

October 2017

# Review

Blind Veterans UK | St Dunstan's since 1915





**On the cover:** Cycling superstars Steve Nixon and Louise Timms make their way back to the Brighton centre after cycling through the South Downs.

**Back page:** Blind veteran, Chevalier Fred Simpson, holds the Legion d'honneur that was presented to him at the Chorley Reunion. The former Royal Artillery Gunner, who landed on D-Day, is shown with fellow blind veterans Maria Pikulski and Alan Holderness.



Oct 2017 | No 1085

### **Patron Her Royal Highness The Countess of Wessex GCVO.**

Blind Veterans UK Review is published monthly by Blind Veterans UK, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD [blindveterans.org.uk](http://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.

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

## **Blind Veterans UK Calendar**

### **Activities from the Brighton centre.**

#### **October/November.**

Amateur Radio Club 1st to 7th.  
Technology Week (second) 8th to 14th.  
Bowling Fortnight (first) 15th to 28th.  
Driving Week 29th October to 4th November.

#### **December.**

Turkey & Tinsel Week 10th to 16th.

#### **February 2018.**

Archery Club 18th to 24th.

#### **March 2018.**

Bowling Fortnight 11th to 24th.

### **Activities from the Llandudno centre.**

#### **October.**

History Week 22nd to 28th.

#### **November.**

Military Week 5th to 13th.

#### **December.**

Sewing Week 3rd to 9th.

#### **March 2018.**

Health & Wellbeing Week 6th to 10th.

Music Week 25th to 31st.

#### **To book Themed and Club Weeks at the Brighton centre.**

For further information and to book your place at the Brighton centre please telephone the Booking Office on 01273 391500.

#### **To book Themed and Club Weeks at the Llandudno centre.**

For further information or to book your place please telephone: 01492 864590.



# From the Chairman.

Your message from Tim Davis.

As I write this month's message the Invictus Games are taking place with veterans making truly great achievements in their chosen sport. Blind veterans Kelly Ganfield and Jamie Weller are just two who are taking part and interviews with them will feature in the November and December Review. As well as speaking about their sporting achievements the athletes have spoken of their lives, pre and post injury. We hear as they speak of making great strides in their personal lives; gaining independence, fulfilment and happiness from a place where life was, for a while, quite bleak. This is a journey many of you are familiar with and for veterans who are vision impaired, it is a journey this organisation was established to help you through. It is the core purpose of our charity and one we will continue to focus on and nurture in future years.

We have grown as a charity as we help more and more veterans who have become vision impaired primarily through eye disease as a result of older age. So what are we doing to meet these challenges and make sure we are fit for purpose?

The charity is operating at capacity at our centres in Brighton and Llandudno, and it is good to see the investments we have made in these centres being so well utilised. Across the country we have put in place a new regional structure of five regions supporting 19 communities to bring services and social networking opportunities closer to where you live. We also help many more, with membership now having grown to over 4,500.

Our current ambition is to double this number as we still only help a small percentage of those who have served and are now living with sight loss. That said, we will do so keeping front of mind some important principles. Our core focus remains to help those who are visually impaired as a consequence of service, to bring you back to independence, to lead fulfilling and happy lives.

We will seek out innovative ways to help achieve what Sir Arthur Pearson called 'Victory over Blindness'; we have laid the foundations to enable more research and development in a number of areas.

And finally we will develop the services we provide to maintain and improve the outcome for all our members over time. All of this we will do in a way that is sustainable and makes best use of the very kind and generous donations of time, money and assets that we are given.

Looking forward, we have much work to do to achieve this ambition. Bedding down and building on the new regional and community structure we have planted. Putting in place the capabilities to grow voluntary donations and legacies to offset the growth in costs. Our speed of growth will be governed by our ability to do this; whilst keeping to our priorities, and ensuring the health of the charity as we do so.

Achieving great things takes time, commitment and maintaining focus on our purpose and priorities. With this in mind I'm very confident, just as our members demonstrate through events such as the Invictus Games; our organisation will continue to make great strides and an invaluable difference to the lives of you all.



## The Presidential Suites at the Llandudno Life Skills centre.

Since our Patron Her Royal Highness The Countess of Wessex GCVO, opened our Life Skills building on 28th March, the question of naming the individual apartments within the building has been the subject of many discussions. Many worthy suggestions were put forward, but in the end all agreed that the most fitting tribute was for the apartments to be named after the Presidents of our charity. To commemorate the naming of the buildings we invited our current and past Presidents, and the families of past presidents, to a naming ceremony in the Life Skills building. They were joined by staff from BLEMSA, who included Heather Nicolson, Director of Operations. BLEMSA partnered with us to bid for funding to convert the derelict buildings to the rear of the Llandudno centre into the new facility for working age members of both charities. Whilst we were fortunate to secure LIBOR funding there was a still a shortfall. Through the generosity of donors we were able to complete the work and to show them how their money has helped we were joined by some of those donors.



**Picture:** Colin Beaumont-Edmonds's daughter Felicia Boss-Walker by the suite that is named after her late father.

Colin Beaumont-Edmonds MC served as President of St Dunstan's from 1986 to 2004.

In May 1943, shortly before the end of the campaign in North Africa, Colin Beaumont-Edmonds was a Lieutenant serving with 2/5th Battalion the Queen's Royal Regiment (2/5 QRR) at Enfidaville, Tunisia. His company was holding a small ridge when he caught sight of an Italian patrol working its way towards them. Ordering a section to give covering fire, he went after them with his platoon Sergeant and a runner. Another platoon joined him and they routed 17 Italians, capturing their machine gun. On the way back he was hit by a fragment from a mortar shell and blinded. He was awarded an MC.

His service overseas lasted a year and a day. After returning to England, he went to our wartime training centre at Church Stretton in Shropshire. A year later, he went up to Magdalen College, Oxford, for a two-year course in PPE. His main difficulty was having to learn by listening. There were no tape recorders, and whereas his fellows at the college were studying late at night, he had to work when he could get a reader. By a strange coincidence, the reader found for him in the mornings was called Mrs Dunstan. "When I was blinded," Beaumont-Edmonds said later, "I did not know what the future would hold or even what a blind person could do. At Oxford, when someone asked me if I would row in the eight, I said it was impossible because I could not see. 'Well,' came the reply, 'if you were the stroke the cox would help you.'" So he stroked the college third eight, and every morning two of the crew — one on each side of him — jogged around the grounds with him.

In 1964 he was elected Mayor of Sutton Coldfield, and in a busy year, in which he performed more than 500 engagements, he made local history by visiting all the industrial firms in the town. Chairing the monthly meetings was the most demanding part of the job, but he used Braille for agendas and speech notes and for reading lessons in church. He was a gentle, modest man, intelligent, perceptive and blessed with a fine sense of humour.



**Picture:** Colin Beaumont-Edmonds MC riding a tandem bike at Church Stretton.





**Picture:** Ray Hazan OBE, President from 1986 to 2017, stands outside the Hazan Suite. Speaking of the honour Ray said, "To be associated with such a worthwhile and invaluable skills accrument, makes one feel very proud."



**Picture:** "I am very proud and humbled to have this room named after me. To be associated with such past Presidents as Colin Beaumont-Edmonds MC and Ray Hazan OBE, whom I have long admired and respected, is a wonderful honour." Colin Williamson, President of Blind Veterans UK.

## Gadgets. By Grace Bittan.

I had the very good fortune to be married to a man who loved gadgets. It didn't matter if they were big or small, cheap or expensive or even what they were for, he just was fascinated by them. I remember standing in a field trying out walkie-talkies. He going one way, me the other and the conversation consisting of, 'Can you hear me now?' and 'Is that any better?' We would have had the same result with two cans and some string but he was happy with his latest acquisition.

When I first started to lose my sight, he went out of his way to find interesting things to help me; a magnifier on a frame that was hands free so that I continued with my tapestry. A pocket magnifier that looked like a bank card that I could use when shopping. A laser light that went round corners. And most effective and funny, a key ring device, that when you whistled, beeped so you could find your keys. He then proceeded to put one on my glasses, the shed keys, his keys, the phones and TV handsets. You can imagine the noise as I whistled!

But as my sight worsened he really got into looking for serious help tools. These gadgets are not necessarily for people with sight problems but I have chosen ones that are easy to use and can replace hand tools that are hard to find and not as effective.

I recommend an electric can opener. It's easier to find than a hand device and simple and safe to use. When the machine has opened the tin, the magnet holds onto the lid so you can find it easily.

Then comes a battery operated jar opener. This is good, especially if there is a lot of liquid in the jar. They are about six inches long and chunky. Holding the jar in one hand with its bottom on the table, you place the opener on top of the jar then press the button on top. Two 'arms' grab the lid and twist it open. It's very effective and if you hold onto the jar you don't end up with vinegar all over you.

If you can still see light then try out a rechargeable torch. Handy to find things in the night or in a cupboard. You can find ones with very powerful lights that have a concentrated beam.



Or maybe stick on light strips that can go around the bathroom door frame, also battery operated. They were bought on the Internet. When you flick the switch the doorway frame lights up, so would be on all night, lighting your way to the loo! Battery operated Christmas lights can also work in the same way.

