

December 2017

Review

Blind Veterans UK | St Dunstan's since 1915



Picture: As we celebrate a centenary of women in the Armed Forces, member Eileen Prince placed a wreath at the Cenotaph for Blind Veterans UK.



Picture: We are deeply grateful to all escorts as you make the Parade to the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday possible.



From the President.

Your message from Colin Williamson.

February 2017 was a very special time for me. It was during that month I took over from my predecessor Ray Hazan OBE and became President of this life changing charity; a very proud moment in my life, and one that will stay with me forever. It has been said that pride makes us artificial, but humility makes us real and right now I feel very humbled to be in this privileged position. I would like to thank everyone that I have come into contact with during my first year of presidency for their kind words of encouragement and support, they are very much appreciated.

During my time as President I have travelled around the country attending Reunion lunches, representing the membership at functions and events, as well as visiting our two centres and getting to meet my fellow blind veterans and listening to their stories, anecdotes and concerns. It has been such a valuable and fulfilling experience and one that I hope to continue into 2018 and beyond.

As you are no doubt aware we are about to embark on a plan to increase the size of the membership of the charity and this will undoubtedly prove to be a very busy but exciting time for Blind Veterans UK. I would like us all, as members, to give this plan our backing and full support, as it means that we will be able to provide more blind and vision-impaired veterans with the quality care and support that they so richly deserve. There is also a lot of hard work going on at the moment to establish the new community based services throughout the country which will allow us to deliver training, rehabilitation, support and care to members in their own communities, and again, I ask for your support with this exciting initiative.

In November I had the honour of representing the membership at a Service of Remembrance that was held in the Chapel at the Brighton centre in memory of those blind veterans who are no longer with us. It was a very touching service, ably conducted by Father Anthony Moore, the vicar of Rottingdean and Chaplain to Blind Veterans UK Brighton, and attended by the families of those who have crossed the divide. After the service we gathered in the Trophy room at the centre when I had the opportunity to chat with some of the families and I found it to be a very moving yet compelling experience.

Also in November I attended the annual Memorial Service for our Founder, Sir Arthur Pearson that was held at Hampstead cemetery, and what a superb turn out we had. The service was conducted by The Venerable Air Vice-Marshall Jonathan Chaffey, Chaplain Chief of the Royal Air Force, supported by our CEO Major General (Rtd.) Nick Caplin and our immaculate Standard Bearer Brian Eldridge. The wreath was laid by blind veteran Major (Ret'd.) Peter Graves and there were readings by our Archivist Rob Baker and member John Cantwell. We all owe a huge debt of gratitude to our Founder and this annual Memorial Service is our way of repaying some of that debt. Lest we forget.

What can I say about the Remembrance Sunday Parade? It was such an honour to be at the front of our contingent and something that will live with me for a long time to come. As luck would have it the rain stayed away and despite the cold I think I can speak for everyone who participated that it was such an amazing and unforgettable experience. After the Parade we were treated to a superb lunch and some very humorous speeches by our Chairman Tim Davis and Mike Tetley MBE, who was blinded in the Mao Mao Uprising. All in all, a tremendous weekend; superb planning and execution, and thanks must go to all of our staff who were involved in organising this marvellous occasion as you did us all proud.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all, from my wife Brenda and I, a very Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and prosperous 2018 and I look forward immensely to serving you all as your President in the years that lie ahead.



Picture: By Sir Arthur's Memorial, our President Colin Williamson, The Venerable Air Vice-Marshall Jonathan Chaffey, Chaplain Chief of the Royal Air Force and Major (Rtd.) Peter Graves who placed the wreath. **Photograph** by Keith Harness.

From the Chairman.

Your message from Tim Davis.

For those of you who attended the Cenotaph, it was perhaps a little more bracing than in previous years, but still the sun shone and it was a great morning. I felt particularly humbled to stand with you on Whitehall, and I want to thank you as it is an honour to serve as your Chairman. As we celebrate a centenary of women in the Armed Forces, Eileen Prince placed a wreath for Blind Veterans UK. This year as we marked the 35th Anniversary of the Falklands War, Terry Bullingham placed a wreath on our behalf, as he also thought of his former comrades in the Fleet Air Arm, and those who made the ultimate sacrifice. As a nation watched, you showed the importance of the act of Remembrance and of the family of Blind Veterans UK and the strength you give to one another.

During our Remembrance weekend good humour overflowed as you laughed together, shared stories, swapped advice and arranged to meet up the following year or at our centres. It was a pleasure to be part of the weekend and to speak with so many of you. I would like to thank the staff who organised the weekend, as you did an outstanding job, the transport team from the Brighton centre, and the many staff who travelled from all parts of the country.

Our charity has grown significantly since I first became involved and we now have almost 5,000 members. The charity is doing well and we are reaching more people as we work to increase our numbers and I'm excited to think about what we can do in the future. Over the course of the last year we've gone through a lot of change. The change from Welfare Officers and the implementation of staff in the new community teams and regions. We will continue to add resources to those in order to continue to bring services to you closer to home. There have been significant changes, but our guiding principle remains unchanged, and that is to support you to gain victory over blindness.

Over the weekend so many of you expressed your gratitude to the charity and I would like to share with you an email from Peter Mould, a working age member who writes:

'Thank you for the opportunity to say thank you to Blind Veterans UK. I recently graduated and the help I received from Blind Veterans UK was a significant

contributory factor in achieving the award. The constant support and advice and the provision of equipment and software made it all possible. I am so grateful, and although I always thank the outreach support, I would really like to say a big thank you to Blind Veterans UK to express the gratitude that I feel for all that you have done and are still doing. I feel extremely fortunate to be a member of the Blind Veterans UK community.'

It is a very humble email as Peter has worked extremely hard and I am sure you will all join me in congratulating him on his graduation.

Returning to Whitehall, as we stood there on Remembrance Sunday, thoughts turned to the First World War, and in particular to the horrors of Passchendaele. I would like to share with you a poem from our December 1917 Review that was written by WC Dies MM, of the 50th Battalion Canadians The King's Own Calgary Regiment, who entered our charity on 23rd May 1917.

Buck-up!

What! blind through this war?

It does not matter a damn, after all, cheer up old boy, you're a real normal man.

Deprived of your sight?

Why, you might have got more, so pull both your socks up; it's a hell of a war.

You surely had courage, and all kinds of pluck

To go over the top with the best of good luck.

Don't worry, old chap; it don't matter a cuss.

There's many a bloke got it worse than us.

Hundreds of fellow have gone up the line,

All serene with full pack,

Crossed No Man's Land and never come back.

Where have they gone?

Well, we're assured they're at rest,

Let's be frank — use the soldiers' term — the poor beggar's went West.

I look forward to meeting you next year at our Reunion lunches, and my wife Lyn and I wish you are very happy Christmas and a healthy 2018.

From the Chief Executive.

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

I write this letter, fresh from the events of Remembrance Week and with the images still filling my mind. It is an important time of year as we reflect on people and events of the past and I was privileged this year to share this experience with members at the Llandudno Centre as well as at our annual Cenotaph event in London. At Llandudno, the members turned out in style for the Military Dinner, 'booted and suited' with medals proudly worn to honour those who have gone before. We heard a moving account of the Battlefield tour that members attended in Normandy in September, where they retraced the steps of the Normandy Landings and the audacious airborne attack on Pegasus Bridge. A number of our members at the dinner were there in 1944, and it was a privilege to hear their stories and recollections. In particular, I really enjoyed hearing the experiences of Cyril Tasker in June 1944 as he took part in the recapture of the bridge. Cyril recalls meeting a young girl aged four named Arlette Gondrez, and he kept in touch with Arlette for many years after the war. Arlette was the daughter of Monsieur Gondrez, the owner of the Café Gondrez which stands to this day by the side of the bridge. Monsieur Gondrez died many years ago, but the café lives on and is run today by his daughter Arlette who has taken, as a life mission, the responsibility of building public awareness of that extraordinary mission in 1944.

Another remembrance event that was truly moving involved Alfred Barlow, a member from Stockport who is also a Normandy veteran. Alfred visits the beaches each year to remember those who were lost there in June 1944, and did so again this summer. Unfortunately, on his return, his medals went missing at a motorway service station. This was a serious blow to Alfred, and it was marvellous to see the charity step up to spread the news of their loss and to seek support in their safe return. In quick time, member Alan Walker had put a plan in place to secure a new set of medals for Alfred. On one of the happiest days of the year, Alfred and his family and friends from the Chorley Normandy Veterans Association attended his own medal parade, held on our gold-medal winning garden at the RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show. Alan presented Alfred with his campaign medals in the most special of ceremonies, which was broadcast that day by ITV News.

In 2017 we have also been drawing to mind the tragedy of 1917, not least the horrors of Passchendaele and other battles in the Ypres Salient. We have been honoured this summer to place the inscription of Lord Fraser's name on one of the new bells that hang at the Menin Gate. And we have also been privileged to provide the focus for the Passchendaele exhibition at the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) this autumn. Supported with stories of our Ypres members and their journey through sight loss, the centre piece of the exhibition was the statue of our seven blinded veterans, the 'Lads' as we have come to call them, who bring to life so powerfully the image of the tragic damage caused by war. But the statue also talks of a journey to a better place, the importance of 'Accept, Adjust, Achieve' (the three As) and how, with the support of others, it is possible to deal with adversity and to live life to the full again. It was very moving seeing visitors to the NMA stop and reflect in front of the statue, each of them taking away their own inspiration. That particular statue has now moved to its final home at the Llandudno centre. But not before we have taken a cast and commenced the process to turn the 'Lads' into bronze. Next year it is our intent to unveil the bronze statue, to leave a lasting memorial to the war blinded from the Great War and a constant reminder about the importance of our three A's and the opportunities that are there to help you, our members of today to achieve victory over blindness.



Picture: The seven soldiers, 'the Lads', blinded by gas, shot and shell that will form our memorial by the sculptress Johanna Domke-Guyot.

For many of our members, this year's Remembrance has been dominated by memories of the Falklands Islands campaign in 1982. Although it is now 35 years since that conflict, these memories are still very fresh. In 1982 I was still learning to fly with the AAC and I remember the determination of those who had qualified the year before to join the Falklands Task Force and to do their bit. Sadly not all returned. And for many of our members, their thoughts have been with comrades whom they fought with but did not return from the Islands.

At the Cenotaph last month, history was made as HRH The Prince of Wales represented HM The Queen for the first time. We had 200 blind veterans and escorts on parade, making one of the largest contingents. I had the real privilege of escorting Kelly Ganfield, our youngest female member who had recently returned from representing our country at the Invictus Games in Canada, along with the amazing Jamie Weller. Kelly's achievements are remarkable and I was inspired by her commitment and determination to build on these experiences and to go further. Kelly is on her journey, and is a remarkable young lady.

As I marched with Kelly, I reflected on the value and power of our supporters. People like Sarah Ganfield, who has supported Kelly through her training for the games, and then in Canada and who continues to support her as Kelly picks up her new challenges. And John and Elaine Cantwell who gave outstanding support on the Hampton Court Garden and who won a Blind Veterans UK One Team Award for that support, and for their Oxfordshire Lunch Club that twice monthly brings members together.



Picture: John and Elaine Cantwell with members and CSW Anne Carpenter at their Oxfordshire Lunch Club at the Marsdon Royal British Legion.

And Jacqui Whitely who for many years made it possible for Nigel to act as the charity's Standard Bearer until he stood down in 2015. And Margaret Eldridge who regularly travels with her husband Brian, the newer Standard Bearer to give him support and encouragement. Richard Hughes who Maria Pilulski-Hughes states is an inspiration to her. These and countless others are firmly part of the Blind Veterans UK Family and give invaluable support, day in and day out.

