

# Review

The journal of  
Blind Veterans UK  
February 2019

## Inside:

News from your community  
Our new recipe column  
Avoiding scam calls  
A history of Review

## Brush Strokes

How art combats isolation



Rebuilding  
lives after  
sight loss



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## On the cover

Read more inside about how taking part in one of our arts and crafts workshops can help combat isolation. Louise Kirk-Partridge explains what's on offer in our feature beginning on page 46.



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## New year, new look!

Hello, and a warm welcome to your February edition of **Review** magazine. I don't know about you, but I feel as if winter has passed us by? Compared to last year, when we were all frozen solid, this year seems to have been not as vicious. I hope you're all well there, regardless. I also hope you all had a lovely festive break, and that 2019 proves to be a positive year for you.

It's been a very positive start to the year here, with the notice of four of our family being awarded various accolades in the New Year's Honours list. You can find out more in our news section on page eight – together with the recent award of the British Empire Medal to Ray Peart. From all of us here on the **Review**, we offer our warmest congratulations.

You'll notice there's something different about your magazine this time round too, and that's because we've given it a bit of a refresh. It's been a few years since it last had a new look, and like most things in life, just needed a bit of extra sparkle. I hope you'll like what we've done.

As a quick pointer, we've moved the

contact numbers to the back of the magazine – in this issue you can find them on page 59. Your usual sections, such as our news, and what's happening in your community, stay at the front of the magazine, with features and other articles to follow.

There's also an updated version of the activities supplement, and there's still time to book a place at one of our centres. It now features details of the topic weeks being hosted, all of which promise to be very exciting. You can find that starting on page 25.

Finally, congratulations to member Ken Grimward for winning our Cufflink Competition. The answer was Vultee Vengeance.

As ever, my best wishes for the month ahead, and I look forward to seeing you all again in March.

**Chris Gilson**  
Editor





# Encouraging good resolutions

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



**Caption: Paul Luker**

As you read this in early February, I actually find myself at the keyboard, drafting it in the second week of January. Our respective minds are undoubtedly in different places. You will have long put Christmas and the

New Year behind you. I, by contrast, am still caught in the aftermath.

The second week of the year is traditionally the time when I conduct a short stock-take of recent resolutions hastily abandoned:

- **Give up drinking for the month:** lasted three days (one day better than last year).
- **Lose weight:** bathroom scales appear to be broken (curiously adding a pound each day).
- **Adopt a new diet:** very little to do with me as 'la regime' is very much directed by the current Mrs Luker. This year it is unquestionably more austere than previously but fortunately little cause for worry (I seem to have committed myself to an unusually large number of working lunches already).

- **Write a book:** more accurately start writing the book I promised to write when I left the RAF in 2006 (still – no rush; there are 50 more weeks in the year to fill).

You get the picture. My resolve to complete good personal resolutions is inversely proportional to my enthusiasm for conceiving them.

However, in common with most officers who have been given a taste of command, I seem to have no difficulty encouraging good resolutions in others, notably my subordinates. In the Services, January is generally a good time to keep away from the watchful eye of 'The Boss'. 'The Boss' has just spent at least two weeks at home. Two weeks in which he has been denied the routine opportunity to meddle in the labour of his underlings but plenty of time to think about it.

More importantly, unlike the joy of his summer holiday – a playtime by contrast – the Christmas break has forced him to find a fortnight's worth of excuses to avoid domestic chores around the house. Normally this is achieved on the pretext that he 'needs to use the time to catch up on paperwork'. And so, rather than be caught out in his little fib, he settles himself in his study (or garden shed),

selects his favourite malt, adopts an aura of cogitation and, without deliberate rancour, daydreams about how his unit might be improved. In short, his determination to avoid work for himself leads him annually to think about finding work for others.

## Impossible to shake off

Once acquired this is a habit that is almost impossible to shake off, especially when the house is temporarily overflowing with three daughters, two sons-in-law and four grandchildren – over and above the burdens of dodging the manifold duties that a lone wife can find to disrupt my life in 'peacetime' (the term I use to describe the balance of the year). Can you imagine how disastrous the so-called festive season would be if I were wholly retired? Cataclysmic, more like. But, fortunately, I can still fall back on one solid excuse: chairman of trustees.

So it was that I spent my Christmas break: hunkered down in the command bunker, insulated from domestic chaos, cocooned in a Glenmorangie whimsy and dreaming up new ways to be 'helpful' to the CEO and his senior leadership team.





Fortunately for all of us, that's not the way this charity works. It is, though, a useful time of the year to take stock of where we are in the charity and how we are faring with our strategies. And, unsurprisingly, that is precisely what the trustees have been doing in the last couple of months.

The good news is that there are lots of up arrows from which to take not just comfort but actually significant pride and satisfaction. It has taken time to grow the permanent staff but most are now on board. Judging by your feedback, their commitment and energy is now producing the goods and being warmly received. Similarly, after a hesitant start we seem to be also attracting a healthy cohort of volunteers, all committed to offering a wide range of support. I also think we should be heartened by the improved way in which services are now being provided: closer to home; with a more personal touch; and in a more tailored way. And finally, we seem now to be making some real

**“We should be heartened by the improved way in which services are now being provided”**

headway in research, an aspect of the charity which has probably been dormant for too long.

We know that our engagement activity is beginning to work well (just look at the marvellous response we received to the Victory Over Blindness unveiling in Manchester). But we also know we must do much better across the board and are now set on a path to realise this, with the engagement team leading a raft of events across the country throughout the year. When you read this I hope you will already be aware of March for Veterans, a major Blind Veterans UK initiative. Importantly, this is not just about the short term. We have always been blessed with generous legacies and bequests. They continue to play a vital role in our annual funding. We have to keep Blind Veterans UK in the public's hearts and minds so that this can continue – and this takes sustained effort.

From all you tell me I know that you will want to play your part in this as well. Please, please do. We need Blind Veterans UK to be more widely known and appreciated and you are our best ambassadors. For my part: no more resolutions. Well, not until the command bunker calls next Christmas.

# Celebrating Success

Our Chief Executive Major General (rtd) Nick Caplin CB celebrates the recognition of our veterans in the New Year's honours list



**Caption: Nick Caplin**

As a charity we have a number of core values that we hold dear to, and that define and shape our behaviour and our approach to our work. One of these values is to celebrate success when it happens, no matter how small.

Small successes happen and are noted every day. Stand-out performances are recognised each year through our Founders Day Awards for members and our One Team Awards for staff and volunteers. Occasionally, we get the opportunity to celebrate outstanding performances through national or state recognition. In the 2019 New Year Honours List we had a bumper crop, no less than four individuals whose remarkable contribution to our lives and society has been formally recognised. How fantastic is that? In no particular order the four are:

Andy Allen MLA, has been made a Member of the British Empire (MBE). He was seriously injured in an





explosion in Afghanistan while serving as a Ranger with the 1st Battalion of the Royal Irish Regiment, and has been a member since 2008. In addition to losing his sight, Andy lost both legs in that incident. Since that point he has devoted his life to helping others, and in 2011 he set up the charity AA Veterans Support to provide help and support to veterans and their families in Northern Ireland. In 2015 Andy was elected as the Member of the



**Caption: Andy Allen - who has been made a Member of the British Empire**

Northern Ireland Assembly (MLA) for Belfast East, since when he has been championing the cause of his constituents as well as the veterans' community in the Province. Last year Andy received the prestigious national Soldiering On award as the most inspirational veteran of 2018, and I am delighted to report that he has now finished the year with the award of an MBE.

Shaun Stocker was been awarded the British Empire medal. Like Andy, he was caught in an explosion in Afghanistan when serving as a Fusilier with the Royal Welsh Regiment, and has been a member since 2010. Sadly, as with Andy, Shaun lost both legs as a result of that explosion as well as most of his sight. Shaun has made remarkable progress, and now dedicates his time in helping and encouraging others. He regularly fundraises for a variety of organisations including Blind Veterans UK, promotes causes and undertakes motivational speaking. He also works at a wing named in his honour for ex-servicemen at Berwyn Prison, Wrexham, helping them to rehabilitate and demonstrate ways to avoid reoffending. At the end of 2018, he featured in the BBC documentary Without Limits, where he traversed Australia's remote and austere Kimberley region. Shaun was

awarded the British Empire Medal in the 2019 New Year Honours List for his services to charity.

### **The darling of the Centre**

Anyone who knows our Brighton Centre is likely to have met Joan Osborne BEM, who has been the darling of the centre for decades, and a member of the Blind Veterans family for all her life.

Joan's father was a 'St Dunstaner', having been wounded at Ypres in the First World War, while her husband Joe was blinded in the Second World War. Joan and Joe were both entertainers - Joan being a very fine pianist (and former star of the Fol de Rols from our time at Church Stretton during the war). They ran the 'kiosk' at the Ian Fraser House for many years, as well as the Brighton Club, which continues to this day as the Bowls Club. It was so wonderful to see Joan awarded the British Empire Medal in the New Year's List for her services to the Brighton Bowls Club and disabled veterans. Incidentally, we looked back through the archives and found her birth notice from January 1931 - happy birthday for last month, Joan.

Ray Peart has also been awarded the BEM. Ray, whose work with the Amateur Radio Society at Ovingdean

J. Walch of Blackpool is well and jolly, and the proud father of a "darling little baby girl" according to our latest news.

### **Caption: Joan's first mention in Review**

makes him a familiar figure to all, was awarded his BEM recently, and you can find the full story further on in our news section on page 10.

Last but by no means least, our former Chairman Tim Davis was awarded the MBE for his eight years' service to the charity as a Trustee, with the last four as our Chair. Tim devoted considerable time to the Council, and we benefited considerably from his wisdom and experience. Notwithstanding his busy and demanding life as a business consultant, he played a full part in the finance and governance oversight of the charity and stepped forward to fill the breach for six months following the untimely death of my predecessor, Robert Leader. Tim was well known and appreciated across the charity and richly deserves this public recognition.

With this excellent start to 2019, I am eagerly awaiting to see what the rest of the year has in store.

Best wishes as ever.

**Nick**





**Caption: Former Blind Veterans UK Chairman Tim Davis has become a Member of the British Empire in the New Year's Honours list.**

# News

## Member awards all round in New Year's Honours List

It was a pleasing start to the year as four Blind Veterans UK members received awards in the New Year's Honours List.

Veteran **Andy Allen MLA** and our former Chairman, **Tim Davis**, both

became Members of the British Empire (MBE) while **Shaun Stocker** and **Joan Osborne** were awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM).

In the citations for Shaun's award, it mentioned he was recognised for his services to charity, which includes motivational speaking, while Joan was awarded her medal for her long-standing services to Brighton Bowls Club, where she is a familiar and well-loved figure.