While he was confined more and more to bed with his many illnesses, my husband scoured the Internet for cooking appliances as I was always burning myself on the oven. Consequently we acquired; a sandwich maker that also makes omelettes. A cupcake maker that can produce six buns at a time in about five minutes. This requires you to be able to make up the cake mix. A waffle maker that I couldn't get on with. A grill that stood on the table and so made it easier to see, being close up.

And seriously recommended, a Breville Halo cooker. This is a largish device with an internal non-stick, round metal container for the food. The paddle then goes in and turns the food over e.g. raw potatoes cut into chips. You can put in about two pounds of food (1 Kilo) at one time. Then a very small amount of oil (two teaspoons). The paddle coats the potato in oil and the internal pan turns for even cooking once you put the lid down and 25 minutes later you have chips. It has a halogen lamp in the lid so is cheap to run and can make toast, grill bacon, burgers, fish fingers and it can even cook buns and make a casserole. In fact it's a healthy eating device that's safer than bending down to an oven, cheaper, and can be plugged in anywhere. If you are alone its ideal.

I also have a smoothie maker that is easy to use. Chop up fruit (and or veg), add some yogurt or fruit juice to about three quarters of the way up. I put my finger inside the cup to measure. And then put the lid on and place it upside down in the device. Press the cup firmly down for a few seconds at a time and then it's a smoothie! It also purees cooked food for babies and crunches ice.

Then nearly three years ago my husband died and a year later nearly all my remaining sight went. I have about 10% of blurred vision in one eye now. Blind Veterans UK stepped in and I went for an induction week. I came home with fabulous gadgets; a talking jug that weighs both liquid and dried food. Highly recommended. A small kettle that's light and safer. A buzzer for liquid levels. Excellent. The Reading Easy machine that reads anything in print up to A4 size. And what would I do without it! That has changed my life again. Now my letters are private.

A small Boom Box that takes a USB stick for listening to stories. So easy to use and a complete delight to me. Free books from the RNIB. What more could you want!

Then there are talking lids that are magnetic and go on top of tins in your larder. You get help initially from someone to tell you what is in the tin, then you press two small buttons together on the top and speak. For example for baked beans pop the lid onto the tin and then when you go back to the larder and reach for a tin, you then press the large button and it tells you 'baked beans'. Saves you from having rice pudding on toast! To change the name of the product you just press the two small buttons and say another word. Simple but very effective.

I also have a small, round, soft plastic mould that holds a cup still while you pour in the hot water. Handy.

What about something that helps you differentiate between similar items, I hear you cry? e.g. DVD's. Well of course there is one and it's called the Pen Friend. As its name implies, it's shaped like a pen only fatter. It comes with small paper labels that stick onto each of your items. Each label has a tiny number on it. Again you will need help to tell you the title of a film or disc. Then pressing one button you speak into the pen and it records the name and the corresponding number on the label. When you touch the end of the pen on the label it speaks back to you. I have the labels on files, music discs and all my spice bottles. You can also get washable labels for clothes.

You have to decide what you want help with most of all and then just go for it! All the things need a bit of getting used to and learning to deal with, but by and large, the results outweigh the effort involved.

### **Now we come onto the big boys of gadgets:**

Think to yourself, what would help me most of all in a shop and help me to shop independently? Is there such a machine? Of course there is. It's called ORCAM. This is a tiny camera that fits onto your glasses by way of a clip. As you hold up an item in the shop, say a packet of cereal, the ORCAM takes a picture of what is written on the packet and tells you exactly what it 'sees'. e.g. Rice Krispies 500 grams made by Kellogg's. It can read most packets and tins, your bank card, labels, bus and train timetables, pill packets etc. Clothes labels are a



bit more difficult. Then when you bring the shopping home it can read all the instructions on the back of packets.

It also has the ability for facial recognition. This is a bit more complicated to understand but for totally blind people it would be worth getting to grips with. The downside is that lots of artificial light is needed, hence the shopping part works well but not always so successful in the house or outside on a dull day. You do need training for this but it has made it possible for me to shop alone.

I also have a cordless vacuum cleaner. It's made by Air Ram. These are quite expensive, Dyson makes one and more are coming on the market. A battery charge will operate the cleaner for about 40 minutes, plenty of time to clean the floors, both carpets and hard surfaces. Again it requires a little help in learning how to empty the dirt container but the plus sides outweigh the initial effort. It's light and no wires to trip over. New cordless items are coming on the market all the time, hedge cutter, lawn mowers and strimmer's etc.

I also acquired ALEXA. This is an interesting and useful gadget that anyone can use. It's the size of a coffee jar lid and plugs in. ALEXA's job is to help answer questions e.g. 'What is the weather like in Scotland' (or anywhere in the world) today or next week? What time is it? How do you spell a word and what is its meaning? Who was the first man on the moon and other pub quiz questions? It's an alarm clock and a timer for cooking. It also plays you all the radio programs and can tell you what things are going on in your area as it's connected to the internet. This setting up process has to be done by a ten year old grandchild with a smart phone! It is operated by your voice.

And the computer that I'm writing on has a talking 'Guide' system on it, making it possible for me to write this for the Review.

My latest acquisition is a free Smart Metre. Apparently everyone will have one by 2020. This is set up in the house to tell you exactly how much electricity and/or gas you have used. You may wonder what use it is to me as I can't see the little four inch screen but it reads my gas and electricity metres and sends the readings directly to my provider. Again releasing the need for help.

Now my favourite kitchen appliance. A soup maker. It's a jug design made by Salters. I got mine from Robert Dyas. There are plenty of them out there but

choose carefully. This one is very stable and easy to understand. The jug has two raised marks inside. The lower one is the food level, the upper is for liquid. So to make a basic vegetable soup you need; a large carrot, an onion, a leek and some other vegetables, maybe broccoli and peas. Chop them into smallish pieces. Put them all in the jug until it's about level with the bottom mark. Now add stock until it reaches the higher mark.

All the works are contained in the lid which fits on top of the kettle with its whisks in the soup. There are flashing lights when you turn it on and you press the farthest left for smooth soup, next one in for chunky soup and farthest right to make it go. Stand back and wait. It boils, chops the vegetables, boils some more, makes the vegetables into a mush and bleeps a lot when it's done and 20 to 30 minutes later you have 1.3 litres of boiling vegetable soup. The sheer joy of making it yourself is fabulous. I use it most days in the winter, thickening it with a small potato or red lentils, adding herbs and spices as I got more confident. A very good buy indeed and there is nothing like fresh soup and a chunk of bread on a cold winter evening. A great buy!

I could go on for some time about more gadgets that are available; pocket Dictaphones that are a verbal shopping list. A hand held device that tells you the colour of items. Little wooden stamps that have your address engraved on them. A sliding plastic appliance that fits over a page so you can write in a space and continue letter writing if you want to. A talking mobile phone, house phone and watch. All simple and relatively cheap but in the end a simple 'bump on' may be all you need to overcome a problem.

Many years ago my husband bought me a talking watch, one of the first of its kind. It came from Japan and was very efficient indeed. There was only one problem, it spoke in Japanese! So think carefully when you purchase from the internet before seeing. When I can't do something for myself my husband's words come back to me; While you are busy thinking how to do something and wondering what tool would help, somewhere in the world someone is busy inventing it! Don't despair!

Good luck and have fun with all your gadgets.



## **Recovery from Hell, after 25 years of working with the Brighton Sports & Rec team, Steve Nixon continues to inspire.**

As Steve Nixon and Louise Timms cycle in tandem through the South Downs and up the steep hill towards their finish at the Brighton centre, former Royal Marine Steve recites a continuous stream of poetry. But for this cultured Marine, who served in 3 Commando Brigade, the poetry is spoken in Spanish, Greek and in English.

Injured during Operation Haven, the United Nations work for the protection of Kurds living in Northern Iraq in the aftermath of the Gulf War, Steve became a St Dunstaner in 1992.

He is a published author and in his book, *Recovery from Hell*, he writes of how he was almost killed during the humanitarian mission. Not expected to live his parents watched as their son was given the last rights. It wasn't his time and Steve fought his way back. He knew he'd recover as he was a Royal Marine to his core. During months of intensive rehab at the Brighton centre, Steve took inspiration from the St Dunstaners he met there. In *Recovery from Hell* he included interviews with them and he wrote of cycling in the London to Brighton bike ride, his first endurance event post injury. He has since gone on to complete numerous endurance cycling challenges.

Taking up his story Steve said, "When I wrote *Recovery from Hell* I carried out the work independently, interviewing Ray Hazan, Billy Baxter, Sparky, Ray Sheriff and others. I used one finger to type my book as I wrote my story of what happened and what was important to me, and each of those people was important to me, as was that first London to Brighton bike ride.