As we approach the end of the year, I hope that you are able to find quality time with your own families and friends. The Caplin Clan will be decamping again to their home on the Isle of Lewis for Christmas — weather permitting! Although far away, our thoughts will be with you all.

Isobel joins me in wishing you a peaceful and happy Christmas, and a joyful New Year.



Picture: David Habershon, William Brant, Chairman Tim Davis, President Colin Williamson, Chief Executive Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB and Kelly Ganfield. Behind them Billy Drinkwater, Ken Facal and Simon Brown.
Photo: Phil Meech.

Mark Threadgold successfully takes on Mount Kilimanjaro. By Colin Williamson, President.

Mark Threadgold is no stranger to adventure, having secured three world records in three different disciplines, and traversing the globe seeking out new challenges and thrills. He has recently returned from a trek to Iceland, participated on a cycle ride to Paris, and in October he successfully climbed Mount Kilimanjaro, the world's tallest freestanding mountain. The Review eventually managed to track him down and ask him about his recent adventure.

Review. Mark, why did you decide to climb Mount Kilimanjaro?

Mark. Climbing Kilimanjaro is something I have wanted to do for many years. It's a unique challenge, being the largest free standing mountain in the world, yet you are able to walk up rather than needing any mountaineering techniques. I was able to afford to make the trip this year and as I discussed it with the Sports and Rec team at the Brighton centre, Russell Scullion expressed an interesting in coming along. We looked into it and then set about a year of planning. I found Charity Challenge, the company who organised the Comic Relief ascent back in 2009 and after some discussion they agreed to take me.

Review. For any other potential climbers, how fit do you have to be?

Mark. As training for the climb, myself, Russell and Craig Brindley climbed Snowdon and half climbed Ben Nevis, and myself and Craig got the chance to do a three day trek in Iceland with the Not Forgotten Association. I use the gym daily so my general fitness is reasonable, but the climbs were excellent for developing what guiding techniques we would use on the trip. I felt the lack of oxygen in the thin air at altitude affected me far more than my level of fitness when on the climb itself.

Review. What was the hardest part of the climb?

Mark. There were several hard days on the climb, but the most difficult day was the Ascent of the Barranco wall. We had wondered how we would get up this after reading some horror stories on the internet. I had been sick at breakfast that morning so only got two slices of dry bread and two mugs

of water with rehydration powders inside me before setting off. With no medication, and no decent meal or liquid intake I mentally crashed that morning. Once we got going I pulled myself together and got on with it, and the wall itself turned out to be far less foreboding than we had been led to believe, so the day ended well. The harder the day, the more rewarding it is to complete it, and if I could get through that day, I knew I would get through anything else that could be thrown at us. The final ascent was also challenging. A small group of us would set off earlier than the main group each day as I was slower than most. Our group got to the summit at 0545 while still dark and with a wind blowing at minus 13 degrees. Bitterly cold, but incredibly rewarding to have made it to the summit.

Review. Which route did you take?

Mark. When researching the different routes to climb Kilimanjaro it quickly became obvious that altitude sickness would be the biggest potential problem. The best way to avoid this is to take the longest, slowest route to give yourself more time to acclimatise. Starting in the rain forest at Lemosho Glades at 1981 metres to the summit, Uhuru Point at 5895 metres and back down is a total of 43 kilometres. Taking eight days, this is six days to ascend, stopping at designated camp sites on route, and making the final ascent early on the morning of day seven. The descent takes the rest of day seven and then a long final day on eight.

Review. What was the most important piece of kit that you took with you?

Mark. Russell and I had some generous support from the boot manufacturers Alt-Berg in Richmond, North Yorkshire. Having the proper boots for the job was imperative over the rocky and changing terrain during the climb. Being totally blind, every time you put your foot down is a lottery. There were many times each day when I heard the boot leather creak, reminding me they had just saved an ankle again. Although the boots had been well broken in through the year, I also used toe socks for the first time. Recommended by one of the long distance walkers in the charity, they are like gloves for the feet, with individual pockets for each toe. This keeps the toes apart and prevents blisters and rubbing. They worked fantastically for me, as I normally have to tape up my toes to prevent blisters, and I had no problems with blisters on the whole trip.

Review. Did you manage to get enough rest during the climb?

Mark. By the end of each day we were all glad to get into the sleeping bag and zip up the tents. The principle of walking at altitude is to walk high and sleep low. This means climbing to a higher altitude than you will sleep at, and descend to the camp site. Night time temperatures were cool as the wind found its way into the tent, but sleeping on sloping ground is challenging in a sleeping bag on a thermarest mat. Trying to wriggle back up the tent without getting out of the sleeping bag after sliding down through the night was amusing to say the least.

Review. What was the worst thing about the climb, the thin air or the cold?

Mark. The hardest part of the climb for me was the lack of oxygen at altitude. While already breathing heavily walking along a flat path it really took it out of me each time we started climbing again. The pace of walking was so slow that one foot did not pass the other one and was almost shuffling, and still it was difficult to breathe. Shedrac, the guide who accompanied me the whole trip, listened to my breathing and slowed down as it got harder. He had previously guided a blind lady on the climb, so was asked to guide me, and did a magnificent job.

Review. What rations did you take with you and what were the meals like?

Mark. Through each day we had snacks of dried fruit and nuts, jelly babies, mints and biscuits for extra energy, but the food provided was amazing. A hot breakfast, lunch and dinner was the norm, with dinner being a two course meal of soup and main course. I have very little sensation of taste and took a bottle of Tabasco sauce in case the food was bland. It didn't even come out of my bag the food was so good. The chef would visit us in the dining tent after dinner in full chefs whites, while the waiter was in waistcoat and bow tie. The level of service from the support staff was fantastic.

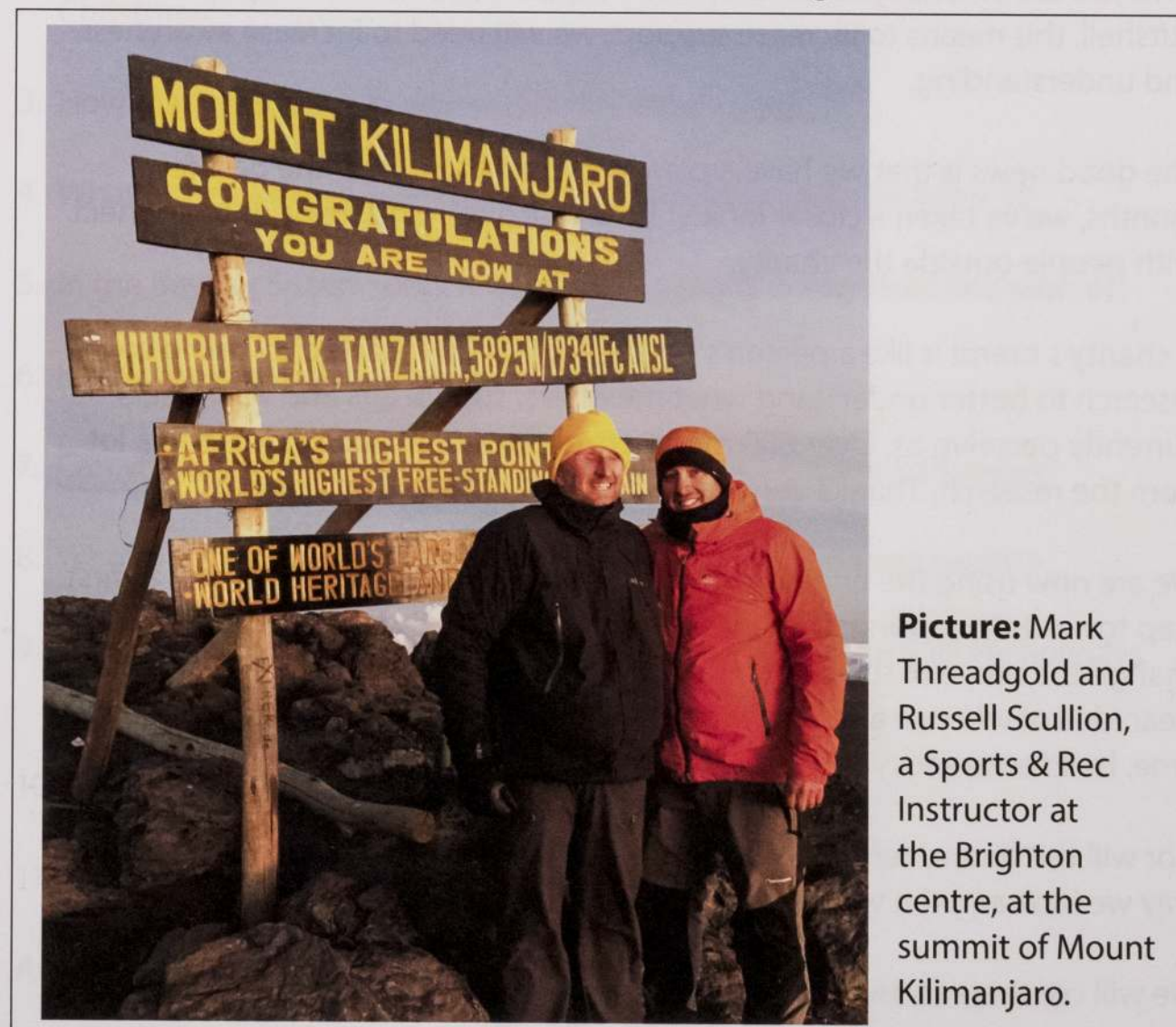
Review. What advice would you give to anyone contemplating making the climb?

Mark. Preparation for the climb had been the key. Having the right equipment, practicing guiding and climbing beforehand and a reasonable level of general

fitness all played their part. While we had worked on the guiding beforehand, Shedrac picked up a lot from watching Russell on the first day, making the teamwork come together incredibly quickly. I was only one part of the team, and I couldn't have done it without all the help. I would like to thank both Russell Scullion and Craig Brindley, as well as all the porters guides and other support staff on the trip. It's the people who put themselves out to help who make it possible to take on challenges like this one, and their help is very much appreciated.

Review. What other challenges do you have in store for 2018?

Mark. Looking forward to next year I am planning to do the Brighton half marathon in February. Having competed in several triathlons in the past few years, I would like to try a Half Iron-Man triathlon. This means running 13 miles after cycling 56 miles, and the Brighton half marathon is the first step to see if I can manage the run. But, oh, how I hate running!



Picture: Mark Threadgold and Russell Scullion, a Sports & Rec Instructor at the Brighton centre, at the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro.

Raising awareness of Blind Veterans UK — brand refresh project.

As you may know, Blind Veterans UK is working to increase its support to members over the coming years, both in terms of what we can offer and the number of members reached. To grow in this way, we will need to gain more support from people who are willing to donate to our charity or fundraise for us, individuals prepared to give us their time as volunteers, and organisations keen to partner with us.

However, we have a challenge. General awareness of Blind Veterans UK, the services we provide and the people we support, is very low among the very individuals and organisations that we need support from – especially when compared to other military charities. This means that we must work harder just to sustain current levels of support because, when people don't know who you are or what you do, they don't support you with money or time. In a nutshell, this means to increase support, we will need to increase awareness and understanding.

The good news is that we have a plan to do just that. Over the past few months, we've taken a closer look at how well our brand helps us to connect with people outside the charity.

A charity's brand is like a person's personality. So, we started by doing some research to better understand what members, supporters and volunteers currently perceive us. Over 600 members got involved and we learned a lot from the research. Thanks very much to those of you who took part.

We are now using the findings to refresh the Blind Veterans UK brand, as first step towards increasing awareness. Rest assured that we are not going to change the name of the charity because our name, 'Blind Veterans UK' gives a clear idea of who we are and who we are for. We will keep the name and, over time, build awareness and understanding of what we stand for.

