

Review

The journal of
Blind Veterans UK
February 2020



On the ball

How Simon rediscovered rugby

Inside:

The story behind our
commemorative coin
Your reunions calendar
A cinematic experience



Rebuilding
lives after
sight loss

Good intentions

Hello, and a warm welcome to your first *Review* magazine of 2020. I hope you all enjoyed the festive season and the start of the year and are ready to face what the next 11 months will bring.

Now, if you're like me in any way, you start the year full of good intentions, and of course the fabled New Year's resolution, and then gently let them slide. I have the utmost respect for anyone who can manage to uphold their goals and rest assured I'm with you in spirit every step of the way.

This year I've told myself that I'll eat healthier, cut down on the tempting Friday glass of red wine, and generally look after myself more, which is no mean feat as anyone who knows me will tell you. I've also told myself that I'll embrace change, which – being a dedicated luddite – is not an easy task.

In fact, embracing change is something we should all look at doing to a greater or lesser extent and that even applies to this very publication. It's been a year since we gave it a new lease of life, and the feedback since then has

been very positive, but more change is afoot which will hopefully improve our service to you. This mainly centres on formats, and how we can streamline them so we're not pulling ourselves in too many different directions. To this extent, we are looking at first phasing out our CD issue of *Review*. If this seems strange, then remember that both of those are now seen as old technology, CDs are nudging 40, and – like the cassette before them – will eventually go the way of the archetypal dodo.

Having talked to you as well, we withdrew the Sonata audio format last month. Instead we have replaced it with a new online player, and if you're a CD or memory stick user, I'd recommend you give it a try. It's easy to use, with crystal clear sound, and it's a moment's work to swap formats – just ask your case support worker.

Until next month, enjoy your magazine. 🍷

Chris Gilson
Editor



On the cover

Member Simon Brown playing rugby at Anfield football stadium



A tale of two genes

Your message from your Chairman, Air Vice-Marshal
Paul Luker CB OBE AFC DL

On the whole, I don't do New Year's resolutions. Instead I tend to do a sort of introspective stock-take. I would counsel against anyone else doing this in the way I do it, as it is usually conducted in the hazy and painful aftermath of a joyous New Year party. Nevertheless, I usually can't resist; this year has been no different.

Why I go through the angst is a mystery, since the outcome is invariably the same each year, at least on generalities and trends. Put simply, when it comes to me, my attributes, my failings, my achievements and my ambitions the debit column always seems overfull and the credit column looks - well - pretty empty. I am basically a pessimist. I come from the school that believes that if things can go wrong then they will. And, when they do go wrong, they will impact on

me first, with greater severity.

My family would be the first to agree. No, that needs clarification. They would be the first to agree that this is the way that I think. But they would absolutely disagree that this is the way that my life pans out. With the exception of my eldest daughter, who thinks in the same way as me, they appear not to have inherited what I think should be medically recognised as the 'Eeyore Gene', named for the pessimistic, gloomy, depressed, anhedonic, old grey donkey of Winnie the Pooh infamy.

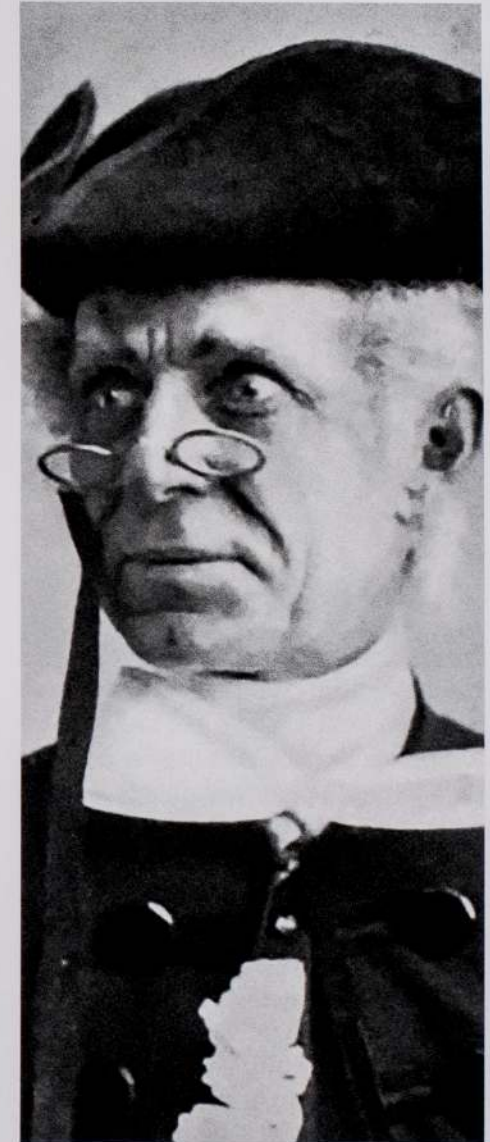
Plan, contingency, plan

Perhaps the gene does manifest often. I do tend to research, plan, contingency plan, model and test to destruction much of what we do. A trip to a new restaurant necessarily

"I am basically a pessimist. I come from the school that believes that if things can go wrong then they will"

entails exhaustive examination of reviews; research into parking or public transport options; scrutiny of Google Street View to select the best route and to be able to identify the restaurant door on approach; and a detailed preview of the on-line menu (just in case the lighting is too subdued). If that comes up looking a little sparse on the requisite intelligence, I might also do a covert drive-by a couple of days beforehand to reassure myself. We are off on holiday in a fortnight. I will leave it to you to imagine how much more preparation that requires. Suffice to say that the family now doubts that I need to go, because in my mind I have already been there.

