

Review

The journal of
Blind Veterans UK
April 2019



Fully automatic

Our new driverless cars

Inside:

News from your community
An interview with TV's Johnny Ball
Baking blind - Penny's story



Rebuilding
lives after
sight loss

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On the cover

The new driverless pods have arrived at our Brighton Centre. Read more about how they're being trialled in our special feature on page 16.



Editorial welcome

Hello, and a warm welcome to your April edition of **Review** magazine. As I write this, I can finally say that it feels like spring is on its way. This morning seemed to be a world of blossom bursting out – although the gardeners among you would say prematurely – and the sun was shining, with not a cloud in the sky. In London, that's nothing short of a miracle, and it certainly put a bounce in my step as I walked to work from the sardine can that is the Tube.

It also made me think of our new driverless pods at the Brighton centre. One of the great things about the location of the site is the freshness of the sea air as it comes rolling in and, on a morning such as today, the residents there could experience many of those Spring sensations while being driven round in perfect safety. I hope the pods are merely the start of a whole host of technological innovation that we can use and adopt for our common good. You can read more about them later in the magazine in a special feature.

One of the other features in this month's issue is somewhat more sobering as Member Ken Newbery, who took part in our film about isolation, talks about how it made

him feel. We've also got an interview with former RAF radar operator and television personality Johnny Ball. Many of you, like me, will remember Johnny from his sterling television work over the last five decades, and his story really is an interesting one to tell.

On a different tack, some of you have asked about the brevity of the In Memory dedications at the end of the magazine, and why a full service history can't be given. Sadly, due to the increase in membership numbers, the number of names per month means that there simply isn't the space in the magazine to accommodate all of that. It's not an easy decision to make, and we do try and include as much as possible. If you do have any specific queries, then my contact details are at the end of the magazine if you want to get in touch.

Until next month, best wishes to you all.

Chris Gilson
Editor



Meeting the Arthurs

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

It's been a funny sort of month. On the one hand I am trying to conclude all sorts of Blind Veterans UK business, so I can get away on holiday with a clear conscience. On the other, I seem to have committed to far too many social events – mainly black-tie

dinners. Pleasant as these dinners can be, the worst of it is I also agreed to speak at too many of them, increasing my workload and the misery of other attendees. My record has been four events in one week, all of them unconnected.

The first that week was loosely connected to the charity. Organised by the grandson of one of our trustees, a very impressive young REME officer, it was a formal dinner night for young men and women joining the Armed Forces through the Defence Technical Undergraduate Scheme. They had selected us as their cause for a fund-raising element after the meal. As the evening wore on the youngsters' natural exuberance came to the fore, such that the auction and raffle seemed well set for a good result. And so it was: they raised over £1,500 and appear to have really taken us to



Caption: Paul Luker

their hearts. If this is a sign that we are getting better recognition with younger generations then it will be welcome news to our Engagement team.

The last dinner was an altogether different affair. Before I retired from the RAF, I helped set up a dinner club for the Support Helicopter Force. The big idea is that the dinner acts as a bridge between the serving and retired communities. In recognition of my status as an old fogey, I was asked to talk about a significant period in my early service. This is tricky territory. I spent most of my youth in one sort of trouble or another and a good chunk of the audience had either been my unwitting victims or my unimpressed bosses. I settled on the early 1980s, a period when I had more ammunition on them, than they had on me.

I picked this period because at the time I had been given a last-minute change of posting (I think the Navy call it a pier-head jump), to form and then command a small independent tactics and trials unit for the Force. In the immediate aftermath of the Falklands War, the on-going terrorist threat and mounting trouble in the Middle East, the RAF had decided that we needed to be better prepared and better equipped to meet new challenges, hence my new unit. I was pretty sure that the tour would throw up sufficient

material to keep them entertained so I started thumbing back through my log-book to jog my memory.

Far less critical

As is the way of these things as I mused on the technology my mind strayed to how much more technological developments affect our lives today. It is occasionally fashionable to bemoan all this, for example by decrying how fixated we all are on our smart phones or whatever. Since joining Blind Veterans UK I have been far less critical. Every visit I make to one of the centres reminds me not just how reliant we are on technology in the visual impairment business, but how adaptable we have been at innovation. On my early visits it was the simplicity of many of the ideas that struck me. You will all know this, but I spend hours boring friends about how members tell the time; make and read labels for clothes or food; use kitchen utensils; use computers; read documents; and a raft of other things. Much of this innovation has come from members and rehabilitation teams working together to take a couple of apparently unrelated developments, and then combining them to be adaptive to our needs.

More recently the trustees have agreed that we need to reinvigorate our efforts on research and



innovation. I will leave it to the more knowledgeable to talk about some of the medically related research that we have underway. I don't pretend to understand the science but I absolutely get the potential benefits. I also absolutely get the idea that we engage in some of this work with an eye to generating much-needed money for the charity, for example by sharing intellectual property rights. However, at heart I am a big kid and I can't resist more interest in the Arthurs. The Arthurs? From the beginning of March, in collaboration with a commercial company, we have introduced a number of driverless 'pods' at Ovingdean to initiate a major data collection exercise. They are all called Arthur, after our founder.

Converging course

You can see why I get distracted. Back to the dinner. I would tell them about the time I had to flight trial a Wessex helicopter in which the cockpit instruments had been replaced with

“As is the way of these things as I mused on the technology, my mind strayed to how much more technological developments affect our lives today”

TV screens and the pilot's traditional controls replaced with a voice activated computer. To be fair there was a safety pilot (Dave) in the other seat and he had all the normal stuff available if things went wrong. In 1984 computers had slow processors and small memories. I had spent a whole day reciting into a recorder the 256 words available which the computer would be programmed to recognise. Dave lifted the aircraft into a hover, then handed control to me. At first it all worked as advertised. Soon we were zooming over the Hampshire countryside. Perhaps we both became a little too absorbed in the glass cockpit. I noticed quite late that we were on a converging course with another aircraft. “Turn right onto three two oh degrees”. Nothing. Dave reminded me I should have said zero. “Turn right onto three two zero degrees”. Probably because my voice was now an octave higher the computer decided to ignore me. A converging course suddenly looked a lot more like a collision course. “Hard turn right, now!” Nothing. “You Dave, you pillock. You turn right. Emergency break right”. It probably wasn't that close but I can remember the startled expression on the other pilot's face.

If you see Arthur at Brighton, don't worry. I have had absolutely no input into its development. Neither has Dave.

Pushing back boundaries

Your message from your Chief Executive,
Major General (rtd) Nick Caplin CB

Isolation is something that affects too many people in our country today. It can stem from many causes: for example from the loss of a life-long

partner, a companion or a best friend; from a loss of mobility which can impose serious restrictions on the ability to get out and about and →



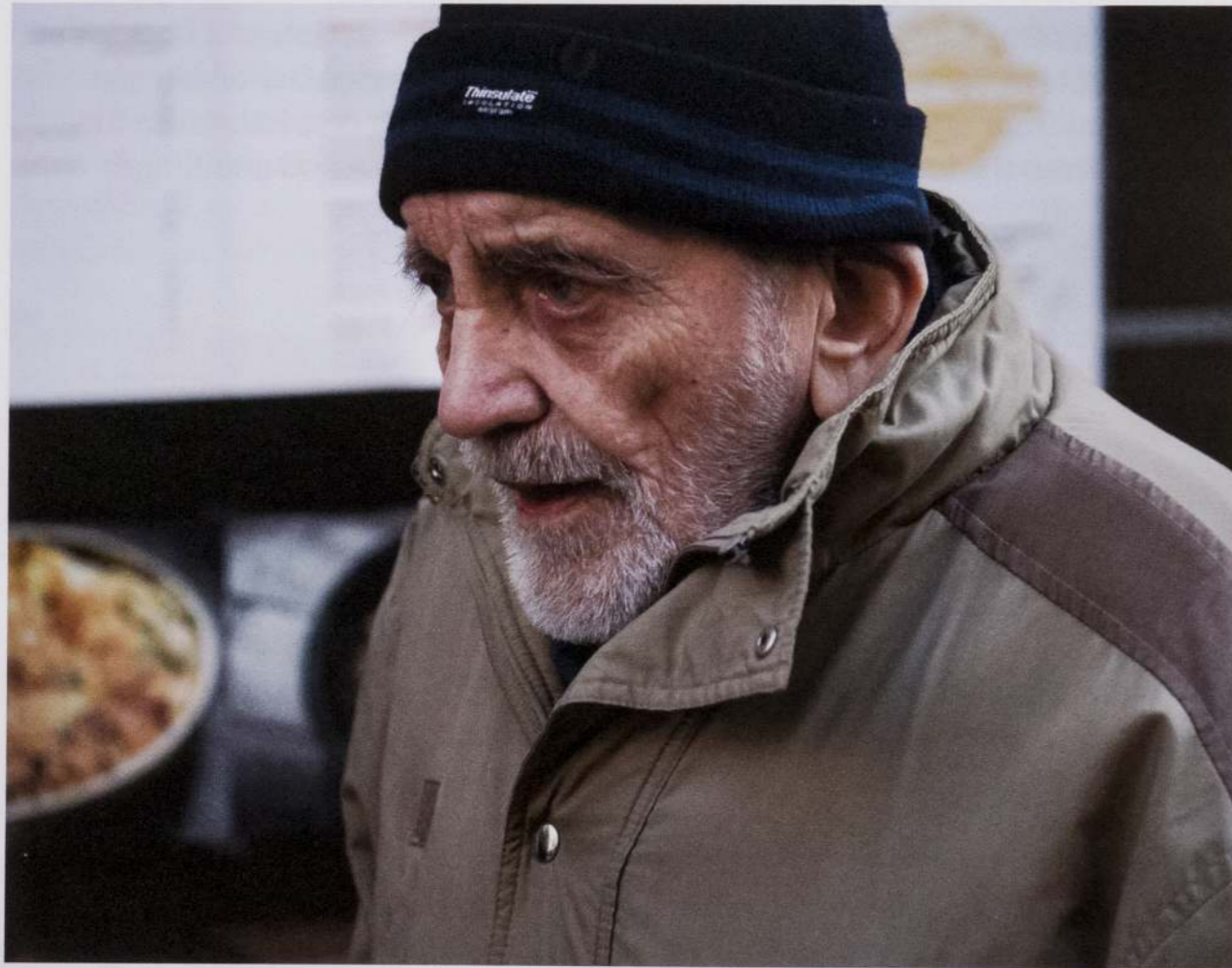
Caption: Nick Caplin

to meet people; from a feeling that life is racing away and increasingly difficult to understand. Add visual impairment to the mix and it is easy to see many of our Members talk about struggling with isolation in their daily lives.

