

October 2018

Review

Blind Veterans UK | St Dunstan's since 1915



Home and dry

'Sparky' finishes his epic journey



Global
Channeling
arts

Seahorse
Maritime Academy

Mich Dawson

On the cover: Steve 'Sparky' Sparkes arrives in Hawaii, having rowed the Pacific Ocean. Photo courtesy of Ellen Hoke.

Back page: More details about our Victory Over Blindness ceremony and campaign.

Contact: Review Editor, Chris Gilson, by phone 0207 723 8367

Email: revieweditor@blindveterans.org.uk

Post: Blind Veterans UK 12 - 14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD



Contact telephone numbers

The Brighton centre 01273 307 811. **Harcourt Street** 020 7723 5021.

The Llandudno centre 01492 868 700. **Research Dept:** 020 7616 8371.

The Booking Office for the Brighton centre: To book accommodation at the Brighton centre telephone the Booking Office on 01273 391 500. If you have care needs please first contact your Team Leader or Community Support Worker (CSW).

The Booking Office for the Llandudno centre: To book accommodation at the Llandudno centre please telephone 01492 868 700 for bookings and ask for the Booking Office. If you have care needs please first contact your Team Leader or CSW.

ROVI IT Helpline: If you need to speak with the ROVI IT Helpdesk please telephone the staff at the Sheffield centre on 01273 391 447 for ROVI and IT enquiries.

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

Review Editor: You can telephone Review Editor, Chris Gilson, on 0207 723 8367, email revieweditor@blindveterans.org.uk or write to him at Review Editor, Blind Veterans UK, 12 - 14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD.

Blind Veterans UK Calendar - Brighton

October.

Technology Week 14th to 20th.

Bowling Club Fortnight 14th to 27th.

November.

Cuisine Week 18th to 24th.

December.

Turkey & Tinsel Week 9th to 15th.

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 391 500. If you have care needs please first speak with your Team Leader or Community Support Worker.

Activities at the Llandudno centre in 2018

October.

Shooting & Archery Week 8th.

Live Well 15th.

Golf Week 21st.

Creative Crafts 29th.

November.

Military Week 4th.

Wood Week 19th.

December.

Christmas Crafts 3rd and 10th.

January.

Food & Drink Week 27th to 3rd February

February.

Photography Week 24th to 3rd March

To book Themed and Club Weeks at the Llandudno centre.

For further information or to book your place please telephone: 01492 868 700. If you have care needs please first speak with your Team Leader or Community Support Worker.

Contents

- 2 Contacts
- 3 Calendar
- 5 Welcome from new Review Editor Chris Gilson
- 6 Welcome from the Chairman
- 8 Our Victory Over Blindness campaign
- 10 All about the music for Victory Over Blindness
- 12 News from around the regions
- 16 Founders Day – your guide to nominations
- 24 Tips and more from our ROVIs
- 26 Padre's corner
- 27 **Crossing the line** – 'Sparky' Sparkes completes his epic journey
- 30 A look back at our Brighton centre as it turns 80
- 36 In Your Community
- 38 Quiz page
- 39 **Filling the Years with Hope** – a look back at the life of member Cyril Tasker
- 46 A round up of what to expect for the Armistice 100 celebrations
- 48 Sleep better, with help from our research team
- 50 Family News
- 52 In Memory
- 58 **Gerry's Workshop** – member Gerry McNeill's world of model-making

Editorial welcome



Hello, and welcome to your October edition of Review. As you will notice, there's a new face at the helm of your magazine, so this short welcome is by way of introducing myself as your new editor, and point of contact.

I've come to Blind Veterans UK from a job editing a well-known historic aviation magazine, and during my time there was privileged to meet some of you and talk about your recollections of service life and beyond. I have long admired those who battle sight loss in all its forms, yet carry on with their lives despite the multitude of challenges thrown at them, and in the course of my time here I look forward to meeting many of you, and hearing about your experiences. Hopefully too, you'll be willing to share those moments with other members – I have no doubt that you all have your own stories to tell.

In the meantime, if you have any suggestions or comments regarding Review, I'd be more than happy to hear them – no matter how small. My contact details are at the start of the magazine on page 2. You'll notice we've introduced a couple of small changes to help you enjoy your magazine too. There's now a **Contents** page on page 4, to guide you round, and the longer articles have been broken into sections with sub-headings, to make them easier to read. I'm always interested in hearing your feedback.

In this edition, you'll be able to read about the 80th anniversary celebrations of the Brighton centre and the start of the **Victory Over Blindness** campaign, which will come into prominence over the next month. Add to this the usual mix of features and helpful information from across the Blind Veterans UK community, and there's plenty to take in.

Until next month, enjoy your magazine.

Chris

Opening the door to opportunity

Your message from Air Vice Marshal Paul Luker CB OBE AFC DL.

In 1968, when Sergeant Mick O'Connell said, "Mr Luker, you is an idle flight cadet!" he could have been predicting what my annual confidential reports should have been saying for most of my Service career. I am, by design and inclination, lazy.

Perhaps that's why this summer came as such a shock to me. These are traditionally the months in which I gear down from my habitually sloth-like zeal to a more sedentary pace of life. But this year, my first as chairman, it's been different. It comes as a shock to discover that Blind Veterans UK just gallops on. And it is, perhaps, what impresses me most about our charity.

From June I have been monitoring with admiration – actually incredulity – the progress of Steve 'Sparky' Sparkes and Mick Dawson as they rowed to Hawaii from Monterey. Not content with making history by being the first blind person to cross the Pacific, Sparky capped it by finishing in the wake of Hurricane Lane on 28th August.



Picture: Dickie Richardson throws the javelin at Brighton

Brilliant as this achievement is, the more I explore St Dunstan's history, the more I discover other incredible feats by our members. The realisation that blindness need not constrain one's life actually seems to open the door to opportunity and ambition. And if proof were necessary, one need only read the Review to see the breadth of activity that our members undertake to find it.

There is another side to this sort of inner steel and commitment. It manifests not only in what our members do but also in what our staff, volunteers and benefactors do as well.

It is the whole business of going that extra mile. Everywhere I turn, I hear about it – but I doubt that I understand a fraction of its totality. However, many of you do. So, as you read on, please take particular note of our Founder's Day awards and put your minds to those of our community who also deserve recognition. Make your voice heard.

But back to my disturbed summer. Readers will know that we have been recruiting for new member trustees. I confess that I feared our campaign would be met with indifference. As ever, I was wrong.

We were overwhelmed with a breadth of talent, all committed to upholding the values of the charity and representing the interests of our members. We are blessed with this level of engagement – but it made the selection process really tough. The outgoing member trustees, Kerry Levins and Paul Palmer, joined as trustees at the same time as me; I have really enjoyed their company and respected their dedication and insight. They have served the membership exceptionally well and they leave big boots to fill. I have no doubt that their successors, Chris Cardwell and Alan Holderness, will do the same.

We have also been on the search for other successor trustees. Whenever we find potential candidates we make a point of taking them to one of the centres before we seal the deal; they are terrific places to determine whether we suit each other. The "sell" becomes immeasurably easier within an hour of crossing the threshold. Who could resist the friendly professionalism of the staff, the generosity of the volunteers and the enthusiasm of the members? For reasons of geography I tend to go most often to Brighton, again discovering something new on every visit. And as we celebrate 80 years of the Brighton centre, I'm sure we will unearth even more uplifting stories. This story of Ovingdean must be told, not just because it is important to us but because it explains much about our nation's social history. Read on.



Picture: Lady Pearson lays the foundation stone in 1937

Our Victory Over Blindness statue to be unveiled in Manchester this month

It has now been formally announced that a new statue commemorating the end of the First World War will be unveiled in Manchester this October.

The statue, of seven blinded First World War soldiers, will be permanently placed outside Manchester Piccadilly Station as a memorial to the injured of that conflict.

The statue depicts the seven soldiers after losing their sight, marching with their hand on the shoulder of the man in front and is based on the sculpture known as "The Lads" which is now at our Llandudno centre.

Victory over blindness is a phrase first used by our founder, Sir Arthur Pearson, and continues to guide our principles today. We supported more than 3,000



Picture: An artist's impression of the sculpture

First World War blind veterans with rehabilitation and training allowing them to achieve victory over blindness.

Speaking about the statue, our Chief Executive, Major General (Rtd) Nick Caplin CB, said: "Helping blind veterans achieve victory over blindness is the cornerstone of everything we do, and have always done, at Blind Veterans UK. In 2018 victory over blindness means enabling blind veterans to lead the lives they choose."

"This statue is our way of commemorating the centenary of the end of the First World War and recognising the amazing work achieved by our veterans at that time and ever since."

The sculpture was conceived and designed by artist and sculptress Johanna Domke-Guyot.

Johanna said: "I'm over the moon with how the statue has turned out. It's been a very long journey and I underestimated how emotional I would feel about the whole process. The time I've had with these seven figures over these years and seeing them come to life has been really amazing."

Helen Wheatley, Regional Manager for the North West said: "The unveiling will take place on Tuesday 16th October and because the station is really busy the actual ceremony will be rather short and sweet."

"We are really excited to have the statue in Manchester and will be incorporating trips to visit it into our community activity over the coming year."

There will be a full report on the unveiling of the statue in next month's Review.



Picture: Johanna hard at work on the sculpture in her studio



Picture: Alastair Caplin playing the violin

Hitting the right note

Composer and violinist Alastair Caplin shares his thoughts about why writing the music associated with the Victory Over Blindness sculpture means so much to him.

In early 2015, I was approached by Blind Veterans UK and asked to compose and perform a piece for the charity's First World War Centenary Service at Westminster Abbey. At this time I was also introduced to the first incarnation of the **Victory Over Blindness** memorial sculpture by artist Johanna Dome-Guyot, which is affectionately known as 'the lads' and resides at the Blind Veterans UK Llandudno centre.