Nor will this 'brand refresh' affect the way that our services are delivered. The way we look and the way we tell our story, are the only things likely to change.

We will continue to involve members, as well as volunteers and supporters, to

help us to make decisions on the look, words and messages we use – so we can ensure that they really reflect how you feel about the charity.

Once we have completed this work, we will develop a plan to reach, engage and activate more people and organisations. Then, together, we can win the support needed to grow the charity that we all love.

Thank you again to everyone who has given up their time to support us with this project. We will keep you up dated with how it is going.

Quiz Master Ron Russell's Christmas Quiz.

1. Father Christmas originally wore a green suit, why was it changed and by whom?
2. Which is the only nationality that is mentioned in the song The 12 Days of Christmas?
3. How many birds are mentioned in the same song?
4. What is the name of Santa's reindeer that begins with the letter V?
5. In the Beverly Sisters song, mummy was caught doing what and where?
6. Has Santa ever been connected with sport?
7. Can you name the most popular secular Christmas song and singer?
8. Who in a song said "All I want for Christmas is my two front teeth"?
9. Why is Christmas Island so called? Is it because Santa owns it? He holidays there? Or it was discovered on Christmas Day?
10. What was the Island's original name?
11. Who sang "Don't they know it's Christmas?"

Answers on page 47.

The National Bowling Club report. By Alan Gibson, Chairman.

Once again we had a good number of bowlers, 22 in fact. We were sorry Jim Glendenning had to cancel due to illness, but we hope he is improving. We were pleased to welcome Hans Haägensen, and what a wonderful match he had against Graham Johnson in the singles — the game of the tournament. As usual our ladies worked very hard. Iris and Shirley on the green, together with Daphne our volunteer, and also help from Daphne Pugsley, and Ann in the 'office' with Joan. The staff from the gym helped when they could, together with two volunteers. I would also like to thank Joan for all her hard work, arranging the games, then altering them and bossing us about!

The winners are as follows:

Triples:

Winners: Brian Davies, Brian Taylor and Paul Watson.

Runners up: Ken Pugsley, Ken Parker and Howard Young.

Pairs:

Winners: Harry Murray and Howard Young.

Runners up: Alan Gibson and Bill Pullen. And Alan Ballenger and Ted Arnold.

Singles:

Winner: Graham Johnson.

Runner up: George Wrightson.

Group winners: Harry Murray and Pete Bradshaw.

I would like to thank you our members for your support, and look forward to meeting you again in March, and I wish you and your families a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Blind Veterans UK welcomes updated Certificate of Vision Impairment Form and Explanatory Notes in England.

After years of work Blind Veterans UK was incorporated into a new Certificate of Vision Impairment (CVI) form and accompanying Explanatory Notes for ophthalmologists that was launched on the Department of Health website. The CVI form is issued to patients assessed by a consultant ophthalmologist as being vision impaired. The form is then sent to social services who work with the person to assess what help and advice they need. The form also records data for research into the causes and the effects of vision impairment.

Certification can be seen as an opportunity for patients to access support and services. The aim of the new CVI process is to ensure that people who are newly certified as sight impaired or severely sight impaired receive the support they need as soon as possible. At Blind Veterans UK we know that almost one quarter (24%) of our veterans go for six years or more before receiving our life-changing services and support. Since 2014 we have been supporting changes to the CVI form to help vision impaired veterans to be signposted to us as soon as possible. We spoke to MPs and representatives from the Department of Health about this at our 2014 parliamentary event, and have been involved in a working group with other charities, led by the RNIB.

We are delighted that the updated form will now provide better information to patients about sources of support, including Blind Veterans UK. The CVI Explanatory notes also advise consultant ophthalmologists to ask their patients if they have ever served in the Armed Forces, and if so, to signpost them to the charity. The CVI form also refers people to "Sight Loss: What we needed to know", for further information, advice and support. Working with our members we helped to develop this guide, along with our partners across the sector and other people who are affected by sight loss. It contains lots of useful information including a list of other charities who may be able to help you.

Len Wright celebrates his 100th Birthday.

Len Wright, of Derbyshire celebrated his 100th Birthday in style at his party on 3rd November, when he was joined by over a hundred guests. It wasn't a day to rest as this fun loving centenarian raised a wonderful £454 for Blind Veterans UK, in lieu of birthday gifts. Len enjoyed the party immensely, singing his favourite Andrews Sisters and Vera Lynn songs and dancing the Congo.

Sight loss isn't the end. Remember the family of Blind Veterans UK is here for you. Maria Pikulski-Hughes speaks to Catherine Goodier.

Watching as Maria Pikulski-Hughes enjoys the first dance with her husband Richard, it's hard to believe this vibrant woman who has such a rich passion for living, once considered ending her life. Through her work as an Eye Clinic Liaison Officer, Maria has introduced many of today's blind veterans to our charity. She is always at the centre of events, and through her kindness she ensures everyone is included in the family of Blind Veterans UK. In 2003, when Maria was registered blind she believed her life was over, and that she would no longer be able to help people. Like so many that changed when she heard that first message of hope.



Picture: Maria with husband Richard on the balcony at the Llandudno centre.

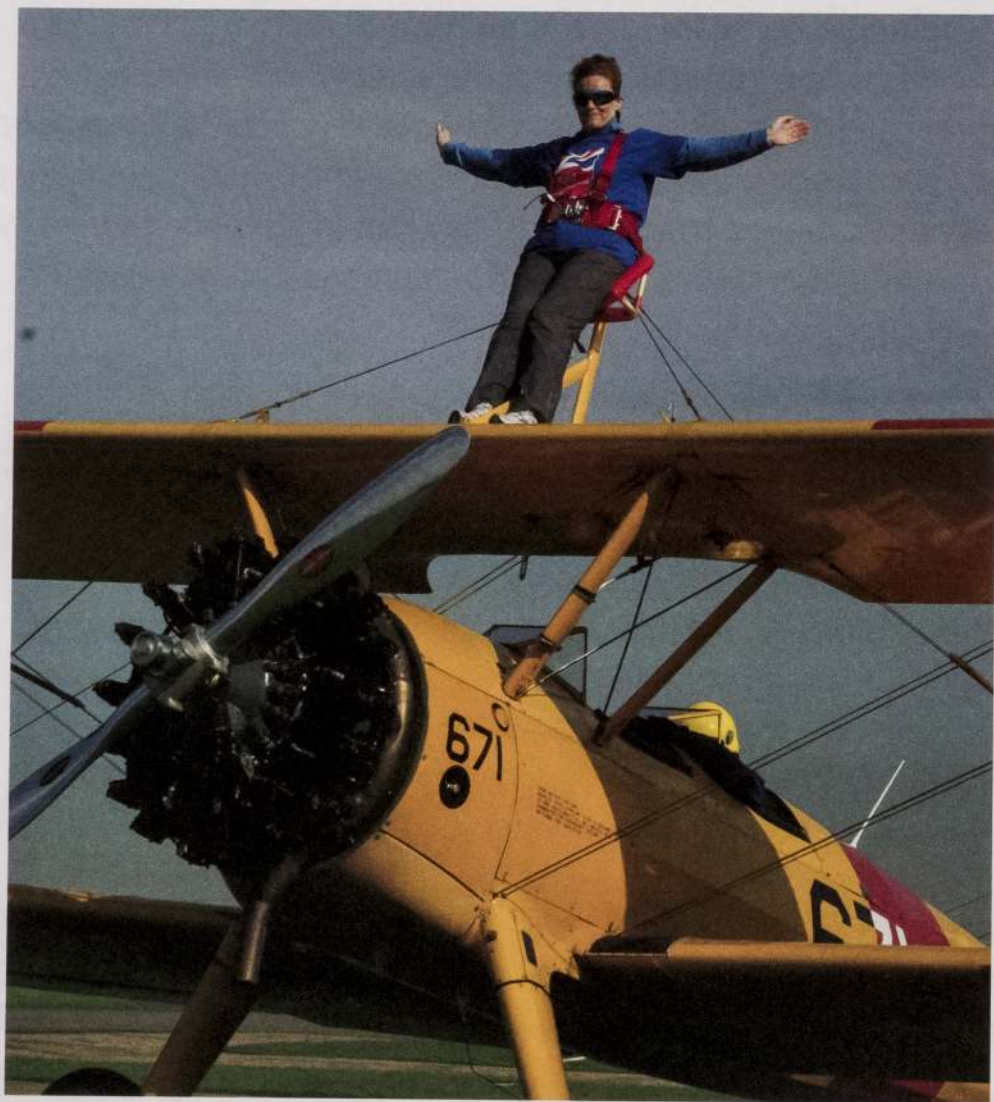
Losing her sight.

"Everything happened so suddenly, and I can admit this now as it may help other people, but when I was registered blind I was on a death wish. I was a Surgical nurse, and one Friday I was working late when a patient called me to her room. As she had demanded to see me I thought 'Oh I've upset this lady. What have I done?'. She was in a side room, I went in and she said, 'Sit down on my bed.' So, I did, and she took hold of my hands and said, 'I've been watching you all week and you struggled doing the charts and taking the bloods.' She listed other close work tasks I had struggled to do and told me to get my eyes tested. This was in February 2003 and I didn't really think anything of it, just that I needed glasses. The next morning, I went to Boot's Opticians for an eye test, and the optician sent me straight to Accident and Emergency, as she thought I had a tumour. I was quite calm, as my sight had gone in one eye, but I still had sight in the other eye. At the hospital they did tests, and the Consultant said that it was either a tumour, MS, or a stroke on the optic nerve, and then listed other conditions it could also be. I carried on working, and then at the end of July the sight went in the other eye, which was a big shock. I was absolutely devastated. I made an emergency appointment when I was told, 'We have good news and bad news. The good news is that it's not MS, and the bad news is that it's Leber's hereditary optic neuropathy, which is very rare in females, it's usually mothers who pass it to their sons, so only a small percentage of females get it.' That was after a DNA test.

"That news felt like, thank you and goodnight. I was distraught and all I could think was, what am I going to do? How will I cope? I was sent to genetics by my GP where I met the magnificent Professor Black, who leads the genetics team in Manchester, and he explained everything. That was on 6th September 2003, the day I was registered blind. Again, all I could think was 'What am I going to do now?' I thought my life was over and I was ready to call it a day. I was ready to fly to Switzerland and have the lethal cocktail. It was a big shock. I did not want to be here as I thought — this is the end. I was eating a bar of chocolate every day and drinking a bottle of wine every night, and really, I was on a death wish. Then my friend Sue, who worked for War Pensions said, "Why don't we put the application form into St Dunstan's?" I'd worked in the MoD, been in the Regulars, been in the TA, and I'd never heard of St Dunstan's. She put the application form in and they invited me to London.

The first message of hope.

"In London I saw the Ophthalmologist and was told I was accepted into the charity. I was still very negative at that time, but I went to the Brighton centre where I met this magnificent man who had been a St Dunstaner since the age of 19, Fred Bentley. He was totally blind, and there's me feeling sorry for myself. He spoke of his rehabilitation, that he had a business, Bentley Cars and Trucks, and that he had lived independently since he was blinded aged 19. He gave me the biggest inspiration to say 'Hold on Maria. What the heck is up with you? You can still help people.' Fred Bentley gave me the biggest kick to carry on, and that's what I've done from that day, as he was amazing and inspirational. I always say that at the time three charities helped me, Action for Blind People helped with employment, as a guy helped me for four and a half years. Galloways, a local blind society, helped me to start climbing mountains again. And St Dunstan's, Blind Veterans UK, saved my life."



Picture: Maria Pikulski-Hughes prepares for her wing walk and to complete another long held goal.

