

Review

The journal of
Blind Veterans UK

June 2019

Inside:

The story of our
locomotive

Happy snapping
in Wales

Our volunteers

Celebrations all round -

A grand day out at Brighton



Rebuilding
lives after
sight loss



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On the cover

The Marine Band plays at our Brighton centre on 10 May when Joan Osborne received her British Empire Medal. Read more on pages 10 and 11



Open spaces

I don't know about you, but as a child going to a museum was somewhat of a daunting experience. No matter what you went to, there would always be at least one room that smelled strongly of naphthalene mothballs, with space being at a premium for exhibits and an impenetrably worded guidebook for company. From the moment I walked in I was looking for the way out, and preferred the great outdoors instead.

It was with some trepidation then that I decided to cover museums and accessibility for this issue of the Review. The idea was to – hopefully – demonstrate to you that despite the limitations of sight loss in whatever form, you can still enjoy a visit out to a nearby attraction. Having worked with the Royal Air Force museum at Hendon, London before, I was confident it would fit the bill nicely – but I still had my fingers firmly crossed that I'd find what I was looking for.

Without giving too much of the game and the feature away, I was more than pleasantly surprised. It was refreshing to see that when the museum underwent its refurbishment program, every consideration had been given to accommodate those with visual impairment.

I hope that those of you who are able to visit Hendon do so when you're nearby. No matter what service you were a part of it's a great day out, and having seen the amazing range of aids and help that's to hand if necessary I have no doubt in saying confidently that you'd have a great time.

Those of you with an interest in railways will appreciate the feature on our very own dedicated locomotive. It's a subject close to my heart, and to my detriment I'd forgotten that we did indeed have a 'Patriot' class engine named St Dunstan's in our honour in April 1937.

It was only when talking with our archivist Rob Baker that I glanced over and happened to see them and instantly recognised them for what they were. Naturally the story had to be put to the page, and I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I enjoyed writing it.

As always, enjoy your magazine.

Chris Gilson
Editor



Testing perceptions

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

When your editor suggested that I might say a few words about volunteering this month, my first reaction was to ask myself what on earth I knew about the subject. I certainly wouldn't see myself as an authority on volunteering and I had never thought of myself as a 'volunteer'. The suggestion set me thinking and pretty quickly surprised me. For one thing, I clearly am a volunteer, or I wouldn't be writing this as chairman of trustees, all of whom give their time freely to support us.

Like many of you I grew up in a Service where volunteering was - at least superficially - viewed with suspicion. "Never volunteer for anything", was the old soldier's maxim. You know the form: corporal

to recruits, "Any of you lot musical?": naive recruit, "Actually, I am corporal"; corporal, "right, get that piano shifted."

In truth, volunteering is firmly established in the DNA of the Services. The civic, social, welfare and sporting structures of the Armed Forces are wholly underpinned by service personnel and their dependents who endlessly volunteer for roles without which Service life would be much poorer. Service personnel are also astonishingly generous in their voluntary work for good causes (whether military or civilian) - both with their time and their money. And, in a very loose extension of the concept, they go to extremes to look after each other - well beyond the bounds of duty.

Nevertheless, the serviceman's perception of a 'volunteer' can be a bit skewed. For the last seven years I have been part of a team reporting to Parliament on the Armed Forces' Reserves and we sometimes see it in the Services' work to better integrate the regular and reserve components. The Volunteer Reserve is often mildly disparaged by the Regulars: they are part-timers and amateurs; we are full-time and professional. Recent operational experience has highlighted some of the differences,

frequently in ways which entirely reverse that perception. Often the volunteer reserve is more mature, less jaundiced, more receptive to ideas, less bound into old ways of working, more willing to experiment and question old doctrine, less well trained and drilled but better educated and quicker on the uptake. Nowadays there is the added dimension of volunteer reserves having skills and experience that simply do not exist in the regular component. One irony, of



ISTOCK / KAVARDAKOVA

course, is that with the demise of conscription both regular and reserve are volunteers; it is only their terms of engagement that differ.

A wider view

This train of thought caused me to look more widely at British society. Are there perceptions here that need to be tested? I think there are. Take, for example, the urban myth that nowadays youngsters (and their older generation) don't muck in in the way that 'we' used to. My experience tells me that is just plain wrong.

For example, the cadet and youth



Caption: Paul Luker

movements of this country are every bit as healthy and vibrant as they have ever been. That isn't just because kids always want to be Guides or St John's Ambulance or Sea Cadets or whatever. It is mainly because there are still adult volunteers who are prepared to give up evenings and weekends to run the organisations. I have had a fair bit to do with the cadet movements over the past few years and I find the adult motivation quite illuminating. Many of them start from the classic premise that if they don't do something themselves then nobody else will either - especially if that means their own children will miss out on the opportunity. But the reasons they serve on as volunteers are much more interesting. Many find unexpected fulfilment: a diversion from relatively mundane jobs, a genuine interest in the movement, comradeship, satisfaction in doing something worthwhile and the ability to put something back into society.

No limits

It seems to me that we should be able to capitalise more from volunteering, drawing on some of this thinking. At the most basic level, using volunteers allows us to make our money go much further. It is about being able to stretch the organisation affordably in order to reach more people, applying a wider range of expertise,

and drawing on skills which we might not be able to home-grow. We really should have no limit to how we might use a volunteer, provided that we can meet all our statutory and regulatory obligations. We should not just look outside for volunteers either; many of our members come with a rich diversity of skill and experience which, when they feel able, would be warmly appreciated helping others. And we should be shameless in rewarding our volunteers with an experience which plays heavily to their value to society and their membership of our community.

As ever, my own experience of volunteering hasn't always lived up to the high ideals I hold for others. As cadets at Cranwell, we were encouraged to find Service placements during our summer leave in order to get a taste of Air Force life. I got wind of a place on a jungle survival course. Selflessly I put myself forward, secure in the knowledge that while my chums were being used as dogsbodies for a fortnight

We really should have no limit to how we might use a volunteer, provided that we can meet all our obligations

on UK stations, I would be enjoying an altogether different internship. True, I had to spend five half days in a classroom and three nights in the jungle but the reward was almost three weeks of swanning about in Singapore. Bliss. Quite hard work and very educational - it taught me that I never wanted to volunteer for the jungle again - but well worth it for the wider benefits of a cushy holiday in the Far East.

Naturally, I got my comeuppance. A couple of years later, by now settled in to my first squadron in Hong Kong, the boss walked in holding my personal file. "Ah, young Luker, just the man. I've been going over your file and noticed that you volunteered for the jungle survival course. The Powers-that-be have decided that helicopter pilots need to have a greater understanding of what our Army chums have to cope with. I've put you on the Jungle Warfare Course in Malaya. You start next week!" Now that is not a course I would ever describe as "Bliss". Jungle warfare is a whole order different to jungle survival!

So, spread the word - Blind Veterans UK is in need of volunteers. And if you volunteer to work with us, I promise that you will never be sent to the jungle or told to shift a piano.

Celebrating our volunteers

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

The first of June this year sees the start of Volunteers' Week across the country, an initiative that is sponsored by National Council for Voluntary Organisations - the national champions for volunteering. The week



Caption: Nick Caplin

is a chance to celebrate and say thank you for the extraordinary contribution that millions of volunteers make across the UK.

These people have played a vital role in our charity since our birth in 1915. Our early records are full of examples and stories of the Voluntary Aid Detachments that provided nursing care for the first war blinded soldiers. Volunteers have continued to play an important role for us ever since, giving us the gift of their time and expertise in support of our blind veterans.

In my office in our Harcourt Street building, I have a certificate presented to my grandfather Harry Moody, for his services to volunteering. Harry worked as a volunteer driver at our Ovingdean centre after the Second World War - support which was recognised by our wonderful Chairman of the day, Ian Fraser. It is

heart-warming to think that Harry was giving this support and that it was acknowledged personally.

A long way

We have come a long way as a charity since those days, and volunteering is more important than ever. At the beginning of this financial year we had 930 active volunteers on our books, which is double the number that we had five years ago, and we have many more in the pipeline. Over 400 of our volunteers now regularly visit members in their homes.

In last month's **Review** we covered the story of Ken Newbery and his struggle with isolation. It was the introduction of volunteer Liam into Ken's life that has made such a difference, and it is an experience that both parties find enriching and rewarding.

In addition to increasing our volunteer numbers, we are developing new roles, including 'lead volunteers' who will help us to manage our volunteering service as it grows.

A total of 83 of our volunteers are themselves blind veterans who provide support in a variety of ways - including home visits, IT support, support to the staff recruitment process and as Working Age Member representatives.



Caption: Member Bernard Pennell with volunteer Debs Pittam

It is difficult to measure the true value of the help that these people give us. We know that last year we were gifted over 40,000 hrs of support by them, which would equate to an equivalent of over £530,000 in salaries if these were paid staff. That is an extraordinary gift, and a cause for rejoicing!

