cole and Jane Taylor.

Ray gave a full report on the past years operating of the Amateur Radio Society at the Llandudno and Brighton centres. It has been quite a successful year having contacts with many countries around the world. This year we are using a special call sign GB40BV. We would like to thank our volunteers John Houlihan and Rob Thornton, who gave up so much time to maintain the aerials and radios at the Brighton centre. Gron Edwards and members of his radio club for all the work they have done for us at the Llandudno centre. Our thanks go to all these people as without their help we would not be able to promote Blind Veterans UK on the air. It was good that Ray Hazan our secretary and Robbie his wife were able to be present. Claire Peart, Treasurer, gave an excellent financial report.

At 12.30pm we all met in the Winter Garden to enjoy an excellent lunch. Many thanks to Ted and Janet Dady who provided us with the wine, but were sorry they were unable to be with us this year, thanks were given to the TnS catering staff. Welcome was extended to invited guest who were present.

Every year at this time we present the G3MOW Trophy to people who have done so much to help us. This year it was presented to Graham Moore and Don Wallis who gave their valuable time to help to operate the radios, our grateful thanks to both of them.

Ray Hazan and others finished the occasion with a number of humours stories. After this enjoyable lunch we went up into the radio shack to start on the hard work of clearing all our spare radios and spare parts, wire, log books and QSL cards etc out of the back room cupboards and pack into large plastic boxes to store in the front shack as the back room was required for use by the kitchen staff as a store room.

After this our own room had to be prepared for the walls etc to be painted and the ceiling repaired, this required the removal and storage of pictures, certificates and QSL cards we had received from overseas amateur radio operators.

Our thanks go to Rob Thornton, John Houlihan and Alistair McGoff for all the hard work doing this work for us. The Radio Shack is rather cramped now with the two meter set being installed from the back shack plus all the boxes and extra chairs. No doubt we will get used to it all. We will soon find out when we meet again on 26th March 2017 for a week. Even with all this going on we still managed over a 100 contacts around the world. Thanks for all the operators and other members and short wave listeners. Looking forward to meeting everybody again next year.

If you would like to join Blind Veterans UK's Amateur Radio Society please contact its Chairman Ray Peart on 01452 533839 or email him at **[Raymond.Peart@btinternet.com](mailto:Raymond.Peart@btinternet.com)**



# Noticeboard.

**Dates for your diary and useful information.**

**Raising awareness of Blind Veterans UK.**

As we intend to reach and support more blind veterans, recruit more volunteers and raise more money than ever before, it's crucial that people know who we are, what we do, and how they can help. In line with this, next year, we will embark on a plan to try and raise as much awareness as possible of our charity. Before we do that though, it's really important to understand what people currently think of Blind Veterans UK and how we might build on this in the future.

In the New Year, we'll carry out some research to help us understand this and we will talk to lots of different people. Of course the first group we need to speak to is you, our members. We will be in contact with a number of you in January to listen to your feedback and hear your experiences of Blind Veterans UK. Other groups that we will speak to include volunteers and donors.

Please note that this research is entirely separate from the strategy review work that has taken place in recent months.

We will use a market research agency to collect the information, so you can be assured it will be confidential. To keep costs down, they will contact the people they need to speak to by email. However, if you'd like to take part in the research, but do not use email, we'd still like to hear from you. Please just let us know by calling Bronwyn Martin on 020 7616 7930 and we will arrange for the researchers to listen to your views on the telephone or we will send you a postal copy of the survey instead once it's ready.

If you have any questions about any aspects of the research, please contact Bronwyn on the number above.

Our thanks in anticipation of your help.

## Blind Veterans UK Calendar

**Activities from the Sheffield centre.**

**December.**

Christmas Week 12th to 16th.