"I raised the money for this tandem bike as the one they had was old and it had a shopping basket. I've retired from endurance challenges, but over the last 15 years cycling with Louise Timms we've completed the London to Brighton bike ride and the Hove bike ride a number of times, and many other events. When I lived in the North East I'd come down to the Brighton centre for weeks at a time and we'd train every day. I now leave challenge events to David Cranson, he's one of my best friends and a fellow Sunderland supporter and blind veteran. So now practically every Wednesday Lou and I do a circular tandem ride from the Brighton centre, through the South Downs and back. We go out in all types of weather, often unintentionally! I'm paralysed on my left side and

cycling is extremely good for my fitness levels, but cycling up that drive is a killer. Going up hills on a normal bike is extremely difficult but going up hills on this one is incredibly hard, it's a nightmare. Sometimes you feel like you're going backwards and you think 'Are we going to make this?' And sometimes we do go backwards, but we always recover. I enjoy the challenge of it and being outdoors in the fresh air.

"Louise is great. We've worked together for the last 15 years, but it feels more like 25! Before that I worked with Grant, her predecessor. Lou has encouraged me to do lots of challenges so, I've done 15 years of intense training."

It is because of Steve that Major General Andy Keeling CB, CBE, RM became involved with our charity as he was Steve's Operation Commander on Operation Haven. It was a proud moment for both men, when on 7th May 1993, Andy presented Steve with his Gulf War Medal at the Brighton centre (shown in the photograph below).





Steve isn't alone in finding inspiration through working with Louise and her team in the gym at the Brighton centre. Full time instructors Steve Mills, Russell Scullion and Richard Phinbow are always on hand to work one to one or with groups.

Louise Timms said, "Our gym is fully equipped and like any other gym we have aerobics machines, fixed resistance machines and free weights. As they have been adapted for people with a vision impairment and other disabilities we have tactile markings on the treadmills and different colours on the controls for people with some sight. We have wheelchair accessible machines as the idea is that anyone can use our gym. We facilitate that for everyone whether you're 95 or 25. In fact Henry Allingham used to come in here when he was 110. Local members use the gym, as do our residents and people here on intro, activity or themed weeks, so we're busy every day of the week.



**Picture:** Charlie Parkinson uses the tactile markings to programme the running machine as he works with Sports & Rec Instructor Richard Phinbow.

"This year we introduced four group training weeks to get people together so you get camaraderie and peer support where they encourage each other during the week. We start the week with a range of fitness tests, which include jumps, runs, sit and reach, and a 500 metre row, which they all seemed to enjoy. Even though its five days you see the improvement. It's perfect for people who are looking for a kick start to their fitness regime at home as we work out a plan they can follow when they leave the centre. When they go home we're still here to support them as they can contact us. So it's not just when they're here for the week, we provide ongoing support and then when they come to the next

group fitness week we can gauge their fitness to see how they've improved. That's something new and exciting that Steve, Russell and Richard have really got their teeth into. It's not all about being in the centre because obviously people have classes in their own communities, it's about introducing them to what's out there once we've trained them in our gym.



**Picture:** One part of the gym shows people on Fitness Week and the other people as they are trained to use the gym equipment.

"We also work with people on their physical rehab, if they have an injury or have suffered a stroke. It doesn't come up all the time but we put packages into place, working with local services and physios to support them on their recovery. That work means we have to be resourceful. We obviously train people to achieve some extreme goals, but it's equally important when we train people who want to dress themselves or to walk to the bathroom unaided. It's about quality of life and maintaining activities of daily living and that's just as important as running a marathon. We see the value in it, and also the social side for people who use the gym, as it's a real social hub."





**Picture:** The Brighton centre's fully accessible gym.



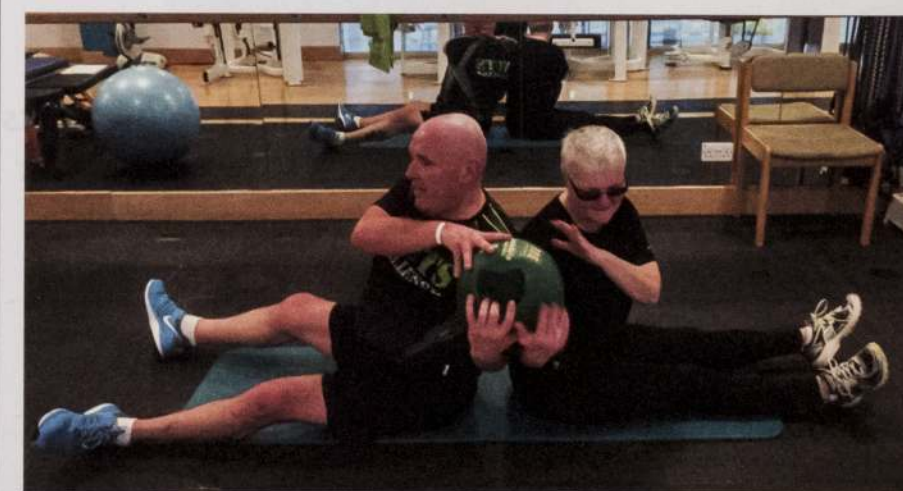
**Picture:** Group training in action.

"We're always here to work with people in the gym, but we also do a range of activities outside. Our activity weeks include a driving week, an adrenalin week, walking week and a cycling week, and much more as we continue to put together a programme based on what people want. We did the 100k training weeks in conjunction with the support team when we equipped the members for it, whether it was fitness advice, nutrition advice or clothing advice.

"We've taken part in British Military Fitness on the sea front from 6.30am when six blind veterans and four members of staff went along. We provide the training for endurance events as blind veterans take part in half marathons, marathons and triathlons, and Richard will do the Royal Parks half marathon in October with David Cranson. Just one of many they complete with blind veterans.



**Picture:** Steve Mills leads an early morning outdoor workout during the group training week.



**Picture:** Blind veterans Alan Walker and Sue Eyles. Alan is now a qualified fitness instructor.



## Sailing for the Blind. By John Nicol, blind veteran and Llandudno centre volunteer.

This year, along with fellow Llandudno member John Moore, I was lucky to be picked to join Sailing for the Blind on the South Coast.

We travelled down to Southampton by train and went straight to the Royal Southampton Yacht Club where our Skipper and crew greeted us with a pint at the bar (a good start). We were then introduced to our yacht, a 40 foot French Dufor that was well equipped with all mod cons. That evening we had a dinner at the Club and met the other vision impaired crews. As there are only two places for blind veterans the rest came from all over.

Sunday morning came with sunshine and a strong Force 7! After a hearty breakfast on board we headed down Southampton water and down the Solent among oil tankers and ferries until we reached the River Beaulie, and on for a meal, drinks and a good night's sleep.

Monday brought more good weather with less wind so we headed for Bembridge on the Isle of Wight. While sailing we could do as much or as little as we liked. I was very keen on all aspects, including a bit of cooking, so we were fairly busy all day. That evening we all met up and had a barbeque at the marina.

Tuesday, lovely start, but couldn't leave harbour until lunch because of tide so walked along the beach and had a coffee, then set off down the Solent to the naval port of Portsmouth among lots of ships and yachts. Interesting. Arrived at Gun Wharf Marina in heavy rain, which lasted for 24 hours, but didn't dampen our spirits as we ate out and also had the odd pint just to keep spirits up!

Wednesday, depart Portsmouth after checking out shops and refilling the boats wine cellar. Anchored off Osbourne House, which was Queen Victoria's pad, for lunch. We saw dolphins. Then on to Cowes, Isle of Wight, the yachting centre of the UK. Then up River Medina for six miles and locked into Island Harbour Marina for the night. We had a party with the other boats and then on to the pub for a meal and more drinks. Our crew went home in good shape, but two of the ladies from another boat fell in the harbour, but all ended ok.

Thursday, sailed back down River Medina. Weather now fine, past Cowes, back

into Solent and round to Yarmouth Isle of Wight. This was a fairly long trip and once again we encountered many ships, and although being vision impaired, with the help of the Skipper we didn't hit anything! We arrived in Yarmouth Marina at tea time. This is the main ferry terminal for the Isle of Wight so very busy. Another party on pontoon and off to the best chippy I've ever been to.

Friday, long sail back to our starting point, so sailed into Beaulie River for our last lunch. Then onwards to Ocean Village, Southampton, next to where the cruise liners dock.

Last evening and a formal dinner at Royal Southampton Yacht Club, with a nice meal and great company.

Saturday, said our sad farewells to our fantastic Skipper and his crew and our thanks for a wonderful week. Thanks to Blind Veterans UK who make things like this happen. We can all lead a richer life.



**Picture:** All at sea. John Nicol, the author of this article, is second from the left and John Moore, his fellow blind veteran who took part in the week, is first on the right.



## I get very sentimental about the White Cliffs of Dover.

**Mary Turton speaks of Germany in 1938, France in 1939, and work at Bletchley Park and in Berlin. By Catherine Goodier.**



**Picture:** This photograph of Mary Turton was taken at Bletchley Park during her service there. She is wearing the badge of the Intelligence Corps.

When war broke out Mary Turton was in the Upper Sixth at Putney Secondary School studying for her Higher School Certificate. She had experienced what was to come as she left Nazi Germany in September 1938 and then France in August 1939. She would return to Germany in 1946, to Berlin with the ATS, after completion of vital war work at Bletchley Park.