So in this national Volunteers' Week, let's take the time to thank those that help us so magnificently.

They are a very special part of the Blind Veterans UK family.



Caption: Joan Osborne

News

A special day for Joan

On Friday 10 May, Joan Osborne was presented with a British Empire Medal to recognise her lifelong commitment to Blind Veterans UK. The award was presented by Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant for East Sussex on the grounds of our Brighton centre.

The ceremony was held in front of four generations of Joan's family, along with a large number of proud members and staff and was followed

by a performance by the band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines.

Joan's connection to the charity began when she was a little girl as her father, Joe Walch, was a member following the First World War. Joan says: "St Dunstan's has been my life so I don't feel like I have done anything special!"

"I had always grown up playing the piano for my father who had a beautiful voice. When we moved to the centre in 1941, I was always in the music department in the evenings and when I was 16 they offered me a job there – this is where it all began really."



Caption: Joan and Lord-Lieutenant

It was at the centre that Joan met her husband Bob, who was supported by our charity after losing his sight during the Second World War, and the pair married in 1948. Joan says: "Bob was a blind double amputee who lost both his arm and his leg so he struggled to find a job. When we married, myself and Bob were offered the opportunity to run the kiosk at the Brighton centre which we ran for 22 years."

As well as running the kiosk, Joan continued with her passion for music and she along with Bob joined two other blind veterans, Ron Smith and Winston Holmes, to form a band called Joan and The Three Blind Mice

who performed around the UK. Joan recalls: "My son Keith suggested the name when he was 14 and it stuck for 10 years! Wales was the furthest we travelled to. Gwen Obern was a member who had a lot to do with Welsh radio. She asked us to come down and perform on the show".

Since Bob's passing in 2011, Joan has continued to be a fantastic support for the charity as she now runs both the bowls club and the social club, being a regular in the centre every Wednesday and Friday. Joan says: "I can't remember a time without St Dunstan's and Blind Veterans UK. It's part of my family"

Freddie heads forth

In June, Craig 'Freddie' Lundberg, a former Corporal in the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment, will set off on a gruelling 1,000-mile tandem ride.

He'll be riding with sighted pilot Callum Edge for up to 10 days and going all the way from Land's End to John o'Groat's.

Craig says: "Blind Veterans UK was always there for me, whenever I needed them. It's my turn to give something back."

You can support Craig's fundraising efforts by donating at bit.ly/2Efo64O.

In your community

Masonic report

Blind Veterans UK freemasons met at our Brighton centre between 26-29 April for an annual masonic gathering.

The first day was a day of travel, social drinking and handshakes, then on Saturday after our annual general meeting, we were transported to Brighton Masonic Centre to be guests of Temple Lodge 4962. The ceremony was a "passing" and one of our own Past Masters, Worshipful Brother (W.Bro) Clive Jones conducted that part of the ceremony after which we were treated to a delightful Festive Board.

Sunday saw presentations made by V W.Bro Adams and the Master of Temple Lodge - they were given handmade mounted pens made by our members, with flowers to their partners.

■ **If you are a Freemason and would like to join with us at one of our centres, please contact Chairman and Secretary W.Bro Clive Jones on 07854 800 256 or email him at dragoneye67@sky.com**

Nimble fingers

Brighton centre resident Nancy Bowstead is a prolific knitter. With the help and guidance from Sue Kaulsi and Lou Partridge an idea for a label was created and Nancy's Knits was born. With a header designed, the Art and Craft Department has made a feature to showcase her work in their shop.

Now 97, Nancy has been knitting since the age of five. Producing an abundance of woollen delights, so far she has made scarves, hats, gloves, glasses cases, tablet and cushion covers.



Caption - a selection of Nancy's knitware

Royal Marine band event - Gifts in wills

Our thanks again to all those who attended the Royal Marine band event on 10 June at Brighton. This presented us with the opportunity to invite some of our closest supporters, those who have generously pledged a gift in their will.

For more information on leaving a gift, please contact Sarah Dalling, Senior Legacy Manager: legacies@blindveterans.org.uk or **020 7616 8365**

A visit to Manchester



Our Victory Over Blindness statue at Manchester Piccadilly station plays host to 28 of our Members who are also Llandudno Lunch Buddies. During the visit, our veterans got to meet the statue's creator, Johanna Domke-Guyot, and the station's railway chaplain

The biggest thing Nancy's ever knitted was a Blind Veterans UK-themed flag in 2013 to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Brighton centre.

Asked why she liked knitting so much, her reply was, 'It's therapeutic and gives me something to do, I don't want to be an idle old has-been. I love it so much, I sometimes even dream about knitting!'

D-Day at Llandudno

Help commemorate the 75th anniversary of the D-day landings at our Llandudno Centre. Meet serving Armed Forces personnel and share your own stories and experiences.

There is also a parade at the local cenotaph to commemorate the landings and you can visit the site where the famous Mulberry Harbours were constructed.

There will be guest speakers, Second World War vehicles and equipment on display, plus a chance to experience life on the Home Front and much more, with a chance to dress up in your finest for the Sunset Dinner.

We still have places available for this great week, if you are interested please contact the Llandudno bookings team on **01492 868 700**.

Pride in our diversity

A message from your chief executive, **Major General (rtd) Nick Caplin CB**



TRITSAN BILLET / UNSPLASH

Caption: Pride flags

The bonds we form in the military family last a lifetime – as a community, the members of Blind Veterans UK act as perfect testament to that. The invaluable friendships and support that we offer each other encompass a vast breadth of service, experience, backgrounds and generations.

2019 marks 19 years since the ban was lifted on gay, lesbian and bisexual people from serving in the British armed forces, since when there have been major reforms to ensure that the forces are an inclusive environment. Everyone in the armed forces and our charity, no matter what their sexual orientation or gender

identity, has the right to be treated fairly and with dignity and respect.

Last year, the armed forces marched together for the first time at Pride in London. This year, Blind Veterans UK will participate in one of the country's most popular Pride events celebrating diversity and inclusiveness, Brighton Pride. We'll have a contingent of up to 50 people in the parade on 3 August, joining our friends at the Royal British Legion in representing the ex-Service community.

I personally will be very proud to know that in our participation we go further than simple tolerance, but show support and celebration for the diverse parts that make up the Blind Veterans UK family.

■ If you would be interested in showing your support and participating in the Pride parade in Brighton between 2-3 August, please do get in touch with the admin team via telephone: **01273 391 892** or **01273 391 894**. You can also email: **BrightonPride@blindveterans.org.uk**

Picking up the threads

Your column from Blind Veterans UK chaplain **Clare Callanan**

What do birds, spiders, humans and beavers have in common? Any ideas?

Let me help you...it is weaving. And weaving is something that I see at our Centres, with yarn and fabric and cane and willow. It is also something I have been doing myself recently. A month ago I did a day course as an introduction to tapestry weaving on a miniature loom, producing small tapestries. I have continued with it since coming home and recently spent the day creating an open hexagonal weave basket plus some willow work too.

Archaeological findings suggest that weaving is at least 20,000 years old and has come down through the centuries as a woman's art. Spinning and weaving could be stopped at any time so that children and the home could be seen to. That is how the word distaff, the staff which holds fibres for spinning, came to represent the women's side of the family.

Weaving involves crossing the warp threads (the vertical ones) with the weft threads (the horizontal ones). The warp is stretched taut whilst the weft weaves in and out, touching each warp as it passes by. It is this rhythm of turning back and forth that gives the cloth or cane or willow its strength, building up as you go. If you concentrate too much on the actions only, then the weft can get pulled too tight and distort the warp. Sometimes you can find yourself missing threads or find loose and uneven weft. This is all part of the learning process requiring patience and persistence and creativity.

So perhaps the art and result of weaving is a metaphor for understanding life around us and our place in it? Maybe we could gain a better understanding of the world and how we, as humans, are woven into it? And just like most pieces of weaving, there are tight places and loose places, uneven edges and even holes. This is all part of the natural way. None of us is perfect. And I can assure you that my weavings and my processes over these two very varied workshops are certainly not perfect!

Each of our lives is different; we are each made of our own threads, and to our own pattern; however random that may seem. And the weavers of ancient times who have woven the fabric of history are with us as we weave our fabric of life.



Caption: The magnificent Short Sunderland

Chocks away

Chris Gilson pays a visit to the RAF Museum in Hendon to see how it caters for those with visual impairment

Keeping in touch with the past is for many of us an important aspect of life. Whether it is to explore one's own yesterdays or to whet our appetite for history, it is often the case that we actively look behind us. One of the best ways to do this on a practical level is to visit a museum and take in what's on offer. But, you may argue, what good would visiting a museum be to someone with sight loss?

In the not too distant past, you could probably say 'not much' with confidence, but – happily – things are changing, and one forward-thinking museum is the Royal Air Force Museum, London in Colindale. The site underwent a substantial program of refurbishment which was completed in June 2018, with the new areas re-opening to the public on Armed Forces Day.