## To change the format you receive the Review in.

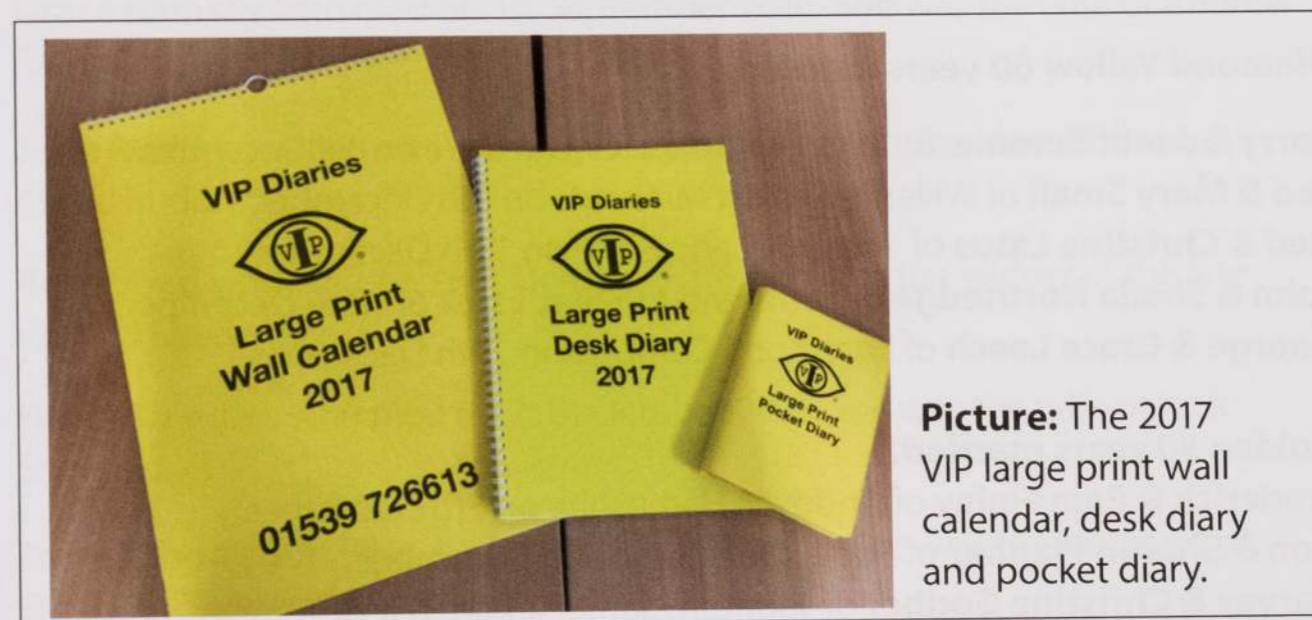
The Review is available as a large print magazine, an MP3CD, on USB, email and in Braille. To change the format you receive the Review in, and you may receive a print and audio Review, please email [revieweditor@blindveterans.org.uk](mailto:revieweditor@blindveterans.org.uk) or leave a message on telephone 020 7616 8367 stating your name, postcode and preference.

## Order your 2017 VIP large print diaries.

As we approach 2017 you can now place your orders for VIP calendars, diaries and address and telephone books.

- A 2017 A3 Calendar is priced at £5.75.
- A 2017 A4 Desk Diary is priced at £8.99.
- A 2017 A6 Pocket Diary is priced at £5.35.
- A VIP Address Book is priced at £9.25.
- A VIP Telephone Book is priced at £9.25.