At their most generous the family accuse me of over-thinking everything that relates to me. Conversely, I just regard this as sensible and prudent. Who knows whether things would have turned out much worse if I hadn't been driven to do all the preparation? That's the thing about pessimists. Are they happiest when things go →



Caption: Sol Smith Russell, one of many well-known actors who have played Dr. Pangloss



Caption: Paul Luker

wrong - in the way that they expected? Or are they happier when their anticipated disaster is averted?

Many of us who carry the Eeyore Gene have a compensating genetic component as well. By complete contrast I have enormous faith and hope in the prospects of everyone else. I will call it the 'Pangloss Gene', named for the fictional philosopher who based his life on the tenet that "all's for the best in the best of all possible worlds". This is why I am absolutely right to believe that only the worst will befall

me but that my eldest daughter is absolutely wrong to think this way of herself.

The oddity here is that while my Eeyore Gene might cause needless angst, I have rarely been disappointed by the effects of my Pangloss Gene. In my Service days as a commander (a position to which I was convinced I would never be promoted), I wholly embraced the idea of delegating responsibility and was never let down. And I do mean never; the subordinates in whom I put my trust not only lived up to it but frequently exceeded greatly what I had asked of them. One of the most satisfying aspects of command is watching those personnel that you have nurtured progress in their own style while still promoting the same values that you instilled in them. Now, as the RAF equivalent of an armchair general, I have gained enormous vicarious pleasure from seeing so many of them reach the top of the tree.

An invincible combination

So it is with Blind Veterans UK. While I might be wracked with self-doubt about my role as chairman, I have no such concerns for the people who run the charity. I have equal faith in the fortitude of you, the Members, to rise to and conquer the challenges that you face too. The combination seems

invincible, no matter the effort involved in getting there.

This long and tortuous preamble leads me to some incredibly important work that the charity has become increasingly involved in over the last couple of years: research and innovation. I have touched on aspects of it in previous letters. At the back end of last year, the trustees became more immersed in the background to some of the work; the span of what we are trying to achieve; and the way in which we might manage it. The last point is important: we need to ensure that the work is undertaken without detriment to our existing responsibilities and we are looking closely at how we might more successfully make this a self-financing enterprise.

Genuinely exciting

The prospects are genuinely exciting. This is much, much more than just commissioning academic research that might not see results in our lifetime. Far from it. It is predominately about practical outcomes that potentially benefit not just the Blind Veteran community but the VI community at large. Scientific and commercial bodies seem wedded to the idea of working with us because we offer an opportunity to collect and test data in a disciplined and organised manner, with informed consent from our

“While I might be wracked with self-doubt about my role as chairman, I have no such concerns for the people who run the charity”

members when they get involved. This really resonates with me; I am hugely attracted to the fact that we could well be the pathfinders in improving the way we cope with sight loss while at the same time generating future funding to sustain the charity. I am convinced that this is an area in which early successes will lead to greater external interest and further successes.

I am sure that I will be writing much more about this over the next few years. My Pangloss Gene will insist upon it. But in the meantime, I feel the dark shadow of the Eeyore Gene. We leave for sunny climes in 15 days. A lot can go wrong between then and now. I need to check the itineraries of other airlines in case our booked airline goes into receivership. How do I monitor the water level in the Mekong to assess the risk of our river-boat running aground? What other currencies do we need, if our credit cards or US dollars are refused? Can I do an on-line recce of the route from the arrival gate to the transfer desk? So much to do! 🍷



Caption: Ancient Mariners

Life on a rolling wave

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

Given that we have no January edition of Review, I think that it might just still be acceptable to wish you all a Happy New Year and perhaps even a Happy

New Decade. There will have been many hours spent over the last few weeks pondering on what the future holds – life's great mystery.

As you read this, I hope that it coincides with the successful completion of the Talisker Whiskey Atlantic Challenge 2019. This is a gruelling rowing race across the Atlantic, a distance of some 27,000 nautical miles. It began when 35 crews departed the Canaries on 12 December, which was our General Election day, and have been rowing ever since.

Most of the teams are quartets, but there are a number of pairs and even seven solo boats. Over the last few weeks my mind has often turned to the race, wondering what it must be like to be in the middle of the ocean on such tiny craft. Some of the crews have exploited technology to send back short video clips that give a feel for the sense of space, remoteness



Caption: Nick Caplin

“One of the crews is named the Ancient Mariners, aptly so because they are the oldest crew ever to have rowed the Atlantic”

and weather. Indeed one clip was sent by a solo rower that showed her boat being capsized by a rogue wave which washed her clean out of the boat and it was easy to hear the terror in her voice as the wave approached. Fortunately she was connected and able slowly to haul herself back aboard once the boat had righted itself. It makes me shudder just at the thought.