I was lucky enough to have a guided tour with Toni Donston, the museum's Access and Learning Officer, who took me on a walkround of the site, and we started off at what is the entry point of the museum – Hangar 1.

Easy access

When you enter the museum, the first thing that is instantly noticeable is the sense of space along the walkways and routes, with no obstacles to collide with, or trip up the unwary. It's an easy, unhurried path to the first exhibition, which is called 'RAF Stories, and First to the Future'.

The hall aims to look at the history of the RAF during its first centenary, while at the same time explaining how it will adjust to future needs. It's fascinating for both young and old, and is packed with exhibits – including the icon of the RAF, a Supermarine Spitfire.

Toni points out that if any visitors have special requirements, they can pre-book to make sure they are fully catered for. While tour guides are not always available, any member of staff will be happy to answer questions. A tour guide can also be booked in advance. In fact a quick look round shows several of them attending to visitors during our time there.

One pleasing aspect of the way the

museum is laid out is that each exhibit comes complete with large-print guides for those who need them, while there are also spoken commentaries in the form of telephone handsets attached to the displays.

Additionally, all the films being displayed have subtitles, all audio handsets feature a 'T position loop', there is free Wi-Fi for users of phone apps such as Synaptic, and all audio is transcribed.

For those with visual impairment, it's a way of making sure they can experience a large element of what is taking place or being exhibited. →



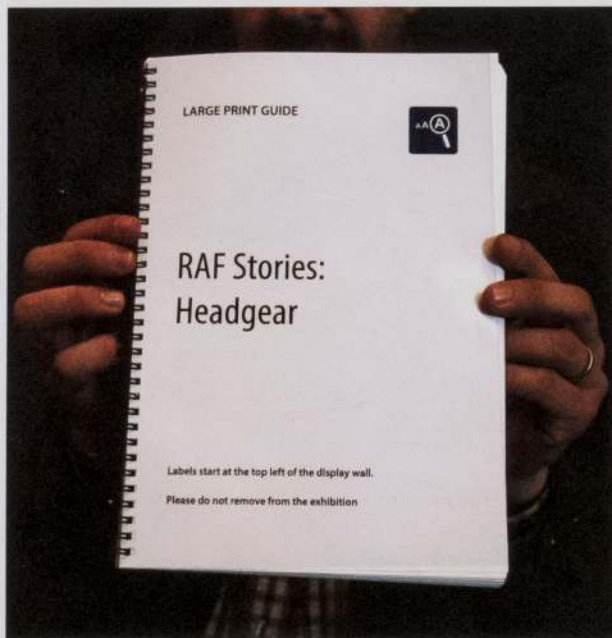
Caption: An overview of Hangar 1. The accessible Sea King is to the foreground of the image

Touchy feely

One other aspect of the exhibition is the amount of touchable objects there are on display. These range from models of the aircraft being exhibited, to three-dimensional representations of items like rank badges, items of clothing and uniform and so forth.

There are also consoles which feature ways to stimulate all the senses, having touchable items, things you can listen to, and even representational smells, such as a cup of tea or oil. Having sampled some of these, I can truthfully say they are remarkably realistic.

Another nice touch is the provision of folding stools at various points around



Caption: A large print guide - these are found with most exhibitions in Hangar 1

the exhibition hall. For those who suffer from reduced mobility it's a thoughtful move.

Provision has been made for wheelchair access as well, and happily the museum has its own stock of wheelchairs for use, together with a bank of 14 lockers to safeguard valuables during a visit. The keys to these are helpfully in yellow - a very visual impairment friendly colour.

Toni also takes us to see the 'quiet room' - there are three on site, and are ideal for those who just want a short break when moving around. They're helpfully located next to the disabled access toilets, of which there are two. These are also notable in that they have been designed with left-hand wheelchair access for one, and right-hand for the other.

A big range

Staying in Hangar 1, there is a wide range of interactive exhibits to keep everyone busy. These vary from a 'plotting table' exhibit, when you can become an RAF plotter during the Battle of Britain, to getting up close and personal with a Sea King helicopter - again an easy access exhibit. Those more interested in the future side of the RAF will enjoy the interactive sections on how the service will progress into the future.

For many though, a highlight of the first hangar will be the chance to step inside

the truly magnificent Short Sunderland flying boat. This beautiful aircraft - developed from the famous pre-war Empire flying boats of British Overseas Airways Corporation (BOAC) - was used in a variety of roles during and after the Second World War. After using a 'measuring cage' to determine whether visitors are physically able to enter the aircraft, the museum staff are able to supervise brief walk-throughs of this spacious aeroplane. It's another nice touch that the glassed-in staircase is also fitted with metal 'bumps' on the steps to reduce slipping accidents.

Once you leave Hangar 1, there are many more exhibits to see. Those interested in the First World War will enjoy the exhibition devoted to that area, but it's a safe bet to say that most will be irrevocably drawn to Hangars 3-5, which feature most of the aircraft on display.

From inter-war to post-Cold War, there is an amazing range of aircraft available to see, including such favourites as the Avro Vulcan, its older stablemate the Lancaster, and other favourites like the deHavilland Vampire, Gloster Meteor, English Electric Canberra and Lightning (a personal favourite) and of course, the Supermarine Spitfire.

Trying on a Spitfire

One highlight in the historic hangars is the chance to sit in a Spitfire. This is



Caption: On display in Hangar 3 is this English Electric Canberra

Mk.XVI RW393 (painted as TB675). The cost is £10 per person, and the museum does reserve the right to restrict access to those unsuitable, but if you can try it - it's worth a go.

It's pleasing to see that the RAF Museum has made every effort to cater for those with restricted vision, and has worked hard to ensure that everyone has a good time. If you're in the area, make sure you make the time to pay a visit - it's time well spent.

Review magazine thanks the RAF Museum and Toni Donston for their time and help with this feature.

Snap happy

A short report from our Llandudno centre's Photography Week

Between 15-21 March, the Llandudno centre's Photography Week got off to a great start with unseasonably beautiful weather for its outdoor photo sessions.



Caption: Chris assists Karl Hill

Member Chris Nowell, 35, from Dronfield Derbyshire, who served in the King's Royal Hussars, lost his sight just three weeks into a tour of Afghanistan. He suffered multiple skull fractures, brain injuries and irreparable damage to his eyes leaving him with very limited sight.

He has been with us since 2008, and always had an interest in photography, especially landscape. He took this interest and turned it into a business as well as a hobby, being very keen to share his enthusiasm and skills with fellow Members, demonstrating that sight loss is not a bar to taking fabulous photos.

Various outdoor locations were visited including trips to the Slate Museum and to the Lone Tree at Llyn Padarn in Llanberis.

The group also went to Llanfairfechan which has a fantastic beach, surrounded by mountains and a view of Anglesey. It also has a duck pond which is currently graced by two

swans. They then headed up the Great Orme for more photos and a tea break. As Chris pointed out, "Landscape photography is all about composition and focus, both essential for good results".

Second time round

One of those attending Photography Week for the second time was Rob Eaglestone, National Serviceman who served with the Royal Engineers in Germany. He has lost his sight due to age related macular degeneration, and had previously enjoyed painting but, after his sight loss, he turned to photography. Chris was particularly impressed with the progress Rob had made in the intervening period.

Rob said, "I thoroughly enjoyed the week, [it was] very good company, [and] we were lucky with the weather. It was all so well organised,[with] lots of variety, and Chris and Nick were always on hand to help out when needed".

A small group trekked to the impressive Swallow Falls waterfall then finished the day with some wonderful sunset shots of the Snowdonia range and over the sea at West Shore in Llandudno. Those able to make it out of their beds for an early start were rewarded with a sunrise session at Llandudno pier.



Caption: The results from the week were truly stunning as seen here

The final task for the veterans was the challenge of taking a picture that encapsulates Llandudno for them. At the end of the week all the veterans were given space to show their favourite photographs from the week.

Chris and Nick were very happy with the way the week went. Chris said, "Everyone attending went away with a portfolio of their work from the week and the encouragement to continue to build on this and we explained ways of promoting their work if they were interested in turning their hobby into a business, as I have done. It was a great week, a lot of fun".