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



**Picture:** The 2017 VIP large print wall calendar, desk diary and pocket diary.

# Family News.

## Congratulations to:

### Birthdays:

**Percy Norton** who celebrated his 103rd birthday on 27th December.

**Percy Wykes** who celebrated his 101st birthday on 4th December.

**John Evans** who celebrated his 101st birthday on 8th December.

**Reg Goodwin** who celebrated his 101st birthday on 27th December.

### Anniversaries:

#### Diamond Gold 75 years married.

**Tony & Lily Boden-Hook** of Dronfield, Derbyshire on 14th December.

**Ronald and Phyllis Britton** of Bristol on 14th December.

#### Blue Sapphire 65 years married.

**David & Joan Durrant** of Beccles, Suffolk on 15th December.

**Graham & Rosemary Hinton** of Dorchester, Dorset on 17th December.

**Grace & Peter Haddow** of Luton, Bedfordshire on 22nd December.

**Eric & Kathleen Buxton** of Barnsley, South Yorkshire on 22nd December.

**Philip & Jane Hall** of Sudbury on Thames, Middlesex on 29th December.

**Donald & Sylvia White** of Reading, Berkshire on 29th December.

#### Diamond Yellow 60 years married.

**Barry & Janet Summerfield** of Grantham, Lincolnshire on 1st December.

**Ted & Mary Small** of Willenhall, West Midlands on 8th December.

**Ged & Christine Latus** of Preston, Lancashire on 15th December.

**John & Sheila Northedge** of Southend-On-Sea, Essex on 15th December.

**George & Grace Leech** of Egremont, Cumbria on 29th December.

#### Golden 50 years married.

**Frederick & Pam Finlay** of Andover, Hampshire on 3rd December.

**Don & Sharon Planner** of Poole, Dorset on 17th December.

**Harvey & Christine Godber** of Taunton, Somerset on 31st December.

#### Ruby 40 years married.

**Michael & Margaret Kelbie** of Portsoy, Banffshire on 28th December.

#### Pearl 30 years married.

**James & Anna Tribe** of Hove, East Sussex on 12th December.

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

**Catherine Andrew** who died on 1st September 2016. She was the widow of the late Eric Andrew.

**Agnes 'Ann' Berry** who died on 5th October 2016. She was the wife of Trevor Berry.

**Glenys Davies** who died on 25th October 2016. She was the wife of Eric Davies.

**Aylmer 'Jane' Ellis** who died on 27th December 2016. She was the widow of the late Hugh Ellis.

**Sylvia Howard** who died on 8th November 2016. She was the wife of Brian Howard.

**Frances Humphrey** who died on 4th October 2016. She was the widow of the late Gordon Humphrey.

**Phyllis Naisbit** who died on 14th May 2016. She was the widow of the late George Naisbit.

**Grace Ramsay** who died on 1st September 2016. She was the wife of Andrew Ramsay.

**June Rudd** who died on 29th August 2016. She was the widow of the late Alfred Rudd.

**Rose Shed** who died on 28th October 2016. She was the widow of the late Richard Shed.

**Hazel Shingles** who died on 25th October 2015. She was the wife of Jack Shingles.

**James Thompson** who died on 2nd August 2016. She was the husband of Elizabeth Thompson.

# Welcome to Blind Veterans UK.

**John Abberley** of Stratford-Upon-Avon, Warwickshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1943 to 1946.

**John Ashbury** of High Peak, Derbyshire served in the Royal Engineers from 1958 to 1974.

**Beryl 'Maureen' Atkinson** of Seaview, Isle of Wight served in the Voluntary Aid Detachment from 1943 to 1944.

**Alan Baker** of Llandudno, Gwynedd served in the Royal Air Force from 1943 to 1947.

**Bernard Ballard** of Cardiff served in the Royal Air Force from 1952 to 1954.

**Frank Barnard** of Bolton served in the Royal Air Force from 1950 to 1952.

**Wally Barnes** of Cambridge served in the Royal Engineers from 1965 to 1974.

**Michael Bird** of Colchester served in the Royal Anglian Regiment from 1972 to 1992.

**Michael Bishop** of Wotton-Under-Edge, Gloucestershire served in the General Service Corps and Gloucester Regiment from 1944 to 1959.

**Kenneth Bowden** of Bristol served in the Royal Artillery from 1957 to 1963.

**George Brewis** of Wooler, Northumberland served in the Royal Air Force from 1953 to 1958.

**David Brocklehurst** of Cromer, Norfolk served in the Royal Armoured Corps from 1956 to 1964.

**William Brooks** of South West London served in the Princess Louise's Middlesex Regiment from 1942 to 1959.

**Edward Buckton** of Middlesbrough, Cleveland served in the Royal Air Force from 1955 to 1957.

**Kenneth 'Ken' Carlisle** of Royton, Oldham served in the South Lancashire Regiment and the Manchester Regiment from 1952 to 1958.

**Arthur 'Allan' Chave** of Tiverton, Devon served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1959 to 1965.

**Walter Clarke** of Worcester served in the Royal Air Force from 1949 to 1951.

**Lorna Cockayne née Fitch** of Christchurch, Dorset served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1944 to 1947.