Ancient mariners

One of the crews is named the Ancient Mariners, aptly so because they are the oldest crew ever to have rowed the Atlantic. As I write they are in 25th position and have 900 miles to go, and it has been fascinating following their progress. A good friend of mine is on board and is no stranger to adventure, having summited Everest, trekked to both the North and South Poles and completed the Marathon de Sable.

Yet it is this expedition that has worried him most above all the others, and two aspects in particular: the challenge of keeping the team of four working →



Caption: Brighton Centre

well together in such a confined space where there is no option to stop or get off; and the potential for claustrophobia by being in such a restricted space. I am looking forward to hearing the stories when they get back, and to thanking them as well, as the Ancient Mariners are raising money on behalf of Blind Veterans UK and a children's charity in Africa. You can read more about their experience at bit.ly/35T3OZS.

Blind veteran and staff member Alan Lock completed this race a number of years ago, while last year Member Steve Sparkes completed a two-man row across the Pacific which is longer still. Their achievements were all the more extraordinary when you consider putting sight loss on top of all the other challenges that face these lonely rowers. These are special people indeed.

Ship shape at Brighton

Finally, a word about the building work underway at Brighton.

Our wonderful centre, built in 1938, is now beginning to show her age and is in need of renovation work. A few weeks ago we started this work and will be proceeding floor by floor over much of the year.

It is essential work and we are blessed to have thoughtful and conscientious contractors who will do everything that they can to minimise the impact on both our Members and our activity.

The Centre will not be looking ship shape for a little while, but the service and smile will continue as ever. Thank you for your understanding and I will update you on progress as we go. 🍷

In Your Community

Bowled over

Some of our Members from Community One in Scotland were invited to a "Try VI Bowling" event at the Falkirk Indoor Bowling Centre.

The team were coached by Commonwealth Games medallist Ron McArthur, along with amazing volunteer coaches Doreen and Grace. This was a new activity for some members and for others it was a chance to re-engage with the sport and make new friends. It was a fantastic day for all involved.



Caption: Member Thomas 'Tam' Buchanan is shown how to bowl by Doreen, a volunteer from Bowling Scotland

New devices on trial

On 6 January, the Member Support Hub in Sheffield welcomed Optelec and Vision Aid, which supplies products for the visually impaired, to demonstrate some of its new devices.

Several of our rehabilitation officers tested out Compact 10 and Clover Book CCTV's, along with an Iris Vision wearable electronic magnifier.

The session was very informative, and it was great to note how the technology is improving to meet the needs →

of those who use it. We are looking at trialling the Compact 10 with suitable Members in the Centres over the next few weeks.

Four decades of Roger

The Blind Veterans UK Rifle Club celebrated the 40 year anniversary of volunteer Roger McMullan working with our Archery and Rifle clubs on 27 December at our Brighton Centre.

The celebrations took place during the Christmas lunch which was kindly funded by a bequest from fellow volunteer Chris Howson, who sadly passed away in 2019.



Caption: Trying out some of the new technology from Optelec and Vision Aid at our Sheffield site

Roger received a certificate of recognition from Regional Volunteering Development Officer Rosemarie Hegarty, as well as a certificate from the Chairman recognising him as Rifle Club Honorary President for his time and commitment.

To top the celebrations off, there was also a birthday cake to celebrate long-standing Rifle club member Reg Goodwin's 104th birthday.

Rugby squad 'tries' to be blind

The North Wales Rugby/Ryghi Gogledd Cymru (RGC) team senior squad members visited our Llandudno centre



Caption: Reg (lower left) celebrates his 104th birthday at our Brighton Centre on 27 December



Caption: Members of the North Wales Rugby team pose with one of our Llandudno residents during their visit

as part of their community involvement programme.

They took part in a number of challenges blindfolded to experience what it would be like to be without sight.

These challenges included blind tandem biking and archery, as well as trying out classes that demonstrated the difficulties that come with being visually impaired.

Blind Veterans UK Masonic group

If you are a Freemason and are interested in joining fellow Masons for

a great weekend each year, why not join us down at the Brighton Centre, where we are the guests of the Temple Lodge.

Age, rank or experience is no barrier, it's a wonderful weekend for all.

The date of the weekend this year is 24-27 April.

■ Please contact group Chairman W.Bro. Clive Jones for more details.

■ Email, dragoneye67@sky.com or telephone: 07854 800 256

Getting the words out - thanks to Tech-Write

Social group 'Tech-Write' has been established as part of Community IT in Newcastle-upon-Tyne as a way to use Synaptic technology to its maximum potential in creative and innovative ways. It shares stories, anecdotes and memoirs orally, before working at home on their own writing.

Royal Air Force veteran and Blind Veterans UK Member Wilson Taylor - already an accomplished writer - has many stories to share. He is currently using equipment that



has been provided by Blind Veterans UK to edit his autobiography. This was a task he wished to do independently, and one that he previously thought was insurmountable.

He has written many other articles and short stories and is also fond of depicting scenes in water colours.