After that initial visit Maria returned to the Brighton centre for IT training. "I was a bit of a guinea pig at the time for some of the software, but I passed the exams. That really helped with employment, as I had to give up nursing, but had found work as an Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (ECLLO), and needed to use a computer. At the Brighton centre I discovered I could still take part in activities, and thanks to the Sports & Rec team that gave me a massive confidence boost. We went off road Range Rover driving and sailing, and since then I've jumped out of aeroplanes and done a Wing Walk." For Maria the biggest confidence boost came when she joined Blind Veterans UK's Ski Club. "In January each year I go to Italy with the Ski Club, which is fantastic. It's a fantastic group and we have the best week and I recommend anybody who wants to ski to give it a go, and get in touch with Mark Brewin or Carl Williams. Join the Ski Club in Italy as that's the biggest confidence boost you can get. We have fantastic guides who give you total faith that they will guide you safely down the mountain. They are all in the services or are veterans and you know they're not going to put you in danger. We always have a laugh, especially as I get my left and right mixed up. You're with other blind veterans and the social side is great as you laugh all the time, there's the comradeship, and by the end of the week your confidence is sky high. That week makes life an awful lot better as it changes your outlook as you realise what you can achieve."

Maria's message.

"It's key to remember that Blind Veterans UK is here to help you, as you are part of a big family and there's always somebody at the end of the phone to talk to, and somebody who can help. That applies to family, not just members. I feel so privileged to be part of Blind Veterans UK, as they've done so much for me and we must all remember that nobody has to be alone. If you want to return to employment they will help, even if it's to signpost you to another organisation, as that can be key. Especially for the younger members who want to get back to work, as it gives you that means to say, 'Hold on a minute I haven't been written off.' And that is key. My role as an ECLLO keeps me going because I know that although I'm not nursing, I'm giving care in a different way within my job."

Goals.

"Each year I set myself a goal. The first year I wanted to lose the weight I'd put on and I wanted to ski. Then it was to jump out of an aeroplane. To walk Hadrian's Wall. To climb mountains. Those are some of the goals, and I must

thank my partner, now husband, Richard, as he's helped me a lot. Right from when we met he's been really supportive, as he would either do those goals with me or he'd drive me to where I needed to be. When I did a Wing Walk he drove me to the airfield in Selby, and I couldn't do these things without Richard. He's my guide at the Cenotaph and he's a good inspiration."

Work.

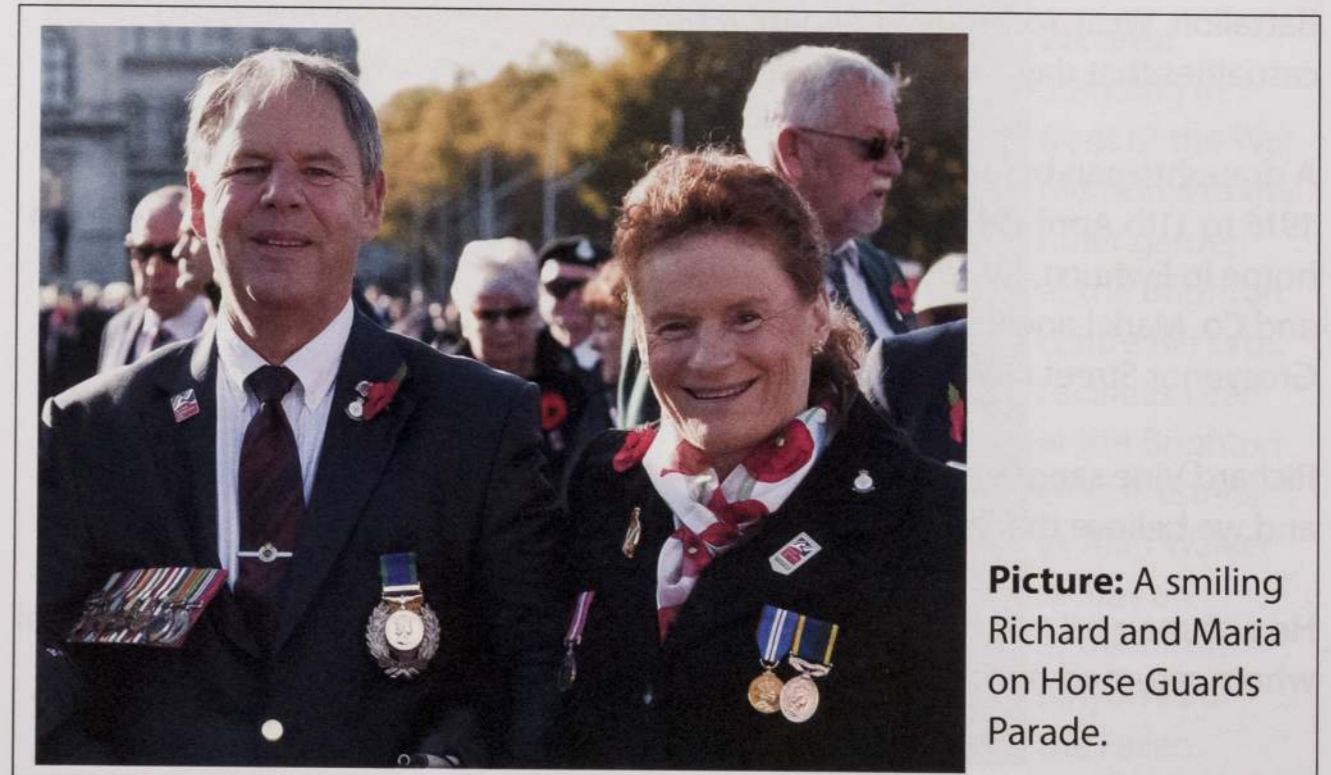
"I'm an Eye Clinic Liaison Officer, an ECLO, at St Helen's Hospital in Merseyside, where my role is to help patients who have different sight conditions. For example, if someone has just been diagnosed with glaucoma, and some of them are so devastated as they think they're going blind, I reassure them. I explain everything about the compliance, and the drops and the driving etc. We also see patients whose eye conditions aren't so advanced that they need a certificate of visual impairment, but they have reduced vision, especially for close up work. Those people we refer for low vision assessment or anything else they might need, as they might also need deafness resource, or Talking Books, or help from Social Services. Then you go to the other extreme where people are registered as severely sight impaired and we have a really good chat when we explain to them that it's not the end, it's just the start, as there is life after sight loss, and that we are the gateway to all services. But I always ask every single person who comes through the clinic door if they've been in the Forces.

"I'll tell you a little story, and she won't mind my saying her name because she's already been in the Review, Joan Jackson, and I hope she reads or listens to this. She came into my office and as I filled in the documents to register her as severely sight impaired, I asked if she had served in the Forces, and she went very quiet and I thought that I'd upset her. Then a couple of minutes later she said, 'Why did you ask me that?' I explained about Blind Veterans UK, and about the Brighton, Llandudno and Sheffield centres, and said that joining the charity would open up her world. She was amazed at what the charity offered, and she said, 'Yes please!' When she went for her Intro Week at the Llandudno centre she phoned and said, 'Maria I had a fantastic time. I've learnt so much, and it's already changed my life' and it was fantastic to hear that. Then, the second time she went to the Llandudno centre, she was talking with a man in the lounge and she asked where he came from. He said Hull. As that's where Joan originally came from she asked what street he'd lived in. He told her, and then she asked his name. He told her, and they found out they were cousins and they hadn't

seen one another for 50 years! It was amazing, and Joan was on a high when she phoned, she was so excited. Then, as it was our centenary year, I said, don't forget you'll get your invitation to Buckingham Palace. She thought I was joking and said, 'Oh Maria, stop teasing me, I've always wanted to go to Buckingham Palace'. She didn't believe it until the invitation arrived and she phoned and said, 'I've got the invitation to Buckingham Palace' and she was over the moon and she had an amazing day. Like so many members Joan said that joining Blind Veterans UK changed her life."

Remembrance.

As we paused at 11am on Sunday 12th November, when asked of her thoughts during the Great Silence, Maria said, "I thought of my father as he had such a bad time in the war, and although he wasn't injured he suffered, but he was proud to have served in the British Army. I remembered our older guys, the ones who fought in the First and Second World Wars. As this year is the 35th Anniversary of the Falklands War, I thought of the people who fought and died in the South Atlantic, and the members and escorts with us who had fought there. I thought of the young guys who have been injured and blinded in Iraq and Afghanistan. Our young ones have given a lot to the nation and it's inspirational to see them develop and grow in confidence. I felt very proud to stand in front of the Cenotaph with everyone as part of Blind Veterans UK's contingent, and to celebrate a centenary of women in the Forces."



Picture: A smiling Richard and Maria on Horse Guards Parade.

Armistice Day. By RJV.

O will ye not be silent then
When the phantom host comes nigh;
O will ye not, for one brief space be still as they muster by?
Ye have your music, song and dance,
For ever at your side;
But will ye not be silent then,
For the sake of those who died?

What things ye love in pleased life
Of comfort, joy and ease;
What things ye boast in freedom's name,
Ye owe it all to these;
Your very life, in truth ye owe to those ye sent to die.
O will ye not be silent then when the phantom host comes by?

Armistice Day was written by Richard Vine, a First World War St Dunstaner.

Born in August 1893 he enlisted on 4th September 1914 and as Vine, L/Cpl Richard J. No 13282, 10th West Yorkshire Regiment, he was blinded in Fricourt on 1st July 1916, the first day of the Battle of the Somme. The 10th (Service) Battalion, West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own) suffered 710 casualties that day when 11 Officers and 300 men were killed.

A draughtsman before the war he trained at St Dunstan's from 24th August 1916 to 11th April 1917. He initially retrained as a basket maker and worked from home in Ewhurst, Surrey. He later worked as a telephonist at Messrs Bullivant and Co, Mark Lane in East London and later at Rose Taylor Milliners at 60 Grosvenor Street in West London.

Richard Vine sang tenor in the Ewhurst Choral Society and in the Church choir, and we believe that he played the violin.

He was married and had two sons who fought in the Second World War, both of whom returned home safe and uninjured. Richard Vine died on 23rd May 1951.

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

But will ye not be silent then, for the sake of those who died?

On the 11th hour, of the 11th day, of the 11th month, in an Armistice Day Service led by Bill Lyth at the War Memorial in the Brighton centre, all present fell silent for the sake of those who died as they thought of the enormity of war.

The Last Post signalled the end of the silence and in a moving ceremony that was full of pathos and respect, member Alan Walker recited an extract from Laurence Binyon's For The Fallen. "They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old. Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning. We will remember them."



Picture: Standing in front of the War Memorial in the inner garden at the Brighton centre Bill Lyth, Facilities Lead at the Brighton centre, listens as Alan Walker recites an extract from Binyon's For the Fallen.

Bill Lyth recited The Dedication — “When you go home tell them of us and say for your tomorrow we gave our today” and Centre Manager Lesley Garven read Armistice Day by RJV.

Following the National Anthem, and as Abide With Me played, Bill Lyth invited Ted Pepper to place a wreath on behalf of the Royal Navy, Alan Cade for the Army and Reg Goodwin for the Royal Air Force. As Royal Marine Steve Nixon placed his wreath he thought of the reason for our freedom, and the people who gave and risked their lives. He thought of his grandfather and of his friend, Jack Gallagher, a St Dunstaner he met in 1992 when he first came to the charity. Further wreaths were placed by Cadets from the three divisions of the Armed Forces, with members from the local emergency services in attendance.

Bill chose Abide With Me to be played as the wreaths were placed, as it was written by Sir Arthur Pearson’s great-grandfather, the Rev. Henry Francis Lyte, who was then vicar of Lower Brixham. The setting day reminded Rev. Lyte of his life, which was drawing swiftly to its close. It was during a 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. His prayer was answered. 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.”

Following the Lord’s Prayer and a blessing, Bill invited everyone present to place crosses at the base of the War Memorial. Each year Bill organises and leads this moving Service. To honour the First and Second World War blinded veterans who are buried at Bear Road Cemetery he also leads a Service there when wooden crosses are placed on their graves.