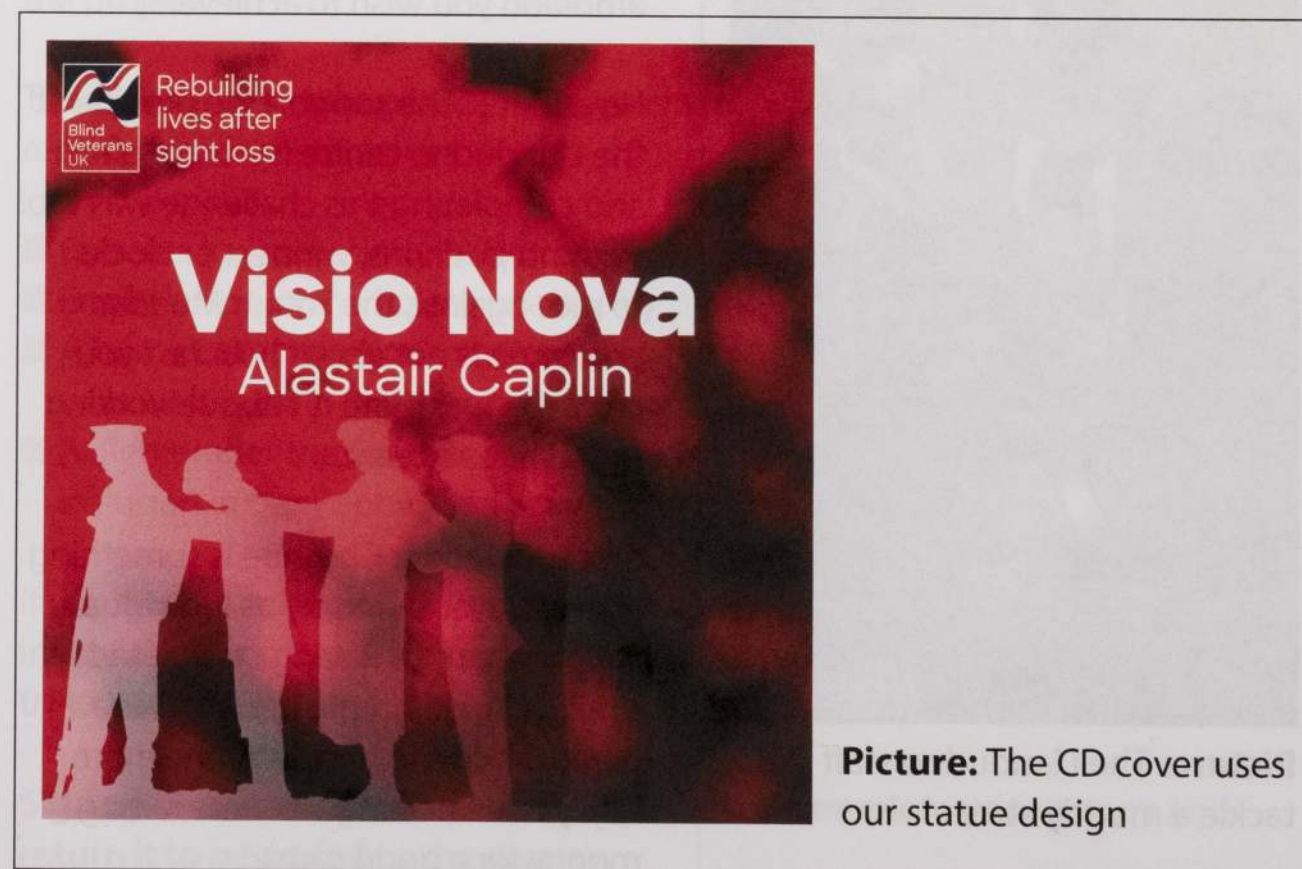
The over-arching perception that hit me the more I delved into work of the organisation and the sculpture, was the bravery and comradeship that the veterans possessed when confronted with their life-changing injuries; or to put it another way, the positivity with which they attacked these horrific afflictions and the determination to not only overcome challenges that the disability

presented, but to incorporate them into the most admirable form of self-improvement.

In the first piece of this album, **Reach Your Hand To My Shoulder**, I set out to try and portray a musical rendering of the journey that a soldier recently blinded in the trenches would have gone through, charting the passage from the initial terror of the injury itself, through the inevitable depression that would follow, and through the rehabilitation and hard work, to finally end the journey as the victor over blindness.

For the three-part piece **Visio Nova (A New Vision)**, I am charting the same journey while trying to evoke in the listener what I understand to be the vast palette of emotion that someone embarking on this journey of blindness will encounter. I am also privileged to include a sample of Blind Veterans UK member Billy Baxter reading a customised version of the poem *If*.

I hope that in listening to this music, my audience will catch a glimpse of the turmoil and confusion that sight loss can cause, but more importantly the strength of spirit that veterans have shown in matching this colossal challenge, and overcoming it.



Picture: The CD cover uses our statue design

News

Llandudno team braves the mud

On Sunday, September 9, a group of staff members from the Llandudno centre – Mark Hollis, Gareth Hall, Rhian Jones, Filip Lament and Suzanne Evanson - took on 10 miles of mud, fire, ice-water and 10,000 volts of electricity to complete the Tough Mudder Cheshire Challenge.

Mark Hollis said, "On a daily basis we witness the challenges faced by you, our veterans.

"From relearning simple tasks such as preparing food and drinks or gaining the skills required to step out with confidence unaided with a cane, to taking part in rock climbing, 100km walks and the fulfilment of any other ambition you wish to achieve."



Picture: The Llandudno staff tackle a muddy stream

He added, "The support we provide at the Llandudno centre is a team effort and completing this challenge was too! With no podiums, winners or clocks to race against, the Tough Mudder challenge is not about how fast you cross the finish line it's about working together as a team.

"Tough Mudder Cheshire is something we've all wanted to try as individuals, with some of us having completed similar courses in the past. It was a great experience made all the more enjoyable knowing we were raising money for a good cause"

All the team members crossed the finishing line in one piece (if a little muddy!) and with more sponsorship still to arrive, they hope to raise £1,000 for Blind Veterans UK in total.

If you, your family or friends have a challenge in mind that that you would like to undertake, why not contact your Regional Fundraiser and see if you can use your next experience or challenge to help raise funds for Blind Veterans UK.

Contact community@blindveterans.org.uk or call **01492 864 574** (Midlands, North and Wales) or **01273 391 455** (South).

Poppy Project 2018

Those of you who have attended Military Week at our Llandudno centre over the past two years may have seen the beautiful Poppy Project display – a blanket of poppies which cascade out of a window and cover the lawn area at the front of our building.

Staff, volunteers, our veterans and supporters have worked together to create this tribute to the fallen and each year it grows as more people sign up to take part in the project.

Those wishing to take part can sign up and make a £3 donation, and in return will receive a pack containing:

- Patterns to create both knitted and crocheted poppies
- Enough wool to complete one poppy project
- A home collection box to help you collect donations from family and friends who wish to help in supporting us
- A 'Remember the Fallen' note card for you to add a personal message for inclusion in our Poppy Field Book of Remembrance

If you wish to take part or know an individual or group who would like more information contact Suzanne.evanson@blindveterans.org.uk or call **01492 868 723**.

Sign up by October 26 to give enough time to complete your poppy and return it to be added to the display.

News

A masonic call to arms

The Blind Veterans UK masonic group will be meeting in the Llandudno centre for the annual week of fun, laughter and Freemasonry.

We visit a local lodge where we are hosted by them, and in return we host them at our group dinner at the end of the week. There will also be other activities put on during our stay.

If you are a freemason and would like to join with us at the Llandudno centre during the dates of 10-16th February 2019 then please contact me on the following details no later than 12th December 2018.

W.Bro Clive Jones P.P.P.G.Purst 07854 800 256. Dragoneye67@sky.com

Calling all Lancaster veterans

You may have heard of a recent film that has recently premiered – *Spitfire*. It's a super film about that lovely aircraft, and the men and women that flew them, and was produced by David Fairhead and Anthony Palmer.

Now David is working on a similar film about the Avro Lancaster, and is looking for RAF veterans who flew them or worked with them in some capacity.

If you are willing to be interviewed by the producers and would like to help David with his research, do please contact Gina Almond by email or phone on gina.almond@blindveterans.org.uk, or 020 7723 5021.

A knitting tribute

The small village of Littleover in Derbyshire marked the centenary of the end of the First World War with the aid of 37 crocheted bears, each hand made by severely sight impaired local resident Sally Edworthy.

Sally, who was diagnosed with glaucoma over years ago explains, "The 37 bears represent the 37 soldiers from Littleover who went off to war but sadly never returned. I thought it would be fitting for each of the 37 soldiers of Littleover to have a bear created especially for them, each one has a tag with that soldier's name on and is unique in colour, size, style and personality; just like human beings, and no two are identical."

Each bear was sold in exchange for a donation to Blind Veterans UK during the village gala on September 15th.

Sally learned to crochet in her teens and explains that it is something she can still do with limited vision, "I get a lot of pleasure out of crocheting, I find it relaxes me and is good for my mental health because it's creative. Many people are surprised that I can crochet, because of my vision impairment, but I don't have to look at what I'm doing to be able to do it."



Picture: The teddy bears on display

Founder's Day Awards

You have until 9th January 2019 to nominate for the 2019 Founders Day Awards.

The Founder's Day Awards are held annually on 26th March, the date in 1915 when the first 16 war blinded veterans were welcomed by Sir Arthur Pearson to the new training centre at St Dunstan's Lodge in London's Regent's Park. In 2019, the Founder's Day Awards will take place at the Llandudno Centre on Tuesday 26th March 2019. The winners of the 2018 Awards featured in the 2018 May Review, and if you know someone you think has excelled, and is eligible to be a recipient of a Founder's Day Award please do nominate them.

The 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 'gongs'.