**Alexander 'Alec' Cook** of Sunderland, Tyne & Wear served in the Royal Air Force from 1948 to 1950.

**Arthur Cooper** of Sutton, Surrey served in the Parachute Regiment from 1938 to 1946.

**Allan Cowie** of Buckie, Banffshire served in the Royal Signals from 1972 to 1984.

**James Daniel** of Aberdeen served in the General Service Corps and Royal Army Service Corps from 1947 to 1952.

**Judith Davies née Cross** of Bath served in the Princess Mary's Royal Air Force Nursing Service from 1947 to 1951.

**Tony Doyle** of Gloucester served in the Royal Navy from 1959 to 1969.

**James Duffy** of Seaham, County Durham served in the Royal Engineers from 1952 to 1953.

**Frederick 'Fred' Elson** of Burton-On-Trent, Staffordshire served in the Royal Engineers from 1950 to 1952.

**Joan Ferguson née Lammiman** of Wombourne, Wolverhampton served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1943 to 1947.

**James 'Jim' Foggoa** of Swindon served in the General Service Corps, Durham Light Infantry and Royal Army Service Corps from 1944 to 1947.

**John 'Bryan' Ford** of Gainsborough, Lincolnshire served in the Royal Lincolnshire Regiment and Royal Army Service Corps from 1955 to 1964.

**Edward 'Ted' Franklin** of Cotterell, Bristol served in the Royal Navy from 1946 to 1948.

**Leslie 'Les' Fryer** of Worthing, West Sussex served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1954 to 1956.

**Richard 'Richy' Furmidge** of Cambridge served in the Royal Air Force from 1984 to 1996.

**Alfred Gale** of Newcastle Upon Tyne served in the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1953 to 1967.

**William 'Bill' Gawith** of Welshpool, Powys served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps and Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1957 to 1959.

**Ian Gilfillan** of Keighley, West Yorkshire served in the Lowland Brigade, Scottish Division and Royal Highland Fusiliers from 1983 to 1995.

**Peter Grogan** of Middlesbrough, Cleveland served in the Royal Engineers from 1951 to 1954.

**William 'Bill' Gwilliam** of High Peak, Derbyshire served in the General Service Corps, Reconnaissance Corps and Royal Armoured Corps from 1943 to 1947.

**Peter 'Pete' Hicks** of Shavington, Crewe served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1960 to 1962.

**Albert Hinde** of Wellingborough, Northamptonshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1948 to 1953.

**Edwin 'Eddie' Hopkin** Cleckheaton, West Yorkshire served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1948 to 1959.

**Thomas 'Tom' Hurst** of Guisborough, Cleveland served in the Royal Air Force from 1946 to 1948.

**Gordon Jackson** of Southam, Warwickshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1947 to 1949.

**Graham Jones** of Caldicot, Gwent served in the General Service Corps and South Wales Borderers from 1946 to 1949.

**Harold Jones** of St. Helens, Merseyside served in the Lancashire Fusiliers and the Fusilier Brigade from 1960 to 1974.

**Patrick Judge** of Harwich, Essex served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1950 to 1964.

**John Kerr** of Bromley, Kent served in the Royal Navy from 1939 to 1954.

**Eric Lewin** of Stocksfield, Northumberland served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1945 to 1948.

**Daniel 'Danny' Martyn** of Birmingham served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers in 1949.

**Derek Maudsley** of Preston, Lancashire served in the Royal Navy from 1956 to 1963.

**David 'John' Maxwell** North Berwick, East Lothian served in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1947.

**Samuel Meers** of Peacehaven, East Sussex served in the King's Own Scottish Borderers from 1962 to 1971.

**John Moore** of Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1949 to 1951.

**John Morris** of Kesgrave, Ipswich served in the Royal Navy from 1950 to 1958.

**Peter Moseley** of Edinburgh served in the Scots Guards from 1944 to 1970.

**Tony Munn** of Burnham-On-Sea, Somerset served in the Royal Engineers and the Royal Corps of Transport from 1954 to 1967.