### **School days and Germany in 1938.**

"In the Lower Fifth, I was given the opportunity to take up a new language. I loved French, and thought another language would be great, especially as you could drop Art and Geography if you took up German, so I cheerfully did just that. I was given a German penfriend and after two years we met when she came to stay with us and we got on like a house on fire. Then in August 1938 I

went to Germany and a week after I arrived, there was the Reichsparteitag in Nuremberg and the start of the anti Czech preaching. Along the streets in the main town in Bielefeld loudspeakers broadcast Hitler's and Goebles's speeches and military music or Nazi songs. In school, we were marched down into the hall to listen to Hitler. As I'd only studied German for two years I could not understand a word Hitler said, but I could understand Goebles, as he was an educated man who spoke decent German. It was a bit unsettling and I didn't like it one bit. What also struck me was the number of air raid shelters, as I don't remember any in London. One had a strong feeling of preparing for war.

"One day while out walking along a country road through fields with my German friend, men in what looked like blue and white striped pyjamas were hoeing the field. I asked my friend who they were and she replied, 'They're prisoners.' Looking back I think they must have been from the concentration camp. Then one evening Frau Seickmann called us in to supper and her husband said supper could wait and we should listen to the radio as it was now a question of war or peace. Dr Seickmann was a primary school headmaster whose promotion had been blocked by Nazi Control as he refused to give up his church work, and teachers were not supposed to be active in the church. I thought Dr Seickmann's remark about war or peace sounded alarming and later that evening my father phoned and asked them to please put me on the first train home.

"At about 3am I boarded a train and as we went down through the Rhur under cover of darkness, I remember at Essen the sky was completely red, as numerous blast furnaces worked at full tilt to produce munitions. It made you feel deeply uncomfortable. At Cologne, I changed to a train for Ostend and there were very few passengers and only about half a dozen of us crossed the border into Belgium. Again, on the ferry to Dover, there were very few passengers and it was wonderful when the white cliffs came into view. Home. I get very sentimental over the white cliffs of Dover. I took the train to Victoria where my father was waiting. At school, the next day I found them all in a turmoil as they prepared to be evacuated, but it all simmered down when Chamberlain came back with his useless bit of paper."

### **France August 1939.**

"Life continued and in 1939 I accepted an offer for an LCC Travelling Scholarship to France for July, August and September. I stayed in Tour, then in the Alps



in Anse and should have stayed in the Paris area, but one lunch time at the Pension in Anse, Monsieur came home with a newspaper. Hitler and Stalin had signed their pact. Oh, there was panic, oh la, la. Oh, mon dieu! Le mais non c'est la guerre! We heard that their crack mountain regiment, De Chasseur Alpin, had been mobilised and left their summer camp just above Anse. Monsieur said I should go home because if they called general mobilisation no civilians would be allowed to travel on the trains until it was complete and I could be stuck.

"Several of us set off from the Pension and we took the night train to Paris where I separated from them and went across to Saint Lazare and on to Dieppe. On the quay at Dieppe there were crowds of people and I produced my ticket and was told 'We're not bothering about tickets, just get on the first ferry you can'. I did and the sailors were so very tired, as for the past 36 hours they had gone backwards and forwards without a break as they took people home. One of them said that already there were U boats in the Channel and they didn't have life saving equipment for even half the people on the ship. So, when we approached Newhaven and saw the white cliffs, this time the Seven Sisters, it was that feeling of home."

### **England and evacuation.**

"Back home I found my mother making boxes for gas masks. All this was going on and at school no lessons as everything was geared to evacuation. I remember on 1st September, the day Hitler invaded Poland, we went off to school and my mother cooked an especially nice lunch as she thought it might be our last lunch at home. After lunch, I went back to school and as I waited at the train station there were placards about the German bombing of Warsaw and as I looked around I thought, I wonder if I shall see this place again or will it be flattened. I was also scared I might never see my parents again."

Mary and her school were evacuated. They were labelled, although Mary thought that somewhat unnecessary for children her age. They went from home to school and marched to the underground at Putney that took them to Wimbledon where they boarded a train. After 30 minutes, their train stopped and they were told to disembark. They had only gone as far as Woking. Mary continued, "Ridiculous when you think of it. We went to a centre and it was like a slave market as the potential hosts walked around saying, 'I'll have that one'. I was left as most people didn't want an older child, but there was one lady, Mrs Denby, who was slightly crippled and she picked me as I could look

after myself. She was a lovely lady and her husband was the head gardener at one of the big houses. They lived about five miles outside Woking in beautiful countryside and it was a glorious summer. I was very happy with Mr & Mrs Denby. He was a specialist in breeding new varieties of delphiniums and his greenhouses were full of different colours, some pale blue and some almost black."

Mary went to Woking Girls Grammar School where they shared the school, studying from 8am until 5pm with their own teachers on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Having since worked as a teacher Mary said, "When I think of the disruption it must have been for the staff at the school I think they coped remarkably well."

### **Oxford.**

It was at that time it was suggested Mary sit the Oxford entrance exam. "It had never entered my head to go to Oxford or Cambridge. I applied to St Hilda's, took the exam and got an interview. I'm sure it was partly because it was the time of the phoney war. Nobody knew what was happening, and I'm sure lots of people who would normally have worked hard and taken the entrance exam didn't. So totally par raison, as the French would say, I ended up in Oxford studying French and German. I had three lovely years there, although it wasn't normal Oxford because of course there were very few men."

At Oxford Mary made lifelong friends with sisters Vlasta and Olga who were in exile from their native Czechoslovakia as their father was in Beneš' Government. Mary also met Basil, her future husband, and although studying physics she initially dismissed him as a sporty type.

### **Bletchley Park.**

"When I took my finals, we were told we had to go into war work. Like everyone I wanted to join the WRNs because it was such a nice uniform, but there was a long waiting list. After I'd been home for about three months the Ministry of Labour wrote stating that if I was not in war work by the end of September or October I would be drafted into a Munitions Factory. I didn't like the idea of that so gave up on the WRNs and joined the ATS. In primary training, we took aptitude tests and because of those I was sent on a course and then posted to Bletchley Park



"We knew the work at Bletchley Park was important and as I was fluent in German my job was to read decoded messages. I couldn't get over the volume of material that came through every day. Anything of importance had already been dealt with before the messages came to us as they first went to an office known as The Watch. It was there they took information that was of military interest, strategic or tactical. So, if we found something that looked interesting we knew it had already been dealt with. Our job was to find any information about the German signals units. If they were going to change call signs, change frequencies, change location. That was translated and recorded and the information passed to the Listening Stations, as they had to be kept abreast of what the German transmitters were up to. We knew it was vital war work, but it wasn't very exciting.

"We slept in huts, 28 beds to a hut, and for the 50th Anniversary of VE Day I went back with a friend who throughout our time there had slept in the next bed. It was only when we returned that I discovered what work she had done and she discovered what I had done. I knew she had worked in Block F, but that was all I knew. I thought they did Japanese work, which was totally incorrect, as she had used the Enigma machines to decode the messages. I had no idea during the war as the discipline and secrecy was incredible. I don't know if it is true, but a lovely thing I heard is that Churchill once said of the people of Bletchley Park, 'They were my geese who laid the golden egg and never cackled'. He was a remarkable man. I know you can't say that one man won the war, but in effect he did because if we'd stayed with Chamberlain we'd have caved in 1940.

### **London theatre.**

"We regarded Bletchley as a dump and would say that the only good thing was there were lots of trains to get away. When we came off duty we went to the station and in no more than half an hour a train for London, or Oxford or Cambridge arrived. We worked shifts, so when we were on a day shift we started work at 9 and worked through to 4. When we were on evenings we went to work at 4pm. On those days, we amused ourselves in Bletchley as best we could, but there wasn't very much to do apart from the cinema, which was a bit of a flea pit. I went to the theatre in London a lot as there were wonderful productions. There was a company who put on three plays, Richard III, Peer Gynt and Arms and the Man. Laurence Olivier played Richard III and Ralph

Richardson played Peer Gynt and because there are two male leads in Arms and the Man they shared those. I think that rep company went on to become the National Theatre. Sadler's Wells ballet was starting and I often went with my mother as my parents remained in London throughout the war. We saw Margot Fontaine and there were lots of ways to enjoy yourself.

"You got used to the blackout and navigating your way to the underground when you came out of the theatre. You just went to the nearest underground station and hoped there wasn't an alert on, as we couldn't take the underground from Leicester Square to Victoria, as the flood gates would be closed. Saying that, if they were we simply found another route. Everybody just got on with their lives as we had one common purpose, to defeat Hitler at all costs.

### **VE Day.**

"Work continued and as we moved towards the end of the war less and less work came through. Then, the day before VE Day, a note came around that stated as the Germans would sign the Armistice the following day there was no work and we were free to go to London and join in the celebrations. So, we did. I hitch hiked with a group of friends and we were in the crowd outside Buckingham Palace shouting 'We want the King' and 'We want Churchill.' As far as I remember there wasn't any dancing in the streets, which my parents said they had done at the end of the First World War, but I suppose that was because the war in the Far East was still going on so it wasn't unalloyed euphoria. But it was so wonderful when the street lights came on and we all cheered, as for the first time in five years we had street light."