Sight connects us with people and our surroundings. Where that sight is impaired or lost, so this critical connection is threatened. Losing sight has a profound effect. Daily activities become increasingly challenging if not

impossible, a trip out can appear to be a daunting prospect and the world will begin to shrink and close in to the most immediate.

Mindful of this, we have made 'isolation' the theme of our national awareness campaign this year. We have been blessed to have the services of blind veteran Ken Newbery, who has helped us to understand some of the challenges of isolation and to bring this to life.



Caption: Ken Newbery - the member who has appeared in our Isolation film

“Although this campaign is barely out of the starting blocks, already we have been inundated with messages of support from around the country”

You can read about Ken’s story on page 34. Although this campaign is barely out of the starting blocks, already we have been inundated with messages of support from around the country, ranging from public bodies to organisations in the vision and care sectors to individuals who have personal experience. This theme resonates strongly.

Joy and zest

The message of our isolation campaign is that, with the help of others, it is possible to push back those boundaries, to bring order and shape back to daily lives and to rediscover the joy and zest for life that had been so sadly missing. In Ken’s case, the key was linking him with Liam, a volunteer who was keen to give his time to help and who shared Ken’s passion for cricket. With this common interest, so their relationship has developed and they have spent numerous hours

discussing the finer points of ‘leather on willow’ whilst re-establishing a daily pattern of life, including trips out and getting to grips with technology to help overcome visual impairment. It is a powerful story, a story of promise and it captures the challenge and reward of much of our regular work across the charity.

We are fortunate to enjoy the support of Liam and others like him in the charity today, people who give us the gift of their time to help blind veterans rebuild their lives. Volunteering is a key strand in our community support strategy and since the appointment of our volunteer coordinators in October, we are now beginning to see an increasing number of volunteers working with our staff to make a difference for the members and their families. Today, we have over 900 volunteers in the charity and this number is growing every month.

Our community staff are working hard to identify potential volunteer needs with our members, and then to match that need with a suitable volunteer who will help to bring some sunlight back into life, just as Liam has for Ken. If you think that a volunteer might be able to help, please speak to your community support staff and let’s see what can be done.

News



Blind veterans UK member Bill awarded the Légion d'Honneur

It was a special day for Member and D-Day veteran Bill Ridgewell when he was awarded the Légion d'Honneur, at the age of 94. This is France's highest order of military merit, and was arranged by the North Dorset branch of Armed Forces charity, SSAFA.

Bill, along with fellow veteran Peter Gardner, was awarded his medal at Blandford Army Camp in Dorset on 17 January. The ceremony was attended by both British and French military personnel, as well as friends and family and Community Support Worker, Sarah Macdonald.

Bill enlisted into the Royal Electrical Mechanical Engineers (REME) and took part in D-Day in 1944. He was awarded the Légion d'Honneur by Colonel Cedric Franco and Lieutenant Colonel Gregory Fierling. Lord Lieutenant for Dorset, Mr Angus Campbell also assisted in the presentation.

In April 1943, Bill enlisted at Cambridge and worked along the coast through

Belgium, Holland and into Germany during the Liberation. Bill landed at Sword Beach in Normandy on 11 June 1944 and engaged in mine disposal duties on the beach. He was discharged in October 1946, and has been awarded the 1939-1945 Star, France-Germany Star and the 1939-1945 War Medal. Following his discharge, Bill returned to farming in his beloved North Dorset.

In addition, the award ceremony was attended by a small group of French school pupils from Caen in Northern France.

The group was invited to attend the presentation after it wrote a letter to Peter while studying the Liberation of France for a school project. Both Bill and Peter enjoyed meeting and having their photos taken with them.

Artificial vision device helps Suffolk blind veteran read again

An assistive technology device which uses artificial intelligence to read printed and digital text in real time allowed Ipswich-based Member Cyril Saunders to rediscover his love for reading in time for World Book Day.

Cyril, 87 years old, first lost his sight through a torn retina in 1998, and then had further sight deterioration due to macular degeneration starting in 2008.

As a result, he wasn't able to read a book for 20 years. However, last year, Cyril visited our centre in Brighton, and had the opportunity to try the OrCam MyReader, a wireless device which allows him to read printed and digital text from any surface.

Cyril has now received an OrCam MyReader of his own through Blind Veterans UK and says, "After 20 years this little camera has given me the chance to settle down with a cup of tea and a book on a rainy afternoon and for that I will be eternally grateful. I'm excited to start getting into the adventures of Jack Reacher in the books by Lee Child."



Caption, top: Bill Ridgewell, proudly wearing his campaign medals bottom: Bill, on left, with fellow veteran Peter and some of the French school children who attended the presentation

In Your Community

ROVI /IT helpline changes its name

It's all change in Sheffield, as our ROVI/IT helpline will be changing its name.

From 1 April, it will be known as the Member Support Hub, although the telephone number will remain the same.

There is also a new e-mail address, and mesh@blindveterans.org.uk replaces rovi-it@blindveterans.org.uk.

■ **If you need to get in touch with the Member Support Hub, then the telephone number is 01273 391 447.**

Brian's "52 weeks" photography exhibition

West Yorkshire-based Member Brian Goodall, has just launched a photography exhibition called 52 weeks, which features 52 images he has taken across the UK over the course of the year.

Brian was a photographer by profession and, when he became a member in 2016, he was determined to continue his passion for the arts, taking part in a photography course at our training and rehabilitation centre in Llandudno.

He is also a member of the Royal Photographic Society, within the Heritage Photography branch and currently travels all across the UK photographing the beautiful cathedrals and abbeys.

Brian showcased his exhibition at the Dewsbury Minster in Kirklees, with each of the 52 photos on display telling a different story.



Caption: Brian Goodall



Caption: Naz Niner

Brighton Marathon runner

On an unusually hot 24 February, Naz Niner, one of our Members from Oxfordshire, completed the Brighton Half Marathon in an impressive two hours, 39 minutes.

Naz was accompanied during the run by guide Stacey, and says that he couldn't have done it without her: "Apart from the physical guiding and letting me know of upcoming obstacles,

Stacey got me through the course psychologically as well". Well done to both of you!

Elvet Davies' 102nd Birthday

Elvet Davies celebrated his 102nd birthday on 6 March at the Llandudno Centre.

As a special surprise, Elvet's family organised for the Maelgwyn Male Voice Choir to perform for him at the centre to celebrate the event. They sang "Penblwydd Hapus" to Elvet along with his favourite, "Calon Lan". There was also a very special tribute to recognise his time in Normandy when the choir sang "My Little Welsh Home".

Eastbourne roadshow

Friday 8 March saw Members local to Eastbourne being treated to a special 'roadshow' event organised by their community team.

Stalls included informative IT and rehabilitation support desks, the opportunity to find out more about creative pursuits, and a 'Meet Up, Brew Up' biscuit station hosted by the regional fundraisers. →



Caption: Arts and crafts

Painting in London

It was a productive session on 12 March for some of our Members as they took part in an arts and crafts activity session at our London office.

The day consisted of sanding and painting pine jewellery boxes as gifts, with each of the four veterans involved taking one home at the end of the day.

Tea and biscuits were served at the end of the session, and a good chat was had by all.

The Chapel Chronicle - Part one

When I took up the role of Chaplain, I was aware that my priority was to get

to know the Charity and the people. I now feel ready to take on the other task that is St Dunstan's Chapel here at Ovingdean.

I believe that for some years the building, which was erected in 1938 with the main building, has been struggling to feel loved. Some damp was treated but has left its legacy mark on some of the paint work and textiles, and the door remained locked. "It's only used for funerals now," one person gloomily informed me.

It is my aim to re-discover this historic Chapel and help it feel loved, needed and of purpose. To that end I spent two days in January getting dusty and dirty by unearthing every nook and cranny and sorting things out. Rubbish has gone in the skip, textiles have been hung and stored appropriately, brass (some of it!) has been polished, and wooden candlesticks restored in the Art and Craft department.

The piano is being tuned next week, and two local organ tuners and restorers became very excited yesterday at the prospect of retuning and working on the valuable W. Compton organ.

In the meantime if you are visiting please contact me and I will happily take you down to see for yourself.

Let your creativity shine at Christmas



photograph, painting, collage, or anything else that you have created and are proud of to us for consideration. It needs to be high-resolution to print, but if you send us a picture of a piece of art taken with a phone we can arrange to have a better version taken later. If you're not sure about high-resolution images then have a word with your Case Support Worker, and they'll be glad to help.

While we are open to any images, we are particularly interested in any that are particularly Christmassy or that show the work of Blind Veterans UK and the lives of our Members.

It may only be Spring, but we are already looking for an image for this year's Blind Veterans UK Christmas card. We want to highlight the creativity shown by our Members, and we know there's lots out there.