Our Chief Executive, Nick Caplin said: "It is fantastic that this group have been honoured in this way. They

have all made a huge contribution to our charity but also in so many other areas and these honours are richly deserved."

## British Empire Medal awarded to Gloucester veteran

Taking place in Gloucester in October 2018, blind veteran Ray Peart received a British Empire Medal from Lord Lieutenant Dame Janet Trotter for his services to his country and his incredible charity work, which includes supporting Blind Veterans UK initiatives.

Ray has been a member since 1974, having lost his sight during active service in Northern Ireland.

Dame Janet said: "His influence in his community has been wide-ranging, supporting both individuals and organisations over the years. Ray is well-known for his selfless fundraising efforts over two decades."

We would like to share our congratulations to Ray and extend it to his proud wife, Claire, and their friends who joined them for the ceremony in the Shire Hall.

On the South West Facebook group, Blind Veterans UK CEO Nick Caplin commented: "Heartiest congratulations, Ray. It's a significant honour."

- There is a video of Dame Janet reading the citation for Ray's award, along with some photos which show Ray receiving his medal and posing after the ceremony had finished. These can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/BlindVeteransUKSW/>



**Caption: Ray and wife Claire**



# 2019 Reunion dates

We have 37 annual reunion lunches this year, and members are invited to attend one of them. The invitation lists are created by your local community teams based on your location to make sure you are invited to the reunion closest to you. Details about the lunches will be sent out closer to the time.

If you wish to find out more about your local lunch, contact your support worker or community team leader.

Date	Reunion	Venue
<b>Friday, 22 March</b>	Edinburgh Reunion	Marriott Hotel, 111 Glasgow Road, Edinburgh, EH12 8NF
<b>Thursday, 28 March</b>	Middlesbrough Reunion	Jurys Inn Middlesbrough, Fry Street, Middlesbrough, TS1 1JH
<b>Thursday, 4 April</b>	Central London Reunion	The Victory Services Club, 63-79 Seymour Street, London, W2 2HF
<b>Monday, 8 April</b>	Hook Reunion	Tylney Hall, Ridge Ln, Rotherwick, Hook, RG27 9AZ
<b>Thursday, 11 April</b>	Belfast Reunion	Park Avenue Hotel, 158 Holywood Rd, Belfast, BT4 1PB
<b>Tuesday, 16 April</b>	Leeds Reunion	Thorpe Park Hotel and Spa, 1150 Century Way, Thorpe Park, Leeds, LS15 8ZB
<b>Thursday, 25 April</b>	Swindon Reunion	The Wiltshire Hotel, Vastern Wharf, Royal Wootton Bassett, Swindon, SN4 7PB
<b>Wednesday, 24 April</b>	Barrow Reunion	The Abbey House Hotel, Abbey Rd, Barrow-in-Furness, LA13 0PA
<b>Wednesday, 1 May</b>	Manchester Reunion	Marriott Victoria & Albert Hotel, Water St, Manchester, M3 4JQ
<b>Thursday, 2 May</b>	Brighton Reunion	The Amex Stadium, Village Way, Brighton, BN1 9BL

<b>Thursday, 9 May</b>	Derby Reunion	Hallmark Hotel Derby Midland, Midland Road, Derbyshire, DE1 25Q
<b>Tuesday, 21 May</b>	Blackpool Reunion	The Village Hotel, East Park Drive, Blackpool, FY3 8LL
<b>Wednesday, 22 May</b>	Cardiff Reunion	Cardiff City Stadium, Leckwith Road, Leckwith, Cardiff, CF11 8AZ
<b>Thursday, 23 May</b>	Surrey Reunion	The Cobham Hilton, Seven Hills Road, Cobham, KT11 1EW
<b>Tuesday, 4 June</b>	Bournemouth Reunion	AFC Bournemouth, Vitality Stadium, Dean Court, Kings Park, BH7 7AF
<b>Tuesday, 11 June</b>	Chorley Reunion	Hallmark Hotel Preston Leyland, Layland Way, Leyland, Preston, PR25 4JX
<b>Thursday, 13 June</b>	Llandudno Reunion	Imperial Hotel, The promenade, Llandudno, LL30 1AP
<b>Wednesday, 19 June</b>	Liverpool Reunion	Liverpool Marriott Hotel City Centre, One Queen Square, Liverpool, L1 1RH
<b>Thursday, 20 June</b>	West Sussex Reunion	The Hilton Avisford Park, Yapton Lane, Walberton, Arundel, BN18 0LS
<b>Wednesday, 26 June</b>	Suffolk Reunion	Bedford Lodge Hotel and Spa, Bury Road, Newmarket, Suffolk, CB8 7BX
<b>Thursday, 27 June</b>	Eastbourne Reunion	The Grand Hotel, King Edward's Parade, Eastbourne, BN21 4EQ
<b>Monday, 1 July</b>	Bristol Reunion	Ashton Gate Stadium, Ashton Road, Bristol, BS3 2EJ
<b>Thursday, 4 July</b>	Essex Reunion	The Lawn Conference & Banqueting, Hall Road, Rochford, Essex, SS4 1PL
<b>Wednesday, 10 July</b>	St Helens Reunion	Haydock Park Racecourse, Newton-le-Willows, Merseyside, WA12 0HQ



<b>Thursday, 11 July</b>	Exeter Reunion	Mercure Exeter Southgate Hotel, Southernhay E, Exeter, EX1 1QF
<b>Thursday, 18 July</b>	Kent Reunion	Tudor Park Marriott Hotel & Country Club, Ashford Rd, Bearsted, Maidstone, ME14 4NQ
<b>Wednesday, 24 July</b>	Durham Reunion	Ramside Hall Hotel, Carrville, Durham, DH1 1TD
<b>Thursday, 15 August</b>	North London Reunion	Aldwickbury Park Golf Club, Piggottshill Lane, Harpenden, Herts, AL5 1AB
<b>Wednesday, 21 August</b>	Newcastle Reunion	Crowne Plaza Newcastle - Stephenson Quarter, Hawthorn Square, Forth Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 3SA
<b>Thursday, 29 August</b>	Portsmouth Reunion	Royal Maritime Club in Portsmouth, 78-80 Queen St, Portsmouth, PO1 3HS
<b>Tuesday, 10 September</b>	Sheffield Reunion	Holiday Inn Royal Victoria Sheffield, Victoria Station Road, Sheffield, S4 7YE
<b>Tuesday, 17 September</b>	Worcester Reunion	The Worcester Whitehouse Hotel, Foregate Street, Worcester, WR1 1EA
<b>Wednesday, 18 September</b>	Birmingham Reunion	Linden House, 211 Tettenhall Road, Wolverhampton, WV6 0DD
<b>Thursday, 26 September</b>	Norwich Reunion	Park Farm Hotel, Hethersett, Norwich, Norfolk, NR9 3DL
<b>Thursday, 10 October</b>	Cornwall and Plymouth Reunion	Lanhydrock Hotel & Golf Club, Lanhydrock, Bodmin, Cornwall, PL30 5AQ
<b>Thursday, 22 August</b>	Inverness Reunion	Venue to be confirmed
<b>Friday, 23 August</b>	Aberdeen Reunion	Venue to be confirmed

# In Your Community

## Walking through fire - for fun!

Blind Veterans UK is holding a firewalk challenge at Cardiff Football Club on 15 March. The event is a great opportunity for veterans,

their family and friends alike to do something really exciting, while raising awareness and funds for the charity.

You'll receive training from Guinness world record holder Scott Bell, before crossing a 15ft bed of red hot coals. Registration is £10 per person (£5 for Blind Veterans) with an aim to raise £70 in sponsorship.

Victoria Beech, the Regional Fundraiser organising this event says, "We are really excited to be holding this event in Cardiff Football Club's stadium - many of our members will have been to the venue for our reunions and the guys at Cardiff can't wait to welcome us back."

■ **If you'd like to take part or would like to find out more, then contact [Victoria.beech@blindveterans.org.uk](mailto:Victoria.beech@blindveterans.org.uk) or call her on 01492 864 574.**



JAN ČEJKA / ADOBE STOCK



## Hard-working Howard nears a thousand

Hardy Howard Young has been collecting regularly for the last two years at a Lewes market in aid of Blind Veterans UK, and has raised £880 for us so far.

Howard, who will be 90 next birthday, wanted to give something back, and came up with the idea to arrange the collections. He says, "All the time I am fit and healthy, I am



**Caption: Howard Young**

happy to give something back. For me it has been a fantastic way of engaging with my local community."

A regular player for the St Dunstan's Bowls Club, Howard is also a member of the Lewes Bowls Club which has a collection box in the bar for our charity.

Rachel Chitty from the Brighton fundraising team said, "Howard is an inspiration. He enjoys representing the charity and is a great ambassador. I would encourage other blind veterans to ask their local shop or pub if they would take a static collection box on behalf of Blind Veterans UK. Speak with your community team and they will organise it."

## Cambridgeshire blind veteran returns to Falklands after 36 years

A blind veteran from Cambridgeshire has returned to the Falkland Islands for the first time since 1982 when the war ended

David Atkinson, 64 from Soham in Ely, joined the Royal Navy (Naval Canteen



**Caption: David Atkinson presents Governor of the Falklands, Nigel Phillips CBE, with a Blind Veterans UK tie**

Service) in 1972, and was mobilised aboard HMS **Endurance** during the Falklands conflict. He was later selected for service aboard Royal Yacht **Britannia**, but retired in 1991 due to his sight loss.

David presented Nigel Phillips CBE, Governor of the Falkland Islands, with a Blind Veterans UK tie at Government House and laid a wreath at the 1982 Liberation Memorial.



**Caption: Blind veteran David Atkinson (right) aboard HMS Endurance in 1982**

As a recipient of the South Atlantic Medal, David took advantage of concessionary flights and travelled by Voyager, the largest RAF aircraft, on the 'air bridge' between RAF Brize Norton and the Falklands.

David says: "I wanted to go back to pay my respects and see how things had changed. It was a very emotional trip

**Continues over**



and an honour to remember those that fell in battle. It was important for me to see not only the graves of our lads but also the Argentine cemetery as well.

"It was great to meet the Governor at Government House and enjoy tea and sticky buns together. My thanks go to Blind Veterans UK and the Falklands Veterans Foundation for helping to make this trip happen."

David first noticed his sight deteriorating aboard HMY **Britannia** in 1985. He was later diagnosed with macular degeneration, and by 1991 it meant he had to leave the Navy behind. Fortunately, he found out about Blind Veterans UK and started receiving support from the charity in 2013.

David says: "The support that Blind Veterans UK has given me from day one has been second to none. At my introductory week I had training and received equipment that has enabled me to do everyday tasks that were otherwise impossible before."

## A slice of old England in Eastbourne

It was a slice of former times in Eastbourne on 15 January, when a group of our veterans met for

afternoon tea at the Hydro hotel in Eastbourne, Sussex.