After Bletchley Park, Mary was transferred from Intelligence to the Army Education Corps to teach ATS personnel about the British constitution before they were demobbed. It was after that things once again became interesting.

### **Berlin from January 1946.**

"I was sent on embarkation leave and went across the channel, which was lovely to cross the channel as we hadn't been able to leave England for over five years. We went across to Calais, had a night there and then moved across to Brussels. We were stuck in Brussels for nearly a week because the Rhine was in flood



and as the temporary bridges were considered unsafe no trains went over into Germany. The thing that absolutely amazed me in Brussels was the amount of luxury goods on display in the shops. We had none in London. I expect it was because in England we could get the basics through rationing, whereas they were dominated by the black market. We were eventually allowed to cross the Rhine at Nijmegen and we crawled across on a temporary bridge with the waters swirling around as the Rhine was still in flood.

"We ended up very near where I'd stayed in 1938, as the BAOR Headquarters were just a few miles from my friend's home. We were there only one night before I was given a posting to a Study Centre in Berlin, which for a German speaker, was wonderful. It was January 1946 and it was bitterly cold. Most of the Germans were living in the basements of war damaged buildings without heating and they were often without power. One of the German girls who worked for us said it was so lovely to come to work because the building was heated. I asked what she did when she went home, and she said they just went to bed, as there was nothing else to do and it was the only way to keep warm.

"Our role was to find out what the ATS girls wanted to do after they were demobbed and organise courses for them. We organised dress making sessions, cookery sessions and flower arranging, as these were considered suitable for girls and we employed English speaking Germans to teach them. We had two dressmakers who normally worked in the top fashion houses in Berlin's Kurfursten damm. They came to teach the girls and they were very elegant and sometimes they forgot that I spoke German. They would chatter to each other and I was amused once because no German you met in Berlin had ever liked the Nazis. I remember those two women said it had been so rewarding to dress Magda Goebbels as she was so elegant and wore clothes so well. They had never been Nazis but they had dressed Magda Goebbels."

Mary continued to enjoy cultural pursuits. "I was amazed that in January 1946 the State Opera was already performing. Not in their proper building because that was too badly damaged, but in an old music hall in the Russian sector of Berlin. In those days, you got on the underground in Charlottenburg, which was British, and off in East Berlin. There was no wall. There was no boundary of any sort. We weren't supposed to go into East Berlin unless we were accompanied by two armed men, but that never happened. I went across with a chap who also worked in the Study Centre and we would go to the State Opera,

and I doubt he was armed. There were all sorts of concerts, small chamber concerts, string quartets and if the poster read saal geheizt, which meant hall heated, they would be packed. Through a boyfriend at the time, who was an aspiring opera singer, I met many opera singers and we held multi national get togethers where we cooked and sang. He was Czech, but he had immigrated to Scotland before the war and become a Church of Scotland Minister and he ran their canteen in Berlin.

### **Praque.**

"We were allowed one short break between home leaves, 72 hours when you could go to Paris or Copenhagen. I didn't want to go to either, but to visit my university friend in Prague, but as it meant driving through the Russian Zone of Germany I couldn't go on my own. Not thinking I would be able to, my CO agreed that if I could organise everything he would give me permission to go. I put everything in place and he kept to his word, which was very fair of him, and that is another story." That part of Mary's account is included in the Talking Review in the full audio interview. Mary was then demobbed and the beginning of the next chapter of her exciting life began as a teacher and translator living in the UK and overseas with her husband and children.

### **Becoming a blind veteran.**

Mary joined Blind Veterans UK in 2016 after speaking with the Oxfordshire Association for the Blind. "I'd been losing my eyesight for quite some time and my daughter Helen found out about their open day and said we should go as they could advise on assistive aids. Somebody asked if I had been in the Forces, I said I had been at Bletchley Park and they recommended I contact Blind Veterans UK. I knew of St Dunstan's, but had never heard of Blind Veterans UK, but I applied and here I am today, enjoying Women's Military Week at the Brighton centre. The training has made a great difference and the talking watch is the best piece of equipment that I've been issued with. I have been given talking scales for cooking and a tablet that Anna Brownlie has taught me to use, and she's just lovely. I have a love hate relationship with computers and didn't really want to learn how to use them. My husband was a physicist and he became involved with computers at the beginning and taught his students and he could write programmes and that sort of thing. Well I never wanted to do anything like that. I have a Mac and Anna has given me instructions for that and for the tablet and I'm getting on with it. It's always good to learn new skills."



## Ron Russell's General Knowledge Quiz.

1. In French this kitchen implement is known as a tire buchon, what is it in English?
2. What did the initial F stand for in former US President John F Kennedy's name?
3. Which is the oldest city in the world?
4. In what year was the Battle of Waterloo fought?
5. True or false, almost 50% of American bank notes are \$1 bills?
6. Who was the original drummer with the Beatles before Ringo Starr?
7. Who is the Patron Saint of children?
8. Which of these has the highest total 10 x 20, 17 x 12 or 15 x 15.
9. Which is the oldest commissioned ship in the Royal Navy today?
- 10 Which two countries are the world's largest producers of silver?
11. Which of these countries is a kingdom? Iraq, Nepal or Bhutan.
12. What is the only grand slam tennis game played on a clay court?
13. What do the letters YMCA and YWCA stand for?
14. The largest football stadium in Britain is in Glasgow, what is it called?
15. In which country were the 1938 Olympics held?

Answers on page 49.

## A very proud David Cranson reflects on the last 10 years.

"I celebrated 10 years with Blind Veterans UK at my 10th Durham Reunion and thought what a life I have these days. What a journey it's been since I joined Blind Veterans UK on 13th June 2007. I have been rescued. Blind Veterans UK taught me home living skills at home, trained me to touch type and use a PC. Working with staff from the Sports & Rec Department I've completed eight Olympic distance triathlons, four 60 mile tandem cycle rides, three Great South Runs, three Brighton half marathons, one London marathon, 1 Brighton marathon, 1 Royal Parks half marathon. And a 75 miles trek along the South Downs Way from Winchester to our Brighton centre to celebrate the centre's 75th year. I've raised over £2,300 for our charity from these events.

"I would like to thank every member of staff who made this possible as you gave me the life I lead today. It was a great honour to meet our Trustee David Turner at our Durham Reunion when we spoke about my journey with Blind Veterans UK and he presented me with this certificate. I am very proud to be a member of Blind Veterans UK and at all of my sporting events I am proud to wear the vest displaying the charity's name. Thank you."



**Picture:** Trustee David Turner, left, with a very proud David Cranson.



## Robert Eddison's book, *Wisdom & Wordplay* 300 original one liners to enrich your day is available to buy from 25th October.

In the September Review we featured an interview with Robert Eddison, when we asked if you could please support him by buying his book, *Wisdom & Wordplay*. This delight of 300 original one liners to enrich your day is available to buy from Amazon's website [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk) from the morning of 25th October.

Robert Eddison's  
**Wisdom  
&  
Wordplay**

300 original one-liners  
to enrich your day



'I salute your genius.  
You are my favourite living Aphorist.'

Gyles Brandreth

**Picture:** Please join us in buying a copy of *Wisdom & Wordplay* on 25th October to push blind veteran Robert Eddison into the bestseller list.

## Busy Bees donate beautiful handmade quilts to Blind Veterans UK.



**Picture:** Quilts for Veterans. Lisa Findlay of Busy Bees donated 30 lap quilts for blind veterans to Jan Alpin Community Support Worker (left) and Jenny Ross, Community Team Leader for Scotland and NI (right), at their exhibition in Townhill, Dunfermline. Lisa, who is the mother of working age blind veteran Paul Findlay, said she couldn't think of a better charity to give the quilts to. Busy Bees has 30 members and Lisa and two others are veterans who served in the Royal Navy, Army and the RAF. They meet each week on Tuesday from 6.30pm to 9pm.



## William 'Bill' Miller 1924 to 2017.

For 67 consecutive years Billy Miller stood on parade at the Cenotaph. The first time was with our then Chairman Sir Ian, later Lord Fraser of Lonsdale, and the armies of the blind formed of the men and women who were blinded in the First and Second World Wars. In November 2014, his last parade, he was the only person to stand in front of the Cenotaph with our charity who was blinded in the Second World War. During the great silence he always thought of his old school mates as they were all so young when they enlisted and sadly several of them were killed. Billy was 24 when he came to work in London for our charity, and it was the first year that he attended the Cenotaph.

From a past conversation with the Review when Billy said, "I knew so many of the First World War men of our charity as I worked as a telephone operator at Headquarters from early 1948 when they moved from Park Crescent to Marylebone Road and I think of them generally. I left my job in Leeds and moved to London as I was young and single and had everything to gain and nothing to lose — and I gained a wife and a family."