We'd like you to submit a

■ Please email your images to revieweditor@blindveterans.org.uk by 31 May to have your picture considered.



Caption: Mark Threadgold (left) and Tony Harbour at the pod launch

Fully automatic

On Wednesday 6 March, we launched a 'driverless' pod trial at our Brighton Centre. **Laura Weir** writes about the day and what this could mean for the future of mobility

For the next six months, Blind Veterans UK is collaborating with the autonomous vehicle company, Aurrigo, to trial a 'driverless' pod at our Brighton centre. The pod, named

'Arthur' after Blind Veterans UK founder Sir Arthur Pearson, is a world first and will give veterans a taste of what it would be like to regain the independence of driving. Members of

“Though they’re compact, the pods can carry up to four people at a time and travel at a maximum speed of 15mph”

the Blind Veterans UK transport team have been trained to assist veterans using the pods.

Mark Threadgold was the first of our Members to trial the pod and therefore the first blind veteran to ever travel in a driverless vehicle. Mark was a keen motorcyclist before his sight loss, so losing his licence was a massive loss, not only because of his love of driving but because of the freedom driving brings.

“When you lose your sight, your independence is something which is taken straight away,” said Mark. “These pods could give that back and that would be absolutely fantastic.”

Though they’re compact, the pods can carry up to four people at a time and travel at a maximum speed of 15mph. This may not seem like much, but will ensure a smoother ride for the passengers. During the six-month trial, the pods will travel between the most popular parts of our training and rehabilitation centre in Brighton.

Member Alan Walker was a professional driver and chauffeur before his sight loss and the opportunity to test drive the pods on the launch day meant a lot to him.

“The pods would give us freedom again, which would be a great bonus” said Alan after his trial.

Tony Harbour, who also trialled the pods, explains that the pod launch is particularly exciting for him as it coincides with a special year ahead.

“Next year on 11 June it will be my 85th Birthday, on the same day as my 15th wedding anniversary. →



Caption: The pod is named Arthur after our Founder, Sir Arthur Pearson

It would be wonderful to say to my wife on the day that I could take her for a drive down to Brighton Pier”.

David Wollett, another lucky veteran who got to trial the pod on the launch day, thought the pod would be a practical way to avoid Britain’s temperamental weather.

“For me, the pod would be a great way to get to and from work – especially if it’s raining!”

“They (the pods) were designed to best suit the needs of people who are blind or vision impaired”

The trial is exploring the importance of voice activated controls. Originally designed in consultation with fellow sight loss charity, Guide Dogs, they were designed to best suit the needs



Caption: Mark and Tony inside the pod

of people who are blind or vision impaired.

Miles Garner from Aurrigo, who created the Arthurs is positive the trial will be a success. “The feedback from the blind veterans who take part will be a massive help to us in improving our pods and making them more user-friendly for the disabled community.”

Nick Caplin, our Chief Executive was on hand to see the first trials, and

was also suitably impressed.

“So many of the blind veterans we support say that not being able to drive is one of the most significant things that hits you when you lose your sight. It’s another way of losing independence and can make people more isolated.”

If you’re in the Brighton centre between April and the end of September, come and test them out for yourself!



Caption: Our Brighton centre and Arthur



Caption: Arthur on his travels

Baking blind

Our recipe columnist **Penny Melville-Brown** tells the story of how she overcame her blindness to become a successful chef



Caption: Penny and friends in Chongqing China

Blindness hasn't stopped former naval Commander Penny Melville-Brown - she was still in uniform using her white cane; started managing a government project just days after becoming a war pensioner in 1999; and established her company

Disability Dynamics. She served in Naples, Portsmouth, Plymouth and the Ministry of Defence, and was the first woman barrister in the Royal Navy.

"I'd had problems getting help to work

when I was leaving the Navy," says Penny. "There didn't seem to be any real practical support anywhere, and I thought I'd be without income, unable to pay my mortgage and risk losing my home. And I could see that there were other people out there in similar situations because gaining a disability can be so life changing."

This inspired her to create Disability Dynamics and begin working with both Government departments and the voluntary sector to improve their activities and attitudes towards disability. "Delivering training and consultancy over all these years, I've changed policy and created practical action: helping other disabled people to work, particularly hundreds of entrepreneurs who started their own businesses. During the last 10 years, I spent most time in old mining areas of Derbyshire where there are very high levels of disabled people."

An active life

Penny is active in public life. Locally she chaired various community groups and led a partnership of charities. She was on the boards of both Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs and the Employment Tribunal System, chaired the council responsible for Hampshire and Isle of Wight sixth forms and Further Education colleges, plus the South East war pensions

committee. On the disability front she has worked with a wide variety of Government organisations, while actively contributing to many other bodies.

She recognises that even great support for individuals won't succeed if employers' fears and prejudices limit recruitment of disabled people. Her Baking Blind project aims to change those attitudes, and won the 2017 international Holman competition that attracted 200 other blind entrants from 27 countries. The \$25,000 prize contributed to her travels across six continents, cooking with professional chefs and home-cooks (sighted or not). Her YouTube channel videos record her adventures in America, →



Caption: Probationary Third Officer Melville-Brown WRNS

Costa Rica, Chongqing in China, Australia plus Lilongwe in Malawi. She and her videographer survived a hair-raising cross-country drive in a major tropical storm and he made national Australian news after a dramatic sea rescue.

Accessible recipes

Penny also publishes on Facebook and Twitter, in blogs and there are accessible recipes on the Baking Blind website.

Undaunted by a near-fatal accident in late 2017 and the long journey of recovery, Penny is already working on a book, has started a series of speaking engagements and is planning new ventures to encourage inclusivity by employers. She was awarded an Order of the British

Empire in 2009 and an honorary doctorate last year.

Although she can't paint watercolours or embroider any more, Penny branched out in to building design, working in pewter, flower arranging and other crafts. She is an avid reader of audio books, antique hunter and swimmer.

"I'd have loved to continue my naval career but, in reality, life has been more varied, interesting and exciting since I became blind!"

Throughout her journey of sight loss, Penny has been supported by us, and equipment, training, home adjustments and support have all played their part in keeping her active, enthusiastic and fulfilled.

Oat flapjacks

In her latest recipe for *Review*, Penny shows us how to make that perennial favourite – flapjacks.

I made these simple treats with taxi driver and chef John for our Comic Relief bake sale. He, videographer Toby and I all put on dark glasses as Three Blind Mice as you can see in the video

<https://youtu.be/6SaB88MiUu4>

They are wheat-free with endless combinations of fruit and nuts.



MARCIN JUCHA / ISTOCK.COM

Ingredients

8 ounces (225g)	butter
6 tablespoons	golden syrup
8 ounces (225g)	soft brown sugar
1 lb (450g)	rolled oats
2 teaspoons	baking powder, dissolved in a little milk or water just before adding.
1 lb (450g)	dried fruit and nuts

Method

- Melt the butter with the syrup in a saucepan.
- Add all remaining ingredients plus the dried fruit, nuts and any other flavouring.
- Pour into two square or rectangular

silicon trays (or other baking tray lined with parchment paper) and spread evenly before covering loosely with kitchen foil.

- Cook at gas 3 (325f/170c) for 20-25 minutes - when the outer edge of the flapjacks looks cooked, tear a square or rectangle in the foil so that it still covers those edges but leaves the centre to cook.
- Return to oven for a further five minutes or so - remove from oven when the centre is still soft but is golden brown.
- Allow to cool a little before cutting in to bars and leave to cool fully before removing from tray – if you can manage it.

My tips:

For one half of the mixture, I used six ounces (175g) quartered dried apricots and two ounces (50g) chopped Brazil nuts: for the other half: six ounces (175g) glace cherries and two ounces (50g) of coconut strips. Other flavour combinations could be chocolate and hazelnuts, fig and pistachio nuts, date and walnuts. Nuts could be replaced with pumpkin and sunflower seeds – the variations are endless.

Adding some lemon or orange zest cuts through the richness.

Perfect for a 'Meet Up, Brew up' or any other bake sale!

A father's legacy

Ron Murray's lasting legacy to Blind Veterans UK

Blind Veterans UK Member Ron Murray's son, Jeff, explained to me why his father decided to leave a gift to Blind Veterans UK in his Will.

"In the Second World War Dad was involved in bringing war equipment from America on the Atlantic convoys. In 1941 his ship, the Javanese Prince, was torpedoed off the Butt of Lewis and sank. Later he took part in the D-Day Landings for which he was awarded the Légion D'Honneur.

After the war Dad worked as a railway signalman and kept very active, even after he retired. It was a real blow to him when he started to lose his sight.



That's when Blind Veterans UK came into his and Mam's lives. They gave them so much support including a magnifier which meant Dad could read the paper and keep up with his beloved Newcastle United. They visited the Brighton Centre twice every year and Dad loved catching up with the other veterans.

I'm enormously proud that his legacy to you will see your Members continue to get the care and support they need in the years to come.

Mam and Dad were always hugely grateful for the help given to them by Blind Veterans UK, and I am sure that you will put his gift to good use."

Blind Veterans UK offers a free Will writing service to our Members. On request it can even be arranged for a solicitor to visit you at home.

■ **For more information on the service or leaving a gift in your Will, please contact Sarah Dalling, Senior Legacy Manager, by emailing legacies@blindveterans.org.uk or by calling 020 7616 8365.**



Padre's corner

Blind Veterans UK Chaplain **Clare Callanan** remembers a special day spent behind the lens

"Taking pictures is savouring life intensely, every hundredth of a second." **Marc Riboud, photographer (1923-2016).**

I had my first camera in my late teens, a Praktica, and took many holiday photos and endless landscape shots... none of which I recognised when I discovered faded prints of some of them recently during a house move. They were

consigned to the bin with regrets that I had not dated or annotated them. Lesson to self!