The art-deco styled hotel, which is on the seafront in the town proved to be the perfect venue for the six members to enjoy a fantastic spread, and to happily reminisce in the lovely surroundings.

Attending from Blind Veterans UK staff were Community Support Workers Ben Gillam and David Higgins, and Volunteer Coordinator Oliver Willis.

## March is for veterans

Lace up your boots, sling on your backpack, and hit the trail or the treadmill. We're dedicating March 2019 to blind veterans, and we need you, your loved ones and colleagues to help us. We're looking for you or maybe someone from your family to complete 100 miles over the month of March to raise money for our blind veterans.

### 100 miles sounds a challenge?

Don't worry, we've organised 10-mile walks across the UK on 30 March, so everyone can get involved. Start times are 9 - 9.30am and there is a minimum of £100 sponsorship

## Locations

### ■ National Memorial Arboretum

Join us on this scenic 10 mile walk as we explore the magnificent grounds of the National Memorial Arboretum, the site features over 300 thought-provoking memorials, each with a story to tell.

### ■ 9am Brighton Centre

Join us on this scenic 10 mile walk as we go off road taking in the magnificent cliff side walk along Brighton's famous shoreline.

### ■ 9am Martock Recreation Ground

Join us in this scenic 10 mile walk as we explore some of the 22 acres of greenery on offer in Martock.

### ■ 9am Royal Parks, London

This exciting 10 mile walk will take participants through four of London's beautiful Royal Parks - Hyde Park, St James Park, Green Park and Kensington Gardens. Known as 'London's lungs' these green haven are Londoners and visitors alike, it's the ideal way to explore the capital's nature reserves, commons and peaceful gardens.

### ■ Llandudno Centre

Starting at the Blind Veterans UK Llandudno Centre, walkers will head for the Promenade, along to the

Cenotaph before making their way up and around the Great Orme. Once back at the Cenotaph they will be joined by those doing a shorter walk option to return along the Promenade and up Queens Road to the Llandudno Centre. This is the perfect walk for anyone looking for a first time challenge this New Year that you can do with all of the family.

## Will you spare five minutes?

**We'd like to get to know you better and understand how you access the online information and digital services that help you in your day-to-day life.**

**Please will you take part in our quick and simple online survey, to help us understand how we can deliver a better range of services for everyone across our communities.**

**The survey won't take long to complete, and can be found at**

**[bit.ly/blindveteransuk-survey](http://bit.ly/blindveteransuk-survey)**





**Caption: Neville Parkin and the Shinichi family in Japan. Neville is back row**

# A Japanese Odyssey

Member **Neville Parkin** spent time in the Far East during his post-war service with the RAF. Here, he talks to our President Colin Williamson about his time there

Neville Parkin served with 367 Signals Unit with the RAF in Hong Kong in the late 1950's. During his time at RAF Little Sai Wan, which he describes as a 'listening station', he worked in Signals Intelligence - a highly classified unit which specialised in intercepting and

decoding morse code messages from foreign powers in the Far East.

After leaving the services, Neville joined Imperial Tobacco and stayed with the company for 22 years before moving on.

He is very interested in languages, speaking German, French, Cantonese and Dutch, and regularly listens into a German news station on the radio. Neville lives with his wife Anne in a beautiful house near to the market town of Hexham, in Northumberland, where he and Anne often ring the bells at the historic Hexham Abbey.

## **Neville takes up the story**

"Before joining the Royal Air Force at the age of 17 years I had never been on an aircraft and I had never been to London. In fact, I don't think that I had ever been south of Sheffield. So, it is not surprising that at the age of 79 I look back on my first trip to RAF Cardington in Bedfordshire as the greatest single change in direction of my whole life.

"After completing my training I arrived at RAF Little Sai Wan in Hong Kong in November 1957, after a breathtaking five day journey from Heathrow passing through a series of new countries and customs.

"I decided that before leaving the Far East I would make every attempt to visit Japan. Some 10 months later, having saved up one year's leave and one year's wages (at £3 per week) I was ready to board a Canadian Pacific airliner bound for Tokyo! In the meantime I had done some research

about the experiences I was likely to encounter, and had taken the trouble to get some knowledge of a few basic Japanese phrases. One piece of good advice that I was given was to make sure that I should present myself as English and definitely not American!

"While making preparations for my departure I was warned that the day I had chosen coincided with a major security operation in Hong Kong city. However, I was able to obtain help from the RAF to escort me through the city to the Star Ferry and then on to Kai Tak where I was due to catch my plane at around 8.00am. I cannot remember the reason for such heavy security. All of the shops were closed and there were barriers across the street at intervals. The only sign of life consisted of dozens of heavily armed police. Having known Hong Kong as 'the city which never sleeps', this was an eerie experience."

## **Moving on to Japan**

From the relatively westernised Hong Kong - at the time a British colony - Neville found himself in the very different environment of post war Japan. The country was picking up the threads of industry that had been shattered by its defeat in the Second World War







**Caption: Neville with Shinichi Yamada**

"I landed in Tokyo," continues Neville, "and after passing through immigration and customs I found myself on a taxi rank feeling very much on my own. A taxi driver took me to a small European-style hotel on the outskirts of the city. From that point on, for the following month, I was treated with courtesy and kindness by everyone I met, many of whom were very keen to practice their English.

"While relaxing and awaiting my evening meal, I overheard a radio broadcast, which I think may have been the American Forces Network, warning everyone of an approaching typhoon. There were warnings to "batten down the hatches" for what sounded like impending disaster! Having experienced a number of typhoons in Hong Kong the complete

broadcast sounded to me to be typically American and somewhat over the top."

### **Awfully lost**

However, just for once, the Americans had understated what was to follow. "Later that evening, the typhoon hit Tokyo and lasted for almost two days. I had not before or since seen such rain. It made the Hong Kong typhoons appear rather like spring rain in England. I learnt some time later, when watching a news broadcast in a Hong Kong cinema, that it had rained 27 inches in 40 hours. I had only reserved one night at my hotel and so next morning I was faced with finding somewhere else to live. I made my way by underground railway to the main Tokyo station. I was trying to make sense of what was going on when a voice beside me, in perfect English, said "You are looking awfully lost".

"The voice was that of a young man about my age who, I later learned, was studying English at Tokyo University. He explained that no trains were operating and that all the hotels would be full. And then he asked "have you ever been inside a Japanese house?" I replied that I hadn't, after which he said, "I would be very honoured if you could spend the night at my home". I accepted the invitation very gratefully, but asked him if he would telephone

home to check with his parents that would be okay. He called home and said that his parents would be pleased to see me. We managed to get hold of a taxi and we were soon on our way, despite the fact that the water levels were covering the hubcaps. I caught occasional glances of the river and could see furniture, parts of buildings and dead animals being washed away at speed.

"We arrived at his home, and as is customary, left our shoes in a porch outside the house. As we entered, his mother and his father greeted us on their knees, and as we appeared lowered their heads to a point where



**Caption: At RAF Little Sai Wan in 1958**

their foreheads touched the tatami; the Japanese name for the straw like mats which covered the entire house. I was shown to a room which was to be my home for the next two nights before we gathered for an evening meal where we sat cross legged on the floor around a low table.

"I doubt if my body would be able to cope with that these days! I learnt that my new found friend was called Shinichi Yamada [editor's note - Japanese names place the surname first followed by the forename], and he acted as translator for the evening. It turned out that his father had been an occupation soldier in Hong Kong. Bearing in mind this meeting was barely 12 years after the Second World War had ceased, it could have been difficult. However, he was keen to talk about Hong Kong, which he knew very well. At one point Shinichi's mother tried to speak to me in Japanese and Shinichi said "she is trying to tell you that you handle chopsticks beautifully".

The next day he took me to meet some of his friends and some more members of his family."

### **Next issue**

**Neville's journey around post-war Japan continues**



# Padre's Corner

Blind Veterans UK padre **Clare Callanan** talks about how you can change your life by focusing on just two words

Never underestimate the power of our intentions. As you leave 2018 behind and begin a new year you are crossing a threshold. What other thresholds will you be crossing over? Who will you connect more with this year? What kind of friend, partner, leader or peer do you want to be? What would you like to achieve and how are you going to set about that? What will be your mantra, your encouraging word for 2019?



**Caption: Padre Clare Callanan**

If we are what we think and believe, then our attitude and the purpose behind what we do and how we live matters more than anything. It's one thing to say we want to start really dedicating ourselves to yoga practice, or finding ways to help out in our community, but without the honest intention behind it, it's easy to let things slip to the end of our priority list.

"Every morning, when we wake up, we have twenty-four brand new hours to live. What a precious gift! We have the capacity to live in a way that these twenty-four hours will bring peace, joy and happiness to ourselves and others." This is one of my favorite quotes from Zen Buddhist monk, teacher and author, Thich Nhat Hanh.

Why not reflect on what you loved about the past year, all that you accomplished and where you are today? Think about your intentions going forward on the life you want to create.

Drew Dudley, an inspirational speaker, once said we should ask of ourselves daily: "Am I capable of five seconds of courage right now?" What are you going to do with your five seconds today and each day?

Blessings,

**Clare Callanan**

# Review

## Activities supplement

2019-20



**Caption: Driving week at Llandudno**







# Welcome

Hello, and a warm welcome to your updated Activities supplement for 2019-20.

Please use this updated guide so you can choose the activities and holidays you would like to take part in at our Brighton and Llandudno centres. Some details are given for each of the activities, all of which will take place throughout this year, and the early part of 2020. This version contains details of our new Topic Weeks at the Brighton Centre, and you can find out the details of those further inside.

Booking details are given after each listing, with contact numbers as well, so you can find out further information. Bookings are limited to one activity week by a member per centre, but there is an opportunity to place your name on our waiting list if you would like to join more than one week.

Don't forget to highlight your support needs in advance of your stay at the centre, and if you have any care needs, then please check first with your Community Support Worker. Please note you can take part in a holiday or themed week if you have not attended an introductory day or week.

We look forward to welcoming you soon.

## Activity weeks at our Brighton Centre from April 2019 to March 2020

### Please note

Our procedures have changed, be please aware we are not working on a first come first served basis this year. This is to enable all members the opportunity to enjoy time at our Centre. You have two weeks to express your interest as follows:

### Register your interest between:

**11-28 February 2019**  
8.00am - 4.30pm

### Confirmation date:

We will contact you between 8-15 March 2019 during the hours of 8.00am - 4.30pm

The Brighton Centre bookings number is **01273 391 500**. If you reach the answer-machine please do leave a message and we will return your call as soon as possible.

Both the themed weeks and in-house themes are charged at a standard holiday rate. The bookings team can tell you how much this will be when you book.