The group has been set up by Community IT Instructor Carol Johnston, and at the moment is only based in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, but it is hoped that it will soon be adopted across all the country.



Caption: The Tech-Write group is helping Wilson Taylor put his autobiography on the page



Caption: John George at Bovington Tank Museum

An unexpected honour

Member John George was proud to represent our charity when he was unexpectedly invited to be part of the wreath laying party at the Bovington Tank Museum war memorial on Remembrance Day.

John wanted to lay a small wreath on behalf Blind Veterans UK and used a small wooden cross adorned with some greenery from his garden.

John felt very honoured and it made his day very special. 🍎

Reunions

Our reunion season will soon be starting again. Here is a full calendar of all the various locations and dates for this year. They're a great opportunity for you to meet up with old friends and comrades, and of course, make new ones. Invitations will be sent out throughout the year, if you have any questions, please contact your case worker

Reunion	Day	Date	Venue
Edinburgh	Fri	20 March 2020	Marriott Hotel, 111 Glasgow Road, Edinburgh, EH12 8NF
Leeds	Tues	14 April 2020	The Queens Hotel, Leeds, City Square, Leeds, LS1 1PJ →



Caption: Cambridge Reunion

Belfast (N. Ireland)	Weds	15 April 2020	Park Avenue Hotel, 158 Holywood Rd, Belfast, BT4 1PB
Middlesbrough	Thurs	16 April 2020	Jurys Inn Middlesbrough, Fry Street, Middlesbrough, TS1 1JH.
Hook	Mon	20 April 2020	Tylney Hall, Ridge Ln, Rotherwick, Hook RG27 9AZ
Central London	Thurs	23 April 2020	Victory Services Club, Seymour St, London W2 2HF
Swindon	Mon	27 April 2020	The Wiltshire Hotel, Vastern Wharf, Royal Wootton Bassett, Swindon SN4 7PB
Carlisle	Tues	28 April 2020	Carlisle Racecourse, Durdar Road, Carlisle, CA2 4TS



Caption: Cardiff reunion

Manchester	Fri	1 May 2020	Marriott Victoria & Albert Hotel, Water St, Manchester M3 4JQ
Suffolk	Mon	4 May 2020	Venue to be confirmed
Nottingham	Tues	5 May 2020	The Belgrave Rooms, 25 Goldsmith St, Nottingham NG1 5LB
Cardiff	Weds	6 May 2020	Cardiff City Stadium, Leckwith Road, Leckwith, Cardiff, CF11 8AZ
Brighton	Thurs	7 May 2020	The Amex Stadium, Village Way, Brighton BN1 9BL.
Blackpool	Tues	19 May 2020	Village Hotel Club Blackpool, E Park Dr, Blackpool FY3 8LL
Surrey	Tues	26 May 2020	Venue to be confirmed
Bournemouth	Weds	3 June 2020	AFC Bournemouth, Vitality Stadium, Dean Court, Kings Park, BH7 7AF
West Sussex	June	Date to be confirmed	Venue to be confirmed
North London (Herts)	Tues	9 June 2020	Hunters Meet, Chelmsford Road, Hatfield Heath, Bishop's Stortford, CM22 7BQ
Essex	Weds	10 June 2020	Hunters Meet, Chelmsford Road, Hatfield Heath, Bishop's Stortford, CM22 7BQ
Llandudno	Thurs	11 June 2020	Imperial Hotel, The Promenade, Llandudno, LL30 1AP →

Leyland (Chorley)	Tues	16 June 2020	Hallmark Hotel Preston Leyland, Leyland Way, Leyland, PR25 4JX
Liverpool	Fri	19 June 2020	Liverpool Marriott Hotel City Centre, One Queen Square, Liverpool, L1 1RH
Kent	Thurs	25 June 2020	Mercure Dartford Brands Hatch Hotel, West Kingsdown, Dartford, DA3 8PE
Bristol	Weds	1 July 2020	Ashton Gate Stadium, Ashton Road, Bristol, BS3 2EJ
St Helens	Weds	8 July 2020	Venue to be confirmed
Exeter	Thurs	9 July 2020	Mercure Exeter Southgate Hotel, Southernhay E, Exeter EX1 1QF
Cambridge	Weds	15 July 2020	The Old Nene Golf & Country Club, Brick Kilns Farm, Huntingdon PE26 2XQ
Durham	Fri	17 July 2020	Ramside Hall Hotel, Carrville, Durham DH1 1TD
Lincolnshire	Weds	22 July 2020	Belton Woods Hotel, Belton, Grantham NG32 2LN
Eastbourne	Thurs	23 July 2020	The Grand Hotel, King Edward's Parade, Eastbourne, BN21 4EQ
Newcastle	Mon	10 Aug 2020	Crowne Plaza Newcastle - Stephenson Quarter, Hawthorn Square, Forth Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 3SA