A full head of steam

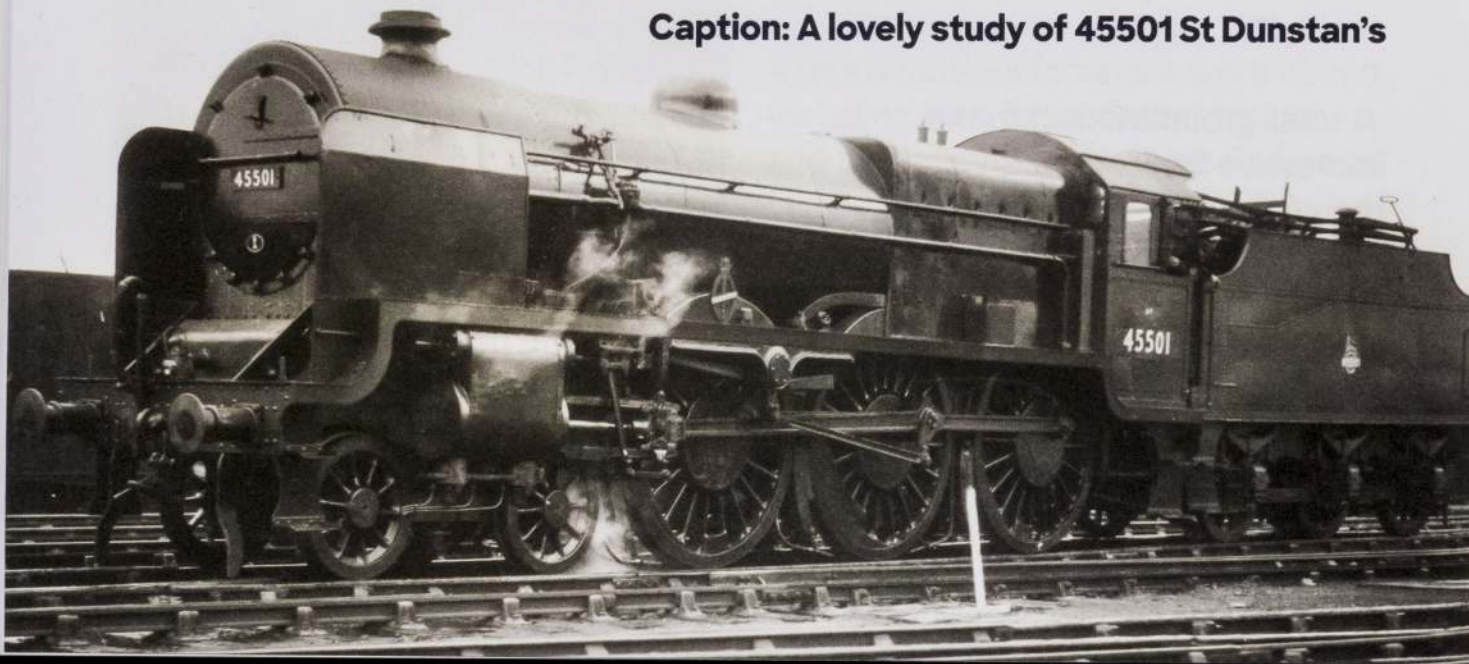
It's a little known fact that our charity once had a railway locomotive named after it. **Chris Gilson** looks into the story of a Patriot and its legacy

To the small group of people gathered on Platform One of Euston Station in London on 17 April 1937, it was a proud day. They were gathered to name one of the London Midland and Scottish (LMS) Railway's prestigious 'Patriot' class locomotives in honour of St Dunstan's.

The engine in concern was 5501, which

was the second-built of 52 express passenger locomotives with a 4-6-0 wheel arrangement. Known colloquially as 'Baby Scots', they became better known as the 'Patriots' after the name bestowed on 5500 in February 1937. From that date, more of the Patriots were given names of a military bearing, focusing on both regiments and also those who had been awarded the

Caption: A lovely study of 45501 St Dunstan's



Victoria Cross in the recently ended First World War. Confusingly, some were also named after seaside towns and holiday destinations served by the LMS, together with managers of the company.

By the mid-1930s they were well-established, and a familiar sight on many routes, including the prestigious London to Scotland route now known as the West Coast Main Line.

A guard of honour

The party who were assembled on the platform that April day included a guard of honour composed of St Dunstaners, the band of the Marylebone branch of the British Legion, members of the St Dunstan's council, our then Chairman Sir Ian Fraser, and Mr E J H Lemon, Vice-President of the LMS.

At the ceremony, Mr Lemon said that his company – like St Dunstan's – stood for service, noting that St Dunstan himself was a craftsman, while the men who made the engine were craftsmen, and the charity was producing craftsmen through its program of training.

For the naming, two large brass replica of the distinctive St Dunstan's crest had been produced in solid brass to act as nameplates. This had the effect of making 5501 (later 45501 after nationalisation) unique, as all the other



Caption: The restored nameplate, which hung in our Headquarters for many years

named engines in the class used the standard curved nameplate style, which was sometimes accompanied by a regimental coat of arms.

After unveiling the nameplate, Sir Ian addressed the assembled party, saying:

"I represent 2,000 men who were blinded in the war. We might be called the two battalions of blinded soldiers. Though not a regiment in the military sense of the word, we are bound together by the same ties of loyalty and comradeship as the regiments in which we served during the war."

He added, "I would like to thank the porters and train crews of the railways for the kindly personal service which they always give to blinded people, and I should also like to thank the



directors and managements of British railways for the facilities which they have given to blinded persons travelling on their railways.”

Following the ceremony 5501, now proudly bearing its new name returned to traffic on its home route.

Long service

As a design, the Patriots were generally a success, but by the early 1960s, as steam was being run down across the railways, they faced a bleak future.

By September 1961, 45501 – as it had become – was taken out of service by the London Midland region of British Railways and by the following year had been taken to its birthplace at Crewe and broken up for scrap.

That was not quite the end of the story though as the November 1962 edition of **Review** featured the following story,

“...the two nameplates, beautifully polished and re-painted have been offered to St Dunstan’s...and we have most gladly accepted them. One will be placed over the front door at Headquarters.”

This indeed was the case, and following the safe return of both nameplates from British Railways, one was duly painted for display and – for many years – hung

in the entrance hall of our Headquarters. The other remained in its ex-locomotive condition, complete with enamelled blue banding around the St Dunstan’s name.

Now, both nameplates are safely stored in the archive of the London offices, although they may make the occasional public appearance in the future.

Next in line

Sadly, despite the fledgling railway preservation movement, none of the 52 Patriots were saved, with the last two – 45543 Home Guard, and 45550 – surviving until November 1962.

Happily, a project to recreate a Patriot from new is underway, with the locomotive to be numbered 45551 – the next number in the order of the class. The new locomotive will continue the military tradition as well, with a poll choosing The Unknown Warrior as the name. It is currently being rebuilt at the Llangollen Railway, and is making good progress.

If you are interested in finding out more about the project, then visit lms-patriot.org.uk.

Exhibition Fundraiser

Be part of our 2019 fourth-annual exhibition fundraiser – beginners, hobby artists, experts and have-a-go artists all welcome

YANNIS PAPANASTASOPOULOS / UNSPLASH



benefitting Blind Veterans UK. Prizes will be awarded for audience favourites on 25 October.

If you are interested in taking part please request the terms and conditions and an entry form from Dave Bryant, Art & Craft Instructor in person, by e-mail, phone or post. He can be reached on email at david.bryant@blindveterans.org.uk, by telephone on **01273 391 466**, and by post at: Art & Craft Workshop, Blind Veterans UK, Greenways, Ovingdean, Brighton, East Sussex, BN2 7BS.

Please arrange delivery of your artwork to: Dave Bryant, Art & Craft Workshop (address above) on or before 20 September. Entries must be accompanied by a fully completed, signed and dated entry form.

■ **Please address any other enquires to Lou Kirk-Partridge, Rehabilitation Lead Art and Craft. She can be reached on email at louise.kirk-partridge@blindveterans.org.uk, or by telephone on **01273 391 458**.**

Members, staff and volunteers are invited to participate in a fundraising exhibition on the theme of ‘transport’, to be held at our Brighton Centre from 14 October - 1 November. From tanks to aeroplanes, submarines to warships, hot air balloons, sledges, goat carts, steam engines, mules, as long as it’s a form of transport, anything goes.

Artists may enter one piece of 2D artwork which must have been created especially for the exhibition. It could be a painting, collage, drawing, textiles – anything that is a flat piece of framed or hangable artwork. It will be offered for sale by auction, with funds raised

Getting together

Akila Jayamaha reports on the latest round of our reunions across the regions

Manchester Reunion

The Manchester Reunion was held on Wednesday 1 May at our brand new venue, the Marriot hotel in the heart of Manchester.

With over 100 attendees on the day, it was one that everybody thoroughly enjoyed with stories filling the room along with cheerful laughter.



Caption: Derek and Jean Mycock at the Manchester reunion

For many of our veterans, it was the perfect opportunity to catch up with old acquaintances they had not seen in a while. For some, it was their first reunion having joined Blind Veterans UK recently and a perfect opportunity to get a feeling of what reunions are like.

Leeds Reunion

The Leeds Reunion was a splendid occasion held on Tuesday 16 April, at the Thorpe Park Hotel. 70 guests attended including 30 local blind veterans.

Member Brian Goodall shared his photography exhibition "52 weeks" which has been touring Yorkshire to show the local community Brian's work and to spread the word about the support Blind Veterans UK provide.

The ROVI table was busy throughout the day with Tracey Bellwood and Ashley Li offering lots of support and advice on useful equipment.