About your Founders Day proposal form

Enclosed in this edition of the Review are the guidelines and proposal form. If you have any difficulty filling in the proposal form, please contact Hayley Goldsmith-Williams on **01492 068 746**. If you would like to complete the proposal via the internet, please go to the following link to complete the form: [surveymonkey.co.uk/r/6865W9J](https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/6865W9J). Additionally, if you require the form in a more accessible format, please contact Hayley Goldsmith-Williams.

In approximately 500 words, please describe what you believe the nominee has done to achieve the award and why in your view, this makes them the most deserving winner.



Picture: Eddie Gaines and Nick Caplin at last year's awards

The categories for the 2019 Founder's Day Awards are:

Member Only Awards

Life beyond Sight Loss Award *NEW AWARD*

For a member whose sight loss journey has led them to excel in:

■ Discovering a new skill/activity following sight loss.

OR

■ Re-discovering a skill/activity sight loss.

Creative Award

To recognise endeavour in a creative activity.

(This may encompass art, handicrafts, sculpture, writing, photography and music).

Winner 2017 – Norman Perry

Winner 2018 – Will Phillips

Sporting Achievement Award

To celebrate an exceptional sporting achievement during the award year.

Winner 2017 – Mark Abel

Winner 2018 – Andy Lietch

Vocational Award *NEW AWARD*

In recognition of a member who has exhibited drive, enthusiasm and attainment in education, vocational training and employment.



Picture: Last year's Founders Day awards

Outstanding Achievement Award

For a member who has achieved an outstanding level of independence via their participation in an activity.

■ For a **New Recruit** who has demonstrated outstanding achievement within the first 12 months of joining the charity.

OR

■ For a long standing member who has demonstrated outstanding achievement within their **Long Service** (membership) with the charity.

Winner 2017 – Ben Shaw

Winner 2018 – Jamie Weller

Camaraderie Award *NEW AWARD*

Nominated to a member by a member in recognition of a veteran who has enabled, helped or supported another on their sight loss journey.

Ted Higgs Prize – War Blinded Members only

Awarded to a war blinded veterans in recognition of lifetime achievement.

Winners 2017 – Billy Baxter

Winners 2018 – Hugh Megarry

Other Awards

Inspiring Community Award –

Member, Spouse, Widow or Widower

For a member, spouse, widow or widower who has demonstrated inspiring behaviour through their contribution towards the development of the Blind Veterans UK family/community.

Winner 2017 – Carole Knight

Winner 2018 – John Nicol

Carers Recognition Award *NEW AWARD* –

Carers/Family Members only

In acknowledgment of an individual who has selflessly provided an exceptional level of care in order to enable a member to live with dignity and pride.

Founders Day Awards 2019 – Members

How to nominate the members, spouses, widow/ers of Blind Veterans UK for a Founders Day award.

Guidance

Nominations must be in writing on the attached proposal form, once cutout or provided verbally on the telephone by contacting Hayley Goldsmith-Williams on **01492 068 746**.

- Each nominee must have a Proposer, who need not necessarily be connected with Blind Veterans UK
- In approximately 500 words, please describe what you feel the nominee has done to achieve the award and why in your view, this makes them the most deserving winner.
- Nominees can be put forward for more than one category.
- Winners shouldn't not be nominated for the same category for two years following their win but may be entered for other categories. Previous Winners for 2017 and 2018 are listed on the category information.

You may re-nominate someone who was not successful previously. Nominations may be made by any individual, including the staff of Blind Veterans UK.

Closing date is 9th January 2019.

A Selection Committee made up of representatives from all facets of the organisation will meet in January 2019 to adjudicate. Nominations are treated in confidence then discussed by the Selection Committee. Nominees are not informed of the proposal until the Selection Committee has reached its decision.

The results will be reported in Review magazine. The 2019 Awards Ceremony will take place at our Llandudno Centre on Tuesday 26th March 2019.



Founders Day proposal form

Nominee

Address

Post Code.

Telephone Number

Nominee

Address

Post Code.

Telephone Number

Proposer

Relationship to Nominee (ie family, neighbour, escort)

Proposer's E-mail Address

Proposer's Telephone Number

continues over the page

Category – please circle

(If you are unsure which category, please circle all that may be applicable):

Member Awards

Inspiring Community Award (Local Community)

Life beyond Sight Loss Award (Discovered a new skill/activity)

Life beyond Sight Loss Award (Re-discovered a skill/activity)

Creative Award

Sporting Achievement Award

Vocational Award

Outstanding Achievement Award (New Recruit)

Outstanding Achievement Award (Long Service)

Camaraderie Award

Ted Higgs Prize

Other Awards

Inspiring Community Award (Blind Veterans UK Family/Community) – Member, Spouse, Widow or Widower

Carers Recognition Award – Carers/Family Members only



Reason for proposal (approx. 500 words)

Large area for writing the reason for proposal, consisting of multiple horizontal lines.

Dated

Please return by 9th January 2019 to:

Hayley Goldsmith-Williams, PA to Llandudno Centre Management, Blind Veterans UK, Queen's Road, Llandudno, LL30 1UT, telephone 01492 868 746, e-mail: Hayley.goldsmith-williams@blindveterans.org.uk

Rehabilitation

Imke Carruthers and Ashley Li are Rehabilitation Officers for people with a Visual Impairment (ROVI). Here, they talk about their work at Blind Veterans UK.



Picture: Imke



Picture: Ashley

Imke

I started working for Blind Veterans two and a half years ago as a ROVI at our Sheffield centre, and then moved into the community, working in and around the West Midlands area where I live. I still work in the community but now I am also a Senior ROVI on the National Helpline - **01273 391 447** - which is based in our new Sheffield office. This means I am a frequent traveller on the M1 for my sins.

One of the questions I often get asked is how to say my first name. My grandmother was Dutch, and my parents decided it would be fitting to keep a traditional name in the family. It is pronounced Im-ker, but I respond to most things.

I really enjoy working on the helpline as no two days are ever the same - one minute you can be taking someone through changing the voice on their Read Easy scanner, and the next moment you're discussing how to spread butter on a slice of toast, while finding out where their nearest lunch club is.

The ROVI team is also in the unique position of communicating with pretty much everyone within Blind Veterans UK, both members and staff alike. This means that if we can't solve a problem, we almost certainly know the person that can!

Ashley

I began my career at Blind Veterans UK three and a half years ago as a ROVI at the Sheffield centre, and I now work within the ROVI-IT help line and Community section.

I had previously worked in Audiology before retraining as a Rehabilitation Officer so I have experience working with people with vision and hearing loss.

My role as Senior ROVI within the ROVI-IT help line provides me with a great opportunity to speak directly with members, staff and external organisations and to visit members out in the Community.

I particularly enjoy working for Blind Veterans UK due to the many resources available to our members as they allow me to best fulfil each individual's needs.

Imke's ROVI tip: If you're struggling to differentiate between similar-shaped bottles, for example your tomato sauce and brown sauce or shampoo and conditioner, then why not try wrapping an elastic band around one of them. This will immediately make them feel different to one another.

Ashley's ROVI tip: Remember to utilise the low vision services in your local area as they can be a valuable resource for offering support and organising social events.

Padre's Piece

Blind Veterans UK padre Clare Callanan offers some guidance in finding some calm in a busy world

Every day is a 'school day' so they say. Well it certainly is here; I am learning so much each day as I settle in as chaplain to Blind Veterans UK. Whatever it is, there is always more each day to discover, learn and reflect upon. My problem is that can make my mind very busy, with thoughts spilling over themselves everywhere. And that does not always make for a calm state of mind.

Add to that a new job, a house move and a family shift as my daughter moves back in with us, and there is potential for things to go wrong. Have you experienced similar events recently? Have you moved house, changed role, lost a relationship, feel disempowered in any way? Do you have that feeling that things are just too busy and that everyone and everything is expecting too much of you?

That rushing, that whirl of activity, that inability to stand still for a moment, that fear of silence, is not good for us. We need to take the time to listen to the wisdom in our bodies, in our dreams, in our intuitions and in our inner selves.

There is a time and season for everything and we have to learn to trust that and to sit with it rather than fight it. Carl Jung believed that each child comes into the world with a blueprint for life, and that the task for each one of us is to realise that blueprint as fully as possible. We have to learn how to co-operate... our idea may be a good one but now is not the time. Wisdom is to be found by living in harmony with the flow of things rather than trying to control events.

Each of us has different ways of doing this. For some it may be walking the dog, or listening to music, cooking, running marathons, or doing yoga. There is no right way to do this but I do believe that it is important to find whatever it is that helps us to be present in the moment, to take a 'still' photograph in your mind of the moment and stay with it.

Blessings
Padre Clare Callanan



Picture: Steve 'Sparky' Sparkes at the oars as he nears the finish line

Sparky and Mick have done it!

Photos: www.greatpacificrace.com © Ellen Hoke

We've been following the amazing journey of member Steve "Sparky" Sparkes and his skipper and friend Mick Dawson as they have attempted the incredible feat of rowing the Pacific Ocean.

We're delighted to report that on 28 August the pair landed in Hawaii having completed their 2,400 nautical mile journey that began in Monterey, California. The pair rowed in gruelling two-hourly shifts day and night for 82 days. Just three boats made it to the finish line, and theirs was the only one manned by two people.

Completing the Great Pacific Race puts Sparky into the record books as the first blind person to row the Pacific Ocean. On his arrival in Hawaii Sparky said: "I knew it was going to be rough but the first two weeks really showed me what the Pacific can throw at you. Every day was a fight against the wet and the cold. Nevertheless it's been an amazing experience, I'm glad we've done it."

He continued: "When you're partially sighted your morale can really drop, but coming out and doing something like this, it makes you think, 'what can't I do?'"

Safe and sound back in the UK and speaking on Facebook Live to their supporters Mick said: "The first thing we did when we reached dry land was hug the people we love, straight after that we headed for the food, we basically haven't stopped eating ever since."