I cannot claim to have the skills and creativity of Marc Riboud, yet I can claim to have experienced something of his quote. I am aware that some perceptions of visually impaired people taking photographs is not always helpful or supportive. My experience showed that the concentration, creativity, fun and wide experience of those attending the recent photography week was affirming, challenging and enjoyable. Standing and shivering slightly while people set up tripods, negotiated rock pools, swapped advice, all in the predawn light on Llandudno beach close to the pier, was certainly fulfilling. Sweeping views of Snowdon in the distance with the bundled fluff of feathers that was a bullfinch snuggled up on a tree branch just a foot away, were all about the intensity of the moment before it flew away.

The company of members, the shared stories and laughter, the pride in achievement, the frustrations of flat batteries or melting ice creams at the harbour all showed me that not only taking pictures, but being in community for a few fleeting days, is about savouring life intensely. Thank you everyone who savoured it with me that week.

Benefits

In the second part of our benefits series, **Noreen Dean** looks at ways to save you money

Money saving concessions

This month we look at a couple of concessions that you can claim if you are registered as blind (this is also known as being registered as 'severely sight impaired').

Reduced TV Licence fee

You can reduce your annual fee by 50 per cent if you qualify for the Blind Concession TV Licence. Call 0300 790 6130 to obtain an application form or complete the online form which can be found at www.tvlicensing.co.uk/cs/pay-for-your-tv-licence/blind/index.app. Then print and post your application form to:

**Blind Concession Group
TV Licensing
Darlington
DL98 1TL**

You must enclose proof of your registration as blind (or as severely sight impaired) with the application form. This can be one of the following:

- a clear copy of your Certificate of Vision Impairment (CVI) or your BP1 if you live in Scotland OR
- a letter issued by your local authority confirming your registration as blind.



Caption: It's easy to make savings

If you have been registered for some time but were unaware of this concession, you may be able to get a back date of the 50 per cent reduction from TV Licensing.

Finally, it is important to note that if you are over 75 years of age, you qualify for a free TV Licence, whether or not you have sight loss. To claim this, call TV Licencing on 0300 790 6117. You will be asked for your National Insurance number so have this to hand when you call. If you do not know your National Insurance number, TV Licencing will ask you to provide a copy of either your passport, your birth certificate or your driver's licence as proof of your age.

Blind Person's Tax Allowance (BPTA)

The Blind Person's Tax Allowance is an additional amount of money you can have added to your personal income tax allowance. This basically means that you are given a higher amount of income before you can be taxed.

The BPTA for 2018-19 is £2,450. As an example of how this allowance works, if your personal income tax allowance is currently £11,850 and you qualify for the BPTA, your personal tax allowance increases

from £11,850 to £14,300 (with the addition of the BPTA).

It is worth noting that this tax allowance can also have a positive impact on the amount of tax you pay on savings.

It is HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) that administers the Blind Person's Tax Allowance so if you would like further information, if you wish to apply or if you wish to check that this additional allowance is included in your personal tax allowance, you can contact HMRC directly on 0300 200 3301. This service is available on Monday to Friday, from 8am to 8pm, on Saturday from 8am to 4pm and on Sunday from 9am to 5pm.

In England and Wales, you are eligible for this tax additional allowance if you are registered as blind (or severely sight impaired). However in Scotland and Northern Ireland the eligibility criteria is slightly different in that you will qualify if you "cannot do work for which eyesight is essential".

Alternatively, you can contact your Community Support Worker if you would like to discuss this tax allowance.

One of your own

Johnny Ball has been on our televisions for over 50 years, and is also an ardent supporter of our work.

Chris Gilson talked to him about his own Services career and much more

To many of you, the name Johnny Ball will be synonymous with his children's television presenting. Through a series of well-received programmes, he rapidly became a family favourite, and succeeded in making science accessible for the young. However, he started off his career in the RAF, as he relates.

"I was a Regular. I went in when I was called up for National Service, but immediately signed on with the RAF for three years. I knew immediately what I was doing, firstly I wanted to get abroad. A radar operator has the maximum chance of getting abroad - I

"I was overqualified to be a radar operator as I came top in my course and as a result they all went abroad except me and I went to Wales"

mean far abroad like Hong Kong and Singapore, and that's what I went for.

I remember when we were called up and there was 18 of us thrown in a billet together - the bonding was almost immediate. There was a 'Jack the Lad' type from the East End of London and when we went to bed that night there were a couple of lads about 18 to 19 who were actually sobbing on their pillows.

The next weekend one lad had told us, 'My wife says my six-month old boy is pining for me'. We weren't allowed to go home that weekend, but we clubbed round and got him his train fare to go back to South Wales and back again. We ganged together and I remember when we went out for a drink we didn't have enough money for a third round, but someone said 'I've got some petrol coupons' and I went and sold them and I got two rounds of drinks. →





Caption: Johnny Ball

We all got on so well, and we really looked after the people who weren't so sure of themselves and we all blossomed together. That was actually the first few days before we even got into uniform and once we were in I just loved every minute of my two years and 11 months."

However, Johnny's dreams of going abroad were rapidly thwarted.

"I was overqualified to be a radar operator as I came top in my course and as a result they all went abroad

except me and I went to Wales. But when I was in Wales it was at the Royal Aircraft Establishment [In Aberporth] where they were trialling lock-on radar and new radar technologies as well as guided missiles, so I was surrounded by boffins and it suited me down to the ground.

I used to be in contact with Llanbedr because that's where all the drone aircraft came from. You used to be able to fly them from a desk and we'd make them targets to fire missiles at, except the missiles had to miss, because you couldn't afford to hit the target every time as it cost a lot of money.

All round the coast off Cardigan Bay there were observation posts with very high speed film cameras, and they'd film the missiles from every angle so they could understand what was happening. I was based at Aberporth, and because of where we were, we didn't do the filming if it was cloudy. So, we had a wonderful time if that happened – we were normally down at the beach.

I had 10 fabulous months down there. It was second education for me."

Sunshine and chalets

After Johnny came out of the RAF, he already knew what was going to be the next stage.

"I'd always planned to be a Butlin's redcoat because when I was 14 I was at Filey on holiday with some mates and there was a redcoat there and I thought he was just a funny, smart outgoing guy and I thought I'm going to follow him – his name was Des O'Connor, and sure enough seven years later I did follow him.

I was great friends with Harry Secombe for a long time, and I said to him when I first met him 'How do you make it in showbusiness as a career?' he said, 'No two people do it the same way', and it's true. I loved that just as much as the forces, it's a version of the same thing.

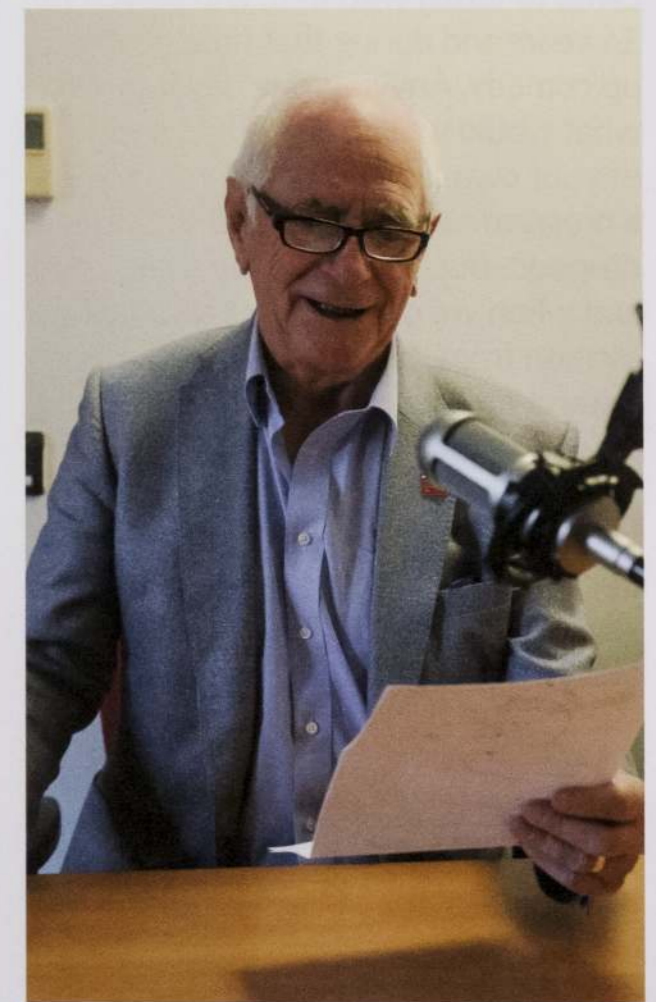
Butlin's was just smile school. For three years I just smiled, and people on holiday are so easy to get along with, and so easy to help and support."

From being a redcoat, Johnny moved into stand-up comedy, playing the

"I was great friends with Harry Secombe for a long time, and I said to him when I first met him 'How do you make it in showbusiness as a career?'"

North West before a very unusual opportunity presented itself.

"I was a stand up comedian and I was doing radio variety shows, and the BBC came along and said 'we're looking for people with non-London accents for children's television'. And I went for this interview, and they said 'oh you're going to be wonderful on Play School.' And I said, 'What? What's that?', and they said it was for under-fives and I was out of the door – I didn't want to do it, but they persuaded me. →



“I’m 80 now and people say to me ‘what do you worry about when you get older’ and my worry would be not being able to drive, that would be the worst thing”

But I loved the integrity of the people who made that programme, which was really a great show for under fives. So, I came to terms with that, and stayed for 16 years and during that time I packed up comedy. Anyway, one day they said what would you do if you had a series of your own, and I said ‘I’d probably do a programme on maths’ and their chins dropped. But, they gave me a pilot, and when we did it, we got a standing ovation from the crew. It was just like a stand-up act, and we got a BAFTA as well. In the end, I wrote 20 series’ worth of shows.