Derby Reunion

We hosted our Derby Reunion on 9 May. The event went very well with the highest number of people attending ever. Ron, a member who attended the reunion, suffered from a stroke several months ago but really enjoyed himself this week.

Ron's wife sent us this lovely message: "Thanks again for all making yesterday a fantastic day out for our members. It was great. So thanks again and let's look forward to next year's".



Caption: The Derby reunion in full swing

Swindon Reunion

After Easter, we held the second Reunion in the South West's calendar. This time, we welcomed veterans and their guests to Swindon. They were treated to the delightful music of harpist Anne Denholm, of Live Music Now.

Anne is one of Britain's leading young harpists, and is Official Harpist to HRH The Prince of Wales. She is earning a reputation for her interpretations and powerful performances across a variety of musical fields. We were honoured to have had her with us.

Photographs, taken by member Mark Pile are being made available for the guests who opted to have

their pictures taken. Contact your Community Support Worker, or Mark directly, if you would like yours.

Barrow Reunion

A small but perfectly formed Barrow reunion was held on Wednesday 20 April, at the magnificent Abbey House Hotel.

The reunion may have been small in number but for many members who live in rural areas of the county it was a rare and valuable opportunity to come together and spend time together and fellowship with one another.

They also served

The story of the Second World War 'services subsidiary' members of Blind Veterans UK, as told by **Rob Baker**

This year marks the 75th anniversary of many significant battles and incidents of the Second World War, including of course the D-Day landings. The Second World War saw hundreds of newly-blinded men and women from the army, navy and air force services join Blind Veterans UK (then known as St Dunstan's). In commemorating them,



Caption: Bill Cowing at Church Stretton in 1941, talking to a visiting Princess Mary

we also remember that there was a corresponding home war effort, and many people joined the charity as a result of losing their sight in these activities.

There had of course been home war engagement during the First World War, and we had also been happy then to support those who had lost their sight from it. Most of these cases were from munitions work, which was notoriously dangerous.

The First World War had seen the establishment of a voluntary home defence militia, the Volunteer Training Corps, but this was not on the scale of the Home Guard (initially Local Defence Volunteers) of the Second. The existence of this and of other services such as Air Raid Precautions and the Auxiliary Fire Service in addition to the additional wartime responsibilities of the police, the nursing services and others, required of us much thought and discussion with Government, the Charity Commission and other charities.

A precise definition

Following this process, our Chairman Lord Fraser, himself a First World War blind veteran, was able to explain to readers of the Review that we would recognise those blinded in such activities, and why: '...we have just recently made a precise definition of the "service" cases that are to be regarded as St Dunstaners...the object of this policy is to maintain St Dunstan's service tradition, but at the same time to recognise that "service" in this war includes the Home Front, because it is a total war.' Fraser listed the cases as '...persons engaged in services subsidiary to the fighting forces, policemen, firemen and members of War Service Civil Defence organisations such as Auxiliary Fire Service, A.R.P., Nursing and Medical Services etc.'

Although they were not specified in Fraser's list, unsurprisingly there were also again several blinded from munitions work. These included Gwen Obern, who lost her sight and her right hand and suffered substantial burns as a result of an accident at the Royal Ordnance Factory at Bridgend. Gwen went to our Second World War training and rehabilitation centre in Church Stretton, Shropshire and afterwards went on to a successful semi-professional singing career and a very long and active association with



Caption: Gwen Obern and companions at Church Stretton

us. Gwen died last year at the age of 100.

Young people...

One striking consequence of our receiving those from the 'services subsidiary' was that some very young people joined the charity. One of these was Michael Oliver, blinded by a bullet wound in an accident whilst on manoeuvres with his local Air Training Corps squadron at the age of just 13. He went on to a successful career as a shorthand typist, remaining happily with the same firm throughout his working life.



Caption: A later image of Billy Griffiths and Gwen Obern

Two other young men who joined us were Jim Padley and Bill Cowing. Both were in the 8th Battalion Home Service Royal West Kent Regiment. At 15, Jim was under the official minimum age of 17 for enlisting when he joined in 1941. A few weeks afterwards he was on duty fire-watching at a school in the Woolwich area during a large scale bombing raid, and suffered eye injuries and loss of sight from an exploding

parachute bomb. Bill was 16 when he enlisted, and 17 when he came to us after being blinded by an incendiary bomb whilst on patrol. Both Jim and Bob joined us at Church Stretton. Having younger people there who had not completed their schooling presented us with a new challenge, and we added teaching in subjects like English, history and geography, as well as individual courses as required, in addition to the other training opportunities we provided.

We have a nice note in our records that Home Guard "B" Company (Woolwich) in 1943 raised £283 19s 7d from the proceeds of a dance, to be invested in a 'Cowing and Padley Trust Fund', to be administered for their benefit upon their attaining the age of 21. Jim and Bill both went on to work for Barclays Bank, although at different branches, and Jim's son Tony remembers Bill living nearby and keeping in touch with his father.

A very different challenge in the saddest of circumstances was posed by the situation of another Home Guard member, John Lawson, known as Jack. He was blinded in an air raid that also took the sight of his wife Mary and that of their five year old daughter Sylvia; tragically it also killed the Lawsons' infant daughter Anne. The family came all together to

Church Stretton. Lord Fraser wrote of them that he 'had never seen such human misery'. In time, Jack was able to train for and go on to a successful career as a telephone operator and he and Mary went on to have another daughter, Jaqueline. Sylvia later also undertook training as a telephonist, recovered some sight after operations, and married and had two children.

...to older people

Home service also provided us with some older people. George Goodwin was blinded at the age of 65 whilst an ARP Officer for Sittingbourne. He went to Church Stretton, where he was nicknamed 'Squire' and made friends with many of the younger men and women there. He had many hobbies and interests and lived to the age of 89. Charles Beaufoy, OBE, was of more advanced years, joining us at age 72 after being blown up by a shell whilst serving as the Chief of Special Constabulary in Dover. He was a former mayor of the town and a current magistrate. He also came to us at Church Stretton, where he successfully learnt Braille and to type and acquired the fond nickname 'Grandpa'. Having been widowed not long after losing his sight, happily Grandpa Beaufoy also found romance at Church Stretton, marrying 'Kitty' Perry who worked in the local food office. He died at the age of 86.

Beaufoy Road and Beaufoy Terrace in Dover are named after him.

This is only a small selection of the stories of those who 'also served' in World War II; it should be noted also that a number of our blind veterans who had lost their sight in the First World War also enrolled in the Home Guard in the Second. 2019 marks the 75th anniversary of the Home Guard being formally 'stood down' as a result of the success of the D-Day landings and the Allied drive towards Germany. Those of its members who joined us from it, and from others of the 'services subsidiary', form a rich part of our history.

With thanks to Tony Padley, son of Jim Padley, for information and John Hurst, Archives Volunteer, for assistance with research.



Caption: Gathered at Church Stretton



Lemon profiterole buns

A crisp and sharp treat from our resident chef

Penny Melville-Brown

Crisp and full of rich but sharp flavour, these profiterole buns are a wonderful way to complete any meal.

Alas, I failed with my first attempt when preparing the centenary lunch for former Wrens in Virginia Beach (USA) – see my efforts at bit.ly/2vMGTQq

Method

- Pre heat oven to 200C, Gas 6, 400f.
- Sift flour and sugar on to a sheet of folded silicon paper.
- Heat the water and butter in a saucepan on moderate heat and stir with a wooden spoon.
- As soon as the butter has melted and the water begins to boil, remove

My tips:

1. Instead of buying lemon curd, make your own: see my recipe at bit.ly/2WB48IM
2. Once you have pierced the buns, return to the oven for a couple of minutes for the steam to be driven out.
3. If you have the oven space and a spare tray, prepare two trays to give the buns more space.
4. Failed profiteroles come out flat and uninviting as a dessert – but are quite like blinis so top with cream cheese, a little smoked salmon and drizzle with lemon juice.

from the heat, and quickly add (shoot) in the flour and sugar in one go. Start beating with the wooden spoon.

- Beat vigorously until you have a smooth ball of paste that leaves the

side of the saucepan clean.

- Gradually add the eggs to the ball of paste. Beat hard to incorporate each addition until you have a smooth glossy paste.
- Lightly grease a baking tray and then hold it under running water for a few seconds before tapping off to remove excess moisture.
- Place teaspoons of the mixture one inch apart. (Should make about 40-45).
- Bake at 200C, Gas 6, 400f for 10 minutes.
- Turn heat up to 425f/220c/Gas 7 and bake for a further 10-15 minutes.
- Pierce the side of each bun to let out steam. Cool on a rack.
- Mix together half whip cream and half lemon curd, and use to fill buns.
- Make icing sugar and lemon juice glaze to top the buns.