Norwich	Tues	18 Aug 2020	Park Farm Hotel, Hethersett, Norwich, Norfolk, NR9 3DL
Portsmouth	Tues	1 Sept 2020	The Royal Maritime Club, Queen Street, Portsmouth, Hampshire, PO1 3HS
Milton Keynes	Tues	8 Sept 2020	Stadium MK, Stadium Way W, Bletchley, Milton Keynes MK1 1ST
Wolverhampton	Weds	9 Sept 2020	Linden House, 211 Tettenhall Rd, Wolverhampton WV6 0DD
Inverness	Weds	23 Sept 2020	Craigmonie Hotel, 9 Annfield Rd, Inverness, IV2 3HX
Aberdeen	Thurs	24 Sept 2020	Atholl Hotel, 54 King's Gate, Aberdeen, AB15 4YN
Worcester Plymouth	Tues	29 Sept 2020	The Worcester Whitehouse & Hotel, Foregate Street, Worcester, WR1 1EA.
Cornwall	Thurs	1 Oct 2020	Lanhydrock Hotel and Golf Club, Lostwithiel Rd, Bodmin, PL30 5AQ
Sheffield	Thurs	8 Oct 2020	Crowne Plaza Royal Victoria Sheffield Victoria Station Road, Sheffield, S4 7YE



Learning to listen

Your chaplain **Clare Callanan** opens the New Year with a message on the importance of listening

When my daughter was young, one of her favourite toys for a season was a toy stethoscope. She would wear it around her neck and we would regularly have to stop and be still as she studiously listened to whatever it was only she could hear. A few months ago, a friend of mine had a routine check-up for driving insurance and after listening to her heart through his stethoscope the assessor said, "Do you know you have a heart murmur?"

I suggest you visit your GP soon."

Four months on, after successful open heart surgery, she is realising that assessor saved her life by listening carefully.

As we enter a New Year 2020, with all the complexity and pain of the previous year 2019, personally, socially, politically and internationally, it seems to me that we need to learn to listen

to people and the world, as if with a stethoscope.

We need to catch the things people want to say but cannot - to hear between the words as well as to actually determine the value of what is actually being said. Many politicians, leaders, and others may appear to be saying the right thing and yet intuitively we often recognise that theirs are hollow words. They are not speaking authentically from the heart. We have to learn how to search long and deep and not be afraid of what we may find.

In our lives and relationships it is too easy to miss nuances and levels of meaning because we do not gift each other time and patience and presence. Before the person has finished speaking we have often already made a judgement, worked out that they are wrong anyway, decided what we are going to reply, and spoken back. How is that going to be truly helpful, kind or thoughtful?

As part of a larger poem, the 13th century Sufi mystic and poet Rumi wrote, "Out beyond ideas of wrong and right, there is a field. I'll meet you there. When the soul lies down in that grass, the world is too full to talk about." In our present awareness, we typically see these two concepts as different, and even as opposites. In the way Rumi

has experienced these two thoughts, they are not in conflict. Each one is neither good nor bad, right, wrong, belief, unbelief, and instead are part of a unity, one would not exist without the other.

In the "field," the gathering place, Love overcomes the apparent difference in these two aspects of human experience. In that place, differences no longer have their former distinction, and no longer have any value. As a Christian, this resonates with God's message of love, so powerfully yet humbly shown in the incarnation that we celebrated at Christmas.

So I wish you a peaceful 2020, with all it will bring, and know that one day I'll meet you in that field. I'll be the one wearing my daughter's toy stethoscope around my neck! 🍷



Caption: Clare Callanan

Ready, Steady, Cook!

Rehabilitation Officer **Stuart Penfold** continues with his series of articles about getting to grips with your kitchen

Following on from the last article; whether you are starting out on your cookery journey or are an experienced chef, I hope you find some of the following equipment advice useful.

Microwave

There are various styles of microwave available – dial, button and talking. A new dial microwave will cost about £40 and the advantage of this is that the dial is tactile and you can turn it to set the required time.

Adding a bump-on to the two minute mark will allow you to set the timer to heat up scrambled eggs or a small tin of beans. Four minutes will do a large tin of soup and six minutes will heat jacket potatoes. If you need more or less time – just adjust the dial to the left or the right of the fixed bump-on.

Also you can use the two minute

cooking rule - to heat a ready meal, cook for two minute intervals until the dish is piping hot in throughout. If you have a button microwave which you find difficult to use then a bump-on applied to the start, one minute and power setting button will help. Set the time by pressing the one minute button the required amount of times. A talking microwave will do the same but will tell you what you have done. These are a more expensive option, around £220.

Microwave cooking can be quicker and cleaner; no fat splattered about and perhaps less washing up. You can do casseroles, cottage pies, fish dishes from scratch all by adding ingredients and cooking for the required time. Remember though the rules of the microwave – no metal, leave anything to stand for a minute before taking it out and when lifting lids, vent away the

steam so it does not blow into your face.

Cooker

Cookers can be marked up to aid dial positioning; if the dials click, even better. Whether your oven is gas or electric when you open the oven door, remember to stand back so you don't get a blast of hot air. Again when boiling, if you lift the lid, vent the steam away – keep the lid in contact with the pan at six o'clock and lift upwards. This will ensure steam will not fly into your face.