"After I learnt to walk again!" Sparky added. "They had to give me two walking



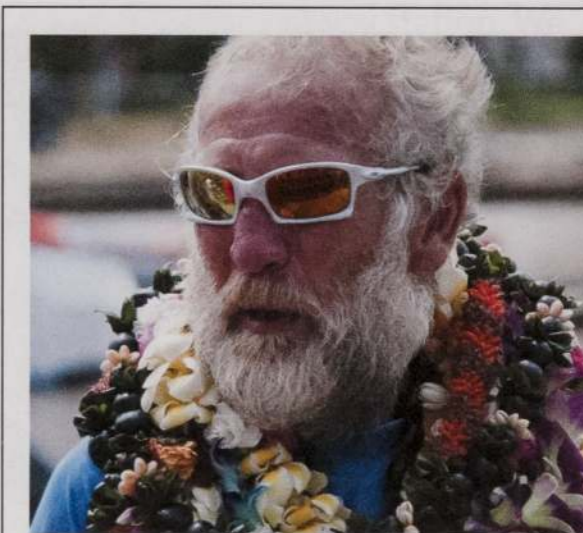
Picture: Nearly there!

www.greatpacificrace.com © Ellen Hoke

sticks as I couldn't stand up properly. I still have the motion sickness now."

Sparky and Mick took on this challenge, dubbed the 'World's Toughest Rowing Race', with the goal of raising £10,000 for The Royal Marines Charity and Blind Veterans UK. However, their fundraising total now exceeds £11,500!

You can still support Sparky and Mick, and donate at: virginmoneygiving.com/Cockleshell-pacific



Picture: A bedecked and jubilant Sparky, with his feet back on dry land



Picture: Mick looks on, as Sparky brings his cockleshell in

www.greatpacificrace.com © Ellen Hoke



Picture: Dame Vera Lynn meets veterans at the centre in 1982

'It's a fine house we have on the coast' – 80 years of our Brighton centre

Our Brighton centre is turning 80. Rob Baker, our Information and Archives Executive, looks at the history of a very special place

Blind Veterans UK came to Brighton within a few months of being founded in 1915. We needed other centres in addition to our headquarters, which was then in Regent's Park, London. Some of the newly-blinded men had additional health issues and needed more time to rest and convalesce in a healthy environment.

Our first centre in Brighton was in Queen's Road, near the railway station. We had this property for only a few years, but in 1917 opened a more substantial building, West House, in Kemp Town. In time the training and rehabilitation of our veterans came to be based here, rather than London. West House (later renamed Pearson House) remained in use even after the opening of our new centre at Ovingdean, and finally closed in 1995.

The need for a new centre

'Above Rottingdean the new villas began: pipe-dream architecture: up on the downs the obscure skeleton of a nursing home, winged like an aeroplane' (Graham Greene, Brighton Rock, 1938)

By the mid-1930s it had become apparent that a new centre was needed; West House was often full to capacity, and as our early blind veterans aged they were beginning to find it difficult to negotiate some of the stairs and sharp corners in the building. We found a site at Ovingdean, between Roedean School and Rottingdean, and commissioned an architect, Francis Lorne. We also asked our blind veterans what they wanted from the new building.

We believe the centre is unique in being purpose-built for blind people who themselves had input into its design and functions. Lorne produced a striking



Picture: Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth looking at weaving looms during a visit to the centre in 1948

six-storey art deco building of fireproof steel and brick, which from a distance looked like an aeroplane, as author Graham Greene spotted! Each floor was almost identical, with straight passages and rounded corners and the stairs had self-closing swing gates. A scale model of the building was produced, so that newcomers could learn the size, shape and relative positions of the rooms and corridors.

Beginnings and evacuation

The new centre opened on 10th October 1938. New facilities included a gramophone with loud speakers, a grand piano and special safety ash trays. In addition to workshops and rooms in which to learn other skills such as Braille and typewriting there was space for more relaxing pursuits in the likes of the Domino Room and the Braille Room. It was important too that those coming to the centre engaged with the local community. They were helped by many local residents known as the 'Good Companions' who came together following an appeal to provide 'guides, philosophers and friends'.

However, following the outbreak of war it had become apparent by June 1940 that the site could no longer cope with the amount of rehabilitation work



Picture:
Members walking outside the centre in the 1940s

created by the new war-blinded cases and that there was a real risk of being hit in an air raid. In the summer the centre moved for the duration of the rest of the war to Church Stretton in Shropshire. The building itself was requisitioned, and taken over by the Royal Navy. It became part of the site of **HMS Vernon**, a shore based training establishment formerly in Portsmouth which the war had forced to be dispersed to various sites across the country.

Return to the centre

The return from Church Stretton came in 1946, and activities at the centre soon returned to normal. Social activities had always been an important part of life for our blind veterans, and there were ample opportunities for group trips out to events in Brighton as well as special entertainment provided at the centre itself. Numerous celebrities have visited and helped support us, including Max Miller, Helen Keller, Tessie O'Shea, Bernard Cribbins and Dame Vera Lynn. The eminent film director Anthony Asquith made a short film about us, **World Without Shadow**, at the centre in 1957. Her Majesty the Queen visited in 1962 and 1985.

New additions and developments to the building

The addition of a swimming pool to the centre had been suggested by a



Picture: Her Majesty The Queen watches member Ted Brown work on a picture frame during her visit in 1985

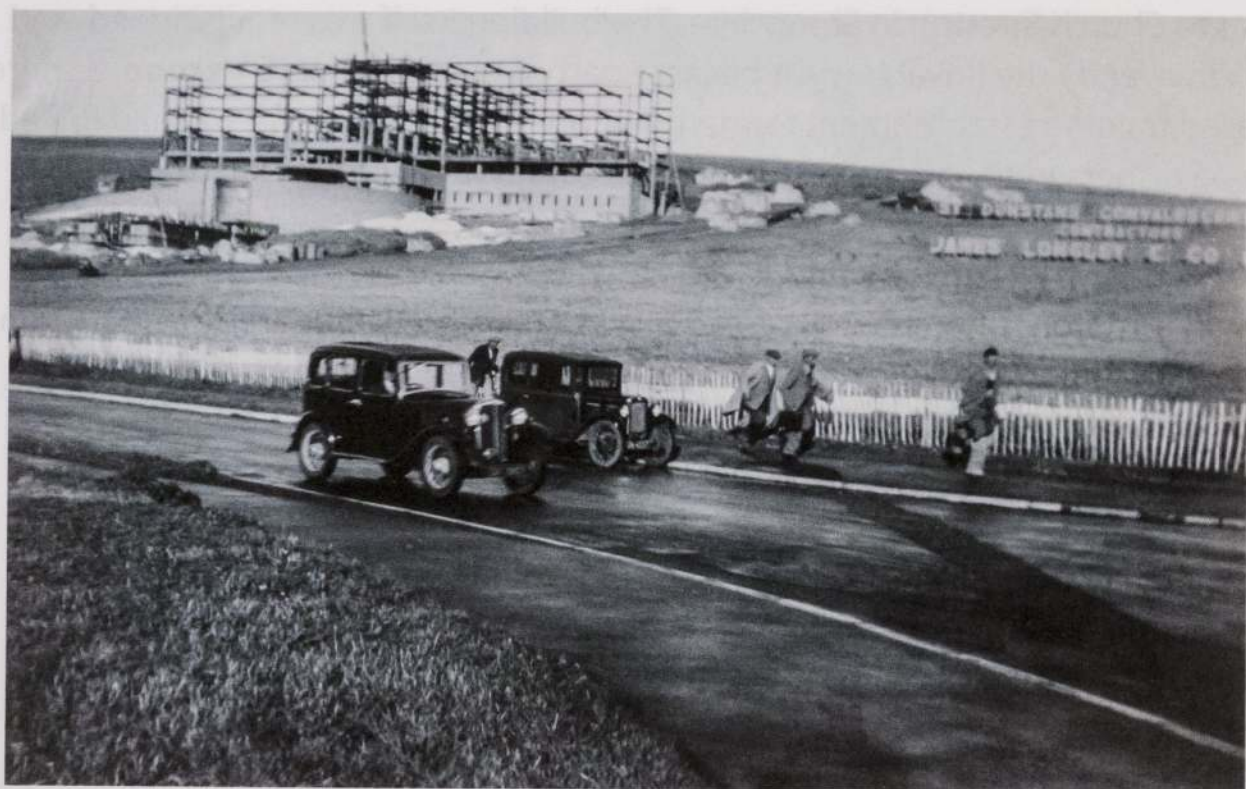
blind veteran in 1966. In 1975 it arrived as part of a major refurbishment which added a new South Wing also housing workshops, a bowling rink and new first floor rooms. Other areas in the building were modernised and fire protection improvements were made. Subsequent changes have included the provision of a substantial arts and crafts centre and new and improved accommodation.

A blind veteran writes about the centre

Thousands of blind veterans have benefitted from the Brighton centre, and it seems appropriate to close with some thoughts about the building from one of them. Wally Thomas lost his sight, and his hearing, serving in the Second World War. In his autobiography **Life in My Hands** he writes:

'At Brighton there is a building reminiscent of an ocean liner, dominating the slope of the Downs near Ovingdean. The view from these thousand windows is, I am told, unrivalled along the South Coast. The Channel is spread below; on the other side there is the soft undulating vista of the Downs, and the village of Ovingdean among the clustered elms.