After the Service refreshments were served in the lounge when friends caught up and the centre was again filled with laughter. Our former Chairman Lord Fraser, who was blinded on the Somme would have approved, as the November 1923 Review stated — he was not one who considered that the anniversary of the termination of such a terrible struggle as the Great War had been was an occasion only for mourning those who had fallen in fight.

During the November 1923 Armistice Day Dance at St Dunstan’s, the then Captain Fraser was quoted, “The men of St Dunstan’s would ever be the first to keep in memory always ‘our glorious dead’. Two St Dunstan’s men would, on the coming Sunday, lay St Dunstan’s tribute at the Cenotaph. But Armistice Day, after all, was the anniversary primarily of a great victory, and I am sure it would not have been the wish of those who had fallen that we should all make it a day of mourning only.”

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.”



The Invictus Ganfields. By Catherine Goodier.

The spectres of sadness and loss have long walked the corridors of our charity, as they gently whisper into the ears of the men and women who take their first tentative steps along the path to Victory over Blindness. As sight is lost in war, or fades through age, or is taken by accident or illness, they seem as a foe who cannot be defeated. As words spoken in 1915 by Sir Arthur Pearson are breathed into the heart of newcomers to the charity, they fade as belief and success slowly take their place and the path is walked with greater confidence. Described by those who knew him as courageous, cheerful and independent, Sir Arthur inspired by his example as a blind man who had triumphantly claimed Victory over Blindness. As the Blind Veterans UK contingent stood on Whitehall in front of the Cenotaph, and the ghosts of the men and women who were remembered during the Great Silence swelled their ranks, Kelly Ganfield thought of Sir Arthur and of Colwyn Lloyd, a St Dunstaner who helped and encouraged her when she began her journey in 2005.

On 16th October 1998, an 18 year old Kelly made her commitment to serve her country when she enlisted into the Royal Military Police, moving into the Adjutant General's Corps. It was the beginning of her life as a Service woman, and the realisation of a long-held ambition, as from a young age Kelly knew her path was to serve in Her Majesty's Armed Forces.

"My uncle was a Royal Marine and that made me determined to go to college where I did a public services course, and from there I joined the British Army. I signed on 16th October 1998 and from 19th October I was serving in the British Army. I initially joined as a Military Police Officer, but became a Military Clerk, as there was a mix up when I was sent to Winchester to join the Adjutant General's Corps, rather than to Chichester where members of the Royal Military Police are trained. I stayed in the Corps as the chances of promotion were greater. It also gave me the opportunity to play football for the British Army when I represented the Army and my Corps. It was a rewarding career, and I was promoted to Corporal, but it was cut short when I was forced to leave the Army as I developed Antiphospholipid Syndrome (APS), a blood condition that caused brain injury, it caused lack of circulation, and also caused me to have two strokes, and those led to my loss of eyesight, Raynard's Phenomenon and epilepsy. Unfortunately, it is something I must now live with, as I could develop

more blood clots or haemorrhages because of the blood condition. There are quite a few health conditions that have resulted from APS, but I don't let it hold me back. I just get on with everything I want to do."

After two years under The Countess of Chester Hospital, and then nine months of rehab in Headley Court, Kelly was invited by ROVI Vanessa Young to St Dunstan's. It was there her journey began when she spoke with St Dunstaners in the lounge. "The first time I went into the Brighton centre was daunting, especially as I was the only female. There were lots of elderly male St Dunstaners, mainly those who had fought in the Second World War, but no women. I felt quite alone at that time as no-one apart from the staff would speak to me. One day I sat next to a chap called Ron, and tried to speak with him, but he didn't answer. As I chatted away I hadn't realised that he was deaf, as well as blind. As soon as I realised I asked the staff to enlarge a chart of the deaf blind sign language so that I could communicate with him. I went back to Port Hall where I studied it and the following morning went over to Ron, who held out his hand, and I signed good morning, signed my name and age and apologised for not having realised that he was deaf. As he was deaf he shouted out in front of everyone in the lounge that he realised someone was sitting next to him trying to hold a conversation, and that he'd asked the staff who it was. I was embarrassed as everyone could hear, but from then on, we spoke every day and he was one of the people who first inspired me.

"After Ron I met other St Dunstaners who were very kind and gave me good advice, especially Colwyn Lloyd, who helped so much as he told me about St Dunstan's and about war pensions. He became a great friend and when I went home we'd phone each other to catch up. We also met up at the Brighton centre when we'd go for walks on the seafront with his guide dog. Everyone adored Colwyn as he was a wonderful man, and since his death I miss him a great deal. He is one of the reasons I attended the Cenotaph this year, to Remember Colwyn and the St Dunstaners I had known. They were so kind and helpful and it was an honour to stand before the Cenotaph with Blind Veterans UK to pay tribute to them."

Before the Parade Kelly was able to remind her escort, Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB that she had kept her word to compete for Great Britain in the 2017 Invictus Games in Toronto, Canada. A humble Kelly said, "In 2015 I promised Nick that I would get a place to compete in the 2017 Invictus Games, and I did.

It was hard work, but a promise is a promise, and I said that I would make the team. That's not me being big headed, as I couldn't have taken part without the support from my wife Sarah, her parents, Blind Veterans UK, Help for Heroes and training from Mikail Huggins, my sprint coach, and Corinne Yorston, my rowing coach. When people ask how I went from a fit young woman serving in the Army, to someone who suffered a series of strokes, to going through rehab, and then once again running marathons, playing football and now competing in the Invictus Games, I tell them it's a combination of stubbornness, determination, and the will to get through. Also, defiance as like the spirit of Invictus I didn't want to be beaten. You need to believe in yourself, and initially I didn't, but I've grown through competing in the Invictus Games. I've grown as a person and am that bit more confident. Sarah and I have a two year old daughter, Bethany, and she has been my inspiration and she's part of the reason I competed in the Invictus Games. Bethany has cerebral palsy and I wanted to show her that anything is possible if you commit to it 100 percent. I thought that was a very big message to pass on to her.



Picture: A very determined Kelly Ganfield rows at this year's Invictus Games in Toronto, Canada.

"Since Toronto I've continued to train with Corinne at Bath University and with Mikhail, as we want to compete in the 2018 Invictus Games in Sydney. Both are professional athletes and with their tuition I can only be better at the 2018 Invictus Games. As I sat at the rowing machine in Toronto I thought of Corinne and the techniques she taught me. We had only trained together for six months, but like Mikhail, as she is a superb coach and mentor she also gave me the confidence to compete. My focus was on not letting Corinne or Bath University down as they had allowed me to train there. In the end I was just two strokes away from Gold. It was very disappointing but now our focus is on training for 2018. Corinne is amazing, and as a former footballer for the British Army we have football in common, as Corinne has played for England, Arsenal, Yeovil, Bristol City and now plays for Oxford. She is inspirational. Mikhail was marvellous as he knew how to deal with my brain injury and memory loss to ensure I understood and remembered the techniques he had taught me. He broke everything down into sections and it worked as I remembered everything, and felt proud of that achievement, and it enabled us to achieve a personal best as we sprinted along the track in the 200 metres race."



Picture: Sprint coach Mikhail Huggins breaks down the race and techniques for Kelly.

As family were a big part of this year's Invictus Games, and they are also at the heart of Blind Veterans UK, the final word goes to Sarah Ganfield, Kelly's wife.

"To have the opportunity to go to Canada to support Kelly and the Great Britain team was an honour. Help for Heroes excelled at everything they did for the family and friends as that was the big message this year, to show how important their support is. It also highlighted how the charities makes a big difference, not just to the veteran or serving personnel, but to us. To see Kelly through this process from January until now has been the most incredible journey for us as a family. To see her grow and once again have her own identity, this time as an athlete who is taken seriously through her sprinting and rowing is wonderful. Kelly is extremely fit, and as we mentioned stubborn and determined, and as we watched the inaugural Invictus Games and were inspired by the athletes, Kelly said she wanted to compete in it to serve her country.



Picture: Sarah Ganfield, their good friend Gerry who lives in Toronto, Kelly and Bethany Ganfield and sprint ace Mikhail Huggins.

When the Invictus Games took place in Florida last year, as we'd just had our daughter Bethany, and we had quite an eventful couple of years having a baby, and all the life changes that come with that, it wasn't possible for Kelly to apply to take part, so she waited for 2017. She took part in every single training camp that Help for Heroes organised with UK Athletics and she trained independently with Corinne at Bath University. Logistically, with a two year old daughter, it's not always easy to get to them, but as a family we made a real commitment, and we either travelled together or Kelly went independently. As a family we've made some amazing friends and we've all grown from this experience, especially Bethany. I think for Kelly the fact she felt deserving of this opportunity is a big deal, as people are judged by what they can see, and Kelly is often overlooked, as she doesn't look blind and it's not obvious that she has a brain injury or is disabled. We struggle with that on a daily basis. Through meeting so many veterans she has grown as they have told her she is deserving of the opportunity to take part in the Invictus Games and represent Great Britain. We both want to thank Help for Heroes, the Royal British Legion, Corinne Yorston, Bath University, Mikhail Huggins, UK Athletics, Blind Veterans UK, Amanda O'Carroll, Nick Caplin and David Richards for making this possible."



Picture: Proud grandparents Peter and Liz Ganfield with Bethany.

Remembrance Day by RJV.

And some there be that have no memorial.
No gilt inscription on a scroll of fame
Or sounding voluntary; unassuming men who,
Laying aside their torch's dying flame,
Were borne away to a world of greater light
Where broken limbs and blindness are unknown.
Each quiet grave reveals a living friend
For ever faithful in the eternal home.

In this most sacred hour, would I could pray
More fervent than this feeble heart allow.
So deeply is emotion welling forth with every heartbeat,
That the tears must flow despite my will.
My very soul is stirred and I must weep,
Because I loved them so;
Because my heart o'erflows with memories of all the pain that they did
Undergo.

Pray on, frail heart, beyond the finite fields of human thought,
Where heaven lies far outspread;
Ere this brief silence break I would be deep
In spiritual communion with the dead.
My heart shall beat, and beat like a thund'rous drum
Calling the dead to life.
Those men I love.
Until their sacrificial presence come to sweeten life and sanctify resolve.

Ere this brief silence break I would be deep in spiritual communion with the dead. By Catherine Goodier.

In silence unbroken, save for the gentle tread of the glorious dead as family, friends and past comrades were called to mind, the 200 men and women of Blind Veterans UK embodied the pledge, We Will Remember Them.



Picture: Falklands veteran Steve Tuffen, Tim Smart, Terry Bullingham, Eric Brotherton and Nigel Whiteley.

During the Great Silence a nation watched as veterans, their escorts, and Service personnel stood in perfect communion, the only movement the cold November wind as it blew along Whitehall. It was a time to remember, a time to reflect, and a time to mourn. It was a time when members of our charity who had served in the Falklands War returned in their mind's eye.

Terry Bullingham led the second column when he placed the wreath for Blind Veterans UK. "As we stood next to the Whitehall Cenotaph my thoughts drifted to my first Remembrance Day Parade as part of the erstwhile St Dunstan's contingent in November 1982 in the aftermath of the Falklands War. I consider myself extremely fortunate to be included in those who returned from the Campaign. It should not be forgotten that over 250 individuals will remain

forever resting in the Southern Hemisphere. It is particularly relevant in this, the 35th anniversary year, as the events in the South Atlantic start to fade into recent history. The effort of all involved in the War to ensure the Falkland Islands remain British shall always be acknowledged.

"During the parade, I particularly bring to mind my former Fleet Air Arm friends and colleagues who perished during the Campaign. In addition to these, I think about others from all three services and the civilian population whose lives remain altered by the events in the Spring of 1982."