Ingredients

| |
|--|
| 3.5 ounces (90g) strong white bread flour |
| 2 teaspoons caster sugar |
| 7.5 fluid ounces (225ml) water |
| 3 ounces (75g) butter |
| 3 eggs |
| Double or (heavy) whipping cream - whipped |
| Lemon curd |
| Lemon juice |
| Icing sugar |

A helping hand

In our latest benefits article, **Noreen Deen** explains what pension credits you're entitled to

Pension Credit - a benefit for older people on a low income

Are you of pension age or older and struggling to make ends meet because of a low income? If so, you could qualify for Pension Credit.

What is it?

Pension Credit is a tax-free, income-related benefit administered by the Government.

It is made up of two parts - the 'guarantee' credit and the 'savings'

credit. Depending on your income and savings, as well as those of your partner or spouse, it is possible to qualify for one or both parts of Pension Credit.

The rules relating to claimants being at 'pension age' for each part of this benefit differ slightly. To check if you satisfy the pension age criteria, we suggest you use an online State Pension Age calculator such as the one found on the Government's website **gov.uk**. If you are not able to use a computer or have difficulty navigating websites, please ask your community support worker to check the online pension age calculator for you.

How much could I get?

Guarantee Pension Credit is paid to people whose weekly income is less than the figure the Government has set for both a single person or a couple. For a single person, the weekly figure is currently £167.25 and for a couple it is £255.25. For example, if you are single and your weekly income amounts to £140, you could qualify for an award of £27.25 Guarantee Pension Credit

per week. This would top you up to the amount the Government has set for someone in your circumstances. Another example would be if you and your spouse or partner's joint income was £200 per week, you could qualify for an award of £55.25 per week.

It is worth noting that the set figures given above are the basic rate figures and that these can be increased to higher amounts depending on your personal circumstances. This could lead to you qualifying for a higher 'top-up' amount. Additionally, in some instances, an award of Guarantee Pension Credit can lead to you receiving additional benefits or concessions.

Savings Pension Credit is paid as a reward to those who have planned ahead for retirement by way of having savings or income. If you are single and your weekly income is more than £144.38, you may qualify for up to £13.73 per week of Savings Credit. If you are a couple and your weekly income is more than £229.67, you may qualify for up to £15.35 of Savings Credit.

It is important to note that due to recent changes in the eligibility criteria, the Savings Credit is not available for people who reached State Pension age on or after 6 April 2016. Therefore, if you reached State Pension age before this date and you are single, you could qualify

for this part of the benefit. If you are a couple and one of you reached State Pension age before 6 April 2016, you will qualify for the Savings Credit only if one of you was receiving this part of the benefit prior to 6 April 2016 and if one of you has been entitled to it since this date.

How do I apply?

If you live in England, Scotland or Wales, call the Pension Credit Enquiry Line on **0800 99 1234**. If you use a text phone, the number to call is **0800 169 0133**. Lines are open from 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday. If you live in Northern Ireland, call the Pension Service on **0808 100 6165** or **0808 100 2198** if you use a text phone.

Can Blind Veterans UK help me with my claim?

Yes. We know that claiming welfare benefits isn't easy so let us do the leg work for you. Your Community Support Worker will be happy to provide further information to you about this benefit.

What if my claim is refused?

If this happens, your Community Support Worker will first determine the reasons why Pension Credit was not awarded to you. Then if we feel that the Government's decision is wrong, we will help you to challenge the decision. Contact your Community Support Worker for more details on challenging benefit decisions.

Pension Overview

| Balance | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------|--------|
| Projected Balance | (Projected minus expenses) | |
| Actual Balance | (Actual minus expenses) | |
| Difference | (Actual minus projected) | |
| Income | | Expen |
| ACTUAL | | ACTUAL |
| State pension | £8,093.00 | |
| Work pension | £4,215.00 | |
| Interest | £630.00 | |
| Total income | £12,938.00 | |
| PROJECTED | | |
| State pension | £8,093.00 | |
| Work pension | £4,215.00 | |
| Interest | £1,000.00 | |
| Total income | £13,308.00 | |



Family news

Birthdays

Dennis Callaghan who celebrates his 101st birthday on 8th June.

George Johnston who celebrates his 101st birthday on 9th June.

Victor Knill who celebrates his 100th birthday on 1st June.

Emlyn Morgan who celebrates his 105th birthday on 10th June.

Olive Patten who celebrates her 100th birthday on 27th June.

Dargan Sidgwick who celebrates his 100th birthday on 1st June.

Eleanor Wales who celebrates her 103rd birthday on 21st June.

George Walter who celebrates his 102nd birthday on 30th June.

Arthur Wignall who celebrates his 100th birthday on 23rd June.

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.

Marjorie Clack who died on 1st April 2019. She was the wife of the late Thomas Frances Clack.

Alice Coupe who died on 7th May 2019. She was the wife of the late Harold Desmond Coupe.

Kathleen Marion Day who died on 4th May 2019. She was the wife of the late Frederick Albert Vernon Day.

Florence Eskriett who died on 20th March 2019. She was the wife of Brian Eskriett.

Audrey Gibson who died on 1st April 2019. She was the wife of the late Basil Gibson.

Elizabeth Lewis who died on 1st May 2019. She was the wife of the late Stuart Nicholson Lewis.

Henry Morley Mclean who died on 11th April 2019. He was the husband of Ann Hart McLean.

Dorothy Parker who died on 1st May 2019. She was the wife of the late Bill Reginald Parker.

Suzanne Seymour who died on 1st April 2019. She was the wife of the late Ernest Seymour.

Margaret West who died on 3rd May 2019. She was the wife of John West.



DANIEL SPASE / 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

Joy Williams of Welwyn, Hertfordshire died on 10th April 2019 aged 97. She served from 1943 to 1946 in the Army as a Corporal.

Roger Williamson of Nottingham died on 4th January 2019 aged 70. He served from 1965 to 1971 in the Army as a Private.

Dorothy Windon of Crowborough, East Sussex died on 24th March 2019 aged 94. She served from 1943 to 1947 in the Royal Air Force as a L.A.C.W.

Robert Wood of Liverpool died on 3rd March 2019 aged 93. He served in the Army as a Private.

Clive Digby Woods of Southampton, Hampshire died on 19th March 2019 aged 94. He served from 1942 to 1946 in the Royal Marines as a Marine.

George Henry Woods of Walton-On-Thames, Surrey died on 16th March 2019 aged 95. He served from 1943 to 1946 in the Royal Navy as a Petty Officer.

Leonard Atkin of Launceston, Cornwall died on 11th May 2019 aged 99. He served from 1939 to 1946 in the Royal Army Service Corps as a Private.

Alwyn Preston Baines of Kirkby-In-Furness, Cumbria died on 24th April

2019 aged 88. He served from 1952 to 1964 in the Royal Electrical And Mechanical Engineers as a Craftsman.

Gordon Hugh Baldwin of Polegate, East Sussex died on 27th April 2019 aged 94. He served from 1942 to 1946 in the Royal Marines as a Temporary Corporal.

Alfred Henry Barlow of Stockport, Cheshire died on 5th May 2019 aged 97. He served from 1942 to 1959 in the General Service Corps, Reconnaissance Corps and 15/19 Hussars as a Corporal.

Maurice Gordon Bell of Sheffield, South Yorkshire died on 19th April 2019 aged 89. He served from 1951 to 1953 in the Royal Air Force as an A.C. 1.

Graham Bentley of Fleet, Hampshire died on 1st May 2019 aged 89. He served from 1946 to 1948 in the Royal Navy as a Seaman.

Basil Walter Beresford of Burntwood, Staffordshire died on 6th April 2019 aged 89. He served from 1948 to 1950 in the General Service Corps and Royal Engineers as a Sapper.

Alan George Bradshaw of Southampton died on 17th April 2019

aged 96. He served from 1941 to 1947 in the Hampshire Regiment as a Sergeant.

Stephen Winter Brown of Barnsley, South Yorkshire died on 12th May 2019 aged 78. He served from 1959 to 1968 in the Royal Air Force as a Corporal.

Thomas William Bryden of Rowlands Gill, Tyne & Wear died on 11th May 2019 aged 90. He served from 1946 to 1948 in the General Service Corps and Royal Tank Regiment as a Trooper.

Edward William Buckton of Middlesbrough, Cleveland died on 16th April 2019 aged 86. He served from 1955 to 1957 in the Royal Air Force as a S.A.C.

James Robert Bullock of Romsey, Hampshire died on 2nd May 2019 aged 89. He served from 1948 to 1954 in the Royal Artillery as a Lance Bombardier.

Paul Albert Leonard Burrows of Rotherham, South Yorkshire died on 11th May 2019 aged 72. He served from 1963 to 1966 in the Parachute Regiment as a Private.

Hugh Carey of Newton-Le-Willows, Merseyside died on 30th April 2019 aged 93. He served from



1944 to 1947 in the Royal Navy as an Ordinary Telegrapher.

Cedric Carr of Virginia Water, Surrey died on 1st April 2019 aged 97. He served from 1937 to 1946 in the Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment) as a Lieutenant.