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

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

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

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



**Picture:** Billy Miller and Kevin Rixon before Billy's final parade to the Cenotaph in November 2014.



Billy was a member of St Dunstan's, now Blind Veterans UK's Masonic Group, and 12 years ago he seconded the proposal for W.Bro Clive Jones to join the group. Clive is now Chairman of Blind Veterans UK's Masonic Group.



**Picture:** Don Oliver, Clive Jones and Billy Miller at the Brighton centre for the Blind Veterans UK Masonic Weekend that is held there in April each year.

Billy was also a very keen and successful race walker and a member of St Dunstan's London Walking Club.



**Picture:** Billy Miller, centre at the front wearing no 6.

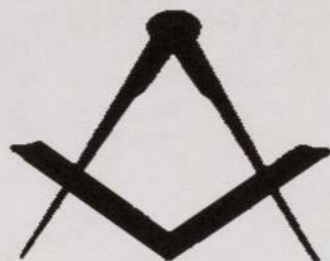


**Picture:** St Dunstan's Walking Club with Lord Fraser and Richard Dimbleby. Billy is wearing the no 2 and his fellow St Dunstaners are Archie Brown, Tom Gaygan (5), Percy Price, Charles Williams, W Scott and Stan Tutton. Lord Fraser is wearing a raincoat and holding his cane.



# Noticeboard.

Dates for your diary and useful information.



## Blind Veterans UK's Masonic Group CYMRU.

Blind Veterans UK Masonic group will meet at the Llandudno centre for the annual week of fun, laughter and Freemasonry.

During the week we will visit a local Lodge who will host our group and in return we will host them at our dinner at the end of the week. There will also be other activities put on during our stay.

If you are a Mason and would like to join with us at the Llandudno centre from Monday 12th until Monday 19th February 2018 then please contact me no later than the 12th December 2017 on the mobile or email contacts given below.

Please contact W.Bro Clive Jones P.G.Purst on mobile 07854 800256 or email me at [Dragoneye67@sky.com](mailto:Dragoneye67@sky.com)

I look forward to hearing from you soon and sharing our annual Blind Veterans UK Masonic Group Cymru meeting with you at the Llandudno centre.

## Would you like to join Blind Veterans UK's Amateur Radio Society and speak to Radio Hams around the world?

Would you like to become an amateur radio ham and communicate with people across the globe? Then please join us at the Llandudno and Brighton centres to learn how to operate the systems and create networks with support from long standing members of the group. It's a great opportunity to make new friends and learn new skills with your fellow blind veterans.

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

In 2018 the Amateur Radio Society will meet at the Llandudno centre from Monday 26th March or Tuesday 27th March until Monday 2nd April 2018.

A further meeting, when you can again take to the airwaves and speak to fellow radio hams around the world, will take place at the Llandudno centre from Monday 6th August or Tuesday 7th August until Monday 13th August. The day difference in travelling to the Llandudno centre is due to transport requirement.

The Amateur Radio Society will then meet at the Brighton centre from Sunday 30th September until 6th October when we will hold our AGM. I look forward to hearing from you and to welcoming you to the Amateur Radio Society.



**Picture:** Three members of the Amateur Radio Society, from left to right, Alistair McGoff, Dick Hardy and Ray Peart.



## Join us at our London Christmas Carol Concert on Tuesday 5th December.

Please do come and join us for a festive evening at St Marylebone Parish Church in London for our annual Christmas Carol Concert. The event is an uplifting celebration where you will sing carols and hearing special readings from Blind Veterans UK's ambassadors and celebrity supporters, including British actor Brian Blessed. It is a magical event that brings everyone together with music, reading and mince pies.

The doors will open at 6.15pm for the 7pm concert. Tickets are priced at £10 for members and £18 for non members of Blind Veterans UK. You can purchase tickets online at [blindveterans.org.uk/carolconcert](http://blindveterans.org.uk/carolconcert) or telephone Grace Dent in the Blind Veterans UK events team on 020 7616 7959. This event has been kindly sponsored by Specsavers.



**Picture:** Inside St Marylebone Parish Church. The Church holds a very special place in the history of our charity.

## You can now watch Forces TV on Freeview Channel 96.

From Monday 16th October you will be able to watch Forces TV on Freeview Channel 96.

## Defence Discount Card.

To save money on the High Street veterans and their spouses can apply for a Defence Discount Card. If you have a computer you can apply online at: [www.defencediscountservice.co.uk](http://www.defencediscountservice.co.uk) If you do not have a computer please telephone 01509 233446 to apply.

# Family News.

## Birthdays:

**Ron Freer** who celebrated his 102nd birthday on 21st October.

**Ernest Frobisher** who celebrated his 104th birthday on 31st October.

**Norman Boughton-Smith** who celebrated his 101st birthday on 13th October.

**Stanley Pape** who celebrated his 100th birthday on 25th October.

## Anniversaries:



**Picture:** Congratulations to Terry & Maria Bullingham who celebrated their Silver Wedding Anniversary on 26th October.

## Platinum 70 years married.

**Bill & Rene Pepperell** of Gloucester, Gloucestershire on 11th October.

## Blue Sapphire 65 years married.

**Bob & Audrey Keenan** of Stockton-On-Tees, Cleveland on 4th October.

**Arnold & Ann Peel** of Worksop, Nottinghamshire on 11th October.



**Thomas & Ivy Williams** of Sheffield, South Yorkshire on 11th October.

**Derek & Eileen Jones** of Llangollen, Clwyd on 20th October.

**Diamond Yellow 60 years married.**

**Douglas & Gillian Harris** of Cirencester, Gloucestershire on 5th October.

**Stewart & Doreen Haywood** of Barnsley, South Yorkshire on 5th October.

**Brian & Joan Magnall** of Mickleover, Derbyshire on 5th October.

**Bruce & Dorothy Marshall** of Colwyn Bay, Clwyd on 5th October.

**Ron & Beryl Barber** of Wigan, Lancashire on 12th October.

**Donald & Olive Carter** of Thornton-Cleveleys, Lancashire on 15th October.

**Ged & Cecilia Hackett** of Worsley, Manchester on 17th October.

**Golden 50 years married.**

**Keith & Jean Beaumont** of Huddersfield, West Yorkshire on 14th October.

**David & Pauline Thomas** of Neath, West Glamorgan on 14th October.

**Eric & Wendy Kimber** of Eastleigh, Hampshire on 21st October.

**Ruby 40 years married.**

**Steve & Brenda Claxton** of Swanage, Dorset on 1st October.

**Ray & Maggie Gilson** of Keynsham, Bristol on 4th October.

**Tom & Catharine Broughton** of Cranbrook, Kent on 29th October.

**Silver 25 years married.**

**Ian & Sylvia Mitchell** of Peacehaven, East Sussex on 10th October.

**Terry & Maria Bullingham** of Peacehaven, East Sussex on 26th October.

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

**Elsie Cole** who died on 17th August 2017. She was the widow of the late George Cole.

**Shirley Collen** who died on 23rd June 2017. She was the wife of Nellson Collen.

**Eileen Collison** who died on 6th April 2017. She was the widow of the late Thomas Collison.

**Ethel 'Mona' Finch** who died on 7th August 2017. She was the widow of the late Edward Finch.

**Eileen Goding** who died on 24th August 2017. She was the widow of the late Reg Goding, a St Dunstaner who was blinded in the Second World War.

**Joyce Hansford** who died on 25th August 2017. She was the wife of Derek Hansford.

**Joan Hindle** who died on 18th March 2017. She was the wife of John Hindle.

**Joyce Owens** who died on 23rd June 2016. She was the wife of David Owens.

**Constance 'May' Saban** who died on 15th September 2017. She was the wife of Ronald Saban.

**Sheila Seaton** who died on 1st June 2017. She was the wife of Colin Seaton.

**George Timmins** who died in 2017. He was the husband of Doreen Timmins.

**Dorothy 'Dot' Upton** who died on 10th September 2017. She was the wife of William Upton.

**Margaret 'Peggy' Wright** who died on 1st August 2017. She was the widow of the late Laurence Wright.



# Welcome to Blind Veterans UK.

**Eric Ambrose of** Alford, Lincolnshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1953 to 1956.

**Walter 'Jack' Arnold** of Yeovil, Somerset served in the Coldstream Guards from 1936 to 1958.

**Gordon Bailey** of Spalding, Lincolnshire served in the Royal Armoured Corps and the 9th Queen's Royal Lancers from 1952 to 1955.

**Dennis Baker of** Ryde, Isle Of Wight served in the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1960 to 1967.

**Harold 'Anton' Baker** of Rhyl, Clwyd served in the Royal Air Force from 1950 to 1952.

**Walter Benning** of Ramsgate, Kent served in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1946.

**George Bleasdale** of Liverpool, Merseyside served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1946.

**Frank Booth** of Bolton, Lancashire served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

**John Boyle** of Wirral, Merseyside served in the Royal Air Force from 1946 to 1948.

**Tom Brooke** of Sheffield, South Yorkshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1955 to 1957.

**Phinaes 'Fred' Bull** of Banbury, Oxfordshire served in the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1950 to 1955.