Because I had a very meagre education – just two o-levels, I had to research everything and I got the knack of researching incredibly quickly, of selecting exactly what I wanted to say and no more because I had to keep it simple.

My love of science and mathematics was always there, from the early

times when I played dominoes with my mum and dad – fives and threes with double-nine dominoes. You have to make the ends divisible and I learned that very quickly.

It’s funny writing programmes for children’s television, people always say what age do you write to, and it had never occurred to me – ‘what age?’ all I had to do was explain how a steam engine works. As Einstein said, ‘if you can’t explain it to a four year old, you don’t understand it yourself.’

Supporting us

Johnny has been a supporter of the work we do for many years, and was chosen to open the new wing of our Brighton Centre. He remembers the occasion well,

“It’s a magnificent spot, on the coast with rolling, grassy fields and it’s just beautiful and a wonderful building. They asked me about opening the new wing, and I was so thrilled and overawed by it, really. I loved meeting the residents there, they were all wonderful and I got on so well with them.

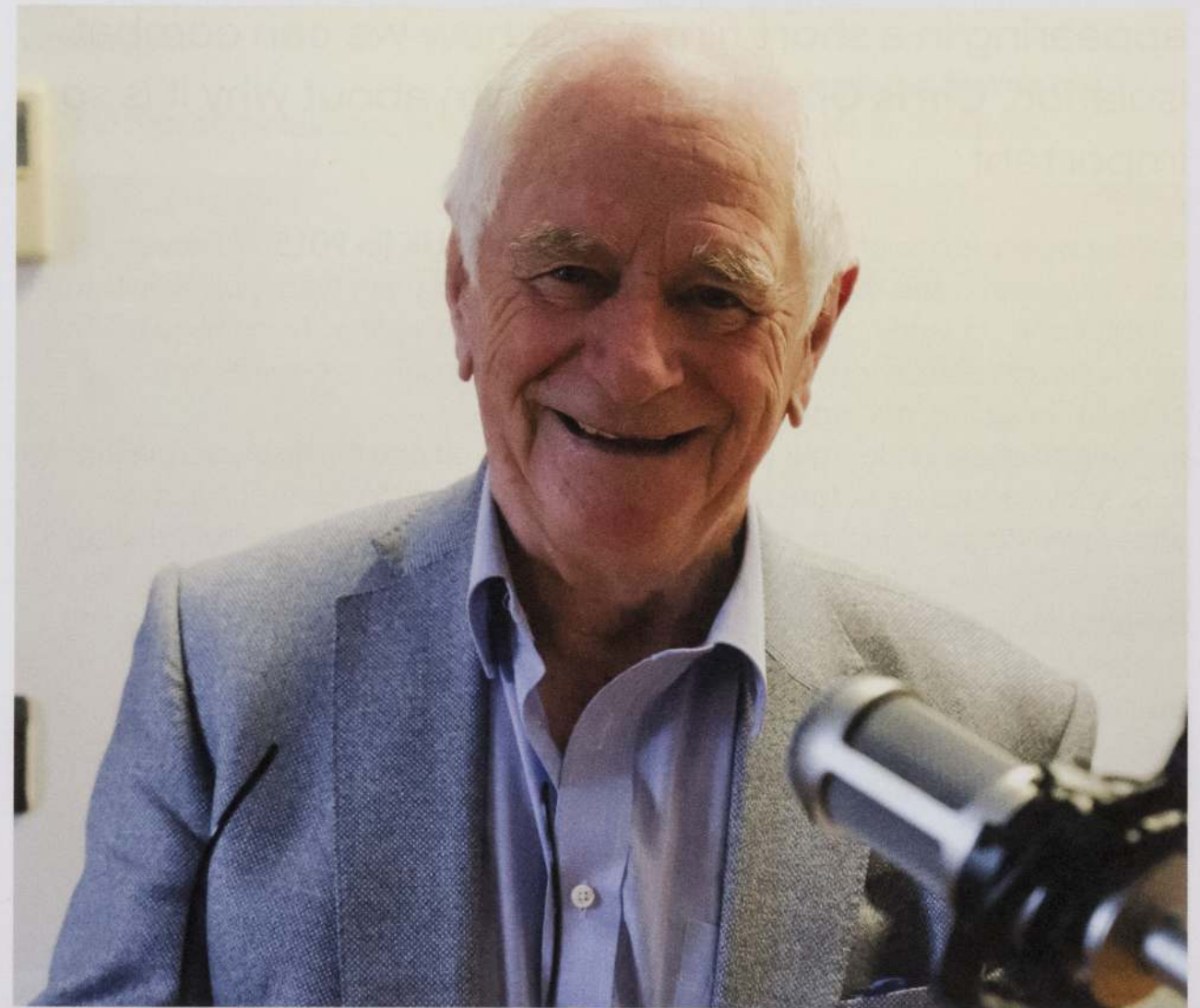
I’ve met quite a few of them at various other events that I’ve been to, but yes, it’s always lovely to be involved with Blind Veterans UK.”

So, why is what we do so important to him?

“I’m 80 now and people say to me ‘what do you worry about when you get older’ and my worry would be not being able to drive, that would be the worst thing. I think if that was taken away from me, then that would be awful, but that’s not as bad as taking your sight from you – that is really life changing and situation changing.

It’s wonderful to have an organisation that can help people through that.

We see today, for example, the Invictus Games, and people who are disabled in so many ways and they’re all still competing and having fulfilled lives, including those who are blind. I think that being blind is a sector in itself, and if you give people help when they’re blind you can enrich their lives, and that’s wonderful.”



In front of the lens

One of our Members, Ken Newbery helped us out by appearing in a short film about how we can combat isolation. **Chris Gilson** spoke to him about why it is so important

Ken Newbery is one of our London-based Members and the focal point of 'Ken's Story' - a video produced by us which aims to highlight the problem of isolation among our veterans. The film, which is just under four minutes long, shows Ken's life before and after receiving our support and the difference it makes. Since its release in February it has proved to be very successful, and marks a pivotal point in our anti-isolation drive.

Now Ken is telling me why the film means so much to him,

"The way I look at it, by helping out I'm contributing to the campaign. It's so important to me because it takes me back to when I first joined Blind

Veterans UK [in 2015]. I'd never associated them with me, I didn't even consider myself as being blind really, because I still have some sight.

"I went on one of the Induction Weeks [at our Brighton Centre] and it was only when I came back from that, that I realised how low I felt before. Since then, everything has just been going upwards.

"All I did was sort of sit there, It wasn't acting, it was good fun actually. I think they've done a great job"

"Without realising it, since 2010 [when Ken's wife passed away] I'd been going down and down without realising it. Had it not been for that week, I don't think I'd have seen the year out."

Ken tells me that it was hard to admit that he felt isolated at the time.

"I realised I was lonely, and that's not an easy thing to admit really. After I went to Brighton I realised it was just the fact that I was going somewhere and it really brought me back into the world again."

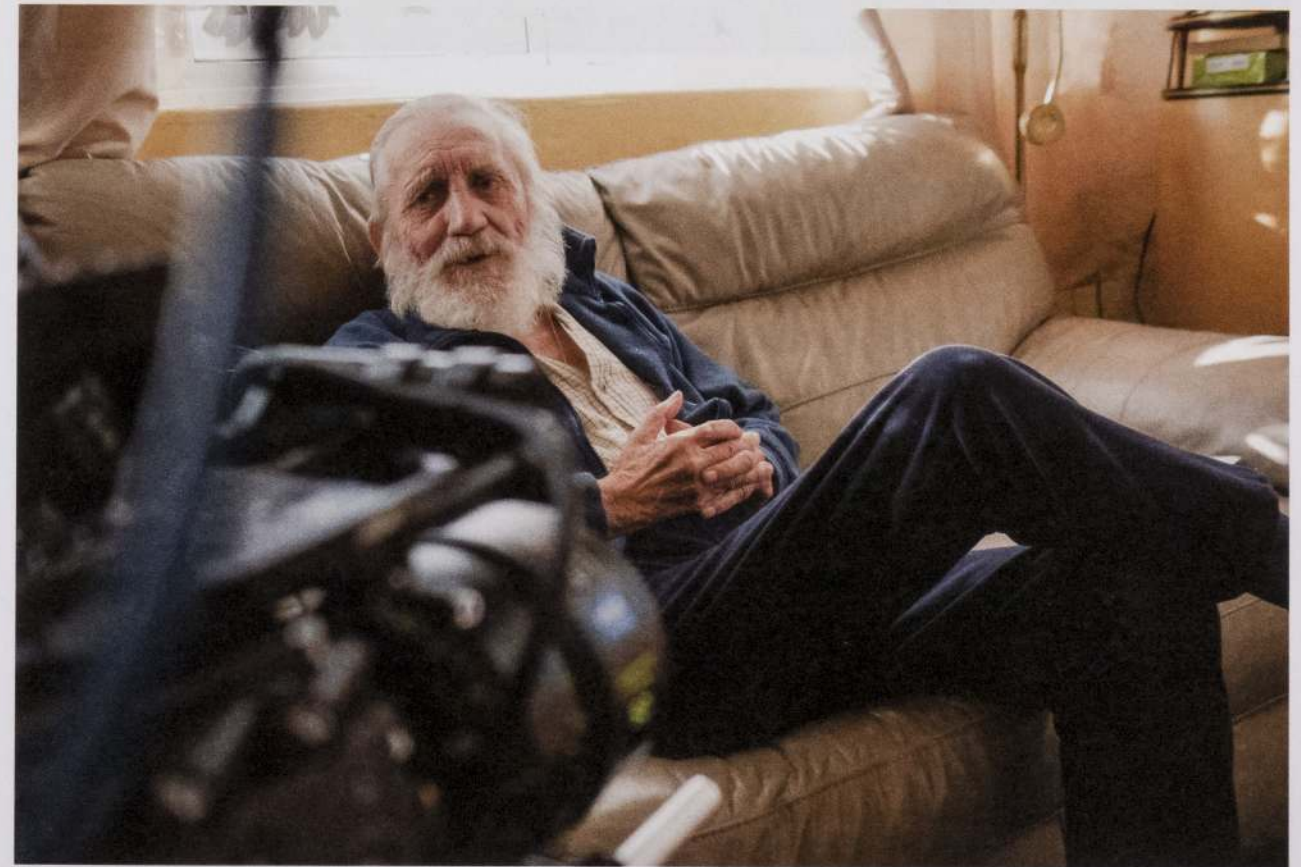
So, did Ken enjoy his time in front of

the camera? The voice at the end of the telephone chuckles,

"All I did was sort of sit there, It wasn't acting, it was good fun actually. I think they've done a great job. If it [the film] does some good, then that's a good thing and I know that I'll have helped out."