Brian William Chandler of Coventry, West Midlands died on 13th April 2019 aged 85. He served from 1950 to 1955 in the Royal Navy as an E.R.A.

Eric Clifford Cook of Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk died on 30th April 2019 aged 99. He served from 1939 to 1946 in the Royal Artillery as a Lance Bombardier.

Michael Joseph Corcoran of Leeds, West Yorkshire died on 1st March 2019 aged 93. He served from 1944 to 1947 in the Royal Air Force as a L.A.C.

Harry Corton of Wombwell, South Yorkshire died on 25th April 2019 aged 97. He served from 1945 to 1948 in the General Service Corps as a Signaller.

Violet Minnie Davies of Folkestone, Kent died on 24th April 2019 aged 96. She served from 1941 to 1945 in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force as a L.A.C.W.

Ronald Dawson of Manchester died on 10th May 2019 aged 90. He served from 1946 to 1958 in the General Service Corps as a Private.

John Dinsdale of Clitheroe, Lancashire died on 28th April 2019 aged 86. He served from 1951 to 1957 in the King's Own Royal Regiment as a Private.

Peter Dixey of St. Albans, Hertfordshire died on 1st May 2019 aged 87. He served from 1950 to 1956 in the Army Catering Corps as a Sergeant.

Ronald Christopher Dunbar of Newcastle Upon Tyne died on 21st April 2019 aged 63. He served from 1971 to 1976 in the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers as a Lance Corporal.

Frederick Reginald John Ellis of Ely, Cambridgeshire died on 20th March 2019 aged 96. He served from 1941 to 1947 in the Royal Air Force as a Flying Officer.

James Evans of Southport, Merseyside died on 19th April 2019 aged 99. He served from 1940 to 1946 in the Royal Air Force as a L.A.C.

Charles Fowles of Burnley, Lancashire died on 26th April 2019 aged 86. He served from 1951 to

1953 in the East Lancashire Regiment as a Private.

Robert Vincent Gray of Liverpool died on 1st February 2019 aged 90. He served from 1947 to 1959 in the General Service Corps And Royal Electrical And Mechanical Engineers as a Private.

William Grimes of Milton Keynes died on 6th January 2019 aged 92. He served from 1945 to 1946 in the Royal Marines as a Marine And Wireman.

Leslie Charles Grimes of Derby, Derbyshire died on 22nd April 2019

aged 97. He served from 1941 to 1946 in the Royal Air Force as a L.A.C.

William Gronow of Wokingham, Berkshire died on 30th April 2019 aged 94. He served from 1945 to 1948 in the Army as a Craftsman.

George Haigh of Banbury, Oxfordshire died on 23rd April 2019 aged 103. He served from 1940 to 1946 in the Royal Air Force as a Sergeant.

Joan Iris Marian Harrison of Hayling Island, Hampshire died on 1st April 2019 aged 96. She served →



GÜNTER MENZL / ISTOCK

from 1942 to 1946 in the Women's Royal Naval Service as a WREN.

Phillip Steven Hawk of Market Harborough, Leicestershire died on 1st March 2019 aged 65. He served from 1968 to 1985 in the Parachute Regiment as an Acting Corporal and Driver.

Sidney Hoddes of Liverpool died on 1st May 2019 aged 90. He served from 1953 to 1959 in the Royal Army Medical Corps as a Captain.

David Owen Hughes of Colwyn Bay, Clwyd died on 14th April 2019 aged 100. He served from 1939 to 1946 in the Royal Army Medical Corps as a Private.

Marion Eva Ellen Jamieson of Ferndown, Dorset died on 18th April 2019 aged 92. She served from 1944 to 1946 in the Women's Royal Naval Service as a WREN.

James Kidd of Hertford died on 14th April 2019 aged 83. He served from 1953 to 1960 in the Royal Engineers as a Sapper.

Peter Herbert Knight of Nottingham, Nottinghamshire died on 14th April 2019 aged 93. He served from 1946 to 1948 in the Royal Air Force as an A.C. 1.

Kenneth William Ley of Swansea died on 5th May 2019 aged 87. He served from 1951 to 1953 in the Royal Air Force as a L.A.C.

George William Marsden of Whitstable, Kent died on 1st April 2019 aged 91. He served from 1945 to 1948 in the Royal Air Force as a Sergeant.

George Raymond Marshall of Peterborough died on 11th April 2019 aged 83. He served from 1953 to 1991 in the Royal Air Force as a Flight Sergeant.

John Benjamin Matthews of Milton Keynes died on 1st May 2019 aged 89. He served from 1947 to 1984 in the Royal Air Force as a Squadron Leader.

Charles Christopher Mccarthy of Crewe died on 1st April 2019 aged 92. He served from 1944 to 1946 in the General Service Corps as a Fusilier.

Leslie Frank Moate of Peterborough died on 16th April 2019 aged 85. He served from 1952 to 1954 in the Royal Air Force as a A.C. 1.

Mary Charlotte Nash of Seaton, Devon died on 22nd February 2019 aged 92. She served from 1945 to 1946 in the Women's Royal Naval Service as a WREN.

Joan Page of Stratford-Upon-Avon, Warwickshire died on 5th May 2019 aged 96. She served from 1942 to 1943 in the Women's Royal Naval Service as a WREN HSR.

John Penman of Fochabers, Morayshire died on 1st April 2019 aged 85. He served from 1952 to 1954 in the Royal Signals as a Private.

Alice Maud Philpin of Dorking, Surrey died on 1st April 2019 aged 99. She served from 1943 to 1954 in the Auxiliary Territorial Service as a Private.

Peter Ritter of Brandon, Suffolk died on 1st April 2019 aged 91. He served from 1945 to 1948 in the Royal Air Force as an A.C. 1.

Francis John Robbins of Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire died on 1st April 2019 aged 83. He served from 1953 to 1955 in the Royal Artillery as a Gunner.

Kenneth Seaman of Manchester died on 6th May 2019 aged 97. He served from 1941 to 1953 in the Royal Navy as a Telegraphist.

Pamela Sellis of Sunbury-On-Thames, Middlesex died on 27th April 2019 aged 95. She served from 1941 to 1943 in the Auxiliary Territorial Service as a Private.

Helen Florence Silvester of Bexleyheath, Kent died on 22nd April 2019 aged 92. She served from 1945 to 1947 in the Auxiliary Territorial Service as a Private.

Geoffrey Simpson of Dover, Kent died on 15th April 2019 aged 84. He served from 1953 to 1958 in the Royal Army Medical Corps as a Private.

Frank Leonard Sleat of Tunbridge Wells, Kent died on 19th April 2019 aged 95. He served from 1942 to 1946 in the Royal Navy as an Able Seaman.

Edward Albert Southern of Ellesmere Port, Cheshire died on 24th April 2019 aged 99. He served from 1940 to 1946 in the Royal Artillery as a Quartermaster.

Henry Spencer of Ormskirk, Lancashire died on 8th May 2019 aged 84. He served from 1952 to 1961 in the Royal Engineers as a Corporal.

Brian Leonard Stansbie of Burton-On-Trent, Staffordshire died on 5th May 2019 aged 83. He served from 1957 to 1959 in the Royal Navy as a Leading Electrical Mechanic.

John Oliver Stevens of Harpenden, Hertfordshire died



on 13th February 2019 aged 89. He served from 1952 to 1954 in the Royal Air Force as a S.A.C.

Robert Mcewan Stewart of Nairn died on 8th May 2019 aged 88. He served from 1949 to 1950 in the Royal Air Force as a L.A.C.

James Stiff of Crawley, West Sussex died on 9th April 2019 aged 90. He served from 1946 to 1948 in the Royal Air Force as an Aircraftman.

Irene Mary Valentine of Eastbourne, East Sussex died on 15th April 2019 aged 96. She served from 1942 to 1946 in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force as a Leading Aircraftwoman.

Winifred Hazel Vines of Plymouth, Devon died on 1st May 2019 aged 99. She served from 1947 to 1951 in the Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps as a Lieutenant.

Michael Windsor of Hythe, Kent died on 2nd May 2019 aged 94. He served from 1943 to 1947 in the Royal Armoured Corps as a Lieutenant.

Edward Winning of Southsea, Hampshire died on 1st January 2019 aged 86. He served from 1951 to 1953 in the Royal Signals as a Private.

Sheila Agnes Withers Green of Newton Abbot, Devon died on 8th April 2019 aged 95. She served from 1945 to 1947 in the Royal Navy as a WREN HSR.

Ronald Woan of Liverpool, Merseyside died on 17th April 2019 aged 99. He served from 1939 to 1946 in the Royal Army Service Corps as a Corporal.

Judith Ann Wood of Faringdon, Oxfordshire died on 17th April 2019 aged 70. She served from 1972 to 1980 in the Princess Mary's Royal Air Force Nursing Service as a Flight Lieutenant.