**Robert Bullen** of South Shields, Tyne And Wear served in the Royal Artillery from 1956 to 1960.

**Michael Carter** of Cambridge served in the Royal Engineers from 1958 to 1960.

**Lionel Chivers** of Colchester, Essex served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Signals from 1944 to 1947.

**Kenneth 'Ken' Clapperton** of Arnoldswick, Lancashire served in the Royal Artillery from 1958 to 1961.

**Kenneth 'Ken' Collins** of Wallasey, Merseyside served in the General Service Corps, Royal Armoured Corps and the Royal Army Service Corps.

**Phillip Cooke** of St. Ives, Cambridgeshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1946 to 1949.

**James 'Jim' Dawes** of Newhaven, East Sussex served in the Royal Air Force from 1953 to 1966.

**John Devine** of Reading, Berkshire served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1953 to 1975.

**Michael 'Mick' Elbro** of Devizes, Wiltshire served in the Wiltshire Regiment from 1952 to 1953.

**Patricia 'Pat' Fairbrother** of Fareham, Hampshire served in the Women's Royal Air Force from 1939 to 1948.

**John 'John' Fereday** of Wolverhampton, West Midlands served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1953 to 1964.

**Harold 'Harry' George** of Abbots Langley, Hertfordshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1949 to 1950.

**William 'Bill' Gillespie** of Haddington, East Lothian served in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders and the Royal Signals from 1951 to 1952.



**Robert Gray** of Liverpool, Merseyside served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1947 to 1959.

**Bertie 'Bert' Green** of Mexborough, South Yorkshire served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1952 to 1954.

**Ivor Guest** of Taunton, Somerset served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Engineers from 1944 to 1951.

**Brian Heather** of Torpoint, Cornwall served in the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1954 to 1956.

**Daisy Hennessy née Mayhew** of Brighton Le Sands, Liverpool served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1942 to 1946.

**Bernard 'Bern' Hickson** of Enfield, Middlesex served in the Royal Navy from 1942 to 1946.

**George 'Alec' Hogg** of Colne, Lancashire served in the Royal Army Service Corps and the Royal Corps of Transport from 1956 to 1971.

**Horace Howarth** of Oldham, Lancashire served in the Loyal Regiment from 1958 to 1960.

**Donald 'Don' Jenkins** of Bembridge, Isle Of Wight served in the Royal Navy from 1954 to 1956.

**David Jones** of Southsea, Hampshire served in the Royal Navy from 1950 to 1973.

**William 'Morlais' Jones** of Royston, Hertfordshire served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1948 to 1959.

**Allan Lester-Jones** of Llandudno, Gwynedd served in the Royal Navy from 1939 to 1946.

**William Kemp** of Leeds, West Yorkshire served in the Royal Signals from 1958 to 1963.

**Basil Lindsay** of Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire served in the Royal Signals from 1951 to 1964.

**Raymond 'Ray' Manville** of Edenbridge, Kent served in the King's Division, Royal Welsh Fusiliers and the Royal Fusiliers from 1944 to 1954.

**Martin McDonald** of New Normanton, Derby served in the Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regiment and the Prince of Wales Division in 1983.

**James 'Jim' McNeil** of Cardiff served in the Royal Air Force from 1951 to 1961.

**William 'Bill' O'Mara** of Gloucester, Gloucestershire served in the Gloucestershire Regiment from 1950 to 1953.

**Geoffrey 'Geoff' Marshall** of Southwaite, Carlisle served in the Royal Navy from 1942 to 1946.

**Gordon Martin** of Ipswich, Suffolk served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1946.

**Derek Micklewright** of Crawley, West Sussex served in the Royal Navy from 1956 to 1958.

**Pamela Morley-Peet** of Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk served in the Princess Mary's Royal Air Force Nursing Service and the Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps from 1953 until the 1970s.

**Sidney 'Sid' Morris** of Abergele, Clwyd served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Army Service Corps from 1944 to 1959.

**Ronald Osbaldestin** of Bowburn, Durham served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps and the Royal Military Police from 1959 to 1964.

**Sydney 'Syd' Page** of Ellesmere, Shropshire served in the Royal Army Pay Corps, King's Regiment, Royal Military Police, Liverpool Scottish Regiment and the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1949 to 1977.

**George Phillips** of Tenbury Wells, Worcestershire served in the Royal Navy from 1938 to 1953.



**Frederick 'Fred' Quain** of Gosport, Hampshire served in the Royal Navy from 1949 to 1968.

**Jennifer Reed née Hancock** of Bristol served in the Women's Royal Air Force from 1954 to 1956.

**Ronald 'Ron' Saban** of Caversham, Berkshire served in the Black Watch and the Parachute Regiment from 1946 to 1951.

**Antonio 'Tony' Scicluna** of Chichester, West Sussex served in the Royal Sussex Regiment from 1954 to 1960.

**Donald Sharpe** of North Hykeham, Lincoln served in the Royal Air Force from 1946 to 1948.

**William 'Bill' Shaw** of Ormskirk, Lancashire served in the Primary Training Wing and the Royal Artillery from 1946 to 1948.

**David Shoosmith** of Blandford Forum, Dorset served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1954 to 1959.

**Norman Sims** of Swindon, Wiltshire served in the Royal Navy from 1944 to 1947.

**Dennis Smith** of Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1950 to 1965.

**Dennis Swallow** of Rotherham, South Yorkshire served in the General Service Corps, Royal Army Service Corps and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1945 to 1955.

**Keith Swann** of Derby, Derbyshire served in the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1963 to 1985.

**Alan Taylor** of Whickham, Newcastle Upon Tyne served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1957 to 1964.

**Geoffrey 'Geoff' Towers** of Pontefract, West Yorkshire served in the Royal Air Force from 1943 to 1973.

**John Trelore** of Barrow-In-Furness, Cumbria served in the Royal Artillery from 1956 to 1964.

**Donald 'Don' Turner** of Midsomer Norton, Radstock served in the Royal Air Force from 1945 to 1948.

**George Turner** of Paignton, Devon served in the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1955 to 1964.

**James Waite** of Bonnyrigg, Midlothian served in the King's Own Scottish Borderers and the Army Catering Corps from 1953 to 1964.

**George Wasley** of Sheffield, South Yorkshire served in the Royal Signals from 1952 to 1958.

**George Wilson** of Rothesay, Isle Of Bute served in the Royal Air Force from 1952 to 1954.

**John Young** of Coventry, West Midlands served in the Royal Warwickshire Regiment and the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers from 1956 to 1969.

## Answers to Ron Russell's General Knowledge Quiz from page 30.

- |                |                      |  |
|----------------|----------------------|--|
| 1. Corkscrew.  | 7. St Michela.       | 13. Young Men's Christian Association and Young Women's Christian Association. |
| 2. Fitzgerald. | 8. 15 x 15.          | 14. Hamden Park.   |
| 3. Jericho.    | 9. HMS Victory.      | 15. Berlin.  |
| 4. 1864.       | 10. Mexico and Peru. |  |
| 5. It's true.  | 11. Bhutan.          |  |
| 6. Pete Best.  | 12. The French.      |  |



# 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.**

**Andrew Adamson** of Rednal, West Midlands died on 15th August 2017, aged 93. He served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Army Service Corps from 1946 to 1948.

**Edward Aston** of Newton Abbot, Devon died on 9th September 2017, aged 93. He served in the Royal Navy from 1942 to 1968 in the Atlantic, Far East and Mediterranean Waters, leaving as a Lieutenant Commander.

**Violet 'Betty' Barber née Harris** of Ipswich, Suffolk died on 29th August 2017, aged 99. She served in the Women's Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946.

**Leslie Beecher DFC** of Tyn-Y-Gongl, Gwynedd died on 6th September 2017, aged 95. He served in England, Canada, Africa, Italy, Egypt and Palestine from 1941 to 1948, until demobilised as a Flying Officer. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross in March 1945 for his service in Africa, Italy, Egypt and Palestine.

**Raymond 'John' Blackmore** of Cambridge, Cambridgeshire died on 11th July 2017, aged 96. He served in the Royal Artillery and the Royal Army Service Corps from 1939 to 1946 in Eritrea, Sudan and Libya.

**George Brailsford** of Barnsley, South Yorkshire served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers in England and France from 1939 to 1954, discharging as a Lance Corporal.

**Ronald Britton** of Bristol died on 6th September 2017, aged 92. He served in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1946 until discharged as a Stoker First Class.

**Alan Chandler** of Guildford, Surrey died on 3rd August 2017, aged 94. From 1942 to 1947 he served in the Royal Air Force in the UK and India until 1947.

**Kenneth 'Ken' Chapman** of Devizes, Wiltshire died on 11th August 2017, aged 86. He served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1949 to 1955 in North Africa, discharging as a Corporal.

**Ronald 'Eddie' Clark** of Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire died on 30th August 2017, aged 92. He served in the Atlantic and Mediterranean waters in the Royal Navy from 1943 to 1946, discharging as an Able Seaman.

**Robert Cole** of Cramlington, Northumberland died on 9th August 2017, aged 82. He served in the Far East and Scotland in the Royal Air Force from 1953 to 1956.