**Jack Nicholson** of Nottingham served in the East Yorkshire Regiment from 1939 to 1945.

**Thomas Nowell** of Rotherham, South Yorkshire served in the Duke of Wellington's from 1948 to 1957.

**James 'Jim' Nuttall** of Tiptree, Colchester served in the Royal Armoured Corps from 1941 to 1946.

**Anthony Odell** of Diss, Norfolk served in the Royal Army Pay Corps from 1955 to 1957.

**James 'Laurence 'O'Toole** of Scarborough, North Yorkshire served in the Royal Navy from 1945 to 1948.

**Joseph 'Joe' Page** of Wolverhampton served in the General Service Corps, South Staffordshire Regiment, Royal Army Service Corps and King's Own

Scottish Borderers from 1944 to 1959.

**Frederick Passey** of Southport, Merseyside served in the General Service Corps and Royal Welch Fusiliers from 1946 to 1948.

**Agnes 'Ann' Payton** of St. Austell, Cornwall served in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1948 to 1950.

**William 'Bill' Quinney** of Livingston, West Lothian served in the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1960 to 1962.

**David Ramshaw** of King's Lynn, Norfolk served in the Royal Air Force from 1960 to 1962.

**Gerald 'Tom' Reardon** of Exeter served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1948 to 1950.

**Cyril Reeves** of Birmingham served in the Royal Air Force from 1949 to 1950.

**Kenneth 'Ken' Richardson** of Scunthorpe, South Humberside served in the Royal Artillery from 1952 to 1959.

**Charles 'John' Robinson** of Scunthorpe, South Humberside served in the Royal Engineers from 1966 to 1992.

**Gilbert Rooke** of Birmingham served in the Royal Navy from 1948 to 1950.

**Eric Sanders** of Burton-On-Trent, Staffordshire served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1945 to 1948.

**John 'Jack' Scotton** of Birmingham served in the Royal Engineers from 1943 to 1952.

**Anthony Steadman** of Southport, Merseyside served in the Royal Air Force from 1955 to 1957.

**Joan Stilwell née Brewer** of Herne Bay, Kent served in the Royal Air Force from 1950 to 1954.

**Michael 'Mike' Stone** of Worcester served in the Royal Artillery from 1940 to 1946.

**Stanley 'Stan' Strange** of Chepstow, Gwent served in the Royal Air Force from 1946 to 1956.

**Lewis Strong** of Buckhurst Hill, Essex served in the Royal Artillery from 1942 to 1947.

**Ernest Symons** of Falmouth, Cornwall served in the Royal Navy from 1942 to 1945.

**Ivan Thompson** of Whickham, Newcastle Upon Tyne served in the Fleet Air Arm from 1946 to 1948.

**Peter Thompson** of Harleston, Norfolk served in the Life Guards Regiment from 1954 to 1957.

**Edward Tolan** of Harrogate, North Yorkshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1975.

**Frank Wallis** of Stone, Staffordshire served in the Royal Naval Reserve from 1941 to 1946.

**Kenneth 'Ken' Ward** of Wellingborough, Northamptonshire served in the Royal Armoured Corps from 1942 to 1954.

**Colin Waters** of York served in the Royal Air Force from 1952 to 1955.

**Ronald 'Ron' Wells** of Watford, Hertfordshire served in the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment from 1950 to 1964.

**Elwyn West** of Blackwood, Gwent served in the Royal Air Force from 1948 to 1950.

**Louise White** of Northampton served in the Royal Anglian Regiment from 1991 to 1992.

**John Wilson** of Aldershot, Hampshire served in the Royal Navy from 1947 to 1949.

**John Winder** of Newcastle Upon Tyne served in the Royal Air Force from 1947 to 1949.

**John Womack** of Bradford, West Yorkshire served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1946.

**Joseph Wood** of Freshbrook, Swindon served in the Royal Air Force from 1948 to 1982.

# 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.**

**Gordon Abbott** of Sunninghill, Berkshire died on 21st October 2016, aged 95. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1941. He was in motor transport and served in the UK, Germany and Belgium before discharge as an Acting Sergeant in 1946.