## Topic Weeks

### Why not come for one of our Topic weeks here at the Brighton Centre?

Brand new for 2019, these weeks boast a variety of different themes which will be introduced into the centre's activity and trips programme. These fun filled weeks will be open to all, and you can pick and choose the right activity for you.

### Comedy week

**31 March-6 April 2019**

From asking Alexa to tell you a joke to put a smile on someone's face, come along for a week full of laughs.

### Spring Music week

**12-18 May 2019**

Put a spring in your step with our music week, that includes the ever popular Royal Marine Band concert on 15 May, 2019.

### Wildlife week

**2-8 June 2019**

Get closer to nature during our wildlife week, enjoying our Sussex surrounds.





### Film Week

30 June-6 July 2019

Test your screen knowledge with our range of quizzes, and indulge in some classic films and popcorn.

### Homes and gardens week

7-13 July 2019

If you like getting your hands dirty in the garden, or have a penchant for design, come and stay with us.

### Coastal week

25-31 August 2019

If you do like to be beside the seaside, then come and see us for all things coastal-related this week.

### Dance and music week

22-28 September 2019

More big band action with the Gurkha Band, on Wednesday 25th, and why not take part in our annual dinner dance?

### Military week

3-9 November 2019

Join together with former comrades and meet current military personnel in the lead up to Remembrance.

### Science week

16-22 February 2020

From science fiction to virtual reality, learn more during our Science week.

### History week

8-14 March 2020

Scholars of the past will enjoy this week as we look into the depths of history.



Caption: Arts and Crafts

## Activities weeks

### April

- 7-13 Fitness training week
- 16-20 Mini Spring break
- 23-27 Mind and body re-balance mini break
- 26-29 Masonic weekend
- 28-4 May Fishing week

### May

- 7-11 Women's mini break
- 24-1 June Archery club
- 28-1 June Healthy eating for all

### June

- 2-7 Walking week
- 9-15 GOAL Group
- 16-22 Photography week
- 30-7 July Amateur radio club

### July

- 7-13 Fitness training week
- 15-18 Carers Summer break
- 21-28 Exercising at home week

### August

- 11-17 Widows week
- 11-17 Cycling week
- 23-31 Archery club
- 27-31 Mini summer break

### September

- 1-7 Fundraising Pamper week
- 15-21 Activities week
- 22-28 Technology week
- 29-5 Oct Amateur radio club

### October

- 6-12 Fitness training week
- 13-19 Food and drink week
- 13-26 Bowls club

### November

- 24-30 Fighting fit week

### January 2020

- 5-11 Fitness training week
- 10-12 Carers winter break
- 12-18 Ski club annual trip

### February 2020

- 21-29 Archery club

### March 2020

- 8-21 Bowls club

## Band concerts

We're lucky enough to have two band concerts being held at the centre next year. These are the ever popular Band of the Royal Marines on 15 May, and the Band of the Gurkhas on 25 September.

Make sure you apply early to avoid disappointment.



## Brighton centre - what's in store during activity weeks

So you can see what's best fitted for you, here are short descriptions of the activities and clubs on offer:

### Mini spring and summer breaks

**April 16-20, August 27-31 2019**

These shorter mid-season breaks allow you to be flexible with your time and also enjoy action packed days. They feature activities such as seasonal gardening, trips taking in the landscape and our famous 'Duck Watch'. The team here have some really great ideas.



**Caption: Brighton Armed Forces Day**

### Mind and body re-balance 23-27 April 2019

A team of experts will guide you through traditional practices to leave your body and mind feeling stretched. This week will feature energetic and relaxing practices in physical disciplines such as yoga, pilates and Tai Chi. We will also touch upon meditation, mindfulness, aromatherapy and Ayurveda.

### Masonic weekend 26-29 April, 2019

If you are a freemason, and are interested in joining fellow masons for a great weekend in April each year, why not join us down at the Brighton centre, where we are the guests of the Temple Lodge. Age, rank and experience is no barrier, it's a wonderful weekend for all.

- Contact Chairman/Secretary W. Bro.Clive Jones on **07854 800 256** or email him at **dragoneye67@sky.com**

### Fishing week 28 April-4 May 2019

The week is open to all whether you've fished before or not, and will have the benefit of all those big fish

being at their maximum weight before spawning starts.

You will need to bring waterproof clothing and a fishing licence. If you do not have one then you can purchase a week long fresh water license from the Post Office. If you have your own fishing equipment that you would like to bring then you are welcome to do so but please keep in mind we have limited space and the transport team will need to know in advance.

### Women's mini-break May 7-11 2019

It's all about women this week. We will be providing a range of activities, trips and sessions with an aim to celebrate women across the world, whether through adventure, culture, beauty or achievement. This is a first for Blind Veterans UK, and promises to bring a wealth of information and support to all who attend this week and beyond.

### Archery club 24 May-1 June, 23-31 August 2019, 21-29 February 2020

Blind Veterans UK Bowmen are the founders of blind archery. The club is known worldwide and is the fount of all knowledge for this exciting sport.

Archery weeks are open to Blind Veterans UK Bowmen, and we

welcome new members from our fellow veterans.

- If you would like to find out more in advance, please contact David Poyner on **0161 282 9524**, or email him on **d.poyner@ntlworld.com**

### Healthy eating for all 28 May-1 June 2019

Coming along to this will give you the tools and knowledge to make food choices that will benefit your overall health. You will have the chance to try various food and drinks that have great health benefits and taste great. You will also learn how to prepare simple healthy meals.

### Walking week 2-7 June 2019

Spectacular and challenging for all, Walking week includes the best coastal trails, forest, heathland and downland walks the South East has to offer. Take in famous land marks such as Pooh Bear Country, Seven Sisters & other areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and enjoy the odd pub lunch. Distances will vary and can be adapted to suit all needs.

### Photography week 16-22 June 2019

If you're a keen photographer already, or an amateur who wants to improve





their skills, then this is for you. Whatever kind of photography you're looking to do, we'll be there to talk you through.

**Amateur radio society**  
**30 June-7 July, 29 September-5 October 2019**

Would you like to become an amateur radio ham and communicate with people across the globe? If so, then please join us to learn how to operate the systems and create networks with support from long-standing members of the group.

- For more information, please contact the society's Chairman Ray Peart on **01452 533 839** or email him at **Raymond.peart@btinternet.com**

**Carers breaks**  
**15-18 July 2019, 10-12 January 2020**

Enjoy a weekend or midweek break with other carers. We offer trips out to local attractions and dinner to one of the many Brighton eateries. A full activity programme will be provided, which can include making gifts for yourselves or others to take away, mindful sessions and lots of opportunities to be pampered.

**Exercising at home**  
**21-28 July 2019**

Do you find yourself wishing to be

more active at home but struggle with home-based exercise? We will be exploring various ideas including chair-based exercises, relaxation, yoga, body weight workouts and stretching.

**Widows' week**  
**August 11-17 2019**

Catch up with old friends and make some new ones when you join us for our annual widows week. With a whirlwind of activities, fun and laughter, trips out and evening entertainment, alongside sessions designed to enhance your well-being, you're sure to have a great time.

**Cycling week**  
**August 11-17 2019**

Cycle around Sussex on a bicycle made for two! Based in Brighton, enjoy daily tandem cycle rides on routes taking in the South Downs and beyond. Distances can be tailored to suit all levels of fitness and experience. There will also be the opportunity to cycle at the Olympic Velodrome, which promises to be a fantastic day out.

**Activities week**  
**September 15-21 2019**

If adrenaline fuelled outdoor pursuits are your thing, then our Activities week is the one for you. Have fun and challenge yourself, while taking part

in activities such as rock climbing, abseiling, kayaking, coasteering and high ropes courses.

**Technology week**  
**22-28 September 2019**

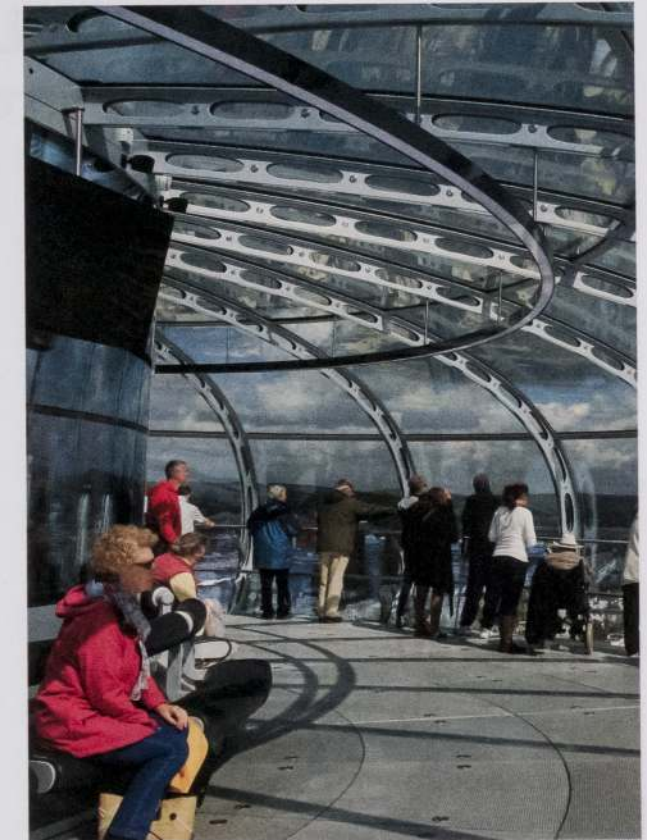
The Technology week will appeal to members who have an interest in how technology impacts our lives. The week contains talks and demonstrations for external speakers, ranging from the latest gadgets you can use at home to learning about how technology works in the world around us.

**Food and drink week**  
**13-19 October 2019**

Welcome to the world of food, drink and all things cooking at the Brighton Centre. The week is packed full of food related activities, with the highlight being a food-related day trip out. We will fill your week with quizzes, reminiscence and talks from food related professionals. Activities include our famous Brighton Bake Off.

**Bowls club**  
**13-26 October 2019, 8-21 March 2020**

Bowlers of any level are welcome to join with bowling fortnights being made up of singles, pairs and triples. There are also round robin competitions and finally a club dinner. However, please note it is not possible to book for a single week.



**Caption: Technology Week**

- If you would like more information on the Brighton Bowling Club, then please contact **Dave Mackenzie** on **07399 481 842**.

**Fighting fit week**  
**24-30 November 2019**

This will give you the opportunity to train and experience a range of martial arts and contact sport such as boxing. You will leave feeling motivated albeit drained from the physical exertion you will have to put in to everything. All you need is determination and a willingness to learn and take part.