Speaking of the importance of Remembrance, Stephen 'Sparky' Sparkes, a former Corporal in the Royal Marines said, "You can't underestimate the impact of Remembrance, as standing on Whitehall in the silence your feelings overcome you. Your mind runs free as you think of friends, and I lost a good friend in the Falklands, and he comes to mind. I think of his wife and his daughter as I've met them since. In the silence you think how everything happens for a reason and that we must always remember."



Picture: Promoted to Corporal during the Falklands War, it is believed that Sparky was the first person since the Second World War to have received a field promotion.



Picture: Community Support Worker Susan Allen who said how honoured she felt to have taken part, Mike Tetley MBE, Blind Veterans UK President Colin Williamson and our past President Ray Hazan OBE. Eileen Prince is in the front holding the wreath. Mike Tetley's speech is in the Talking Review.

As we celebrate a centenary of women in the Armed Forces, Eileen Prince, who served in the Auxiliary Territorial Services from 1944 to 1946, placed the first wreath for Blind Veterans UK. Eileen said that as she placed the wreath she thought of her relatives and of all people who have died, from all the countries.

Win Amos, who served as a Lance Corporal in the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1945 to 1947 said, "I think of my father who was in the First World War and the Second World War, and of my eldest brother Frank, who was killed in 1940 when his submarine went down in the Mediterranean. He was only 20 years old and was a wonderful brother and I think of him today."



Picture: Win Amos was escorted by Niki Kokonas, a former member of staff, who for years organised our attendance at the Cenotaph. Niki, who served in the Adjutant General's Corps said that each year on Remembrance Sunday she thinks of everyone who has died in all wars, and of today's Serving personnel as they work for peace.

Pictured on the opposite page, it was a proud and poignant day for Carl Adamson and Brian Myler, former comrades who have been friends for over 20 years. As they Served together in Northern Ireland, Brian was with Carl when he was wounded and he has witnessed the strength of Carl's character and his determination to rebuild his life. Carl is now a key person at our Llandudno centre as he has become a role model who helps his fellow members.

Carl Adamson, who served in Belize, Germany, the USA and Northern Ireland, spoke of his thoughts as he stood before the Cenotaph. "I thought of everyone who has gone before, and about the history of Remembrance from the First World War to now, as it's an important part of our identity. I'm proud to be here with Brian who I served with as we've been friends for many years. Brian was in the Land Rover when I was injured 20 years ago and it's very moving to be here today. I want to thank Blind Veterans UK for this opportunity to show our respect for those who have gone before and today's Service men and women."

Brian said how impressed he was by the spirit of the members of Blind Veterans UK, and it had a been a very poignant and moving Remembrance Sunday as he stood beside Carl and thought of those he had Served with and those who had made the ultimate sacrifice or been wounded.



Picture: Carl Adamson and Brian Myler.



Picture: Simon Brown and his former Sergeant Major Tim White. Behind is Charlie Eastwood with Connor Dooley, whose mother was a member of our charity. He said the charity had improved his life though the care given to his mother.

Tim White: "Until you have stood on Whitehall you can't comprehend the magnitude of it, especially the silence and stillness. There are thousands of people, and during the silence all I could hear was a rope from a flag hitting the flagpole as the wind blew it, and the only movement was the changing colour of the traffic lights at the end of Whitehall. I reflected on those who had made the ultimate sacrifice or were injured. I thought about the families of people who have gone to war, as they too make their own sacrifice. The soldier understands what they are going into, but the family is concerned every minute of every day when they are away. It brings home the words Lest We Forget."



Picture: Eric Brotherton with Nigel Whiteley who is also a veteran of the Falklands War.



Picture: Stan Bowers with Alan Holderness who fought in the Falklands War.

Former Royal Marine and Falklands veteran Alan Holderness said, "The older I get the more emotional I find I become as you think of those times and how long it has been since people passed. As you get older you're faced with your own mortality. I'm grateful to have made it through the Falklands War and I think of those people who were killed in action who didn't have those extra years. I think of their families and how they have coped with the feelings of loss and sorrow as it leaves a vacuum that could have been filled with so much. It moves you to your core to stand here in honour of them."



Picture: Bill Lyth who works at the Brighton centre with Stephen Locker, Mike Upton and Paul Cartwright.



Picture: Chris Stanners, Ken Facal, Dale Watson and Billy Drinkwater.





Blind Veterans UK Calendar

Activities from the Brighton centre.

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.

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.

The 2018 Activity and Themed Week Supplement is included with this Review.

We do not publish a Review in January. The next edition will be published in February 2019.

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.

Noticeboard.

Dates for your diary and useful information.

Order your 2018 VIP large print diaries.

As we approach 2018 you can now place your orders for VIP calendars, diaries and address and telephone books.

2018 A3 Calendars are priced at £5.95.

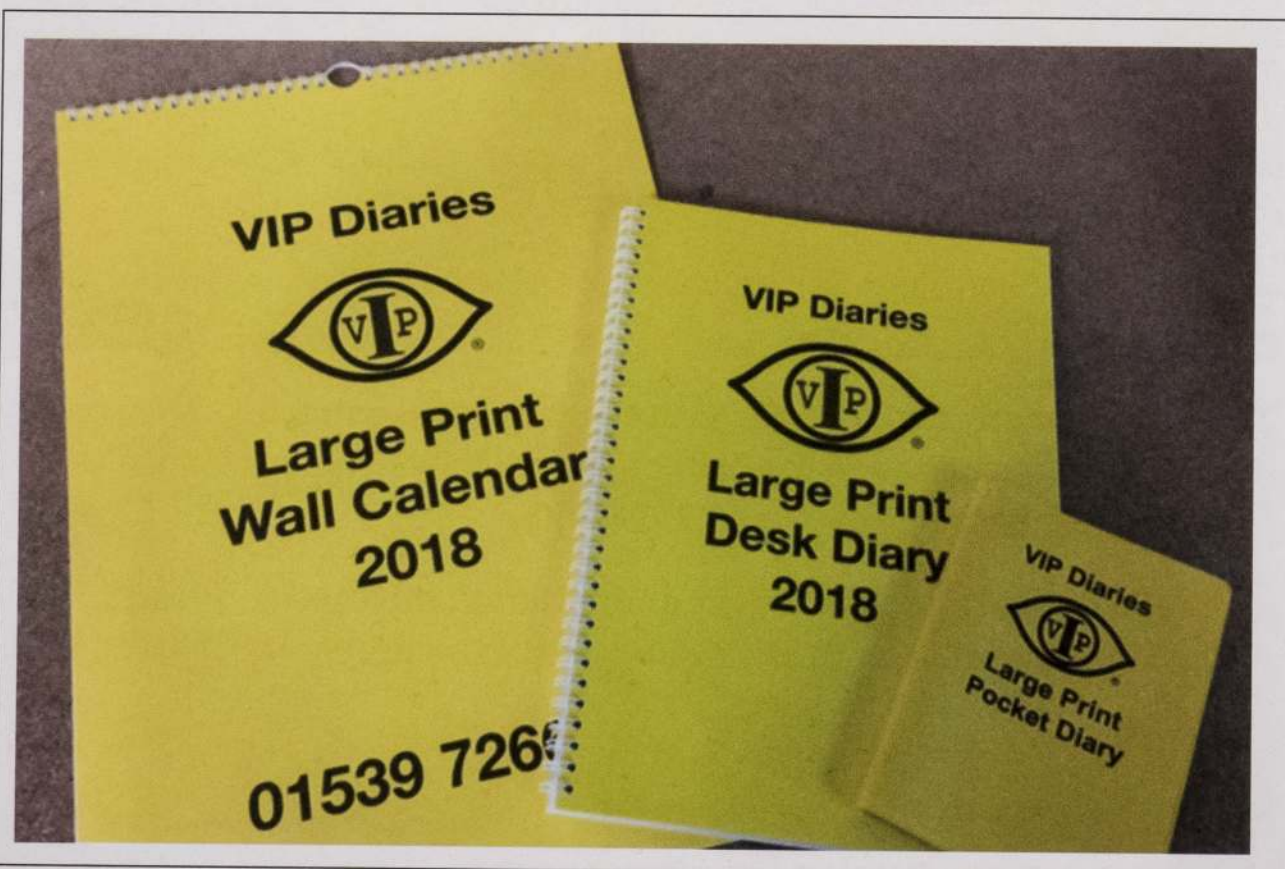
2018 A4 Desk Diaries are priced at £9.25.

2018 A6 Pocket Diaries are priced at £5.50.

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.



No January Review.

Please remember that we do not publish a Review in January. The next edition will be in February 2018. We wish you a very Happy Christmas and 2018.

Sign up to run a Marathon or Half Marathon with the Brighton centre's Sports & Rec team in 2018.

Please contact Russell Scullion, Sports & Rec' Instructor at the Brighton centre if you would like to take part in the Brighton Half on 25th February, the Brighton Marathon on 15th April, the London Marathon on 22nd April or the Royal Parks Half on 7th October. You can reach Russell on 01273 39 1481 or email russell.scullion@blindveterans.org.uk

Answers to Quiz Master Ron Russell's Christmas Quiz.

1. For publicity and corporate purposes by the Coca Cola company in the early 1900s.
2. French.
3. There are 23 birds. One partridge, two doves, three French hens, four call birds, five geese and seven swans.
4. Vixen.
5. Kissing Santa under the mistletoe.
6. Yes. A horse called Santa Claus won the 1964 Derby.
7. White Christmas which was sang by Bing Crosby.
8. Shirley Temple.
9. It was named by Captain William Mynors when he sailed past it on Christmas Day.
10. Kiritimati.
11. Band Aid.

You have until 15th January to nominate for the 2018 Founder's Day Awards.

The Founder's Day Awards are a time for us to celebrate our charity and all that is great about it, but to truly be able to celebrate we need you to nominate those whom you feel deserve one of these highly prized Awards.

Historically the Founder's Day Awards are held annually on 26th March, the date in 1915 when the first 16 war blinded veterans entered the new training centre at St Dunstan's Lodge in London's Regent's Park. The 2018 Founder's Day Awards will take place in St Dunstan's Chapel at the Brighton centre on Monday 26th March 2018.

The winners of the 2017 Founder's Day Awards featured in the May Review, and if you know someone you think has excelled, and is eligible to be a recipient of a Founder's Day Award in 2018, please do nominate them.

The categories for the 2018 Founder's Day Awards are:

- 1) Community Award. This award is for the best contribution to their local community or the family of Blind Veterans UK. The Community Award is open to members, spouses, widows and widowers.
- 2) Training Achievement Award. This award is given to the best novice who has shown great ability or perseverance as they learn new skills. It is only open to members of Blind Veterans UK.
- 3) Creative Art Award. This award recognises endeavour in a creative activity and encompasses art, handicrafts, sculpture and music. If practical, an example should be sent with the proposal form. If this is not practical, then please do send a photograph. This award is only open to members.
- 4) Sports Person of the Year Award. Open to members only, this celebrates an exceptional sporting achievement or achievements during the award year.
- 5) Outstanding Achievement Award. This is for a member who has achieved an outstanding level of independence via their participation in activities promoted

or provided through and by Blind Veterans UK. This award is only open to members.

6) The Ted Higgs Trophy for a war blinded veteran.

7) Innovator of the Year Award. This award is given to a person or organisation who successfully introduced a good idea or device to Blind Veterans UK.

For guidelines and a proposal form, please contact Hannary Barnes at the Brighton centre. You can write to Hannah at Blind Veterans UK, Greenways, Ovingdean, Brighton, East Sussex BN2 7BS. Or, if you prefer, telephone Hannah on 01273 391490 or email her at hannah.barnes@blindveterans.org.uk

Nominations are treated in confidence and will be discussed by a Selection Committee in January 2017 so please submit your entry by 15th January 2018. Nominees are not informed that they have been nominated until the Selection Committee has reached their decision.