On my first visit to St Dunstan's I was at once aware of the size, the grandeur



Picture: The centre under construction in 1937



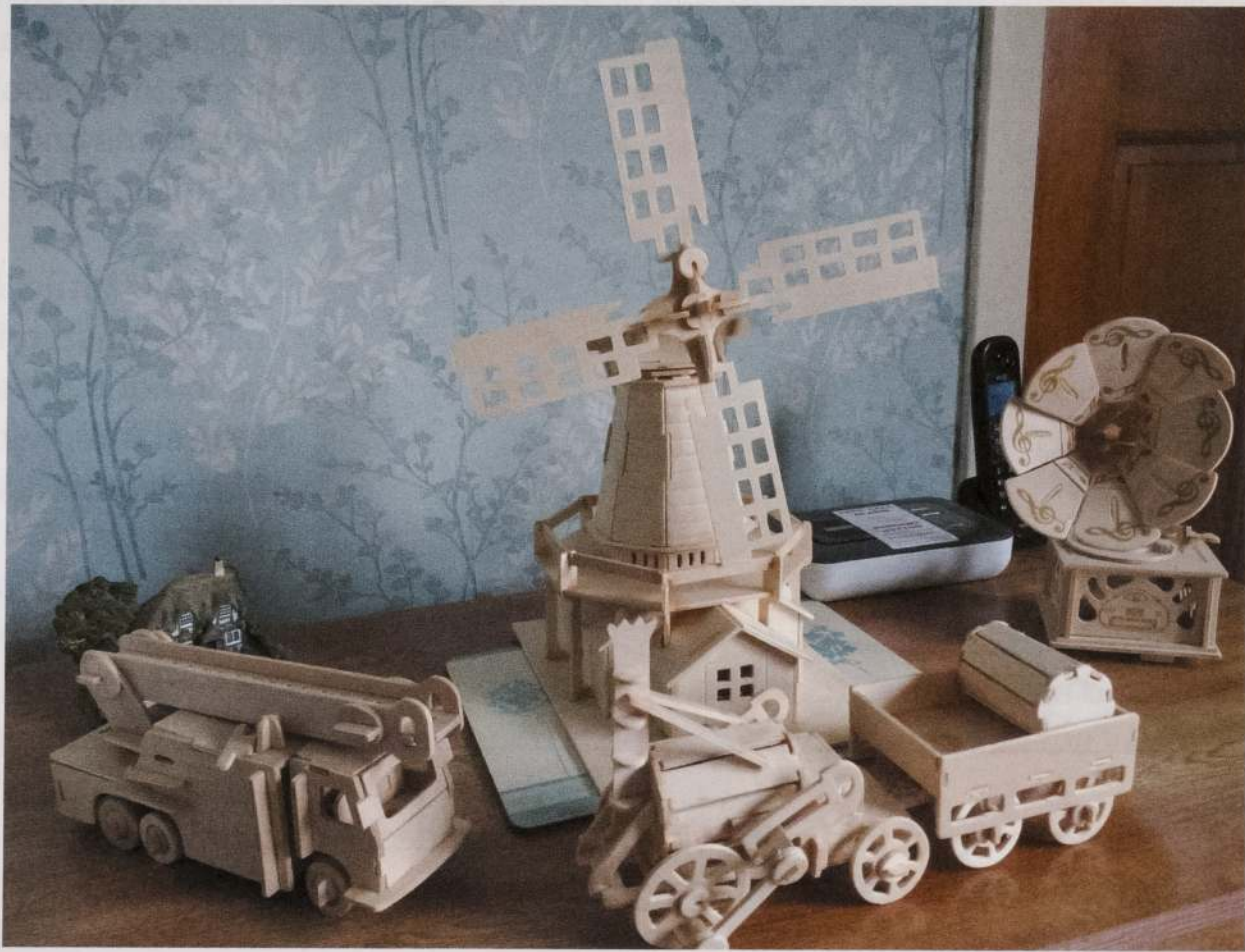
Picture: A 1980s view of member Sid Jones enjoying archery outside the centre

of the place; then I was told of the views it commanded. It required a night's thought for me to decide that it was right that a house of blind men should enjoy these magnificent views that they would never see. Because we know they are there. People describe them to us. When we sit on the terraces, we face the English Channel, and we know it. We can smell its clean tang and we can picture it just as it is. We couldn't do this unless it were really there.

I am often there for holidays, still. I can see the whole building in my mind, and hear in my mind the rooks that nest in the elms not far away, wheeling and floating above the dark massed trees. It's a fine house we have on the coast; its position is not wasted on us. We could as easily live in a dark building shut off by high walls in the hollow of the land, since we can see nothing wherever we are: but we would know we were there, and we would be less happy in such a place...'



Picture: An early picture of the centre



Picture: A selection of Neil's models

In Your Community

Rehabilitation Officer Catherine Smith talks about a member's new gift for working with balsa

I met Neil McDougall and his wife Jackie at their home in Dumfries, and found out about Neil's new hobby - which he is keen to share with other members.

At his Introduction Week at the Llandudno Centre in August 2017, Neil was introduced to making balsa wood model kits by Mark Hollis, the Rehabilitation Support Team Leader. His first model was a helicopter, which he made with the help of the CCTV in the lounge at the centre.

Neil was hooked and since returning home has made another 15 models,

including a working clock, a stag's head, a sailing ship and a windmill. Neil's family bought him a large work table and he spends many happy hours making the models assisted by the CCTV issued by Blind Veterans UK. This helps him read the kit instructions and examine tricky parts of the model assembly.

Jackie told me that she had just ordered another five kits for Neil so there will soon be some exciting new additions to Neil's growing collection!

Are you a budding chef, or want to improve your hand in the kitchen? If you do, then our Brighton centre has just the thing for you.

Welcome to the world of food, drink and all things cooking on this new exciting themed week which we'll be hosting at our Brighton centre on 16th November.

The week is packed full of food-related activities with the highlight being a delicious culinary day trip out. We will fill your week with quizzes, reminiscences and talks from food-loving professionals, and of course, there's our famous Brighton Bake Off.

For those learning the ropes, there is a session dedicated to helping you brush up on kitchen safety, which will be run by our team of expert ROVI's. You will have a chance to taste and experience lots of different foods and even spruce up your table design to the standard you'd see in a top restaurant. Members with a sweet tooth will also get the chance to spend time icing and decorating cakes.

Though this is not a course, you will learn lots from the activities lined up, and have the chance to share your experiences over a cup of tea. We look forward to serving you in November. Contact our Bookings team on **01273 391 500**, or speak to one of the ROVI team members at the centre for more information.



Picture: Budding chefs in the making

News / Quiz

Prima Choral concert

Blind Veterans UK members are invited to a very special concert at Selby Abbey on Wednesday, 10th October at 8pm. **Prima Choral Artists**, a group of award winning choirs based in York, will be performing *The Armed Man: a Mass for Peace* accompanied by York Railway Institute Band and other guests.

The work was originally commissioned to mark the passing of 'the most war-torn and destructive century in human history', and was dedicated to the victims of the Kosovo conflict. Karl Jenkins' moving work has become a commemoration to the sacrifices made in all conflicts, and stands as a powerful message of both warning and hope.



Picture: Selby Abbey

In 2018, as we mark 100 years since the end of the First World War, we are inviting people from all over to come and join us to experience this moving work, performed by over 80 singers and musicians.

Tickets are available from primachoralartists.com and cost £10.

Quiz master Ron Russell's celebrity birth names quiz.

What are the real names of these celebrities? Answers on page 50.

- | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| ■ Cliff Richard | ■ Elton John | ■ Stan Laurel |
| ■ Engelbert Humperdinck | ■ Adam Faith | ■ Acker Bilk |
| ■ Michael Caine | ■ Tommy Steele | ■ Lonnie Donegan |
| ■ Ringo Starr | ■ Frankie Vaughan | ■ Lulu |
| ■ Cilla Black | ■ Marti Caine | ■ Eric Morecambe |
| ■ John Wayne | ■ Julie Andrews | ■ Ernie Wise |
| | ■ Vic Reeves | ■ Sid James |

Filling the years with hope

Blind Veterans UK member Cyril Tasker was involved in some of the most well-known events of the war. In 2016, he was interviewed by author Gary Bridson-Daley for his book, *A Debt of Gratitude – The Last Heroes*. This is Cyril's story.

Cyril was driving and delivering supplies of one kind or another locally from when he was 16 years old, when he worked for the Allen West factory in Brighton which produced various commodities for the Army. Then, at 17 he was delivering goods to Army camps and depots all over the country, so it was no great surprise that he carried on with what he was already very good at and had a fair bit of experience in - logistics. He joined the Royal Army Service Corps (RASC) on 16th April, 1942 aged 19, and was sent to Bulford Training Camp near

Salisbury for his basic training, then to Hadrian's Camp near Carlisle for Army driver training.

Essential supplies

From September 1942 until September 1943 he was posted to Northern Ireland, where he delivered essential supplies to Army bases in Belfast, Antrim, County Londonderry and County Down. When Cyril returned to Salisbury with his unit, the 716 Company RASC, the Allied preparations for D-Day were in full swing, and he volunteered to become part of the airborne forces, joining the 6th Airborne Division.



Picture: Cyril pictured in 2016

This choice would take him in a whole new direction, and on a journey that would lead him to

experience things he could never have imagined at that point. Cyril tried both parachute and glider training and chose to become part of an airborne glider troop, after which his training intensified in the months running up to D-Day.

On 6th June 1944, Cyril and his company were dropped around mid-afternoon into Ranville as part of the 19,000-strong force that would descend from the skies over Normandy in support of operations from the sea. He landed in a Horsa glider with two jeeps and two trailers loaded with petrol and supplies, and four men for each jeep. They were now attached to the 9th Battalion of the 6th Airborne Division, and once they had landed, their remit was to try to keep the 9th and any other units they were ordered to help, supplied at all costs in the areas where they were actively engaged, and wherever that front line was or moved to as the troops advanced.

They were to continue supplying with the materials dropped from aircraft, or brought up later after the beaches and ports were secured. This they successfully did from when they linked up with Major Howard and fellow 6th

Airborne troops at Pegasus Bridge, through to getting essential materials to the 9th Battalion at the Merville gun battery. For three months they were based around the Pegasus Bridge area, where they had to make and guard their storage dumps and then deliver what was needed, wherever it was needed at the front line. Despite coming under close-range fire and being exposed to frequent shelling from the Germans during their supply runs, they stuck to their tasks.

By mid-September 1944, the 9th Battalion had been sent home via the Mulberry Harbour at Arromanches to regroup after hard months in the line. Then, on Christmas Eve 1944, the men got the immediate order to mobilise once again.