## Activity weeks at our Llandudno Centre from April 2019 to March 2020

Welcome to the Llandudno Centre's programme for April 2019 - March 2020

### Activity weeks

Activity week bookings will be open from 11-28 February 2019, and the lines open at 8.30am. The team will take the details of your first three choices and will confirm bookings between 8-15 March, 2019. There will be a limit to the number of people able to book on each week and priority will be given to members who have not had an opportunity in previous years.

■ To book an Activity Week at the Llandudno Centre please call **01492 868 700**. Lines open at 8.30am.

Both the activity weeks and in-house themes are charged at a standard holiday rate. The bookings team can tell you how much this will be when you book.

### Topic Weeks

From April this year, we will be introducing new Topic Weeks for those members coming to the Llandudno Centre for a holiday. On the following weeks of the year the activities, trips and entertainment while you are on holiday will be based around different topics. A list of the activities will be advertised in the centre, and you will be able to book yourself a place on the activity while here.

We will continue to provide a full programme of activities and entertainment during all other holiday weeks outside of dates shown below.

#### Shooting and archery week

**Week commencing 6 May, 2019**

Currently fully booked, please call to place your name on the cancellation list

#### History week

**Week commencing 10 June, 2019**

Currently fully booked, please call to place your name on the cancellation list

#### Music week

**Week commencing 1 July, 2019**

Currently fully booked, please call to place your name on the cancellation list

#### Strolling week

**Week commencing 26 August, 2019**

**Bookings open 4 February, 2019**

An accessible week of leisurely walks in beautiful North Wales.

#### Science and technology week

**Week commencing 10 February, 2020**

**Bookings open 5 August, 2019**

An opportunity to learn about new technologies and share your skills and knowledge with others.

### Activities weeks calendar

#### April

**14-20 Driving week**

#### May

**19-25 Golf week**

#### June

**2-8 D-Day 75th anniversary**

**Military week**

**23-29 Adventure week**

#### July

**28-3 Aug Accessible adventure week**

#### August

**18-24 Fishing week**

#### September

**8-14 Cycling week**

**29-5 Oct walking week**

#### November

**3-11 Military week**

#### February 2020

**23-29 Horse riding week**

#### March 2020

**15-21 Photography week**

#### Driving week

**14-20 April, 2019**

For all you petrol heads we are offering a fantastic opportunity to take part in a wide range of driving activities including buggy and hovercraft driving.

#### Golf week

**19-25 May, 2019**

Time for a round! It doesn't matter whether you have never picked up a golf ball in your life or if you have played a bit and would love the opportunity to get back out on the course again.

#### Military week

**2-8 June, 2019**

Help commemorate the 75th anniversary of the D-day landings with a week of visits to local military units and museums where you will meet





serving personnel and share stories and experiences. There will be guest speakers, equipment displays and much more, with a chance to dress up in your finest for the Sunset Dinner.

### Adventure week

23-29 June, 2019

This is a fantastic opportunity to take you away from your comfort zone and reach new goals. Experience activities such as tandem cycling, climbing, abseiling, and water-based activities.

### Accessible adventure week

28 July-3 August, 2019

Now you can access the world of adventure at any level of mobility to help develop self-confidence, challenge yourself and - above all - have a fun week.

### Fishing week

18-24 August, 2019

Develop your fishing techniques on a full day boat trip, or on the pier on a sunny summer's day. You can also visit local trout farms during the calm, warm evenings when the fish are biting!

### Cycling week

8-14 September, 2019

Feel the excitement and thrill of riding on a tandem around the North Wales landscape; feel the sea breeze on your face as you ascend the hills of Snowdonia, before topping it all off with a well-deserved meal.

### Hill walking week

29 September-5 October, 2019

Walk, talk and take the opportunity to document your ventures into the Welsh landscape. Your journeys will be varied from walking on beaches, through mountains, across rivers and waterfalls.

### Military week

3-11 November 2019

Ending with the Remembrance Sunday parade at Llandudno's cenotaph, our November Military Week will deliver an unforgettable time. It includes visits to local military sites, and members will have the opportunity to interact with present day military personnel. The week will end fittingly by remembering those who served with a 'dining-in' dinner so do bring your formal wear and medals.

### Horse riding week

23-29 February, 2020

Learn the basics of horse riding on this taster week. Start by using the latest in technology at a specialist riding centre, and go on days out in the Welsh countryside at local riding schools.

### Photography week

15-21 March, 2020

Join like-minded people and visit spectacular locations. Learn new tips and share skills with other members. You will have the opportunity to create, print and mount your own photography.

# Rehabilitation

**Paul Hartley** is the Lead Rehabilitation Officer (ROVI) at our Brighton centre. Here he tells us how he came to work for Blind Veterans UK

After I qualified as a counsellor from the University of Sussex in 1999, a friend met me for lunch to tell me that she'd found the 'perfect job' for me. Funnily enough it wasn't as a counsellor, so I think she might have been telling me something.

Anyway, she knew that as part of my training I had worked on my feelings towards my own vision impairment and that I had said that I had wanted to be part of a movement towards positive change for people with sight loss.

So, off to ROVI school I went. I'm Brighton born and bred, and I love my city life, so my first challenge was to up sticks and move to Glasgow. I'm an urbanite and proud of it, and life in a Scottish city won over Hindhead School's beautiful - yet isolated - rural location. Suffice to say, I loved my time in Glasgow making lifelong friendships.

### Working with our veterans

I had my final work placement of my training with Blind Veterans UK (then St Dunstan's), but had no idea where the company who I was under contract



**Paul's tip:** We rarely want to do what we need to do to effect positive change in our lives, so count back from five to one and get moving. It's all about the 'push'. My thanks to Mel Robbins and the 'five-second rule' for this advice - it really works

with was going to send me once I was qualified - it could have been anywhere.

There was however, a loophole in my contract that meant I was released from it as my company had not found me work within 18 days of qualifying - I was free. I quickly secured a ROVI post here in 2001.

Over the years I have mainly worked within the core roles of assessing and teaching mobility, daily living and communication skills, but it is now, hand-on-heart, that is the most exciting time for me here.



# The Queen's Birthday Parade, Trooping the Colour ballot

Blind Veterans UK has an allocation of 20 tickets to the Trooping the Colour event. Due to high demand, two tickets per Member will be drawn by ballot. The event will be held on Saturday, 8 June 2019 at: **Horse Guards Parade, Whitehall, London SW1A 2AX**

The event starts at 1000 and should finish by 1225. You may wear ceremonial day or other service equivalent. Alternatively, you can wear morning dress, lounge dress, lounge suit or jacket and trousers, equivalent for the ladies, no denim.

If you wish to be included in the ballot, please contact Akvile Jukneviute on **0207 616 7998** or **Akvile.Jukneviute@blindveterans.org.uk** by Friday, 29 March 2019. You will receive a confirmation letter by Friday, 12 April 2019.

Please note that Blind Veterans UK provides tickets only - accommodation and transport arrangements are to be made independently.



# Lamb tajine - a winter warmer with attitude

In a new series for **Review**, celebrity cook and Blind Veterans UK member **Penelope Melville-Brown** will be presenting you with a series of recipes for you to try

Welcome to a new recipe feature for **Review**. I've been cooking all my life - even after I too became a blind war veteran. I've cooked all over the world with my **Baking Blind** adventure,

and hope that you'll enjoy the recipes. When we have had enough of all the Christmas fare, lamb tajine - a real taste of the Middle East served with simple couscous, can be a welcome change.

## Ingredients



Imperial	Metric	Ingredient
2 tablespoons		Olive oil
2 pounds	(900 grams)	Lamb, diced
2		Onions, peeled and diced
1		Red chilli, de-seeded and finely chopped
1 inch	(2.5 cm)	Fresh ginger, peeled and finely chopped
3		Cloves garlic, peeled and finely chopped
1 teaspoon		Turmeric
1 teaspoon		Ground cumin
1 teaspoon		Ground cinnamon
1 level teaspoon		Smoked paprika
1 teaspoon		Harissa paste
2 heaped tablespoons		Ground almonds
9 oz	(250 gram)	Dried apricots, stoned and chopped
1/2 pint	(275 ml)	Strong chicken stock
1		Lemon, zest and juice
1		Orange, zest and juice



## Method

**1** Heat the oil and brown the lamb in batches before removing and seasoning with a little salt and pepper.



**Caption: Penny's lamb tagine**

- 2** In the same pan, gently cook the onion until it starts becoming translucent and softened, then add ginger, garlic and chilli and allow to cook for a couple of minutes.
- 3** Return the meat to the pan and all other ingredients except the lemon and orange.
- 4** Bring to a simmer then place in oven on lowest heat for five hours.
- 5** Add the lemon and orange zest and juice about an hour before serving.

**Penny Melville-Brown**  
penny@laylands.co.uk

### My tips:

If you don't have the authentic tajine dish (or want to keep it just for serving), cooking an ordinary casserole with a close fitting lid and a circle of parchment paper (cartouche) on top to keep the moisture.

You could also add a pound or two of tomatoes. The amount of stock should be only enough to cover, especially if using tomatoes.

Serve with couscous sharpened with lemon zest, slithers of cucumber for texture and chopped coriander for freshness.

- You can see and hear me cooking this recipe on my YouTube channel. There's also a recipe for a vegetarian tajine at [bakingblind.com](http://bakingblind.com)

# Circadian Therapeutics - Blind Veterans UK Sleep Health Study



In partnership with the Blind Veterans UK, we are conducting a two part Research Study aimed at understanding sleep and daily (circadian) rhythm disruption that is experienced by vision impaired individuals. Outcomes of the study will help us to provide informed feedback to the Blind Veterans UK community about treatments and therapies to improve your sleep and circadian rhythms. **You must be a Blind Veteran UK Member to participate in this study.**

**Part 1 - Sleep health survey:** Questions in the survey will ask about your:

- Visual health
- Sleep and daily rhythms
- Physical health and current medications
- Mental health and well-being

The survey can take up to one hour to complete. You may complete the survey online or by phone with one of our friendly researchers. If you are interested in taking part in the survey, please complete the attached survey participation request form and return via the provided envelope.

### Part 1: Sleep Health Survey

The survey will ask you questions about your visual health, sleep, physical health and medications, and your mental and well-being.