Picture: At the March 2017 Founder's Day Awards, Joseph Hallett, known as Bird Box Bert, won the Innovator of the Year Award. He is shown receiving his Award from our President Colin Williamson. Bert was nominated by John Cantwell.

Don't Leave it Unsaid. By Alfred Barlow.

Don't leave it unsaid until they are dead,
For then it's too late to acknowledge those things,
That love, happiness and thankfulness brings.

If there's love in your heart for those in your life,
Your friends, your children, your husband, your wife.
If you are grateful for someone's good deed,
If someone has filled up that gap in your need,
That helpful hand as you've crossed life's way,
That smile that has helped to brighten your day.

To those who've stood by you when all had seemed lost,
Who've supported and helped you, not counting the cost,
Say I thank you, say I love you, to show that you care
For the things they have done in which you've had your share.

Say I really am proud of you my dear son
You've far surpassed me in the things you have done.
Say, dear daughter I love you, I still have that curl
That I snipped from your hair when a sweet little girl.
Dear Mother, Dear Father, for you I will pray,
You made me so happy and guided my way.

Dear friend when I needed you most you were there
You lifted me up from the depths of despair.
My teachers, my tutors, let me say thanks to you
For imparting the knowledge that you had accrued.
To those who have helped you in their diverse way
Say I thank you good health to the end of my days.

To all those good people who've played any part
In lifting your spirit, bringing life to your heart,
Let them know now how they've helped you along
When their faith and their smile turned your sadness to song.
Don't wait until they are cold in their graves
Or dispersed far away on the wind and the waves,

Tomorrow's too late as I've found to my cost,
For then you will find that the chance has been lost
To say all those things you intended to say
But kept putting off until the next day.

So say to them now the words in your heart
Before the Lord calls 'It's time to depart'
Don't leave it unsaid what ought to be said,
Don't leave it unsaid until they are dead.



Picture: Don't Leave it Unsaid was written by Alfred Barlow, who is shown on our Gold Medal Garden at RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show. Pictured from left to right are the Standard Bearer from Alfred's Normandy Veterans Association, Alan Walker who presented replacement medals to Alfred, May Barlow and Blind Veterans UK's Chief Executive, Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB.

David Thomas 1935 to 2017.

David Thomas died on 3rd September 2017, aged 82. He leaves his wife Brenda and their children Neil, Esther and Michael. He had been a St Dunstaner for 55 years, and was a popular member at the annual 50 Year Badge Holders Reunion.

Brenda said that David was a very determined man and that he would want to thank St Dunstan's for giving him back his life, as he thought the world of the charity and of the people. Since he passed they have been extremely kind.

David served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1953 to 1955. In 1954, during his service in the Far East he noticed two large black spots in his eyes, his vision gradually deteriorated and he returned to the UK. Diagnosed with Bilateral Uveitis as a result of his service, he was admitted to St Dunstan's. Before his Service and subsequent sight loss he worked as a constructional engineer, but when his sight failed he sought employment as a labourer in a Brewery, keeping the extent of his sight loss a secret from his employer. As he was keen to gain more stimulating employment, from 1st May 1963, he attended the Brighton centre to learn Braille and for vocational training, which he completed in May 1964. A skilled Brailist he came second in a national Braille reading competition.

His Braille instructor's comments at that time state: 'A hard working and persevering pupil. Has a good memory and is quick to learn. Doing very good work'.

His telephony instructor, PM Slade, wrote: 'Mr Thomas has shown a keen interest in telephony. He has a pronounced accent, but that is not an issue as his voice is clear, pleasant and business like. I see no reason why he should not be very good, as he puts the maximum of effort into his work at all times. He is very quick recording numbers and messages and is ideally suited for a busy board.' In 1964 he joined Warrington Borough Treasurer's Office as a Telephonist. He later worked for City Engineers in Nottingham and then Barclays Bank International in Manchester and then Haywards Heath.



Picture: A very elegant Brenda and dapper David Thomas at the 50 Year Badge Holders Reunion at Church Stretton in Shropshire.

Alf Dodgson 1924 to 2017.

Alf Dodgson died on 5th November 2017 aged 93. He served in the the Royal Scots Fusiliers from 17th December 1942, until he was injured during his Service in Holland on 6th January 1945 when he stepped on a booby trap. He was admitted to St Dunstan's on 3rd April 1946.

Asked of his memories of Alf, his fellow St Dunstaner Bernie Blacker, who was also blinded in the Second World War recalled, "I've known Alfie for over 70 years and we got on well and had some quite happy times together. A group of us often walked to the pub in Rottingdean, there was Billy Miller, Alfie, Nick Jones and Bobbie Holmes, and we each walked with the hand on the shoulder of the man in front. Alf was a tough old boy, he didn't give way easily if he got ill or anything like that. He was a good friend, full of jokes and one liners and he made a lot of people smile. He was always friendly and a good sport."

Alf was keen bridge player often on the winning team at the National Bridge Congress that was held at Ian Fraser House [the Brighton centre].

He was a strong swimmer and with Ray Sheriff he swam for a million yards in the pool at the Brighton centre. Alf and Ray took up the Amateur Swimming Association's challenge to swim a million yards in less than five years. It was believed that they might have completed their million yard targets in the shortest time ever.

Alf was quoted in the Review saying that he would continue swimming. "To have this regular exercise and the million yards to aim for has helped me to cope after the loss of my wife. However, we mustn't forget Vi Delaney who completed the million yard challenge first."

Joan Osborne said "Alf was a great friend of my late husband Bob. They both had a great sense of humour and could laugh and talk for hours. I've known Alf for many years and he is very much missed."



Picture: Alf and Joyce Dodgson on their wedding day in 1985 at St Dunstan's Chapel at the Brighton centre.



Picture: Relaxing at the Brighton centre after Christmas celebrations Bob Osborne and Alf Dogson.

Don Planner 1947 to 2017.

Don Planner died on 4th October 2017 aged 69. He leaves his wife Sharon and their sons Stuart, Daniel and James. Don, who served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1963 to 1976, leaving as a Corporal, became a St Dunstaner in 1976. On 16th June 1975, during service in Berlin, his skull was fractured and he sustained eye damage when a pressed steel container exploded as he cut it with an oxyacetylene torch. He was referred to St Dunstan's by the Consultant Ophthalmologist at Cambridge Military Hospital. He was a first class vehicle mechanic with good prospects of promotion in the REME.

Don was a popular and well known St Dunstaner, who did a lot for the charity. Speaking of him his wife Sharon said, "I'd known Don since we were 13 and we married when we were 19. We celebrated our Golden Wedding Anniversary in December last year, and my 70th birthday on New Year's Day. We had a good life together, although not as long as we hoped. His funeral was on his birthday and we had balloons, birthday cake and we sang happy birthday as he'd tried so hard to get to his 70th. Some of our youngest son's friends put his dark glasses on and sang Happy Birthday and toasted him, and we had a good day. Dark colours weren't allowed at the funeral as Don could only see darkness and he believed in wearing only bright colours so that everyone could see him, so we had Hawaiian shirts. It was standing room only as 120 people came to celebrate his life. Don was very well known as he would walk for miles and miles with his guide dogs and people always remarked 'I saw Don here, there and everywhere'.

"He loved his Army life. He cycled for the Army team during his apprenticeship for NATO forces in Berlin and he was a team Captain at one stage. He enjoyed cycling, cross country and marathons. He went to Gibraltar for six months when Stuart was nine years old, and Kenya, back to Gibraltar and then to Germany.

After his accident they put in the morgue until they saw him twitching. When they phoned to tell me they said 'He had a little accident'. He was moved to a German Hospital and neurosurgeons were flown from Hanover to Berlin to look after him. Then he was transferred to a third hospital for plastic surgery to his jaw. He was never so good looking afterwards, but he had his own appeal and he was still my Don.

"He was casaevaced back to Aldershot for more plastic surgery and then on to St Dunstan's and he thought it would be a church. When he went there it was the days when wives couldn't go to their rooms.

"He was a great guy. He was something of a nutter as he did everything he wanted to, and things people thought he couldn't do, just to prove that he could. He was a keen sportsman and he took part in marathons and in 1979 he went to Germany with a local blind organisation to give a talk on archery. His attitude was 'If you can do it I can too'. There weren't many things he couldn't do. He grabbed every opportunity that St Dunstan's gave him skiing, archery, sports. He was his own man and he only asked for help if he really needed it.

"Over the years he raised about £50,000. He first starting raising money for SeeAbility, which Jimmy Wright got him into. I think the first thing he did was a little ride round our village on my bike with our youngest son on the seat behind, and that progressed to running marathons. He did a tandem ride from London to Canterbury to raise money for the Hawk Eye Club that we set up in Kent for kids coming out of school at 16 years of age. There was nothing for them so we started the club for 16 to 40 years old as it encouraged them to get on with life.

"Ray Hazan, Terry Bullingham and Jimmy Wright were a great inspiration to Don and he made some lovely friends at St Dunstan's. He loved going to the Cenotaph and would go in all weather. He felt so proud to be allowed to go, but when he was first asked he didn't think he should as he wasn't injured during war. He enjoyed going to HMS Sultan Summer Camp for many years until he became ill.

"Don worked on the switchboard at St Dunstan's at Brighton then for the National Health and then Natwest. He was a Braille reader up until the last year and still reading his Braille books. He had a good life, a full and active life. He was Borough Councillor in Kent where he served for four years for Swale Borough Council for the SDP when we got about 67% of the vote with the largest turnout that year. It's only a small village and Don was well known and well liked.

"He always supported me. He is missed."

Family News.

Birthdays:

Percy Wykes who will celebrate his 102nd birthday on 4th December.

John Evans who will celebrate his 102nd birthday on 8th December.

Reg Goodwin who will celebrate his 102nd birthday on 27th December.

Jim Brettell who will celebrate his 100th birthday on 8th December.

Anniversaries:

Blue Sapphire 65 years married.

William & Mabel Hill of Camelford, Cornwall on 6th December.

John & Lily Jones of Wolverhampton, West Midlands on 20th December.

Ron & Gwen Ward of Oldbury, West Midlands on 20th December.

Ray & Elizabeth Bentham of Newton-Le-Willows, Merseyside on 26th December.

Jack & Janet Pulfer of North Walsham, Norfolk on 27th December.

Diamond Yellow 60 years married.

Stanley & Margaret Bousfield of Thornton Cleveleys, Lancashire on 10th Dec.

Alan & Jean Carroll of Colwyn Bay, Clwyd on 15th December.

Peter & Pam Thomas of Hailsham, East Sussex on 26th December.

John & Hazel Grosset of Ilkley, West Yorkshire on 28th December.

David & Una Middleton of Ryton, Tyne And Wear on 28th December.

James & Jean Eadie of Strathclyde, Lanarkshire on 31st December.

Golden 50 years married.

Alan & Heather Cooke of Newport, Shropshire on 2nd December.

Ruby 40 years married.

Peter & Jackie Hammond of Rottingdean, East Sussex on 17th December.



Picture: Don and Sharon Planner.



Picture: Great friends Don Planner and Jimmy Wright present a cheque from their very successful charity fundraising.

Silver 25 years married.

Derrick & Margurite Cross of Paignton, Devon on 11th 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.

Mary Collingwood who died on 5th August 2017. She was the wife of Frederick Collingwood.

Joan 'Susan' Ellis who died on 9th November 2017. She was the widow of the late Anthony Ellis.

Joan Follis who died on 22nd October 2017. She was the widow of the late Norman Follis.

Daisy Greenaway who died on 3rd November 2017. She was the widow of the late Frederick Greenaway.

Rosemary Mann who died on 14th November 2017. She was the wife of Keith Mann.