With those words I thank Ken, knowing that the day he spent helping us could also potentially help our more isolated veterans.

■ **You can watch the film on our website at bit.ly/214Fhsm**



Caption: Ken during the filming of our Isolation film, 'Ken's Story'



Caption: John Shonfield

A remarkable man

Michael Shonfield remembers his father John, and talks about his life with St Dunstan's

My father, John Shonfield joined the RAF in 1939. He did not become one of the few - he was just one of the many, an ordinary chap doing his bit for his

country. John joined the ground crews, training as a fitter armourer. He had a very good mechanical aptitude and rose through the ranks to T1 Sergeant.

“The ATC magazine and a Reading newspaper both published articles detailing John's determination to overcome blindness”

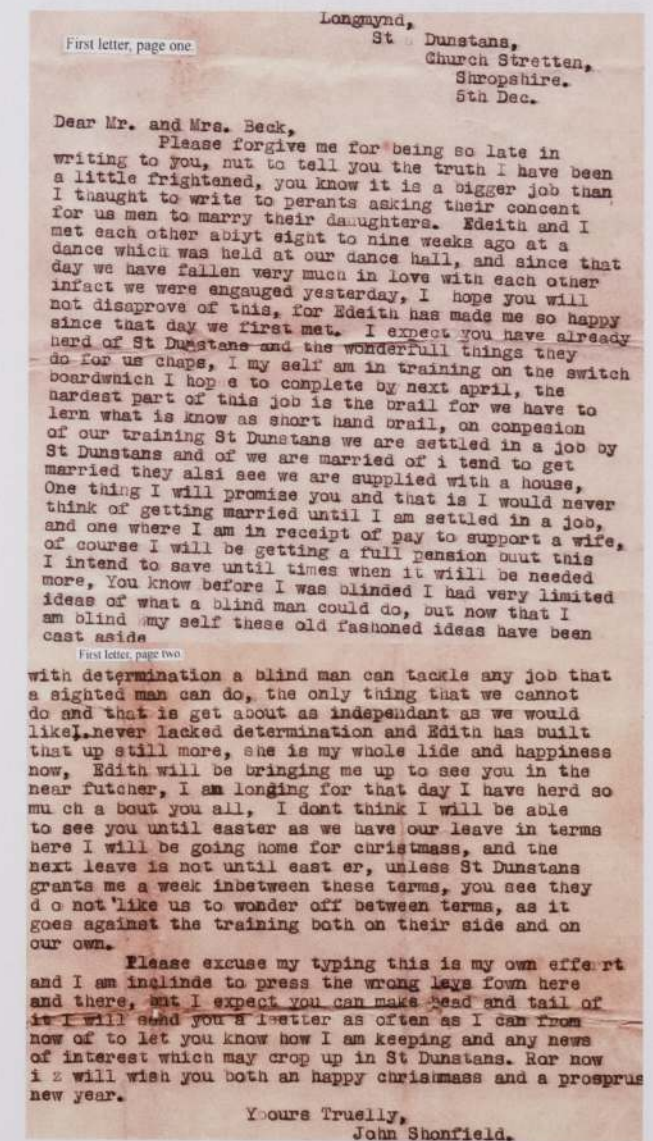
John had a number of postings before finally arriving at RAF Habbaniya in Iraq. Then in September 1944, while on landmine clearing duties, John's life and career changed forever. One of the mines he was working on exploded, he was blinded and lost his left hand. John's career and war was now over, but his biggest battle was about to begin.

As soon as John was released from hospital, it was St Dunstan's who took care of everything helping him come to terms with his disability. He was allocated a place at the Church Stretton centre.

He underwent training to become a telephone switchboard operator there, and learned Braille. It was hard work, but he was determined to succeed and be able to get a full time job. The centre organised many social events for the men. On one particular evening at a dance John met Edith, a sergeant in the Auxiliary Transport Service. They both loved dancing and romance blossomed - they fell in love and eventually got

married in Edith's home town of Gateshead.

Thanks to St Dunstan's their married life together started perfectly in Berkshire. A job was found for John at the CWS Printing Works in Reading, and they set up home together. They were both very happy together and made lots of new friends in the area. Then →



Caption: John's letter about St Dunstan's

in September 1947, Edith gave birth to a son named Michael. Four years later they had a daughter named Jacqueline. Life was as perfect as it could be.

Preparing lectures

John had long been considering doing something with the RAF, so he contacted the local recruiting office. They introduced him to 2287 Squadron, an Air Training Corps squadron based at Presentation College in Reading. There, he became a voluntary civilian instructor and started preparing lecture material.

He persuaded St Dunstan's to loan him a tape recorder and a one handed Braille writer. During the day, Edith would read from the training manual, recording the lecture notes. When John arrived home from work he spent two hours every evening listening to the recordings, operating the Braille writer, and converting everything into Braille. The objective was to have enough material for 12 lectures on aircraft engines and tools.

John loved every minute of his part time work with the RAF and was well respected by everyone at his squadron. He was also very quick to point out that all this would not have been possible without the help and support of his wife Edith and St Dunstan's.

All this hard work did not go unnoticed.

R.A.F. FORM 1294
ROYAL AIR FORCE
BRIEF STATEMENT OF SERVICE AND CERTIFICATE OF DISCHARGE OF

SURNAME SHONFIELD. OFFICIAL No. 653667

CHRISTIAN NAMES John.

Date of enlistment 7.2.39. Terms of enlistment 6 years

Date reported for regular service 7th February 1939. Pitter/Amourer.

Rank of Air Force in which enlisted S.A.F. R.A.F. trade on discharge

Date of discharge 20th June 1946. Rank on discharge T/Sergeant.

Reason for discharge Going to fulfil Royal Air Force physical requirements. ← NOTE!

(Para. 652 Clause 53 King's Regulations and Air Council Instructions)

(a) General character (i) during service Y.G. (ii) on discharge Y.G.

(b) Degree of trade proficiency - A B Superior

Special qualifications None

(c) Medals, Claps, Decorations, Mentions in Despatches, Special Commendations, etc.

DESCRIPTION OF ABOVE-NAMED AIRMAN/AIRWOMAN ON DISCHARGE.

Date of birth 22nd May 1920. Marks or scars One vaco-mark left arm.

Height 5 ft 6 1/2. ← NOTE → Loss of left eye, loss of sight right eye, loss of left hand, Depressed vertical scar left side of nose.

Complexion Fresh. Colour of eyes Brown. Colour of hair Dark brown.

Airman's signature [Signature]

(g) Brief statement of any special aptitudes or qualities or any special types of employment for which recommended :-

A good N.C.O. with an excellent knowledge of his trade. An armourer capable of carrying out his duties in an efficient workmanlike manner without supervision.

Unit Date Stamp [Stamp]

Attention is directed to Notes (a) to (g) on reverse.

Caption: John's discharge papers

The ATC magazine and a Reading newspaper both published articles detailing John's determination to overcome blindness and lead as normal a life as possible. He was also to be awarded the Lord Lieutenant of Berkshire certificate at a special ceremony in Reading.

Always doing something

John was always doing something. As well as a full time job and the part time work with the ATC, he erected garden fences, fitted wardrobes and other jobs around the house. Probably his best achievement was to build a large wooden garden shed all by himself.

People just could not believe that a blind man could do all this. St Dunstan's was a great help. They provided John with many tools and equipment specially made to suit his disability. One was a leather "forearm" that fitted over the stump of his left arm, it came with various tools that could be attached, making him "two handed". This worked well as John was originally left handed. He then could hold items with his good right hand and use a hammer with his left. Although I'm sure the hammer sometimes hit one or two fingers instead of nails.

John was now 44, and had developed a heart condition. He had no intention



Caption: In front of his homebuilt shed

of slowing down, though, and carried on as normal. However, he did find the perfect way to relax in reading. He regularly received Braille books from the extensive St Dunstan's library.

Then while quietly reading, tragedy struck. It was 10 January, 1966 when John's heart cried enough - he collapsed and died with his family by his side.

Naturally everyone was devastated, his family were in shock - even production at the CWS printing works came to a standstill when it was announced. The funeral was held at the local church that John and Edith had regularly attended. It was packed - people had to stand outside and the ATC cadets formed a guard of honour.

In such difficult times St Dunstan's were a great help for the family. The welfare departments made sure all the legal and paperwork formalities were taken care of.