**Part 2 - Sleep and Circadian Monitoring Study:** Following the survey, you may also wish to sign up for part 2 of the research study. This will involve four weeks of at-home sleep monitoring and a two-night stay in the Blind Veterans UK Residential Care Facility. *Participation in the Survey does not require participation in Part 2.*

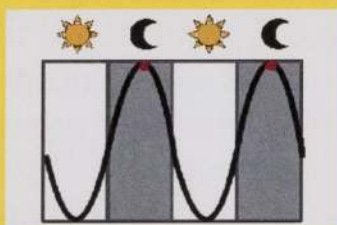




**Part 2: Sleep and Circadian Monitoring Study**  
 You may also wish to take part in a second survey which involves:

**Circadian Assessment**

Assessment of your circadian timing via collection of urine samples (four weeks)



**Two-day monitoring**

Monitoring of biological, physiological and behavioural outcomes at the Blind Veterans UK Residential Care Facility



If you would like to learn more about the sleep health study, or have any questions, please contact us by phone or email, or visit our website:  
 Email: [sleepstudy@circadiantherapeutics.com](mailto:sleepstudy@circadiantherapeutics.com) Telephone: **01235 841 532**  
 Online: [circadiantherapeutics.com/blind-veterans-study/](http://circadiantherapeutics.com/blind-veterans-study/)

**Sleep survey participation request form**

BVRES1 JAN19

**I would like to learn more about the sleep health survey.**

Please provide your name and contact details below and **tick** your preferred contact method:

Name: .....

Email: .....  Telephone: .....

**How would you like to take the survey?**

Online (screen reader accessible)  By Telephone (a researcher will call)

Signature: .....



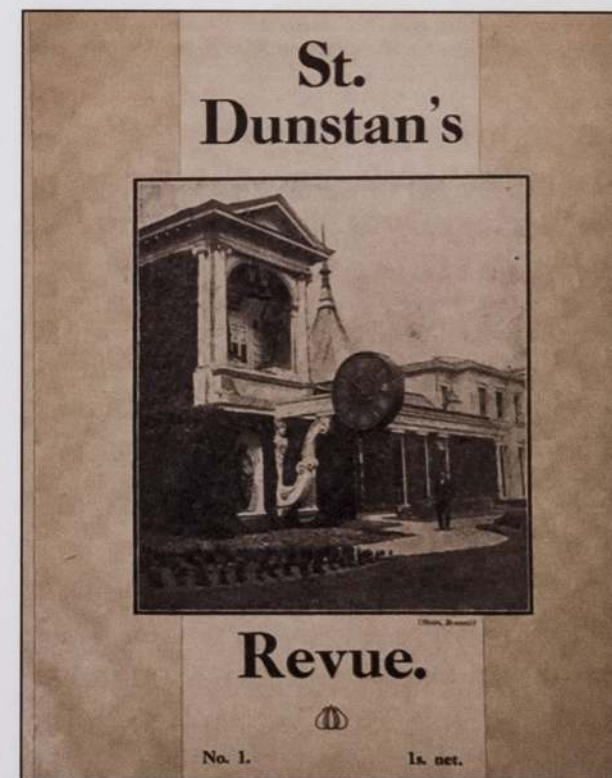
*Personal information provided here will only be used to contact you to participate in the study.*

# From Revue to Review - the history of our magazine

As Review undergoes its latest change, archivist **Rob Baker** takes a look back at the history of a much-loved magazine

What we know today as the **Review** started life as the **St Dunstan's Revue** in July 1915, just a few months after Blind Veterans UK came into being. We

do not know who founded and edited it, but it was short-lived in its initial form. The Editor gave his address, if not his name - 12, Kensington Gate, W.' and explained his reason for producing the magazine: 'Nobody wants it and so I consider it my duty to bring one out'. Initial articles were light-hearted, and included an account of 'Rowing on the Lake' and a parody of Rudyard Kipling's poem 'If' addressed 'To those with Secretarial Aspirations'.



**Caption: The cover of the first ever Revue, published in July 1915**

As the **Review**, the magazine was revived in June 1916 by William Girling, who had been blinded at Ypres in 1915 and joined us soon afterwards. A second edition, with a much more substantial print run was published the following month. It was then, and has always been, published on a monthly basis, with one 'holiday' month off per



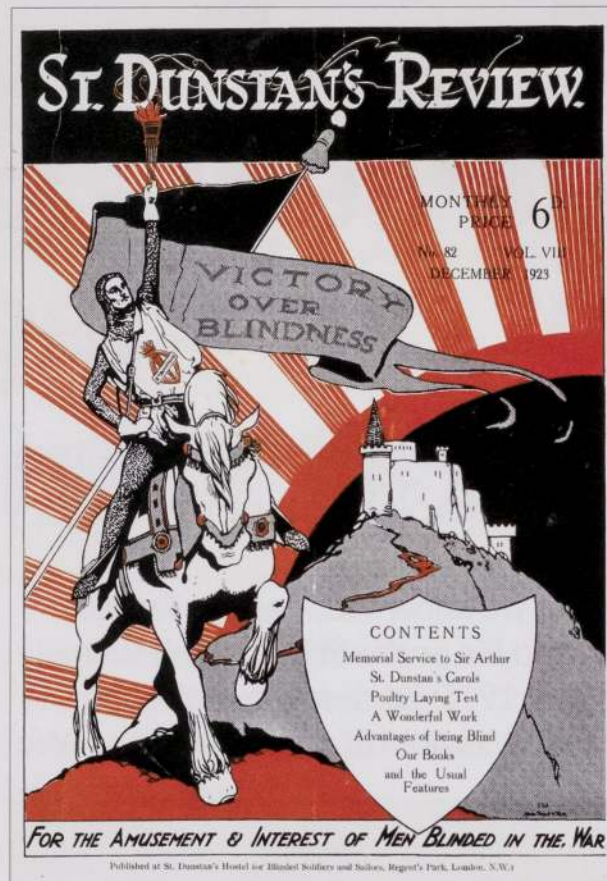


year. The magazine was sold, rather than given, to those of our blind veterans who had completed their training at our Regent's Park base and were now based back at their homes. A six month subscription cost 3s 6d – equivalent to over £10 today. Copies were also sold to the public, including by Sergeant Ernest Hetherington, our gate-keeper.

The new version of the **Review** was given the sub-heading 'A Monthly Record of Work and Sport' and is more recognisable in tone and content to what we have to this day. There were still poems – some serious, some comic – and articles of general interest, but the primary function was to keep members in touch with events and developments.

### Lacking in stability

The **Review's** early editorship lacked stability. After six months as editor Girling, who had now completed his training as a masseur and left Regent's Park, stepped down. He was replaced by Charles Rose, our workshop superintendent. Not long afterwards Rose too stepped down and was replaced by Richard King Huskinson, a journalist and writer who was a good friend to us over many years. Huskinson was followed, from February 1918, by Ian Fraser, who was later to become our Chairman. He



**Caption: A mid 1920s cover with striking artwork – note the use of the 'Victory Over Blindness' slogan, which we still use today**

was then replaced by Perry Barringer, of whom we know nothing except that when he stepped down he had aspirations to go into journalism and other literary work; doubtless the **Review** gave him a good grounding!

In our early years we had a separate charitable fund specifically for young children of our members, and to help promote that in 1921 the **Review** included a 'Blinded Soldiers' Baby

Competition' (actually open to former sailors and airmen too!). Readers were invited to send in photographs of their offspring and a small committee, which included Lady Pearson, the wife of our founder Sir Arthur, judged them. Over 250 entries were received and the most beautiful baby prize was awarded to Leslie Back, aged 1 year and 4 months, son of Alfred 'Jackie' Back, who had served in the Royal Navy.

The **Review** was not the only magazine we produced in our early years! **All About Portland Place** was produced for those of our blind veterans who were officers. Similarly, early issues were mostly comic in tone, with many in-jokes, then it developed over time, changing its name to **The St Dunstan's Officers' Magazine** and providing more by way of news and updates.

The Second World War, unsurprisingly, impacted on the **Review**, with it necessarily reducing its page count. However, it was published throughout the conflict.

Perhaps surprisingly, it took a long time before the **Review** was published in Braille. It was felt that there was an insufficient number of Braille readers amongst the veterans who read it well to make this worthwhile! This changed only after the Second World War.

### Now with sound

Audio recording of the **Review** began in March 1977, with copies being provided on a C90 compact cassette. By a year later 190 members had chosen to receive it in this format.

The 1970s also saw interviews with members start to appear regularly, ably conducted by David Castleton. With many of the First World War veterans now approaching the end of their lives, these preserved memories dating back to our early days and are a hugely valuable record for us. Moving forward, we again had a blind veteran as editor with Ray Hazan.

The paper version of the **Review** changed format in 1994, springing up to its still-current shape and size. By this time under the editorship of Simon Rogers, it was a lively mix of news, articles, interviews and photographs. One notable feature was the forthright and entertaining reviews of talking books by member Ted Bunting. Quite typical are his analysis of Henry Blofeld's *Caught Short of the Boundary*, commencing 'This recording, which is mercifully short..', George Borrow's *The Romany Rye*... 'I've had more excitement listening to last week's football results', and of events in Peter De Polnay's *The Guest House*... '... what a comfort it is to know such things don't happen in Brighton.'



# Arts and craft

Did you know that art and craft sessions can help combat isolation? Rehabilitation Lead Art and Craft **Lou Kirk-Partridge** explains further



**Caption: Member Brenda Byron with head of arts and crafts Lou Kirk-Partridge (standing), and Mandy Wintle**

Popular with Members and visitors alike, the Brighton Centre's art and craft workshop is a hub of bustling activity full of tools and materials, and beautifully crafted items and artwork. Visitors to the department are always impressed when they see 'what blind people can do', but behind this showcase of visual and touchable achievements, the art and craft

department's impact on Members' lives runs much deeper.

Coming to one of our centres is not only a chance to access activities designed specifically for those who are blind, but also to be somewhere where everyone's thing in common is living with sight loss. It's a great way of alleviating isolation, not just the isolation of being alone at home with nothing fun to do, but also the isolation that comes with being the only person in a family or community living with sight loss. At our centres 'blind' is the 'normal' and everyone starts on an equal footing from that point.

The workshop team offers a programme of art and craft activities open to all Members at the centre. Most Members who access the sessions are locally-based 'Dailies' who attend the Centre on regular days every week; some are Centre residents and some are holiday makers.



## Pictures at an Exhibition

In October, the Brighton Centre hosted its third annual exhibition, with this year featuring the theme of buildings and architecture. A call was put out in late spring for contributors and over 30 entries arrived at the centre over the summer, mostly from Members but also a few from Blind Veterans UK volunteers.

Entries could be any type of flat artwork. Most were paintings and this year we had an entry in collage, another in textiles and one in pyrography. The idea is that artists create an artwork especially for the exhibition and that artwork is donated to the Charity, shown in the exhibition and then silent auctioned off at the end to the highest bidder. Any unsold artworks are put to good use, either being sold or auctioned over the coming year at fundraising events.

The exhibition was opened by the mayor of Brighton and Hove, and the artwork was on display in the centre for two weeks, during which time visitors voted on their favourite artworks.



**Caption: Elizabeth-Sharpe Nelson with her competition entry 'Snow covered windmill'**

Members attending the Brighton Centre Workshop who enjoy painting were encouraged and assisted by the art and craft department to create an art piece. Some of our entrants were also members of Scottish War Blinded, attending the art and craft workshop at their Linburn centre. We were delighted this year to receive five entries from our friends over the border - they have supported this event every year.