**Louis Bell** of Consett, County Durham died on 15th October 2016, aged 85. He joined the Royal Navy in 1949 serving in the North Atlantic in a frigate. He was discharged as a Stoker in 1953.

**Richard Bell** of Abergele, Clwyd died on 1st November 2016, aged 88. He joined the General Service Corps in 1946 for National Service. After basic training in Carlisle he specialised with the Royal Signals in Catterick and was posted to Nienberg near Hannover for approximately 18 months. He was discharged as a Signaller in 1948.

**Joseph 'Ray' Bellamy** of Spalding, Lincolnshire died on 6th October 2016, aged 94. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1940 working as an engine fitter on Spitfire Merlin engines. He was later posted to Egypt where he was involved with testing engines. He also served in Tripoli and Italy before he was discharged as a Leading Aircraftman in 1946.

**George Bennett** of Liverpool, Merseyside died on 4th July 2016, aged 88. He joined the General Service Corps in June 1946, transferring to the Royal Army Medical Corps. He served on HMS Elnil, a hospital boat carrying prisoners of war, and was discharged as a Private in 1948. He also served with the Royal Army Medical Corps (TA) from 1951 to 1954.

**Joseph 'Joe' Bennett** of Mansfield, Nottinghamshire died on 24th October 2016, aged 92. In 1942 he joined the Royal Navy, training at HMS Duke in Malvern. He later transferred to Portsmouth and was then on HMS Keppel, spending time in the Atlantic, Iceland, Russia, France and the Mediterranean. He was discharged as a Stoker First Class in 1946.

**Timothy Blott** of Cambridge, Cambridgeshire died on 8th November 2016, aged 94. He joined the Royal Army Ordnance Corps in July 1942, transferring in May 1943 to the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers when he served largely with the Ack-Ack batteries in the UK. Later his unit was shipped to the Far East but VJ Day occurred on reaching Egypt and he remained there until discharge as a Warrant Officer Second Class in 1947.

**John Bloxham** of Borehamwood, Hertfordshire died on 23rd October 2016, aged 92. He enlisted in the Royal Navy in 1941. He served in various theatres (worldwide) throughout the war before his discharge as an acting Able Seaman (Gunlayer) in 1946.

**William 'Bill' Braund** of Alfreton, Derbyshire died on 5th November 2016, aged 97. He joined the Welch Regiment in 1939 and was attached to the King's African Rifles in Kenya and Nyasaland. He also served in Burma and Northern Ireland before discharge as a Company Sergeant Major in 1946.

**Jack Britton** of Colchester, Essex died on 22nd October 2016, aged 85. He joined the Royal Air Force for National Service in 1949 and subsequently signed on for a full career. He trained as a dental mechanic and served in Germany, Cyprus and the UK before discharge in 1983 as a Flight Sergeant.

**Peter Brown** of Glastonbury, Somerset died on 8th October 2016, aged 88. He joined the Royal Air Force in November 1946 and following training was posted to a number of stations as they were closing down after the war. He was discharged in 1949, having attained the rank of Leading Aircraftman.

**Patrick 'Jack' Carroll** of West Bromwich, West Midlands died on 28th October 2016, aged 86. Following call up for National Service in 1948 he joined the Royal Air Force Transport Division, serving in the UK and Germany. He was discharged as an Aircraftman First Class in 1950.

**Edward 'Ted' Cooper** of Northampton, Northamptonshire died on 16th October 2016, aged 90. He joined the General Service Corps in March 1943 for initial training, transferring to the Royal Signals in September that year when he was posted to Bletchley and Germany. He was discharged as a Signaller in 1947.

**Sidney Cutter** of Solihull, West Midlands died on 20th October 2016, aged 92. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1942, serving as an air mechanic on Ansons in the UK and Egypt, before he was discharged as an Leading Aircraftman in 1947.

**Harry Etherton** of Brighton, East Sussex died on 27th October 2016, aged 97. He joined the Royal Artillery (TA) in 1938, transferring to the Royal Army Ordnance Corps in 1942. He qualified as a Radar Mechanic and served on coastal defence then anti-aircraft 4" gun sites based all around the UK, though mainly on the Sussex and Kent coast. He was discharged as a Craftsman in 1946.