Continuing with pans - positioning

them correctly on the hob will ensure all the heat is used to heat the food, not escaping up the side. Hopefully the colour contrast between the heat source and the hob top will assist. For steel plate hob tops, use a wooden spoon to orientate where the ring is and bring the pan to the spoon. Use a similar technique for gas tops but don't jog the burners. Halogen hob tops have a flat top, easy to clean (when cold) but not so easy to position the pan. These glow red when they heat up, which may stand out for some, but be warned, when they reach the required temperature they look like the rest of the hob top. Induction hobs are →



Caption: Cookers can be marked up to aid cooking

great; you need special pans but the hob only heats up when a pan is placed on it. Most cookers like this have little lights to indicate the cooker is hot. If you are ever unsure about orientation with any cooking equipment, orientate yourself first while things are cold.

When touching anything hot in the oven or microwave, my favourite tip is to get a pair of Coolskin gloves. These have been specially designed so they fit like a pair of ordinary gloves. You have the full use of all your fingers and wearing them you can get a tray out of the oven or dish out of the microwave, place it on the side and you won't even know you have touched it. They also cover your wrists as sometimes you can catch this on the edge of the oven. So there is no excuse to use a thin tea towel any more. If you are continually



Caption: Food hygiene is important

burning yourself, then contact our Member Support Hub (MESH) on **01273 391 447** for an assessment of need, as we keep a variety of sizes and styles in stock.

Keeping clean

Most important of all, keep things as clean as you can. Food hygiene is as important in the home as it is in a top restaurant. Don't mix utensils and chopping boards for cooked and uncooked foods. Keep tidy by having bowls ready by your workplace to place prepared foods and one for all the peelings.

Another tip is to peel onto a sheet of newspaper. When done, wrap this up and put straight into the bin. Wash up safely by not putting knives straight into the bowl; in fact try to organise the utensils you have used on one side of the draining board, transfer them into the bowl individually for washing, then place them on the draining board. Clean as you go, wipe up – start in one corner and work systematically across the area you are cleaning.

Transferable skills

Many skills are transferable. See the following as an example -

- If you can fry an egg then you have the basic skills to do a stir fry or fry mince



Caption: Bump ons are a handy aid

- Boiling an egg means you can boil vegetables or potatoes to make mash or boil pasta
- Peel a carrot, similar skills will help you do a potato or use a clean peeler or cheese plane to slice cheese
- Basic chopping skills for vegetables will improve knife safety allowing you to slice cheese or bread, cut your sandwiches into squares, triangles or rectangles
- Making the tea means you can make gravy, pouring sauces, make custard and add stock to a variety of dishes
- Put a pie in the oven then you can put a larger casserole dish or large roast chicken in the oven

Just by learning and doing one skill means you have the knowledge already in the bag to do other things as described above. The list is endless. Knowing the simple skills such as chopping and peeling, knowing cooking times, safe oven management, pouring safely to make gravy means a Sunday roast is not out of the question.

We know there are thousands of good cooks out there with plenty of ideas and suggestions so it would be good to share these with everyone. So if you have any tips, hints and skills you use, do share them with other Members you know. Don't forget it can be a simple technique which works for you, to a handy little gadget that makes life easier.

You may find your local services can provide kitchen and cooking training as part of a voluntary group. Local social services will look at your basic cooking needs. Your Rehabilitation Services department, full of budding Gordon Ramseys can advise about safe skills in the kitchen. Tailored to your needs we can offer advice on all sorts of cooking skills, from making the tea, cooking porridge in the microwave to safe chopping and peeling skills. New strategies can be taught alongside useful and needed equipment. 🍷

A big thank you

With Blind Veterans UK here to help, making your Will has never been easier, says **Jamie Rae**

The Legacy Team here at our London site would like to thank everyone who responded to our article in the November 2019 edition of this magazine, featuring our friend and Member, Simon Brown.

Simon was one of the first of our Members to sign up, and his experience is a testament to how easy it is to do. After making contact, the Free Wills Network got him in touch with a local solicitor, who walked him through the process step by step.

Our offer also extends to friends and family age 55 or above; and it covers all simple Wills, including mirror Wills.

A free service

Throughout this year, we will be continuing our free Will service to Members, covering the costs of a simple Will for any Member who needs one. If you want the peace of mind and legal security a Will provides, just a reminder that to get started all you'll need to do is provide us with your name and address.

With the Free Wills Network, achieving peace of mind couldn't be easier. To start the process please talk to your Community Team or directly to the Legacy Team. You can also do it online via our website.

■ **To get in touch with the Legacy Team, just call 020 7616 7953 or email legacies@blindveterans.org.uk.**

Simon told us -

"The whole process was very painless. The solicitor talked me through it, explained any problems and I felt at ease. I wasn't forced into making any decisions I wasn't sure about, and everything was explained in full so I understood what it meant."

As well as being delighted with the ease of making a Will, Simon is keen to emphasise the importance. "I think making a Will is an incredibly important thing, at all ages" he said. "I've known people where, without a Will, it's difficult to sort things out, and I wanted to make sure my assets go where I want them to go."

Simon went on to tell us -

"Dealing with bereavement is difficult enough without legal proceedings pinned on top. But if you've got a Will in place, you have that peace of mind that should anything go wrong, your loved ones are looked after".