Congratulations to David Grigor (SWB), and Members Carole Sharpe and Eddy Taylor who were voted 'favourites in show'.



## Brian paints again

Member Brian Ashpool trained with the art and craft department in January, and used to be a professional artist. When Brian lost his sight, he felt he could not paint anymore - it was just too difficult. After an inspiring intro week where he was reintroduced to acrylic paint, the CCTV and magnifier, practicing at home, and two subsequent training weeks, Brian is painting again, has his own website and is part of the OutsideIn online gallery showcasing the work of marginalised artists. You can see his work here:

<https://brian-ashpool.site123.me/>  
<https://www.outsidein.org.uk/Brian-Ashpool>

For many 'Dailies', it is their only regular opportunity to take part in fun activities with others. Many tell us that coming to the centre and being part of the workshop is the highlight of their week. All Members are given a warm welcome by the art and craft team, and once a Member has attended the workshop a few times, they become part of the 'family'.

The art and craft department also



**Caption: The workshop at Brighton**

offers a training scheme to Members. Those who have enjoyed a craft or art activity before sight loss and would like to learn how to adapt their style and methods to accommodate this, and those who have never done a craft or art subject before, and would like to learn something new are equally welcome to request a training week. Having a craft or art hobby is possible for even those with total vision impairment, and offers the chance to find something enjoyable to do to fill your time at home. Once involved in an art or craft hobby, opportunities to combat isolation arise for those able and willing - making connections with others with a similar interest.

■ **To find out more about opportunities in art and craft please contact your Community Support Officer, or speak to one of our team if you are at a centre.**

# Scam calls

Scam computer-related telephone calls have risen in the last few years, with many households now getting at least one a week. **Craig Vaughton** explains how you can avoid getting caught out



CREATIVE SOUL / ADOBE STOCK

**“Hello, this is an engineer from Microsoft, we’ve been monitoring your computer, and believe you have a problem that’s slowing your PC down”**

It’s an earnest, very sincere and probably foreign sounding voice on your telephone. It’s also a pack of lies! The voice could claim to be from any number of companies, including Microsoft, BT, or any one of the anti-virus software firms, but none of them are.

Why? Because none of these companies has the facility, time,

let alone the inclination to monitor anyone’s PC, at least not unless you’ve rung them to raise a fault call in the first place.

As of July 2018, more than 90 per cent of the UK population has accessed the internet in the last 12 months, and there are over 700 million Windows 10 users alone worldwide.

So, what do you do if you receive one of these call? Simply hang up no matter how convincing they sound. If they call back, hang up again, they’ll soon take the hint.

Whatever you do, don’t try to be clever and see what happens, don’t visit any webpages they tell you to go to, or provide any other details like an email address. Most important of all though, never give them any banking details.

Remember, nobody can gain access to your computer over the internet without your help. Hang up, and stay safe online.



# Family News

## Birthdays

**Peter Vincent James Lowen** who celebrated his 101st birthday on 15th January.

**Pauline Antoinette Stiles** who celebrated her 101st birthday on 18th January.

**Jean Lacock** who celebrated her 100th birthday on 19th January.

**George William Kimber** who celebrated his 100th birthday on 22nd January.

**James Leslie Cavender** who celebrated his 100th birthday on 26th January.

**Stephen Tapster** who celebrates his 100th birthday on 2nd February.

**Florence Joyce Morgan** who celebrates her 102nd birthday on 8th February.

**Dervish Niazi** who celebrates his 100th birthday on 12th February.

**Eric Corner** who celebrates his 103rd birthday on 15th February.

**John Humphrey Creaton** who celebrates his 101st birthday on 23rd February.

**Lily Jepson** who celebrates her 102nd birthday on 23rd February.

**Frederick George Richardson** who celebrates his 100th birthday on the 28th February.

## 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.

**Doreen Phillips** who died on 19th October 2018. She was the widow of the late Leslie Christopher Phillips.

**Denise Esme Lewis** who died on 13th November 2018. She was the widow of the late David Henry Lewis.

**Emily Louisa Dunn** who died on 20th November 2018. She was the widow of the late Leonard James Dunn.

## Obituary, George Frederick Wilson

**A moving tribute to George who passed away in December, written by his daughter Christine**

George was born in Scarborough on 12 December, 1920. He joined the local T.A. 5th Battalion, Green Howards, in May 1939 and, with his unit, embarked for France on 19th January 1940.

Aged just 19, in May and June 1940, he was part of the epic chapter of Dunkirk forming part of the cordon to help an orderly evacuation.

George's next posting was to the Middle East, Cyprus, Palestine and the Western Desert. He was captured in the Western Desert at the Battle of Gazala in June 1942, where the 5th Battalion was overrun. What followed were three years as a prisoner of war.

In 2013, Scarborough made him its honoured veteran on Armed Forces Day.

In his later years as his sight began to fail, he was grateful for the invaluable help he received from Blind Veterans UK. This included

the supply of equipment, regular bulletins on USB stick to keep him abreast of the latest news, and the audio books which gave him many happy hours of listening. All these helped him maintain as independent a life as possible. He also thoroughly enjoyed his regular visits from Blind Veterans' representative Ray East and they built up a good rapport.

His last act of courage happened on Remembrance Sunday. Despite his great age and frailty, he found, from somewhere, the strength and determination to go to St Peter's, his local church in Scarborough, to lay his wreath at the war memorial. He did it, we all know, because an old soldier never forgets his fallen comrades, and he never lets them down.

He passed away on 2 December, 2018 and at his funeral he was given full military honours with the Last Post being played and 12 standard bearers attending.

**12 December 1920 -  
2 December 2018**





# 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

**Royston Robert Henry Bird** of Ipswich, died on 21st October 2018 aged 88. He served from 1948 to 1952 in the Royal Air Force as an A.C. 2.

**Eric Billington** of Walsall, died on 1st November 2018 aged 90. He served from 1946 to 1948 in the Royal Navy as a Wireman.

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

**Charles Botwright** of Littlehampton, died on 23rd October 2018 aged 96. He served in the Army as a Private.

**Florence Joan Bowles** of Cheltenham died on 1st November 2018 aged 99. She served from 1944 to 1946 in the Royal Navy as a Nursing Sister.

**Donald Bradbury** of Cockermouth, Cumbria died on 4th September 2018 aged 87. He served in the Army as a Lance Corporal.

**Alister Brown** of Ipswich, died on 1st November 2018 aged 68. He served from 1968 to 1969 in the Army as a Private.

**Fernley Henry Collier** of Plymouth, died on 28th October 2018 aged 92. He served from 1944 to 1948 in the Army as a Sapper.

**Alfred Cooke** of Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire died on 4th November 2018 aged 95. He served from 1941 to 1946 in the Royal Air Force as a L.A.C..

**Irene Catherine Maud Cray** of Worcester, died on 31st October 2018 aged 92. She served from 1944 to 1946 in the Army as a Private.

**Thomas William Crea** of Rochdale, Lancashire died on 26th October 2018 aged 91. He served from 1945 to 1945 in the Army as a Private.

**Kenneth Crump** of Dunstable, Bedfordshire died on 3rd November 2018 aged 95. He served from 1942 to 1947 in the Army as a Bombardier.

**Alan James Davies** of Lymington, Hampshire died on 31st October 2018 aged 97. He served from 1940 to 1945 in the Royal Navy as a Telegraphist.

**Douglas Duckitt** of Caernarfon, Gwynedd died on 1st November 2018 aged 102. He served from 1940 to 1946 in the Royal Air Force as a L.A.C..

**Richard Francois Eastley** of Paignton, Devon died on 3rd November 2018 aged 73. He served from 1964 to 1973 in the Army as a Corporal.

**Frank Ellison** of Preston, died on 20th October 2018 aged 95. He served from 1942 to 1947 in the Army as a Lance Corporal.

**David Henry Evans** of Port Talbot, West Glamorgan died on 18th October 2018 aged 84. He served from 1952 to 1957 in the Army as a Private.

**Nicholas Fagan** of Bolton, died on 1st November 2018 aged 97. He served from 1941 to 1946 in the Royal Air Force as a L.A.C..

**Rosemary Elizabeth Fleet** of Newport, Gwent died on 22nd October 2018 aged 93. She served from 1948 to 1951 in the Army as a Corporal.

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

**Frederick Albert French** of Kenley, Surrey died on 22nd October 2018 aged 98. He served from 1940 to 1946 in the Royal Air Force as a L.A.C..

**Donald Gill** of Middlesbrough, Cleveland died on 1st November 2018 aged 83. He served from 1953 to 1959 in the Army as a Driver.

**Eric John Gilmore** of Doncaster, South Yorkshire died on 18th October 2018 aged 73. He served from 1961 to 1985 in the Royal Air Force as a Chief Technician.





**Kathleen Peggy Gomme** of Lancing, West Sussex died on 31st October 2018 aged 94. She served from 1941 to 1945 in the Royal Air Force as a L.A.C.W..

**Anthony Griffiths** of Bristol, died on 1st November 2018 aged 62. He served from 1975 to 1979 in the Army as a Private.

**John Hewson Hemy Hodgson** of London, died on 30th October 2018 aged 85. He served from 1954 to 1959 in the Army as a Lieutenant.

**John Isaacs** of Worthing, West Sussex died on 24th October 2018 aged 91. He served from 1947 to 1949 in the Army as a Sergeant.

**David Henry James** of Ammanford, Dyfed died on 25th October 2018 aged 90. He served from 1946 to 1949 in the Royal Air Force as an A.C. 1.

**Kenneth Lawrence** of Bradford, West Yorkshire died on 26th October 2018 aged 95. He served from 1942 to 1946 in the Army as a Gunner.

**Douglas James Lindley** of Rotherham, South Yorkshire died on 3rd November 2018 aged 94. He served from 1946 to 1956 in the Royal Air Force as a Senior Aircraftsman.

**Marjorie Lockley** of Derby, Derbyshire died on 30th October 2018 aged 95. She served from 1942 to 1946 in the Royal Air Force as an Acting Corporal.

**Betty Dorothy Lunniss** of Cambridge, died on 5th November 2018 aged 98. She served from 1942 to 1946 in the Royal Navy as a Leading Wren.

**John Mcclean** of Belfast, County Antrim died on 1st November 2018 aged 80. He served from 1955 to 1972 in the Army as a Sergeant.

**Francis Joseph Mcgreal** of Wirral, Merseyside died on 16th October 2018 aged 91. He served from 1946 to 1948 in the Army as a Bombardier.

**Derek Graham Micklewright** of Crawley, West Sussex died on 6th November 2018 aged 81. He served from 1956 to 1958 in the Royal Navy as an Able Seaman.