Picture: A youthful Cyril pictured during the war



Picture: Cyril (arrowed) on the tenth anniversary of the D-Day landings, pictured with Field Marshal Montgomery (left), and General Gale.

It was a major emergency, as the Germans had launched a massive offensive in the Ardennes and troops were being sent to re-join the 6th Airborne as reinforcements. By Boxing Day they were in Belgium, working to help supply the defensive line between Dinant and Namur. They also worked closely with the American First Army to supply beleaguered troops when and wherever needed during what was to become known as the Battle of the Bulge. In extreme winter conditions, and under constant enemy fire, they played their part in turning the tide and eventually thwarting the German offensive.

Through Germany to the Baltic

Once the panic was over by mid-January 1945, the 9th Battalion, 6th Airborne, continued on into Holland, and in March that year, was involved in Operation Varsity - the airborne operation over the Rhine. The 9th Battalion, of which

Cyril's 716 company was a part, then continued through Germany, ending up in Wismar on the Baltic Sea where they joined up with Russian forces in May 1945.

Following VE Day, Cyril's service continued when he was again sent overseas as part of the 6th Airborne Division to the Middle East to help police the troubles in Palestine. Based in a big Army camp in Gaza, his unit experienced attacks from insurgents who, as Cyril recalls, would randomly spray the Army tents with machine gun fire.

Cyril was based there from September 1945 until December 1946, after which he returned home to Widdingdean near Brighton. He was eventually demobbed in May 1947 at the Kiwi Barracks, Bulford Camp, Salisbury, home of the 9th Parachute Battalion.

However, Cyril's story did not end there because ten years later, through his work with the Royal British Legion in Brighton, he was selected to accompany Field Marshal Montgomery and Major General Gale for the tenth anniversary commemorative service at Ranville cemetery on 6th June 1954. He carried

soldiers' ashes at this very important event, which for him was also held at a place of great personal significance where a decade earlier, he had landed to play his part in the liberation of Europe. During his time as a serviceman in the UK, Europe and the Middle East, Cyril experienced many things and has many stories, some of which he now shares with us.

Serving with the 6th Airborne Division in the Liberation of Europe – in Cyril's own words

"When we were driving into Ranville we came across General Gale. He said to me, 'You're lost, soldier.' I said: 'Yes, sir,' and while we were talking, he suddenly pushed me into a ditch!



Picture: The emblem of the British Airborne Forces during the war – the mythological winged horse Pegasus being ridden by Bellerophon

This poem was written by Cyril's youngest grandchild – now an adult - for his 90th birthday in 2013. It is all about honouring our veterans, and reflects the gratitude from a younger generation to an older one.

Grandad

People have you heard the news, Cyril is 90 today.
He looks not a day over 80, I hear you all say.

So what do we know, about this Cyril chap?
Well we know that in the summer, he wears a nice white cap.

Married to Jean, his lifelong soulmate.
Laughing and joking, together they are great.

They do everything together, rarely seen apart.
After 65 years, she has stolen his heart!

There is one thing about Cyril, that we know for sure.
That he was a hero, in the Second World War.

Everywhere he goes, he is greeted with cheers.
He even invited Belgian people, round to his house for beers!

He always has upon him, his magic piece of string.
A natural entertainer, though I'm not sure he can sing!

A Dad, Grandad and Great-Grandad as well.
Everyone enjoys hearing, the stories he tells.

So there you have Cyril, a very special man.
As his youngest Grandchild, I'm quite a big fan!

I've now come, to the end of my rhyme.
Grandad I hope that you have, a wonderful time.

GARY BRIDSON-DALEY
FOREWORD BY DAME VERA LYNN



A DEBT OF GRATITUDE TO
THE LAST HEROES

VOICES OF BRITISH AND COMMONWEALTH VETERANS



Gary's book is available on Amazon

A second later he was on top of me, and behind us was a huge explosion. When we got out he said, 'You haven't been in action before have you soldier?' I said 'No, sir,' and he replied, 'That was a mortar bomb that just landed where we were standing!'

And so a general had saved my life that very morning. Ten years later when I went to Normandy with General Gale and Field Marshal Montgomery, he remembered me and said: 'I had wondered if you survived the war, glad you did.'

A lot of the time while we were in Normandy, we were getting shelled, mortared and machine gunned, and

the Germans used air burst shells that exploded over our heads. Many of our men died because of those. At Christmas, when we were called to the Ardennes it was a very rough time - horrendous, severely cold, and the German attacks were still strong, causing a huge loss of life - mainly American but we were taking some heavy casualties, too. It was all a huge shock from an enemy that we thought was nearly finished at that stage of the war, and even though we were the RASC, we had Sten guns and found ourselves having to use them when we came across Germans.

After the Battle of the Bulge, we went up and through Holland over the Rhine and into Germany. Eventually we ended up in Wismar on the German Baltic coast, where we linked up with the Russians a few days before the war finished. When it was over we were dancing in the streets with the Russians. Throughout, we did our job and kept the supplies flowing from Normandy to the Baltic. We were a small part of a much bigger picture, each one of us proudly doing our bit to help win that long and hard-fought war.

A good quote from Cyril to finish, one of his favourites - **'Let hope fill the years to come, and memories gild the past.'**

Service History and other information

Born: 25th April 1923, East Hoathley, England, UK.

Cyril joined the Royal Army Service Corps (RASC) in April 1942 and after training as a driver he was posted to Northern Ireland, where he delivered supplies to many Army bases

- In 1943 he returned to the UK, where he joined the 6th Airborne Division. He was trained in Horsa gliders for D-Day and dropped at Ranville.
- His unit, the 716 Company RASC, supplied forward units at Pegasus Bridge, the Merville battery and on throughout France, Belgium, Holland and eventually into Germany.
- As part of the 9th Battalion, 6th Airborne Division, in 1944-46 he was also involved at the Battle of the Bulge in the Ardennes, the link-up of Allied and Russian troops on the Baltic coast, and he later served in Gaza, Palestine.
- Cyril was chosen to escort Field Marshal Montgomery and Major General Gale to take soldiers' ashes to Ranville cemetery on 6 June 1954 for the tenth anniversary of D-Day.

Served with: 716 Company RASC, 9th Battalion, 6th Airborne Division

Service number: T/10696981

Rank at end of service: Sergeant

Medals and honours: Legion d'Honneur (French Government), 1939-45 Defence Medal, 1939-45 War Medal, 1939-45 Star, France-Germany Star, General Service Medal Palestine 1945-48

Post-war years: After the war Cyril returned to the Allen West factory in Brighton from 1947-67, then had one year as a farmhand in Billingshurst. In 1968 he returned to transport and worked for Sussex County Council at its Ringmar depot until his retirement in 1988. He married Jean in June 1947 and they have two children, five grandchildren and five great-grandchildren

Associations and organisations: Royal British Legion Lewes and Brighton, Blind Veterans UK

100 years – a nation remembers

As many of you are aware, this year marks the centenary of the end of the First World War. We've always been keenly involved in remembering the fallen, beginning with the first ceremony at the Cenotaph in July 1919, which marked the formal end of the Treaty of Versailles.

This year, 110 of our members will be there, of whom 20 lost their vision in combat, while nine served in the Second World War. They will be remembering not only their own comrades, but all Armed Forces personnel who have lost their lives serving our country.

Remembering our founder

A day before, on November 10, we also remember our founder, Sir Arthur Pearson, who died in 1921. His funeral at Hampstead Cemetery was attended by nearly 1,200 members to mark his passing. In the years after his death, a

memorial service was held on the anniversary at our headquarters, and was followed by a visit to his grave, where members of staff and veterans would lay a wreath and give other tributes.

A century later

There will be a Festival of Remembrance held across Britain and Europe, with a wide range of events taking place to commemorate our fallen. This is a timetable of what is confirmed so far, but if you're looking to attend then please remember that these may be subject to short-term change. If you are unable to attend an event, then you can join in with the national silence at 11.00.



Picture: A group of veterans, including then Chairman Ian Fraser, laying a wreath at Sir Arthur Pearson's grave in 1932

Remembrance Sunday 2018, 11th November

06.00

Battle's O'er

1,000 individual pipers across the United Kingdom and countries around the world will commence the day's commemorations with Battle's O'er, the traditional Scottish lament played at the end of conflict

08.00

UK time Dawn Ceremony

Saint Symphorien, Mons in Belgium – the place where the first and last casualties of the First World War are interred

11.00

Two minute silence

Cenotaph Parade lead by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

12.00

A Nation's Thank You parade, London

12.30

Bells in countries across Europe and the Commonwealth are invited to ring

14.00

Armistice 100

National moment of participation, led by filmmaker Danny Boyle

17.00

Westminster Abbey Ceremony of Thanksgiving, attended by VVIP

18.55

The Last Post

1,000 individual buglers sound this historic tribute at WW1 Beacons of Light locations across the nation and UK overseas territories

19.00

WW1 Beacons of Light

The lighting of 1,000 Beacons of Light, symbolising an end to the darkness of war and a return to the light of peace