**Francis Cox** of Swindon, Wiltshire died on 1st September 2017, aged 91. He served in the Fleet Air Arm from 1944 in the UK and Northern Ireland, until discharged as a Leading Supply Assistant in 1946.

**Kenneth 'Ken' Davison** of Chesterfield, Derbyshire died on 30th August 2017, aged 83. He served in the Royal Air Force from 1952 to 1955.

**Robert 'Bob' Dobson** of Telford, Shropshire died on 5th August 2017, aged 81. He served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps in the BAOR from 1953 to 1957, discharging as a Lance Corporal.

**Jean Doidge née Sones** of Poole, Dorset died on 7th September 2017, aged 82. She served in the Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps in Kenya, Egypt and Northern Ireland from 1953 to 1957, leaving as a Corporal.

**Thomas 'Tom' Dorset** of Hornchurch, Essex died on 31st August 2017, aged 80. He served as a Fusilier in the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers from 1956 to 1961.

**John Douglas** of Comrie, Perthshire died on 11th September 2017, aged 91. He served in the General Service Corps and the Cameron Highlanders from 1944 in Belgium, Holland and Germany until demobilised as a Corporal in 1945.

**John Douglas** of Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire died on 12th August, aged 91. He served in the General Service Corps, the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment and the Royal Scots Fusiliers from 1944 to 1948.



**James Farrell** of Sheffield, South Yorkshire died on 16th July 2017, aged 95. He served in the Fleet Air Arm in the UK and Canada from 1941 to 1946.

**Frederick Fisher** of Burnham-On-Sea, Somerset died on 1st September 2017, aged 97. He served in the Royal Pioneer Corps from 1940 to 1945.

**Beryl Ford née Tall** of Swaffham, Norfolk died on 25th July 2017, aged 94. She served in England in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1943 to 1945.

**Arwyn Gilvear** of Wokingham, Berkshire died on 19th August 2017, aged 80. He served in the Royal Air Force from 1956 to 1958.

**Douglas Goodyear** of Felixstowe, Suffolk died on 15th September 2017, aged 94. He served in the Royal Air Force in the UK and France from 1942 to 1947.

**Edward 'Ted' Grocock** of Nottingham, Nottinghamshire died on 13th August 2017, aged 80. He served in the Royal Signals from 1956 to 1961.

**Cyril 'Syd' Hadfield** of Littleborough, Rochdale died on 16th September 2017, aged 89. From 1947 to 1949 he served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Army Ordnance Corps in England, Egypt and Palestine.

**Richard Hardman** of Blackpool, Lancashire died on 14th September 2017, aged 93. From 1942 he served in the Royal Navy in the Atlantic, Mediterranean and Far East Waters until discharged in 1946 as a Stoker First Class.

**Ian Harland** of Woking, Surrey died on 10th July 2017, aged 65. He served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1967 to 1973 in the UK, Northern Ireland and Germany.

**John Hindle** of Preston, Lancashire died on 30th August 2017, aged 97. He served in the Royal Navy from 1938 to 1945 until discharged as a Leading Telegraphist.

**Daisy 'Thelma' Hughes née Wells** of Rhyl, Clwyd died on 6th September 2017, aged 97. She served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1942 to 1945.

**Derek Keen** of Llanidloes, Powys died in 2017, aged 83. He served in the Royal Artillery from 1952 to 1955.

**Edith 'Mollie' King née Waud** of Hove, East Sussex died on 26th August 2017, aged 96. She served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1942 to 1946.

**Eric Knott** of Leigh-On-Sea, Essex died on 12th August 2017, aged 88. He served in the Royal Air Force from 1947 until 1949 in the UK and Germany.

**William 'Gerry' Lackey** of Ulverston, Cumbria died on 4th September 2017, aged 96. He served in England, France, Belgium and Germany in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946, until demobilised as a Leading Aircraftman.

**William 'Bill' Lister** of Liverpool, Merseyside died in 2017, aged 84. He served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and the Queen's Lancashire Regiment from 1951 to 1975 in Korea, Singapore, Malta, Germany, Northern Ireland and Malaysia, discharging as a Staff Sergeant.

**Robert Mason** of Bootle, Merseyside died on 14th August 2017, aged 85. He served in the King's Regiment, Loyal Regiment and the Liverpool Scottish Regiment from 1947 to 1962 in Italy, Germany and the Middle East, leaving as a Lance Corporal.

**Ronald Meads** of Worthing, West Sussex died on 1st June 2017, aged 100. He served in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve from 1939 to 1945 in the North Atlantic and Indian Ocean.

**John Mills** of Barnsley, South Yorkshire died on 30th August 2017, aged 96. He served in the Merchant Navy from 1941 in the Atlantic, Middle East and Far East until 1947, leaving as a Quartermaster.

**Andrew 'Andy' Morgan** of Guildford, Surrey died on 14th August 2017, aged 96. From 1941 to 1946 he served in Europe with the Royal Air Force.

**Alan Morris** of Penarth, South Glamorgan died on 29th August 2017, aged 86. He served with the Welsh Guards in Egypt, Cyprus and Germany from 1947 to 1973, discharging as a Warrant Officer 2nd Class.

**Collin Naylor** Mansfield, Nottinghamshire died on 18th August 2017, aged 79. He served in the 9/12 Royal Lancers and the Royal Armoured Corps in Ireland, Cyprus, Aden and Germany from 1958 to 1974, discharging as a Trooper.



**Jack Netherstreet** of Beckenham, Kent died on 20th August 2017, aged 94. He served in the Royal Navy from 1942 in the UK, India, Burma, Ceylon, Malaya and Singapore, until discharged in 1946 as a Leading Sick Berth Attendant.

**Albert Neville** of Cleckheaton, West Yorkshire died on 23rd August 2017, aged 93. He served in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1947 in Egypt, Belgium, Germany and Palestine, discharging as a Leading Aircraftman.

**Lawrence 'Bib' Onions** of Willenhall, West Midlands died on 5th September 2017, aged 88. He served in the Royal Army Service Corps from 1948 to 1949 in Egypt and East Africa.

**Clifford 'Perry' Perry** of Paignton, Devon died on 1st March 2017, aged 98. From 1940 he served in the Royal Air Force in England, Italy, France, Egypt, Libya, North Africa, Syria and Palestine until 1946, discharging as a Clerk.

**Daniel 'Danny' Queen** of Manchester, Greater Manchester died on 15th September 2017, aged 85. He served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1950 to 1956.

**Francis 'Charles' Roberts** of Stoke On Trent, Staffordshire died on 19th August 2017, aged 94. From 1942 he served in the North Staffordshire Regiment in North Africa, Malta and Italy, until demobbed as a Corporal in 1946.

**Eric Saunders** of Norwich, Norfolk died on 13th September 2017, aged 97. He served in the Royal Signals in Europe and the Middle East from 1939 to 1946 until demobbed as a Lance Sergeant.

**Valerie 'Val' Shepherd née French** of Seaford, East Sussex died on 1st September 2017, aged 97. She served in the UK in the Women's Royal Naval Service from 1942 to 1945, leaving as a Leading Wren.

**Roy Sinton** of Formby, Merseyside died on 3rd September 2017, aged 92. He served in the Royal Navy from 1943 in South East Asia and the Mediterranean, until discharged in 1946 as an Acting Leading Seaman. He became a successful breeder of fuchsias and his fuchsias were included in our garden at this year's RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show.

**Kazimierz 'Kazik' Slaski** of Cambridge, Cambridgeshire died on 18th July 2017, aged 94. He served in the Polish Army Armoured Division in Italy and the Middle East from 1942 to 1948.

**Henry 'Jeff' Sparks** of Wincanton, Somerset died on 17th August 2017, aged 103. He served in the Royal Marines in Crete and Germany from 1941 until 1945 until demobilised as a Lieutenant.

**Aleksander (Alek) Tarwid** of Alton, Hampshire died on 18th July 2017, aged 95. From 1949 he served in the Royal Air Force in Borneo, Kuwait, Aden, Kenya, UK, Malaya and Singapore. He was discharged as a Squadron Leader in 1976.

**William 'Bill' Taylor** of Keighley, West Yorkshire died on 6th September 2017, aged 92. He served in the UK and India General Service Corps, North Staffordshire Regiment and the Manchester Regiment from 1943 to 1947.

**John Wheeler** of Brighton, East Sussex died on 14th September 2017, aged 92. From 1943 he served in the Royal Air Force in England, India and Burma until discharged as a Leading Aircraftman in 1946.

**George Whitby** of Plymouth, Devon died on 5th September 2017, aged 88. He served in the Royal Navy from 1947 to 1974, discharging as a Chief Petty Officer.

**Harold Whitmore** of Gloucester, Gloucestershire died on 3rd September 2017, aged 93. He served as an Air Mechanic First Class in the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm from 1943 to 1946.

**Johannah 'Joan' Willdridge née O'Hea** of Cambridge, Cambridgeshire died on 31st August 2017, aged 99. She served in the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service from 1944 to 1954, discharging as a Lieutenant Colonel.



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