**Richard Gould** of Downham Market, Norfolk died on 3rd November 2016, aged 95. He joined the East Kent Regiment in 1935 as a boy soldier and played the trombone in the Regimental Band. He joined the Royal Navy in 1940 and trained at HMS Ganges, qualifying as a gunner. He served in HMS Fiji and was sunk at the Battle of Crete. He also served in the Arctic Convoys. He was discharged as an Able Seaman in 1945.

**George Green** of Southport, Merseyside died on 3rd April 2016, aged 93. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1941 and served as a fitter on Typhoons and Spitfires in the UK and South Africa before discharge in 1945.

**Patrick Hendry** of Maldon, Essex died on 26th October 2016, aged 86. He joined the Royal Armoured Corps in March 1948, transferring to the Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards in August when he was posted to Paderborn. He was later in Korea for 13 months and subsequently Suez before being discharged as a Sergeant in 1953.

**Betty James née Martin** of Croydon, Surrey died on 26th October 2016, aged 94. She joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force in 1942, served in the UK and was discharged as a Leading Aircraft Woman in 1945.

**Martin Jones** of Etchingam, East Sussex died on 4th November 2016, aged 87. He joined the Royal Artillery in 1947 and following commission in 1949 he served with the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, transferred to the Parachute Regiment in 1962 and retired in 1984 as a Colonel.

**William 'Tom' Jupp** of St Albans, Hertfordshire died on 17th October 2016, aged 87. He joined the Royal Navy in 1950 as an Engine Room Artificer and served in HMS Triumph, a light fleet carrier in the Home Fleet. The ship was deployed to Cyprus during the Egypt crisis. He was discharged in 1952.

**Ronald 'Ron' Leaney** of Lewes, East Sussex died on 7th October 2016, aged 79. He was called up for National Service enlisting in the Royal Engineers in 1956 and training in Worcester. He was subsequently posted to Manchester, Southampton and eventually to Cyprus during the troubles. He was discharged as a Sapper in 1958.

**Peter Manning** of Newcastle Upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear died on 21st October 2016, aged 80. He joined the Royal Marines in 1955, serving in Kuwait, Aden, Egypt, Iraq, and the Arabian Gulf before discharging as a Marine in 1962.

**Terence 'Terry' McDermott** of Thornton Cleveleys, Lancashire died on 30th October 2016, aged 88. He joined the Royal Navy for National Service in 1946 and after training he was involved in minesweeping at Port Edgar in Scotland. He was then posted to Plymouth and later HMS Renown where he worked for the Captain's Secretary. He was discharged as a Leading Writer in 1948.

**Eric Newlan** of Eastbourne, East Sussex died on 27th October 2016, aged 95. He joined the Non-Combatant Corps in 1941 serving initially in the Bomb Disposal Unit. He also served in the UK building railways and was discharged as a Private in 1943 following illness contracted through his work.

**Alan Nichols** of Newtownards, County Down died on 19th October 2016, aged 85. He joined the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers as a boy in 1947. He served in the UK, Northern Ireland, in the Korean War, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore and Kenya. He was discharged as a Sergeant when his engagement expired in 1971. However he continued to work with the Army, as a civilian employee in a barracks in Northern Ireland; he retired fully in 1996.

**Jack Patten** of Gateshead, Tyne & Wear died on 10th October 2016, aged 94. He enlisted into the RAF in 1941 and served in North Africa and invaded Italy. His squadron was posted to Greece briefly when the Communists threatened invasion but he returned to Italy when the war ended. He was discharged in 1946 as a Leading Aircraftman (Flight Mechanic).

**Betty Peach** of Glasgow, Lanarkshire died on 5th October 2016, aged 94. She joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service in 1943 and trained as a lorry driver, serving in Stockton-on-Tees before moving to London before discharge in 1946.

**William Perry** of Seaford, East Sussex died on 5th October 2016, aged 91. He joined the General Service Corps in 1943 and after training transferred to the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers when he was deployed to Europe. He was later posted to Nigeria where he instructed the local troops on vehicle maintenance until discharge as a Corporal in 1947.