19.05

Ringin' Out for Peace

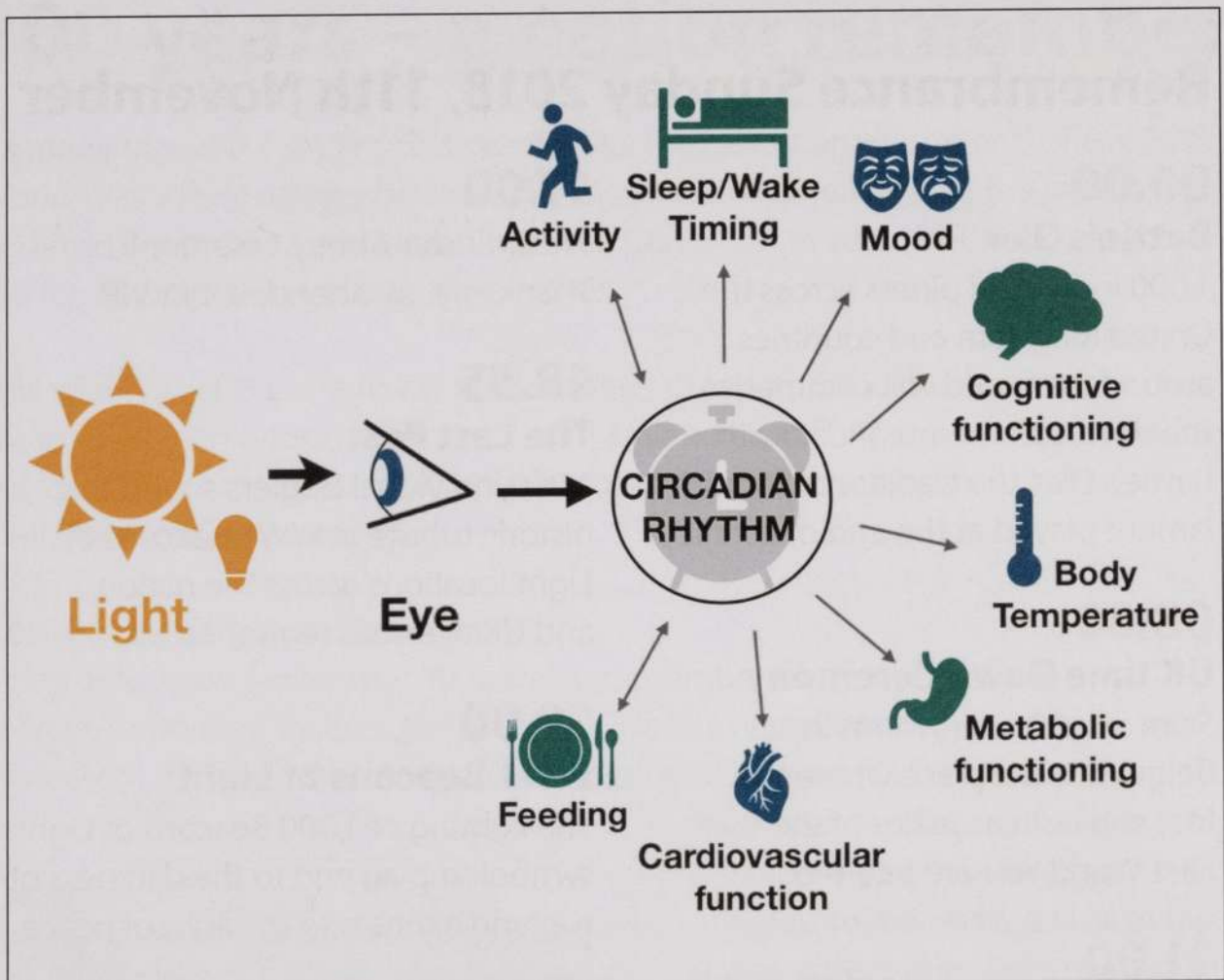
1,000 Cathedral and Church bells ring out across the nation and beyond, in celebration of peace

19.05

A Cry for Peace

100 Town criers throughout the United Kingdom and other countries around the world will join together in an international cry for peace

Please note all timings are subject to change



Picture: Circadian Therapeutics in action

Getting your head down

A good night's sleep is vital to your health. Dr Suzanne Ftouni explains why, and how you can take part in a great sleep survey

We all know how draining it is not to get a good night's sleep. You wake the next day listless and tired, and not wanting to do anything active. Much of this is down to your sleep patterns and your daily biological rhythm, which is known as your circadian rhythm.

This internal 'clock' – your body clock if you like – matches up with the daytime, and gives your body a healthy sense of balance, which in turn makes you feel alert and healthy.

Many people experience disrupted sleep in the course of their lives, and it's not an uncommon condition – especially to those who are visually impaired in some way. Light is an important cue for our body clock – together with feeding, activity and exercise – but a loss of light through the eyes affects your brain's ability to retain that sense of balance, and – more importantly – will affect your sleep.

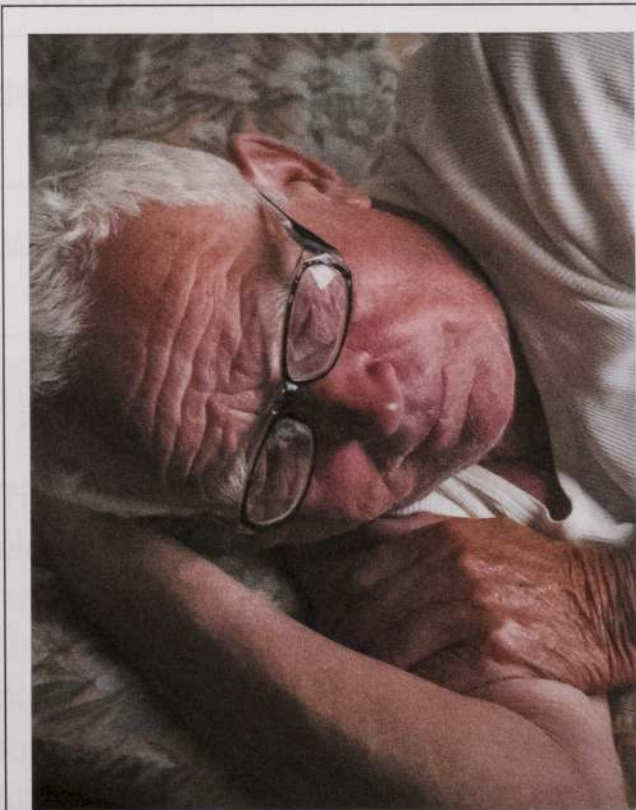
For some people, this can cause a loss of up to an hour per day, and subsequently leads to nights of poor sleep and lots of daytime napping as you try and catch up.

So, what can you do to try and avoid this? If you suffer from disrupted sleep, then you should try and get as much morning light as possible, and keep a dim environment in the evening before you got to bed. Try and keep a regular schedule if you can, including regular periods of daily exercise, meal times, and when you go to bed and get up in the morning. These may seem like little things, but they will help your body clock regain its sense of balance – and you'll feel better for it.

How can I help others?

You can help in the study of getting a good night's sleep by taking part in a special programme. This has been organised by Blind Veterans UK research department, Oxford University and Circadian Therapeutics and includes a survey in which you get to tell us about your sleep.

It's open to all members, and in return, we'll give you advice on how to improve your body's rhythm to help you get the rest you need. The study will take place in three stages, and we'll have more information in the coming months if you're interested in taking part.



Picture: Lack of sleep is bad for you

Family News

Birthdays.

Sidney Wilson who celebrated his 100th Birthday on 7th October.

Chas Warman who celebrated his 100th Birthday on 8th October.

Dennis Blake who celebrated his 100th Birthday on 11th October.

Norman Boughton-Smith who celebrated his 102nd Birthday on 13th October.

George Latham who celebrated his 100th Birthday on 20th October.

Ron Freer who celebrated his 103rd Birthday on 21st October.

Betty Forster who celebrated her 100th Birthday on 24th October.

Margery Morris-Richardson who celebrated her 104th Birthday on 30th October.

Daphne Hinton who celebrated her 100th Birthday on 31st October.

Quiz Answers – from page 38

- | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| ■ Harry Webb | ■ Thomas Hicks | ■ Bernard Stanley Bilk |
| ■ Jerry Dorsey | ■ Frank Ableson | ■ Anthony James |
| ■ Maurice Micklewhite | ■ Lynne Denise Shepherd | ■ Donegan |
| ■ Richard Starkey | ■ Julie Elizabeth Wells | ■ Marie McDonald |
| ■ Priscilla White | ■ James Moir | ■ McLaughlin Lawrie |
| ■ Marion Morrison | ■ Arthur Stanley | ■ Eric Bartholemew |
| ■ Reg Dwight | ■ Jefferson | ■ Ernest Wiseman |
| ■ Terry Nelhams-Wright | | ■ Solomon Joel Cohen |

Anniversaries.

Diamond Yellow 60 years married.

David & Joan Woodrough of Swindon, Wiltshire on 11th October.

Rob & Margaret Eaglestone of Caernarfon, Gwynedd on 18th October.

John & Pamela Griffiths of Newport, Shropshire on 26th October.

Golden 50 years married.

David & Joyce Cook of Leeds, West Yorkshire on 19th October.

Roy & Bridgit Truan of St. Albans, Hertfordshire on 26th October.

Ruby 40 years married.

William and Sheila Chambers of Oldbury, West Midlands on 4th October.

Christopher & Hazel Humphrey of Thorpe End, Norwich on 16th October.

Bill & Evelyn Mooney, of Stanley, Durham on 28th October.

Condolences.

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.

Wendy Carter who died on 13th September 2018. She was the widow of the late Alec Carter.

Audrey Deadman who died on 1st September 2018. She was the widow of the late Albert "Bert" Deadman.

Elaine James who died on 1st August 2018. She was the widow of the late Lionel James.

Dilys Saywell who died on 20th August 2018. She was the widow of the late Percy Saywell.

Hilda Wilkinson who died on 1st August 2018. She was the widow of the late Alfred Wilkinson.

Daphne Zwierzchowski who died on 28th August 2018. She was widow of the late Julian Zwierzchowski.

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.

Kenneth Arckless of Blaydon-On-Tyne, Tyne And Wear died on 18th August 2018 aged 91. He served from 1946 to 1948 in the Royal Air Force.

John Marshall Baldock of Hove, died on 26th August 2018 aged 79. He served from 1954 to 1983 as a Chief Communications Yeoman in the Royal Navy.

Peter James Blee of Cranleigh, Surrey died on 27th August 2018 aged 90. He served from 1946 to 1946 as a Signalman in the Army.

Robert Bolton of Barrow-In-Furness, Cumbria died on 7th September 2018 aged 90. He served from 1946 to 1949 as a Lance Corporal in the Army.