On top of that, this month we will be launching a Free Wills leaflet around the Centres and in new Member welcome packs, to make sure we get the message out as widely as possible. Please do look out for them, and please share the information contained.

This service is for Members of all ages,

and we would encourage people to start thinking about their Will early. Simon sums it up perfectly here -

"If you're even contemplating making a Will, then it's definitely time to make one. All it means is that you've got important people in your life that you want to make sure are taken care of".

Any last advice Simon?

"You've got an opportunity here to have a Will done by a respectable organisation. Someone you can trust, where it's done in a very dignified, honest integral way. So yes, I would always advise people, get your will sorted out". 🍷





Lemon curd tartlets

In her first recipe for 2020, our chef **Penny Melville-Brown** serves you up this tangy dessert

Don't be put off by thinking a video is no use for visually impaired people. The Baking Blind YouTube channel at bit.ly/368M116 is more like podcasts, but with pictures. Share my time cooking these simple shortcrust tartlets in the Costa Rican jungle in the middle of a rain storm at bit.ly/2R3Bm3g. Ordinary lemons work just as well as the local lemon

mandarino fruits to make the sharp, citrus curd.

Method

- By hand, rub the butter into the flour until it resembles breadcrumbs.
- Add the water a tablespoon at a time and, using a palette knife, mix into the flour and butter before starting to bring together with your hands.

Ingredients

Pastry:

8 ounces plain flour

4 ounces butter, cold and cubed

About 1 and a half fluid ounces water

Curd:

3 ounces caster sugar

2 lemon mandarinos (or 1 large lemon), rind and juice

2 large eggs

2 ounces unsalted butter, cubed.

- Form the pastry into a ball and place in a plastic bag before chilling for at least 30 minutes.
- Meanwhile, make the curd by placing the sugar and lemon zest in a heat proof bowl.
- Whisk the lemon juice and eggs together before pouring over the sugar and zest.
- Add the butter cubes to the mixture and place over a pan of simmering water, taking care that the water doesn't touch the bowl.
- Stir until the mixture has thickened as the eggs cook (about 20 minutes).
- Place the bowl in the fridge to cool.
- Remove the pastry from the bag and roll out on a lightly floured board.

- Cut out rounds and place into tartlet tray, pricking the bottoms with a fork.
- Chill again for 20 minutes while the oven heats to Gas 7.
- Take squares of kitchen foil and scrumple into balls.
- Place a ball in each tartlet and cook for about 10 minutes until the pastry is starting to firm.
- Remove and cook for a further 3-5 minutes until the pastry is cooked.
- When the pastry cases are cool, fill with the curd and serve. 🍋

My tips:

1. If using a food processor to make the pastry, take care not to process for more than a few seconds after adding the water to avoid the pastry becoming tough.
2. You can enrich the pastry by adding a tablespoon of caster sugar and replacing some of the water with an egg yolk.
3. If serving later, store the tartlets unfilled.
4. You could top the tartlets with meringue made with egg white and caster sugar and return to the oven until toasted - but don't try this in the jungle in the rainy season...

Striking for Victory

One of our highlights has been the production of our Victory Over Blindness commemorative coin. **Alan Lock** and **Rob Baker** explain how it came about

When Member and Blind Veterans UK Special Projects Commercial Manager Alan Lock was asked to produce a Victory over Blindness commemorative coin for our charity he was keen to see just what could be achieved.

“As a Member I’m aware of how much our iconic Manchester-based sculpture by artist Johanna Domke-Guyot means to us, and I was keen to see what could be produced that was meaningful,” says Alan.

“As a child I always remember getting a commemorative Spitfire coin. I wanted to produce something tangible, and began looking into the idea.”

With a rough idea in his head of what he wanted, Alan now needed someone to make it reality and turned to Birmingham-based St Paul’s Mint to

create a design. The Mint was thrilled to take on the task of producing our coin, and in turn recommended coin designer Matthew Bonaccorsi for the artwork.

Matthew’s pedigree is impressive – he was previously Chief Engraver for the prestigious Royal Mint – and he also accepted the job with alacrity.

“The project for Blind Veterans UK was a very interesting one, and gave me the opportunity to mix figurative sculpture with some more symbolic elements,” notes Matthew.

“From my initial conversations with Alan, I decided to follow the design themes of military decorations, as I thought this would help to tie the medal to the charity, and also create an emotional response in viewers. The requirement to include our famous

Victory over Blindness statue nicely echoes the common use of allegorical figures in military medals.”

A laurel border

Matthew wanted to keep in line with military tradition regarding medals, especially the peripheral decoration.

“Another common feature of military medals is the use of a ribbon or laurel border. For the Blind Veterans UK design, I chose to incorporate a ribbon/ bandage motif. A strip of bandage is synonymous with the healing of blindness, so this border represents repair, and caring. It also creates a flowing texture that can be followed around the medal with one’s fingertips, as I wanted to try to incorporate tactility into the medal.

“The ribbon on the ‘statue’ side of the medal features seven ‘knots’, representing the seven soldiers in the sculpture, while also breaking up the flow of the ribbon to symbolise adversity.”