**George Robertson** of Southport, Merseyside died on 30th October 2016, aged 93. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1942, training in London, St Andrews and Canada. He was unable to complete his training due to a perforated eardrum and was medically discharged in 1944.

**Kenneth 'Ken' Scriven** of Devizes, Wiltshire died on 1st August 2016, aged 82. He was called up for National Service in 1952 and joined the Royal Armoured Corps attached to the 14/20 Hussars, training at Catterick. He specialised as a Driver and served in North Africa, based in Tripoli. He was discharged in 1954.

**Reginald 'Reg' Searle** of Seaford, East Sussex died on 1st November 2016, aged 94. Called up in 1942 he joined the Royal Air Force. He trained to fly in Rhodesia and qualified as a bomber pilot in Liberators. He served in Egypt and Palestine before discharge as a Flight Sergeant in 1947.

**Ernest Seymour** of Aylsham, Norwich died on 1st November 2016, aged 82. Called up for National Service he served in the UK in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1954 until discharged as a Private in 1956.

**Neville Smith** of Whitchurch, Shropshire died on 12th October 2016, aged 78. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1960 and served as an electrical fitter on Valiants until 1963.

**Bertie 'Bert' Stephens** of Billingham, Cleveland died on 23rd October 2016, aged 95. He volunteered to join the Royal Air Force in 1940. After training he was later posted to the Faroe Islands on General Duties. He was subsequently posted to Pitreavie Castle in Scotland, Wick, RAF Kenle, Belgium and Germany. He was discharged as a Leading Aircraftman in 1946.

**Roy Trezies** of Bracknell, Berkshire died on 30th October 2016, aged 91. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1943 as a Flight Mechanic. After initial training in Skegness he joined a target towing squadron in the south of England before being posted to Egypt and Palestine. He was discharged in 1947 as an Aircraftman First Class.

**Arthur Walker** of Rhyl, Clwyd died on 1st March 2016, aged 92. He joined the General Service Corps in March 1942 and transferred to the Royal Artillery in 1943. He served in the UK and Italy and was discharged in 1947 as a Gunner.

**Arthur Walton** of Durham, County Durham died on 20th October 2016, aged 97. He enlisted in the Royal Signals Corps in 1936 and served in Tunisia and Sicily. He was discharged as an Acting Lance Corporal in 1946.

**Dennis Webb** of Crawley, West Sussex died in 2016, aged 87. He joined the Royal Air Force for National Service in 1946, serving at RAF Padgate. He was discharged as an Aircraftman Second Class in 1948.

**Sylvia 'Sally' Whittaker** of Barrow In Furness, Cumbria died on 6th October 2016, aged 102. She joined the Women's Royal Air Force in 1941 and served in Germany where, later in the war, she collated records and archives for the Nuremberg Trials. She continued with this work and stayed in Germany, even after her discharge as a Corporal in 1946.

**John 'Colin' Williams** of Frodsham, Cheshire died on 6th November 2016, aged 92. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1942. He started as an instrument maker and later became a navigator in the Far East until discharge as a Sergeant in 1953.

**Tom Willis** of Alvechurch, Birmingham died on 21st October 2016, aged 97. He joined the Royal Army Medical Corps in 1939. He trained locally and was posted to East Africa and latterly discharged as a Warrant Officer in 1946.

**Eric 'Monty' Woolley** of Looe, Cornwall died on 6th November 2016, aged 101. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1936 and was largely based in Dover with 27 Air Sea Rescue Service prior to discharge in 1945 as a Leading Aircraftman.

**Ian Wynne** of Hull, Yorkshire died on 15th October 2016, aged 63. He joined the Royal Military Police in 1975, serving in the UK, Germany and Cyprus until discharge as a Sergeant in 1987.

**Raymond Yeates** of Tunbridge Wells, Kent died on 15th August 2016, aged 92. He joined the Royal Air Force in 1942, training as a ground-based wireless operator in the UK. He served in Sicily, Italy and Yugoslavia and was discharged as a Leading Aircraftman in 1946.



First We Forget