Rowena Rees who died on 1st July 2017. She was the widow of the late Banks Rees.

Ruby Russell who died on 23rd October 2017. She was the wife of Reginald Russell.

Jean Sherman who died on 27th September 2017. She was the wife of Frank Sherman.

Mavis Stares who died on 11th November 2017. She was the wife of Kenneth Stares.

Doreen Thompson who died on 9th November 2017. She was the widow of the late Leslie Thompson.

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.

Wallace Adams of Bedford, Bedfordshire died on 20th October 2017, aged 94. He served in the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm from 1941 to 1946 in Home Waters and the North Atlantic and South Atlantic, leaving as a Leading Airman.

Grace Allan née Rankin of Kilsyth, Glasgow died on 31st October 2017, aged 95. From 1942 she served in Scotland in the Auxiliary Territorial Service until 1945 when she was discharged as a Lance Corporal.

Leonard Andrew of Hinckley, Leicestershire died on 14th October 2017, aged 97. He served in the Royal Air Force from 1941 to 1946, discharging as an AC1.

James 'Jim' Ayling of Chichester, West Sussex died on 5th November 2017, aged 93. He served as a LAC in the Royal Air Force from 1943 to 1947 in the UK.

Ronald Beamish of Basildon, Essex died on 25th October 2017, aged 95. He served in the Royal Sussex Regiment and the Royal Engineers from 1941 to 1946.

John Bell of Blackpool, Lancashire died on 1st November 2017, aged 96. He served in the Home Guard from 1940 to 1945.

Hebert Bendle of Abergavenny, Gwent died on 18th August 2017, aged 99. He served in the Royal Engineers from 1940 to 1946 in Libya, Tunisia, Italy and the Middle East, until demobilised as a Lance Corporal.

Peter Bennett of Swindon, Wiltshire died on 21st September 2017, aged 85. From 1951 to 1956 he served in England in the Royal Army Veterinary Corps.

Leslie Bentley of Liverpool, Merseyside died on 1st November 2017, aged 90. From 1945 he served in the King's Regiment in Cyprus and the UK until 1948.

Iris Blackburn née Waton of Newcastle Upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear died on 14th July 2017, aged 95. She served in England in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force 1942 to 1946, discharged as a Leading Aircraftwoman.

Eric Bly of Beeston, Nottingham died on 21st October 2017, aged 83. He served as a Driver in the Royal Signals in the UK and Germany from 1952 to 1964.

James Briers of St. Helens, Merseyside died on 24th October 2017, aged 88. He served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1946 to 1949 in the UK, Ireland and Germany.

John Cleverley of Oldham, Lancashire died on 7th November 2017, aged 93. He served in the 79th Armoured Division from 1942 to 1946 in Normandy and Germany, discharging as a Lieutenant.

Estelle Cole née Lawley of Brighton, East Sussex died on 25th September 2017, aged 99. From 1943 to 1944 she served in the Women's Royal Naval Service, then as a Flying Officer in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1950 to 1953.

John 'Lynn' Davies of Y Felinheli, Gwynedd died on 23rd October 2017, aged 81. He served in the Royal Air Force from 1954 to 1958 discharging as an SAC.

Albert 'Bert' Dodd of Hornchurch, Essex died on 20th October 2017, aged 90. He served in the Essex Regiment from 1945 to 1947 in Italy, Egypt and Palestine, discharging as a Private.

Matthew 'Matt' Doherty of Manchester, Greater Manchester died on 25th October 2017, aged 90. He served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Engineers from 1945 to 1953 in the UK and Germany, discharging as a Corporal.

Ronald 'Ron' Dovey of Gloucester, Gloucestershire died on 29th October 2017, aged 81. He served in Germany in the Royal Berkshire Regiment from 1954 to 1956, discharging as a Private.

Muriel Fisher née Bailey of Westbury, Wiltshire died on 1st January 2016, aged 95. She served in England and Northern Ireland as a Nursing Sister with the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service from 1947 to 1948.

David Giles of Birmingham, West Midlands died on 9th November 2017, aged 86. From 1949 to 1955 he served in the Royal Army Medical Corps in Hong Kong.

Eileen Gubbay née Evans of Nottingham, Nottinghamshire died on 3rd November 2017, aged 91. From 1944 to 1947 she served in England in the Royal Army Medical Corps, discharging as a Private.

Norman Hayes of Brighton, East Sussex died on 18th October 2017, aged 96. From 1938 until 1946, he served in the Loyal Regiment, Reconnaissance Corps and the Army Catering Corps in the UK, France and India, demobbed as a Sergeant.

Anthony 'Tony' Heathcote of Stratford Upon Avon, Warwickshire died on 1st August 2017, aged 90. He served in the Royal Air Force from 1944 to 1948 in the UK, discharging as a Corporal.

James 'Jim' Hosking of Truro, Cornwall died on 18th October 2017, aged 83. He served in the UK in the Royal Air Force from 1952 to 1954, discharging as an LAC.

George Huff of Greenwich, London died on 19th October 2017, aged 94. He served in the Royal Navy from 1941 in the Atlantic and Arctic convoys, the Mediterranean and Far East until discharged in August 1946. He then served in the REME from 1961 to 1965.

Alan Hurlbut of Kineton, Warwickshire died on 26th October 2017, aged 87. He served in the Royal Navy from 1952 to 1969 at HNS Ganges, HMS Tiger, HMS Hogue and in Malta, leaving as a Lieutenant Commander.

Graham Hutton of Darlington, County Durham died on 1st November 2017, aged 96. He served in the Royal Artillery, Border Regiment and the King's Own Royal Regiment from 1941 to 1946.

William Jackson of Hailsham, East Sussex died on 11th October 2017, aged 94. He served in the General Service Corps and the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1942 to 1947, until demobilised as a Private.

Colin Jacobs of Gosport, Hampshire died on 3rd November 2017, aged 82. He served in the Royal Army Medical Corps in England from 1953 to 1958.

Derek Kemp of Middlesbrough, Cleveland died on 5th November 2017, aged 76. He served in the Royal Air Force from 1958 to 1967 in Aden and West Africa, discharging as a Senior Aircraftman.

Arthur Lane of King's Lynn, Norfolk died on 12th October 2017, aged 90. He served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1945 to 1951 in the UK and Jamaica until demobbed as a Sergeant.

Peter Lennon of Reading, Berkshire died on 10th July 2017, aged 81. He served in the Royal Air Force from 1954 to 1956.

Stuart Lewis of Plymouth, Devon died on 19th October 2017, aged 88. He served in the Royal Signals and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers from 1947 to 1965.

Tudor 'Lew' Lewis of Wolverhampton, West Midlands died on 11th October 2017, aged 96. He served in the Royal Navy from 1941 to 1947 in the Mediterranean, North Atlantic, Pacific Ocean and Indian Ocean, leaving as an Able Seaman.

Patricia 'Trish' Mantell née Stenhouse of Petersfield, Hampshire died on 3rd November 2017, aged 93. She served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force from 1942 to 1946 in the UK, discharging as a Leading Aircraftwoman.

Geoffrey 'Geoff' Marshall of Southwaite, Carlisle died on 7th November 2017, aged 94. From 1942 to 1946 he served in the Royal Navy in the Mediterranean, North Sea, Americas, Pacific Ocean, Africa and the Atlantic as a Stoker 1st Class.

Alan Matthews of Ruthin, Clwyd died on 30th July 2016, aged 81. He served in the Royal Air Force in Wales from 1953 to 1955, leaving as a Corporal.

Kenneth Morrison of Port Talbot, West Glamorgan died on 17th October 2017, aged 92. From 1943 to 1966 he served in the Royal Corps of Transport in the UK, Norway, Germany, and Cyprus, rising to Sergeant.

Gordon Norris of Epsom, Surrey died on 21st October 2017, aged 88. He served in the Royal Engineers from 1947 to 1949 in North Africa and Germany, discharged as a Sapper.

Harry North of Southam, Warwickshire died on 21st October 2017, aged 94. He served in the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm from 1942 to 1946 in the UK and USA, discharging as an Air Mechanic.

William 'Derek' Parry of Newport, Gwent died on 23rd October 2017, aged 85. He served in the South Wales Borderers and the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1952 to 1958 in Germany and Korea, discharging as a Private.

Stanley 'Stan' Portway of Hartlepool, Cleveland died on 13th October 2017, aged 92. From 1942 to 1946 he served in the Household Cavalry Regiment in Italy, Belgium, Germany, Africa and Iran, until demobilised as a Trooper.

John 'Jack' Prior of Brighton, East Sussex died on 7th November 2017, aged 96. He served as a Leading Seaman in the Royal Navy from 1941 to 1946.

Robert 'Bob' Reid of East Kilbride, Glasgow died on 7th November 2017, aged 90. He served as a Third Officer in the Merchant Navy from 1944 to 1951 in Finland, Sweden, North Africa, the Middle East and Canada.

Deryk Rouse of Bradford, West Yorkshire died on 1st October 2017, aged 82. He served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps from 1953 to 1955 in Egypt.

Morley Skipper of King's Lynn, Norfolk died on 26th October 2017, aged 81. He served in the Royal Artillery from 1955 to 1960 in Wales and The Canal Zone, until discharged as a Bombardier.

James Smith of Bristol died on 21st October 2017, aged 91. He served in the General Service Corps, the Dorset Regiment and the Queen's Own from 1943 to 1946.

Arthur Stamp of Colchester, Essex died on 29th October 2017, aged 95. From 1942 to 1947 he served in the Royal Engineers in Italy, Sicily, Germany and North Africa, until demobilised as a Lance Corporal.

Leonard Stanton of Peacehaven, East Sussex died on 19th October 2017, aged 94. From 1942 to 1946 he served in the Royal Air Force in England, India and Burma, discharging as a Leading Aircraftman.

Leslie Stevens of Towcester, Northamptonshire died on 22nd October 2017, aged 96. He served in the Royal Air Force in the Middle East from 1941 to 1946.

Keith Swann of Derby, Derbyshire died on 26th October 2017, aged 77. He served in the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1963 to 1985 in Cyprus, the UK and Germany, discharging as a Sergeant.

Lionel 'Len' Williams of Margate, Kent died on 16th October 2017, aged 83. He served in the Royal Air Force in England from 1952 to 1953, leaving as an AC2.

Douglas Wilson of Diss, Norfolk died on 24th October 2017, aged 93. From 1940 to 1947 he served in the Royal Air Force in Siam, Burma, Singapore, Pakistan, Malaya, India and Indonesia, demobbed as a Leading Aircraftman (LAC).

Lest We Forget. Brighton centre staff honour First and Second World War St Dunstaners.



Picture: In a service devised and led by Bill Lyth, staff from the Brighton centre placed wooden crosses on the graves of the First and Second World War St Dunstaners who are buried at Bear Road Cemetery. Staff to honour them were Bill Lyth, Craig Brindley, Gordon Grey, Des Standing, Trevor Turrell, Richard Blyth, Natasha Cartwright, Carol Innes, Aaron Buckland, Faye Pye, Ray Brooker and Jason Piddleston.

On the cover: David Habershon, William Brant, Tim Davis, Colin Williamson Nick Caplin and Kelly Ganfield.

Back page: Falklands War veterans and their escorts Lee Cole, Steve 'Sparky' Sparkes, Gary Steele, Steve Tuffen, Tim Smart and Terry Bullingham.

Photos taken by Phil Meech.



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Patron Her Royal Highness The Countess of Wessex GCMG.

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Contact telephone numbers.

The Brighton centre 01273 307811.

The Llandudno centre 01492 868700.

Harcourt Street (HQ) 020 7723 3392.

ROVI IT Helpline: If you need to speak with the ROVI IT Helpdesk please telephone the staff at the Sheffield centre on 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 number 0800 389 7979.