John Shonfield's character and determination was passed on to Edith. She pulled herself together, got a good full time job, did charity work and helped with functions at her local church. St Dunstan's carried on its support, making sure Edith was OK. It also made sure that the house was maintained and in good order until the day Edith died in April 1998.



Family News

Birthdays

George Goodchild who celebrates his 100th birthday on 8th April.

Thomas Davies who celebrated his 102nd birthday on 6th March.

Herbert Edwards who celebrates his 106th birthday on 13th April.

Eric Foster who celebrates his 103rd birthday on 4th April.

John Stacey who celebrates his 101st on 3rd April.

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.

Audrey Archbold who died on 9th February 2019. She was the wife of Ned Archbold.

Ann Alice Buck who died on 14th February 2019. She was the widow of the late Howard Hugo Buck.

Joyce Lilian Cooper who died on 13th December 2018. She was the widow of the late Ted Cooper.

Mary Lillian Dovey who died on 5th November 2018. She was the widow of the late Ron Dovey.

Lilian Margaret Filby who died on 23rd December 2018. She was the widow of the late William Edward Filby.

Peggy Frith who died on 11th November 2018. She was the widow of the late Douglas Philip Frith.

Doreen Joyce Godfrey who died on 9th March 2019. She was the wife of George Charles Godfrey.

Margaret Louise Heffernan who died on 15th November 2018. She was the widow of the late William John Heffernan.

Patty Higson who died on 1st December 2018. She was the widow of the late Ray Higson.

Jean Kelly who died on 22nd November 2018. She was the widow of the late William Patrick Kelly.

Margaret Phyllis Daisy Lashbrook who died on 1st November 2018. She was the widow of the late Morris Lashbrook.

Barbara Corrine Leslie who died on 15th February 2019. She was the widow of the late Ken Douglas Leslie.

Lilian March who died on 1st December 2018. She was the widow of the late Ronald March.

Phyllida Mariette Meerendonk who died on 1st December 2018. She was the widow of the late Malcolm Meerendonk.

Sheila Patricia Milne who died on 15th December 2018. She was the widow of the late Thomas Edward Milne.

Nancy Marjorie Page who died on 9th March 2019. She was the wife of Albert Frederick Page.

Mavis Perkins who died on 9th March 2019. She was the widow of the late Robert William Perkins.

Freda Joan Taylor who died on 15th February 2019. She was the wife of Dennis John Taylor.



LUKE RICHARDSON / UNSPLASH



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

Eric Ashall of St. Helens, Merseyside died on 28th December 2018 aged 89. He served in the Army as a Private.

William Atherton of Manchester, died on 20th December 2018 aged 88. He served from 1949 to 1955 in the Army as a Driver.

Dorothy May Avery of Dymock, Gloucestershire died on 29th December 2018 aged 98. She served from 1942 to 1946 in the Royal Air Force as a Corporal.

Stephen Batty of Bolton, died on 15th December 2018 aged 68. He served from 1969 to 1978 in the Royal Air Force as a Senior Aircraftsman.

Hugh Blissett of Market Harborough, Leicestershire died on 21st November 2018 aged 96. He served from 1940

to 1982 in the Royal Air Force as a Squadron Leader.

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

Frank Breach of Eastbourne, East Sussex died on 29th December 2018 aged 94. He served from 1943 to 1946 in the Royal Navy as a Wireman.

John Bridge of St. Helens, Merseyside died on 15th November 2018 aged 93. He served from 1945 to 1946 in the Army as a Private.

James Young Brodie of Braintree, Essex died on 29th December 2018 aged 88. He served from 1946 to 1953 in the Royal Air Force as a L.A.C..

Frederick James Camroux of Wymondham, Norfolk died on 8th November 2018 aged 98. He served from 1941 to 1946 in the Army as a Signalman.

Esmond Causer of Prescott, Merseyside died on 2nd December 2018 aged 85. He served from 1951 to 1952 in the Army as a Private.

Norman Peter Chappell of Aberdeen, died on 21st December 2018 aged 85. He served from 1951 to 1954 in the Royal Air Force as a Leading Aircraftman.

Marjorie Cheetham of Malvern, Worcestershire died on 8th November 2018 aged 93. She served from 1944 to 1947 in the Royal Navy as a Petty Officer.

George Clayton of Newcastle Upon Tyne, died on 5th December 2018 aged 83. He served from 1953 to 1953 in the Army as a Private.

George Frederick Cooper of New Milton, Hampshire died on 21st November 2018 aged 104. He served from 1940 to 1945 in the Royal Air Force as a L.A.C..

Thomas Gordon Coote of Bromley, Kent died on 1st December 2018 aged 92. He served from 1944 to 1954 in the Army as a Sapper.

Glenn Alexander George Coull of London, died on 26th November 2018 aged 81. He served from 1956 to 1960 in the Royal Air Force as a S.A.C..

Hugh Emlyn Davies of Penmaenmawr, Gwynedd died on 9th November 2018 aged 93. He served from 1943 to 1947 in the Army as a Sapper.

David Humphrey Davies of Pwllheli, Gwynedd died on 6th December 2018 aged 90. He served from 1947 to 1949 in the Army as a Lance Corporal.

John Davis of Witney, Oxfordshire died on 21st November 2018 aged 94. He served from 1942 to 1946 in the Royal Navy as an Air Mechanic 1st Class.

Gladys Edey of Worthing, West Sussex died on 4th December 2018 aged 95. She served from 1944 to 1946 in the Royal Navy as a Wren Hsr.

Fred Edgley of Chatteris, Cambridgeshire died on 6th December 2018 aged 81. He served from 1956 to 1961 in the Army as a Private.

Robert Elsey of Reading, died on 26th December 2018 aged 86. He served in the Royal Air Force as a Corporal.

Idris Evans of Brighton, East Sussex died on 4th December 2018 aged 101. He served from 1938 to



1946 in the Army as a Warrant Officer 1st Class.

John Evans of King's Lynn, Norfolk died on 10th December 2018 aged 80. He served from 1956 to 1992 in the Royal Air Force as a Flight Sergeant.

Sadie Viola Farrelly of Woking, Surrey died on 7th November 2018 aged 96. She served from 1941 to 1945 in the Royal Navy as a Leading Wren.

David Hugh Farrow of King's Lynn, Norfolk died on 13th December 2018 aged 81. He served from 1958 to 1961 in the Army as a Drummer.

Joan Gwendoline Fowler of Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire died on 11th November 2018 aged 95. She served from 1944 to 1945 in the Army as a Private.

Sheila Joan Francis of Taunton, Somerset died on 13th November 2018 aged 92. She served from 1944 to 1947 in the Royal Air Force as an ACW1.

Roy French of Worcester, died on 28th November 2018 aged 81. He served from 1955 to 1961 in the Army as a Private.

Patricia Hazel Gardner of Burton-On-Trent, Staffordshire died on 12th

November 2018 aged 84. She served in the Royal Air Force as a Corporal.

Eric William Gouge of Northfleet, Kent died on 16th December 2018 aged 90. He served from 1946 to 1952 in the Army as a Private.

Edgar James Greaves of Birmingham, died on 27th December 2018 aged 83. He served from 1954 to 1956 in the Royal Air Force as a L.A.C..

Frederick Grimmer of Norwich, Norfolk died on 20th November 2018 aged 97. He served from 1939 to 1976 in the Army as a Major.

Peter Benjamin Harrington of Ipswich, died on 14th December 2018 aged 91. He served from 1945 to 1948 in the Royal Air Force as an A.C. 1.

Charles William Harvey of Helston, Cornwall died on 29th December 2018 aged 88. He served from 1948 to 1956 in the Army as a Sergeant.

Jessie Albert Haskell of King's Lynn, Norfolk died on 1st January 2019 aged 99. He served from 1939 to 1946 in the Army as a Warrant Officer 2nd Class.

Eric Hickford of Manchester, died on 30th November 2018 aged 93. He served from 1943 to 1946 in the Royal Marines as a Marine.

Grace Dorothy Hughes of Guildford, Surrey died on 11th December 2018 aged 95. She served from 1943 to 1946 in the Royal Navy as a Wren.

Nancy Hulton of Oxford, Oxfordshire died on 21st December 2018 aged 95. She served from 1941 to 1945 in the Army as a 2nd Subaltern.

John Boyd Humphrey of Preston, died on 1st December 2018 aged 87. He served from 1962 to 1968 in the Army as a Corporal.

Margaret Inglis of Market Rasen, Lincolnshire died on 5th December 2018 aged 100. She served from 1942 to 1945 in the Royal Navy as a 3rd Officer Wren.

Joan Hamilton Irvine of Washington, Tyne and Wear died on 10th December 2018 aged 90. She served from 1946 to 1953 in the Army as a Private.

Alan James of Hyde, Cheshire died on 27th December 2018 aged 87. He served from 1952 to 1955 in the Royal Air Force as a S.A.C..

Arthur Ernest Jopson of Benfleet, Essex died on 10th November 2018 aged 80. He served from 1956 to 1959 in the Army as a Sapper.

Donald Peter Grandvill Kane of Lancing, West Sussex died on 29th December 2018 aged 87. He served from 1949 to 1954 in the Army as a Trooper.

Thelma Margaret Kelly of Westcliff-On-Sea, Essex died on 14th December 2018 aged 97. She served from 1943 to 1946 in the Army as a Private.

Horace Raymond Kirby of Northallerton, North Yorkshire died on 10th November 2018 aged 98. He served from 1939 to 1946 in the Army as a Sergeant.

James Lane of Yarmouth, Isle Of Wight died on 23rd December 2018 aged 100. He served from 1939 to 1946 in the Army as a Lieutenant.

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.