**James Sidney Miles** of Worthing, West Sussex died on 28th October 2018 aged 88. He served from 1948 to 1950 in the Army as a Private.

**Godfrey Millward** of Derby, died on 8th November 2018 aged 83. He served from 1953 to 1956 in the Army as a Corporal.

**John James Neill** of Littlehampton, West Sussex died on 25th October 2018 aged 91. He served from 1946 to 1948 in the Army.

**Frederick George Page** of Hailsham, East Sussex died on 22nd October 2018 aged 95. He served from 1941 to 1968 in the Royal Air Force as a Corporal.

**Bernard Samuel Parker** of Plymouth, Devon died on 28th September 2018 aged 98. He served from 1940 to 1946 in the Royal Navy as a Painter 3rd Class.

**Kelvin Platt** of Doncaster, South Yorkshire died on 16th October 2018 aged 55. He served from 1982 to 1995 in the Army as a Sergeant.

**Robert Earnest Pollington** of Thetford, Norfolk died on 5th October 2018 aged 91. He served from 1946 to 1948 in the Royal Air Force as an A.C. 1.

**Harold Pomerance** of St. Albans, Hertfordshire died on 28th October 2018 aged 88. He served from 1948 to 1950 in the Army as a Corporal.

**Iris Nancy Redgate** of Birmingham, West Midlands died on 20th October 2018 aged 96. She served from 1942 to 1946 in the Army as a Lance Corporal.

**Jean Mary Rees** of Poole, Dorset died on 1st September 2018 aged 92. She served from 1944 to 1947 in the Royal Air Force as an ACW1.

**Kenneth Thomas Ripp** of Henfield, West Sussex died on 31st October 2018 aged 84. He served from 1953 to 1955 in the Royal Air Force as a Corporal.

**Andrew Robertson** of Dereham, Norfolk died on 3rd November 2018 aged 85. He served from 1954 to 1959 in the Army.

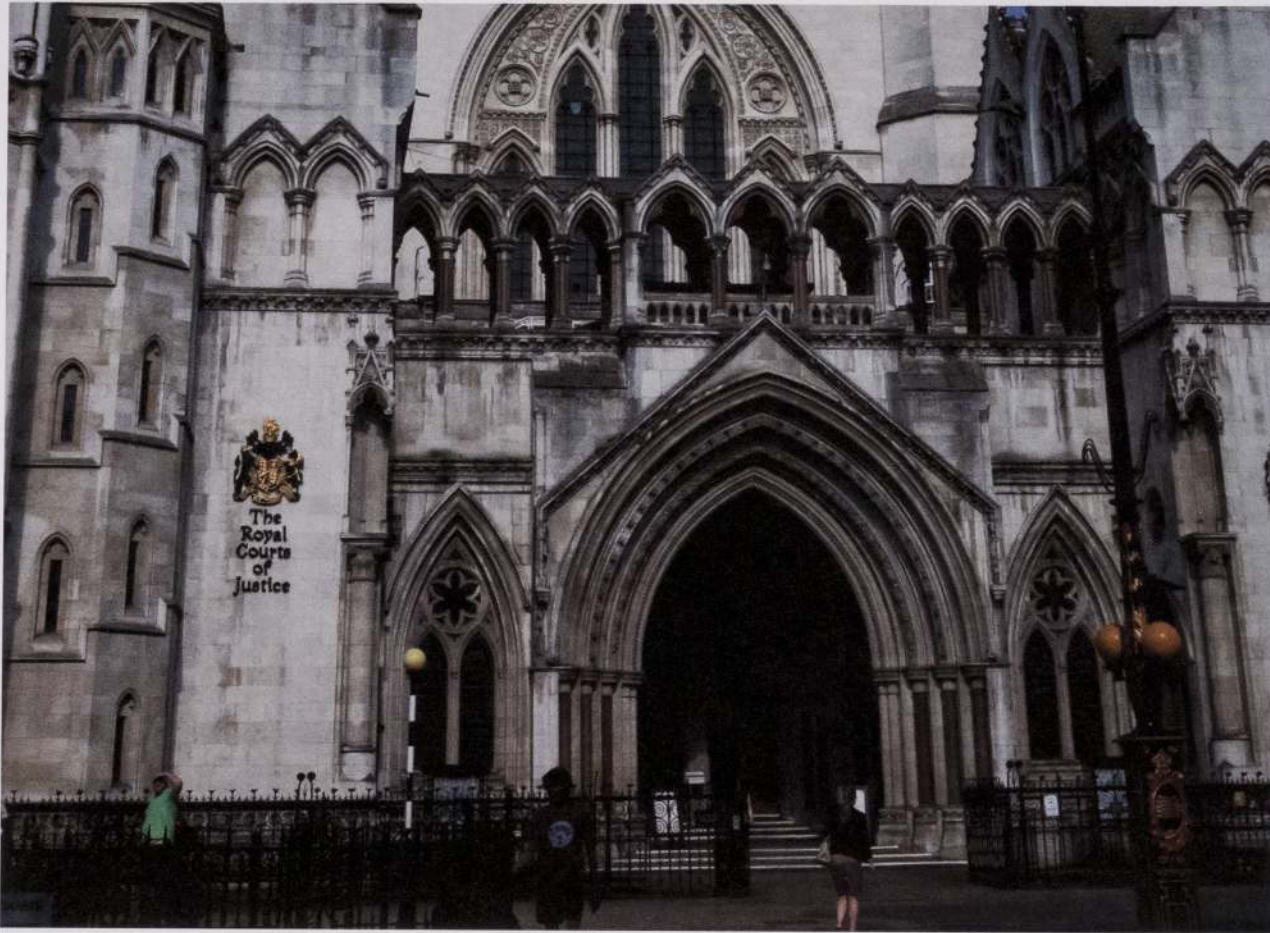
**Joan Diana Savage** of Basingstoke, Hampshire died on 1st November 2018 aged 97. She served from 1942 to 1945 in the Royal Air Force as a L.A.C.W..

**Robert Simpson** of Norwich, died on 29th October 2018 aged 95. He served from 1941 to 1944 in the Army as a Private.

**Thomas Smith** of Bury, Lancashire died on 1st November 2018 aged 88. He served from 1948 to 1960 in the Army as a Substantive Corporal.

**William Smith** of Bexhill on Sea, East Sussex died on 30th October 2018 aged 98. He served from 1942 to 1947 in the Army as a Private.





THOMAS LAUNOIS / ADOBE STOCK

# Joining the bar

It's been a difficult journey for Blind Veterans UK Trustee Kerry Levins to become a barrister. Here, he talks to **Chris Gilson** about just what the process entails

"When I left school, I had two objectives in life," muses trainee barrister and Blind Veterans UK Trustee Kerry Levins, "one was to be an officer in the army, and the other was to be a barrister."

Now, after several setbacks and a considerable amount of hard graft that's not been helped by the sheer amount of paperwork involved, Kerry is finally nearing the end of what has been a very long process. We're sat together

on a cold winter afternoon in a pub near Gray's Inn, London's historic legal centre, and Kerry's explaining how it all started.

"I thought to myself, if I'm ever going to do it – now at 45 is the time. I did some research and found out that to become a barrister you either need to have a law degree or a qualifying degree, plus a law conversion course. Then you have to do the bar professional training course, and finally you're into pupillage."

This was Kerry's first obstacle, as he'd joined the army and gone to Sandhurst straight from school, meaning he hadn't got a degree of any kind.

"I had to overcome that," he nods, "and that meant applying to the Bar Standards Board for a Certificate of Academic Standing, which takes into account your time in the army and [my] time in industry afterwards.

"I received a certificate equivalent to a 2:1 degree, which meant that I could register for the Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL) course. A GDL is essentially the contents of a law degree squeezed into one year."

## Setbacks

They say that things happen in threes, and Kerry's first two 'things' were about to happen in quick succession. A

"Two weeks later, he had a stroke but despite the severity of his condition, carried on with his studies from his wheelchair"

month into his GDL course, he missed a step at Paddington station, fell down some stairs and broke his left knee.

"My old guide dog has a lot to answer for" he says with a wry smile.

Two weeks later, he had a stroke but despite the severity of his condition carried on with his studies from his wheelchair, and successfully achieved a pass. The effort adversely affected his health however, and he had to take the next year off to recover.

"I spent two weeks living in the Brighton Centre," he remembers, "which was literally a life saver. I then made the choice to focus on my studies, so my recovery took a bit of a back seat."

At this point, the third thing happened, when his left leg suddenly stopped working in May last year. After being admitted to hospital, he was told he had lesions on his spine.





Once again he made the decision to keep going, and in September 2018, started on the Bar Professional Training course, which – once finished – means he has completed all the training stages in becoming a barrister. The next stage after that will see him spend six months as an observing student, and six months in practice. You won't be meeting him at the Old Bailey yet, though.

"I'll be a very, very junior barrister," he laughs, "which means I'll get all the low-end jobs such as applications for bail. After that, I'll reach what's called tenancy where you find yourself a chambers and become a practicing barrister. That will be two years from now."

### Drowning in paperwork

What has been Kerry's biggest challenge in the process, I ask, notwithstanding his health problems.

"It's been accessing material," he says, "I have to be able to read the statutes (Acts of Parliament), which are not written in a very user-friendly manner. It doesn't relate well to being read out, and sounds very stilted. Then there's the Civil Procedure Rules, which are in two volumes, and each is just over 3,000 pages.

"However, I can get through this material quicker than most because of



**Caption: Kerry Levins**

the speed I have my reader set to. The only difficulty is staying awake because of the droning voice of the narrator."

What would Kerry's advice be to anyone wanting to follow the same path?

"Don't underestimate what's involved – it's a lot of commitment, and it will require the people in your life to be supportive."

With that, he smiles,

"I'm a member of Gray's Inn now, which is such an achievement for me. I've come a long way, and I do realise I've accomplished a lot, but there's still a long way to go."

## Contact telephone numbers

**Harcourt Street 020 7723 5021.**

**The Brighton centre 01273 307 811.**

**The Llandudno centre  
01492 868 700.**

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

**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: 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 Chris Gilson, on **020 7616 8367**, at [revieweditor@blindveterans.org.uk](mailto:revieweditor@blindveterans.org.uk) or write to him at **Review Editor, Blind Veterans UK, 12 - 14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD**.

AGENTURFOTOGRAFIN / ADOBE STOCK



### A different format?

If you would like your copy of Review in a different format, then please contact your Community Support Worker, or ROVI for more information.





# March for Veterans

Step out in the month of March to help end isolation for blind veterans.

Whether you choose to count your own steps or join one of our organised walks you can help us raise funds to support ex-Servicemen and women who have lost their sight.



Rebuilding  
lives after  
sight loss

For more information and to register, visit our website at [walk.blindveterans.org.uk](http://walk.blindveterans.org.uk)