Donald Bradbury of Cockermouth, Cumbria died on 4th September 2018 aged 86. He served as a Lance Corporal in the Army.

Harry Brammer of Sheffield died on 15th August 2018 aged 88. He served from 1951 to 1952 as a Craftsman in the Army.

Charles Garrett Brooks of Wisbech, Cambridgeshire died on 31st August 2018 aged 93. He served from 1942 to 1943 as a Gunner in the Army.

John Browne of Woking, Surrey died on 4th September 2018 aged 91. He served from 1945 to 1945 as a Lance Corporal in the Army.

John Clegg of Bury, Lancashire died on 13th August 2018 aged 101. He served from 1940 to 1943 as a Private in the Army.

Richard Commins of Flint, Clwyd died on 22nd August 2018 aged 94. He served from 1943 to 1943 as a Private in the Army.

Irene Mary Cotter of Salisbury, Wiltshire died on 19th August 2018 aged 96. She served from 1941 to 1945 as a Sergeant in the Royal Air Force.

Joseph Duncan Cruickshank of York, North Yorkshire died on 31st August 2018 aged 89. He served from 1950 to 1952 as a Leading Aircraftman in the Royal Air Force.

William John Dell of Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire died on 9th September 2018 aged 93. He served from 1943 to 1943 as a Private in the Army.

Margaret Edith Dickinson of Cromer, Norfolk died on 10th August 2018 aged 96. She served from 1943 to 1954 as a Lieutenant in the Army.

Leon Sydney Dunmore of Hungerford, Berkshire died on 6th August 2018 aged 93. He served from 1943 to 1953 as an Aircraftman in the Royal Navy.

Frederick Eckhardt of Manchester died on 20th August 2018 aged 91. He served as a Rifleman in the Army.



Wilson Eilbeck of Whitehaven, Cumbria died on 4th August 2018 aged 98. He served from 1940 to 1946 as a Sapper in the Army.

Hugh Fleming of Burnley, Lancashire died on 1st September 2018 aged 90. He served from 1946 to 1948 as an A.C. 2 in the Royal Air Force.

Charles Henry Ford of Seaford, East Sussex died on 11th August 2018 aged 94. He served from 1942 to 1946 as a Corporal in the Royal Air Force.

Thomas Galt of Edinburgh, died on 12th August 2018 aged 66. He served from 1967 to 1976 as a Fusilier in the Army.

David Gemmell of Glasgow, died on 1st August 2018 aged 93. He served from 1953 to 1959 as a Lance Corporal in the Army.

Joyce Mary Graham of Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire died on 19th August 2018 aged 99. She served from 1939 to 1946 as a Corporal in the Army.

James Frederick Grant of London, died on 16th August 2018 aged 87. He served from 1949 to 1954 as a Sapper in the Army.

John Hodgson of Cannock, Staffordshire died on 10th August 2018 aged 82. He served from 1958 to 1960 as a Lance Corporal in the Army.

Gerald Harry Albert Jefferies of Witney, Oxfordshire died on 29th August 2018 aged 88. He served from 1948 to 1950 as an Aircraftman in the Royal Air Force.

Joseph King of Hailsham, East Sussex died on 1st August 2018 aged 85. He served from 1951 to 1954 as a L.A.C. in the Royal Air Force.

Donald Lane of Staines-Upon-Thames, Middlesex died on 4th September 2018 aged 97. He served from 1939 to 1940 in the Army.

Hugh Patrick Maguire of Bathgate, West Lothian died on 29th August 2018 aged 98. He served from 1942 to 1946 as a Lance Corporal in the Army.

Robert Mccallum Mathieson of York, North Yorkshire died on 7th August 2018 aged 96. He served from 1941 to 1944 as a Flight Lieutenant in the Royal Air Force.

Allan McGarrity of Wirral, Merseyside died on 12th August 2018 aged 88. He served from 1948 to 1950 as a Corporal in the Army.

Brian McManus of Rhyl, Clwyd died on 16th August 2018 aged 91. He served from 1944 to 1972 as a Master in the Merchant Navy.

Stanley Moate of Caerphilly, Mid Glamorgan died on 3rd August 2018 aged 98. He served from 1939 to 1946 as a L.A.C. in the Royal Air Force.

Sidney John Morris of Telford, Shropshire died on 20th August 2018 aged 93. He served from 1944 to 1944 as a Private in the Army.

Frank Moseley of Henfield, West Sussex died on 28th August 2018 aged 94. He served from 1942 to 1946 as a Private in the Army.

Ronald Mullett of Bearsden, Glasgow died on 28th May 2018, aged 85. He served as a Sapper in Egypt and England from 1955 to 1961.

Dennis Frederick Murphy of Orpington, Kent died on 12th August 2018 aged 87. He served from 1949 to 1954 as a Sapper in the Army.



Peter Newton of Leeds, West Yorkshire died on 2nd August 2018 aged 90. He served from 1945 to 1945 as a C.F.N in the Army.

Mary Alice Peck of Lowestoft, Suffolk died on 13th August 2018 aged 98. She served from 1943 to 1946 as an ACW2 in the Royal Air Force.

Clive Alphonso Reynolds of Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire died on 1st August 2018 aged 80. He served from 1956 to 1958 as a Signaller in the Army.

James Ritchie of Rogart, Sutherland died on 2nd August 2018 aged 94. He served from 1945 to 1948 as a Staff Sergeant in the Army.

Ronald Smith of Ipswich, Suffolk died on 5th August 2018 aged 84. He served from 1952 to 1955 as a Lance Corporal in the Army.

Peter Reginald Stevens of Cambridge, died on 8th August 2018 aged 91. He served from 1945 to 1945 as a Private in the Army.

Cyril James Stone of Littlehampton, West Sussex died on 17th August 2018 aged 88. He served from 1951 to 1953 as a L.A.C. in the Royal Air Force.

Marjorie Taylor of Scunthorpe, South Humberside died on 13th August 2018 aged 93. She served from 1944 to 1947 as a Corporal in the Royal Air Force.

Albert Tully of Brighton, East Sussex died on 26th July 2018, aged 93. From 1945 to 1948 he served as an Aircraftman First Class in the RAF in RAF Calshot and Iraq.

Philip 'Phil' Vincent of Swinderby, Lincoln died on 15th July 2018, aged 94. He served as a Steward in the Merchant Navy from 1941 to 1945 in the Pacific Ocean, North Sea, Indian Ocean and the Atlantic.

Arthur William Vine of Tenterden, Kent died on 1st September 2018 aged 96. He served from 1941 to 1987 as a Flight Lieutenant in the Royal Air Force.

William Ward of Birmingham, died on 31st August 2018 aged 91. He served from 1945 to 1948 as a Private in the Army.

Frederick James Wheeler of Telford, Shropshire died on 21st August 2018 aged 89. He served from 1946 to 1948 as an A.C. 1 in the Royal Air Force.

Glenville 'Glen' Wiffen of Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk died on 1st August 2018, aged 87. He served with the RAF in the UK as a Senior Aircraftman from 1952 to 1955.

William Williams of Swansea, died on 17th August 2018 aged 94. He served from 1943 to 1947 in the Army.

Derek Windsor of Oldham, died on 17th August 2018 aged 70. He served from 1965 to 1975 as a Lance Corporal in the Army.

Derek Woodcock of Chichester, West Sussex died on 17th August 2018 aged 82. He served from 1953 to 1956 as a Craftsman in the Army.

Peter Wyman of Honiton, Devon died on 13th January 2018 aged 92. He served from 1943 to 1947 as a Staff Sergeant in the Army.

Come inside my workshop!

Blind veteran Gerry McNeilly, 63 and ex Royal Irish Rangers, lost his sight in 2013 due to a stroke. Gerry, from St Helen's, Merseyside, was always a keen model maker and his sight loss has not held him back.

Gerry explains, "I saw an advertisement in a craft magazine for a kit to build HMS Victory. The kit was actually just planks of wood with instructions, so I needed to find a way to be able to do this. My eye sight is very poor and I rely on a head set which magnifies to 250 times the actual size. With it on, I can see the ridges on my fingers, without it I cannot see my hand in front of my face."

He goes on to describe various other pieces of kit he uses in his model making, "I have a machine which, when I put a piece of wood on it, tells me the dimensions of the piece and then I can speak into the machine telling it the exact length of wood I want to cut and it will mark that with a laser light. With my headset magnifier on



Picture: Gerry in his workshop



Picture: Always keeping an eye on Gerry is his guide dog, Calvin. Laying across the shed threshold to make sure no harm comes to him. Good dog!

I can then cut the wood to the correct length. The machine will also measure and read out the angles for me when I am using steam to heat and bend the wood into shape for the hull of the boat. It is an amazing piece of kit".

The model of HMS Victory, which Gerry recently presented to our centre in Llandudno, is remarkable for its detail; everything exactly to scale and including cannon and sails and model sailors of the correct era. Everything was made and painted by Gerry.

In order to build his next model project, measuring eight feet by four feet, Gerry had to expand his operations. His wife bought him a new shed and that is now his workshop.

In honour of the RAF's centenary this year, Gerry is in the process of building a model airfield complete with runway lights, buildings and model planes. This is still a work in progress but he says, "I am determined to complete the model this year".



Picture: Gerry is creating a model of an airfield – complete with Avro Lancaster






Rebuilding
lives after
sight loss

Victory Over Blindness

More than 3,000 veterans lost their sight as a result of serving in the First World War. Making their way home from the front, they began the journey to rebuild their lives after sight loss. In 1915 our charity was founded to support them.

Blind Veterans UK continues to transform the lives of thousands more blind veterans. But, for every one that we support, there are ten more that we can't yet reach without your help. Those who have served our country deserve our support. Find out more inside on page 8.

blindveterans.org.uk/victory

   #VictoryOverBlindness

Registered Charity No. 216227 (England & Wales) and SCO39411 (Scotland)
Battlefield image © Imperial War Museum (Q 1051)