Ronald Layfield of Rhyl, Clwyd died on 2nd December 2018 aged 84. He served from 1952 to 1959 in the Army as a Trooper.

Fred Liles of Bognor Regis, West Sussex died on 28th November 2018 aged 95. He served from 1941 to 1946 in the Royal Air Force as a Flight Lieutenant. →

Leslie Martin of Filey, North Yorkshire died on 20th November 2018 aged 96. He served from 1942 to 1944 in the Army as a Lance Corporal.

Walter Mcgreevy of South Shields, South Tyneside died on 16th December 2018 aged 88. He served from 1949 to 1950 in the Royal Air Force as an Acting Corporal.

Colin Mills of Rotherham, South Yorkshire died on 18th November 2018 aged 84. He served from 1958 to 1970 in the Army as a Sergeant.

Alexander Mills of Horsham, West Sussex died on 10th November 2018 aged 97. He served from 1940 to 1946 in the Royal Air Force as an A.C. 1.

Roy Mitchell of Huddersfield, West Yorkshire died on 12th November 2018 aged 91. He served from 1945 to 1955 in the Army as a Corporal.

Patrick Morris of Bedworth, Warwickshire died on 24th November 2018 aged 89. He served from 1947 to 1952 in the Royal Navy as a Stoker Mechanic.

Michael John Moxham of Bath, Somerset died on 10th November 2018 aged 92. He served from 1943 to 1947 in the Royal Navy as an Able Seaman.

Peter Graham Nash of St. Ives, Cornwall died on 4th December 2018 aged 87. He served from 1949 to 1955 in the Army.

Iris Nelmes of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire died on 30th November 2018 aged 97. She served from 1942 to 1945 in the Army as a Lance Corporal.

Herbert George Norris of Abergele, Clwyd died on 6th January 2019 aged 96. He served from 1941 to 1946 in the Royal Air Force as a Junior Technician.

Hester Muriel Nottage of Salisbury, died on 16th November 2018 aged 96. She served from 1942 to 1946 in the Royal Navy as a 3rd Officer.

Edmund O'Brien of Brighton, East Sussex died on 28th November 2018 aged 85. He served from 1951 to 1954 in the Royal Air Force as a L.A.C..

Anthony Roderick Odell of Diss, Norfolk died on 11th December 2018 aged 82. He served from 1955 to 1957 in the Army as a Private.

Denis Owens of Preston, died on 6th November 2018 aged 91. He served from 1945 to 1948 in the Royal Air Force as a Corporal.

Cyril Walter Pine of Exeter, died on 1st January 2019 aged 92. He served from 1943 to 1946 in the Royal Navy as a Telegraphist.

Patrick William Pinkney of Gosport, Hampshire died on 9th November 2018 aged 95. He served from 1941 to 1944 in the Merchant Navy as a Steward.

Walter Davies Pritchard of St. Helens, Merseyside died on 7th November 2018 aged 102. He served from 1939 to 1946 in the Army as a Signalman.

Anthony Churches Rood of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire died on 3rd January 2019 aged 83. He served from 1953 to 1959 in the Army as a Gunner.

Robert Salisbury of Prestatyn, Clwyd died on 12th November 2018 aged 82. He served from 1954 to 1959 in the Royal Air Force as a Corporal.

Leslie Sanderson of Burnley, Lancashire died on 5th November 2018 aged 84. He served from 1953 to 1963 in the Royal Marines as a Marine.

Robert Scott of Gateshead, Tyne And Wear died on 27th November 2018 aged 89. He served from 1947 to 1949 in the Army as a Private.

Benjamin Frederick Seal of Penarth, South Glamorgan died on 24th November 2018 aged 95. He served from 1942 to 1946 in the Royal Air Force as a Flight Sergeant.

Raymond Sharp of Boston, Lincolnshire died on 8th November 2018 aged 92. He served from 1944 to 1948 in the Army as a Gunner.

Raymond Shuck of Bolton, Greater Manchester died on 5th January 2019 aged 95. He served from 1941 to 1946 in the Army as a Private.

Anthony Simms of Kettering, Northamptonshire died on 6th November 2018 aged 91. He served from 1945 to 1959 in the Army as a Private.

Wilfred Staton of Doncaster, South Yorkshire died on 26th October 2018 aged 95. He served from 1942 to 1947 in the Army as a Private.

John Wallace Noel Stephenson of Alnwick, Northumberland died on 19th December aged 82. He served from 1959 to 1991 in the Royal Air Force as a Flight Lieutenant.

Stanley Gordon Strange of Cinderford, Gloucestershire died on 11th November 2018 aged 90. He served from 1946 to 1956 in the Royal Air Force as a S.A.C.

Remembering the Fallen of recent conflicts

In the second part of our short series, our President **Colin Williamson** continues to remember those who fell in the other conflicts our Armed Forces have taken part in

We continue to remember those who gave their lives in recent conflicts around the globe in service of their country. Many of these wars are remembered only by those that fought in them, and by their families. We have a duty, as a nation, to never forget the sacrifices made on our behalf by British servicemen and women the world over.

The Cyprus Emergency. 1955-1959

After British forces completed their withdrawal from Egypt, Cyprus became the new HQ for the Middle East. The island had been part of the British Empire since 1914 and a Crown Colony from 1925 to 1960.

Greek Cypriots had long campaigned for the island to be unified with Greece and, when Britain failed to respond to international pressure, a campaign of violence and civil disobedience ensued, mainly orchestrated by EOKA, a Greek Cypriot nationalist guerrilla organisation. This campaign of bombings, shootings

and assassinations eventually led to the island being granted independence from the United Kingdom in 1960. 371 members of the British forces lost their lives during the conflict.

The Suez Crisis. 1956

In 1956 President Nasser of Egypt nationalized the Suez Canal in order to use the revenue for the building of a new dam in Aswan after both Britain and the United States withdrew their pledge of providing funding for the project. The World Bank also refused to loan Egypt \$200 million for the dam's construction.

Britain depended on the canal for a shorter sea-route to the Persian Gulf oilfields and also to its Empire so protecting the canal was vitally important.

On 29 October, airborne elements of the Israeli army dropped into the Mitla Pass in Egypt's Sinai region and on 5 November, the Anglo-French assault was launched.

At midnight on 6 November a ceasefire was called, and all invasion forces were withdrawn from the region. A United Nations peacekeeping force was then mobilised to supervise the ceasefire and restore order.

A total of 22 British service personnel lost their lives during the crisis.

Oman and Dhofar. 1962-75

In 1962 Britain engaged in a war in Oman and Dhofar that it simply couldn't lose. Defeat would see control of the strategically important Strait of Hormuz being transferred to the victor, with the precious oil that is exported through this 22 mile long waterway being administered by whoever controlled the region.



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Caption: Omani soldier in Dhofar 1970

In the 1960's, 60 per cent of the western world's crude oil came through this narrow artery; with the flow of oil, economies in the countries that surrounded the Strait flourished. Quite a lot of their income was spent in cities around the world, including London, so it was important for the British government to support and protect the Sultan of Oman to prevent any other colonial power gaining a foothold in the region.

A rebellion by Arab nationalists, commonly referred to by the British as the adoo, (Arabic for enemy) broke out in 1962 with the aim of ousting the Sultan, mainly led by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman.

Britain had signed a defence treaty with the Sultan in 1958 and already had British forces stationed in theatre which were quickly augmented by three regiments of artillery, a squadron of tanks, SAS squadrons and Spitfires and Mosquitoes from the RAF.

The rebellion was eventually put down in 1975 with the loss of 24 British service personnel.

The Borneo Campaign. 1963-1966

Some historians have claimed that the Borneo conflict began in April 1963, when an Indonesian guerrilla force attacked a police outpost in →

Tebedu, two miles from the border of Indonesia and Malaysia. Others argue that the hostilities began earlier. What cannot be denied is that the conflict started as a direct result of Indonesia's opposition to the creation of Malaysia.

This federation was made up of the former British Crown colonies of North Borneo, Sarawak and Singapore.

Britain backed Malaysia and consequently began a war with the Indonesian rebels, who were backed by China. It was in the main a jungle war, fought in the tropical jungles that dominated the border between Malaysia and Indonesia. If the guerrillas had won, Malaysia would have become a communist country, affiliated to China.

The confrontation ended in August 1966, when Indonesia signed a peace treaty with Malaysia with the loss of over 120 British servicemen.

The Aden Emergency 1963-1967

The Radfan Uprising, commonly referred to as The Aden Emergency, was an insurgency against British rule in the Protectorate of South Arabia, which now forms part of Yemen. The insurgency began on 14 December 1963 when a hand grenade was thrown at a party of British officials which included Britain's High

Commissioner to Aden and South Arabia, Sir Kennedy Trevaskis at Aden Airport by Arab nationalists. The resulting explosion killed one woman and injured 35. The Assistant High Commissioner at the time, George Henderson, later died as a result of his injuries.

The tactics employed by the members of the National Liberation Front and the Front for the Liberation of Occupied South Yemen consisted mainly of grenade attacks and ambushes against members of the armed forces and police but also attacks on Commonwealth civilian personnel.

Britain responded by sending in Spearhead Lead Element troops including Special Forces and elite units. The RAF deployed transport units with helicopters and Hawker Hunter fighter bombers, and the Royal Navy sent in warships including air-craft carriers and amphibious warfare ships carrying Royal Marine Commandoes.

The insurgency ended in November 1967 with the withdrawal of all British land forces.

While precise figures are hard to come by, it has been estimated that over 90 members of Britain's armed forces lost their lives in the campaign.

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.

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

Review Editor: You can telephone Chris Gilson, on **020 7616 8367**, email at revieweditor@blindveterans.org.uk or write to him at **Review Editor, Blind Veterans UK, 12 - 14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD**.

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