Bernard Woolford of Maidenhead, Berkshire died on 3rd April 2019 aged 93. He served from 1943 to 1947 in the Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment) as a Corporal and A.C. 1.

Michael Gordon Worthington of Poulton-Le-Fylde, Lancashire died on 28th April 2019 aged 58. He served from 1980 to 1992 in the Royal Navy as a Chief Petty Officer.

Colin York of Brighton, East Sussex died on 18th April 2019 aged 88. He served from 1948 to 1950 in the Royal Engineers as a Sapper.

Ron's Quiz

Once again Review's quiz master **Ron Russell** tests your brains with a short quiz. In this case every answer features the word 'which'. Answers are at the bottom of the page overleaf

1 Which of these is Malta not a member of? The British Commonwealth, the European Union or NATO

2 Which of these is a triangular number? 27, 28 or 29

3 Which of these cities was also the name of the Duke of Wellington's horse? Rome, Lisbon or Copenhagen

4 Which year did Red Rum win the Grand National? 1974, 1975 or 1976

5 Which country did England beat at the Battle of Agincourt? Spain, France or Belgium

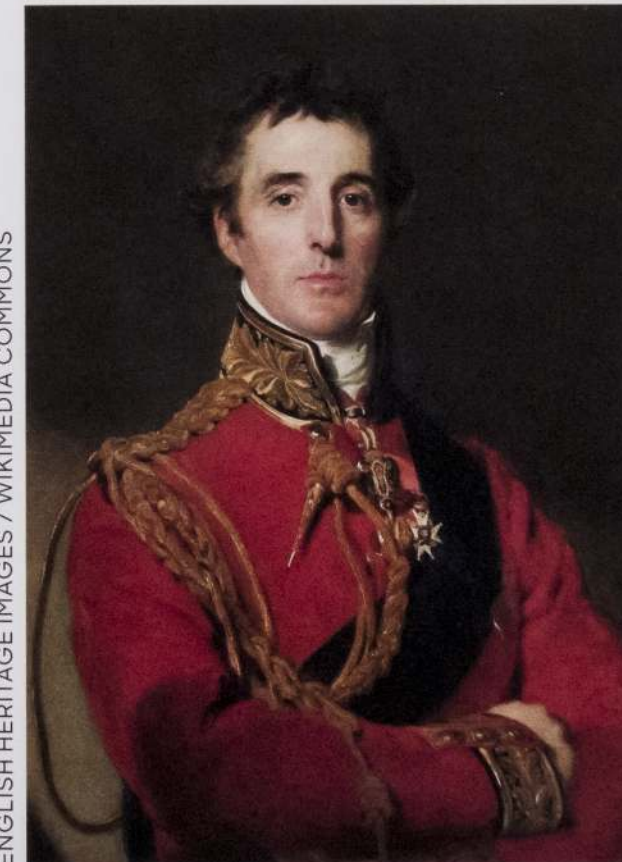
6 Which family of birds does the house sparrow belong to? Crow, raptor or finch

7 Which continent has the shortest name?

8 Which of these is classed as a boat? Cruiser, frigate or submarine

9 Which of these is not found in a trifle? Cream cheese, biscuits or jelly

10 Which of these singers wrote the song Crazy? Patsy Cline, Dolly Parton or Willie Nelson →



ENGLISH HERITAGE IMAGES / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Caption: Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington (1769-1852)

11 Which of these is a position in the royal household? Page of the back room, page of the back stairs, page of the back alley



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Caption: The Statue of Liberty

Answers

1. NATO. 2 . 28. 3. COPENHAGEN 4 . 1974. 5 . FRANCE 6 . FINCH 7 . ASIA 8 . SUBMARINE 9 . CREAM CHEESE 10. WILLIE NELSON 11 . PAGE OF THE BACK STAIRS 12. YEW TREE 13 . BLACK BIRD 14 . TWINKLE TWINKLE LITTLE STAR 15. JORDAN 16. 19th 17. PINK 18. BORIS JOHNSON 19. ALASKA 20 . JOHN

12 Which of these is not found at Buckingham Palace? A cinema or a yew tree

13 Which of these birds is the largest? Robin, starling, or blackbird

14 Which nursery rhyme contains the line "up in the sky so high" ?

15 Of which country is Amman the capital?

16 During which century did France give the Statue of Liberty to the USA? 17th, 18th or 19th

17 Which colour is a baby giant panda when it's born? Brown, black and white or pink

18 Which former Mayor of London was born in New York?

19 Which of these was the penultimate state to join the union? Nebraska, Texas or Alaska

20 Which king was on the throne in 1200? Henry II, Stephen or John?

One of the last

John Harris, one of the last Second World War-blinded Members has passed away. We present a short obituary.

John was born in Witney, Oxfordshire on 6 December 1924 and had an elder sister Betsy, and brother Peter. They kept chickens, a favourite being called Fanny, who John could make go to sleep by putting its head under its wing. Opposite was a flower nursery and young John found amusement in shooting at their signwriter with his air pistol.



Caption: A youthful John shortly after joining St Dunstan's

He was 15 when war broke out and found employment at de Havilland aircraft, repairing damaged fighters. He was called up in 1944, and thereafter developed a taste for HP sauce. He was then shipped off to northern France and thrown into action with a Canadian army unit. As he was following a tank, it blew up, with all around peppered with shrapnel, John was dragged off to a field shelter and left overnight before being returned to England, with sight still in one eye. The other was not saved.

John became a Member on 11 March 1945, and was taught basket weaving, and rug-making - there still is one on the hall floor. He won medals for swimming, and played trumpet in the dance band. The community among the disabled ex-servicemen led to lifelong friendships.

He retrained as a physiotherapist, and his student days were spent in our site at Park Crescent, Regent's Park, where he played in a dance band, →

Meeting Evelyn

Victoria Dickinson explains how volunteer Sue has changed the life of Member Evelyn

Evelyn Brooks from Horsham in West Sussex has been a Member of Blind Veterans UK since 2015. She joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force in 1942 as a driver, having been trained

on three-ton Bedford and 30-cwt Fordson trucks. Evelyn was posted all across the country during her time during the war.



Caption: John second from left, celebrating D-Day

drank something called boilemakers, and went to various theatres and concerts.

Physiotherapy was his salvation. It led him to the Royal Berkshire Hospital, where running the department was an attractive redhead, Patricia Leach. They married in coronation year - 1953 - and the celebratory fireworks were appreciated.

He was patient and painstaking in everything he undertook. He made some incredible fitted cupboards and tables, he built a cable car between trees across the lawn, grew all kinds of

vegetables, laid cement crazy paving, took up pottery and painted the greenhouse red. He went skiing with other St Dunstaners and was probably happiest when digging the garden, accompanied by his friendly robin.

And all through this, Patricia was his guide, his eyes.

Every morning he woke to face the challenge of blindness and met it with courage and bravery.

He listened more than he spoke. He was very fair. He was gentle and courageous. He was loved.



Caption: Sue and Evelyn

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 (CSW).

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

ROVI IT Helpline: 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**, email at revieweditor@blindveterans.org.uk or write to him at **Review Editor, Blind Veterans UK, 12 - 14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD.**

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.

AGENTURFOTOGRAFIN / ADOBE STOCK



“I know it’s important that the experience is positive for both parties, but had no idea that I would get as much out of the relationship as I do”

One of our volunteers, Sue Davies, was introduced to Evelyn in the summer of 2018.

“I first enquired about being a home visiting volunteer because as a member of staff, volunteering is something I am involved in from our point of view and I wanted to understand what it was like from the other side.

“I know it’s important that the experience is positive for both parties, but had no idea that I would get as much out of the relationship as I do. What I do is so small – to me, anyway. I visit Evelyn once a week or fortnight, have a cup of tea and a giggle or help her to read some mail.

Sometimes we go to Sainsbury’s for a weekly shop, or to a boutique to select a new outfit. All this helps me to see what challenges someone with sight loss faces in so many ways.

Reading the sell-by date on a chicken piece is something I have always taken for granted. Choosing a birthday card is so much more complicated when you can’t see categories on the shelf or read the greetings. Spending time with Evelyn is fun, makes me a better person and I always look forward to our visits. “

In return, Evelyn really enjoys Sue’s visits and says, “She is a real Diamond - we get on so well together, and always end up having a laugh and a cup of tea.

“Sue made my day when she took me to the shops to buy some birthday cards. We also went to the jewellery shop to get a new watch strap, and bought some tops in Bonmarche, she is so helpful.”

Sue also took Evelyn to the Brighton Reunion, where she really enjoyed meeting other members and having lunch.

Thank you to all our amazing volunteers who do so much for our veterans.





Rebuilding
lives after
sight loss



Broadgate Tower Abseil

14 September 2019

Broadgate Tower, London

Soaring 540 ft above you, this iconic building offers stunning views of London but could you walk off the side? Test your nerve in this ultimate adrenalin challenge!

blindveterans.org.uk/broadgateabseil

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