Alan worked closely with Matthew, making sure that small touches like the words ‘Victory Over Blindness’ reproduced in Braille were added to the design. In the end, a design was created that both agreed on and as Alan says,

“I like the way it all hangs together. It’s



Caption: Creating the design at the mint

not too busy or too empty – it comes across very well.”

But that was only half the story. There are two sides to every coin, and the reverse had yet to be decided upon. Enter Information and Archives Executive Rob Baker. Working with Alan, it was decided that the coins would be produced in a limited edition of 3,017 to commemorate our first veterans, with each coin bearing the individual name of a founding Member of St Dunstan’s.

“Our commemorative coins each represent an actual First World War blind veteran. We are fortunate to have extensive archives dating



back to the founding of Blind Veterans UK - initially as the Blinded Soldiers and Sailors Care Committee, although we soon afterwards became generally known as St Dunstan's - in 1915 and these were drawn upon to identify the individuals selected for the coins," explains Rob.

"This provided us with their names, rank and - in the case of army - regiment and, where known their date of enlistment. This information was taken from records which were compiled for each individual veteran from the time they joined us. These records also give much more detail including about their formal training (usually at St Dunstan's Lodge in Regent's Park, our then headquarters). Other interests are usually noted; for



Caption: The finished product

example some learnt to play a musical instrument whilst with us, many were actively involved in sport.

"The records also give details of their lives after the initial training and rehabilitation had been completed: their work lives, house moves, family life and involvement in the local community. This enables us to see how the charity helped enable and support each of the veterans, and gives a vivid sense of the life and character of the people the coins commemorate, making them much more than just a name. Sometimes too we have the person identified in photographs also held in our archives and can put a face to the name."

Like hot cakes

The coins are approximately the same size as one of the old crowns - some of you may remember the most recent issue of one was the 1965 Winston Churchill commemorative crown - and from the moment they went on sale proved very popular, flying off the shelves like hot cakes. 🍪

- **There are still a limited amount left in both gold and silver coloured metal priced at £75 for the silver, and £19.95 for the gold-plated version. Please contact our Supporter Services on 0300 111 333 for more information.**



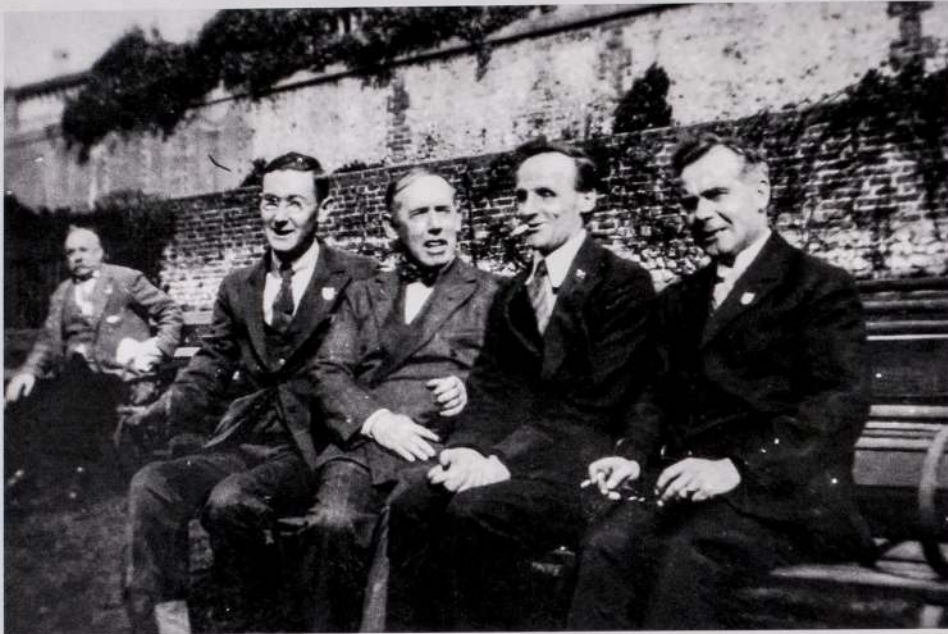
Caption: Richard King Huskinson (in bow tie) is seen at the forefront of this group shot

Family surprises: the Huskinsons of Epperstone

Our Information and Archives Executive **Rob Baker** talks about one family's links with our charity since its inception

Blind Veterans UK's archives sometimes throw up unexpected stories and connections. One such is the link between Richard King

Huskinson, a writer who gave us considerable volunteer support in our early years and then again during the Second World War, and Air →



Caption: Richard King Huskinson is third right in this group image taken at Regent's Park

Commodore Patrick Huskinson, who lost his sight in 1941 and joined us then.

Richard King Huskinson was a journalist and writer. We do not know exactly how he came to be involved with us but he clearly gave us a great deal of assistance from our earliest days in Regent's Park. He took on particular responsibility for running, together with the Matron, our 'College' building there (this had been a theological college prior to being loaned to us), which opened in

1917. He contributed a chapter, 'The Psychology of the Blinded Soldier', to our founder Sir Arthur's own book about us, 'Victory over Blindness', published in 1919 and also edited the Review for a time in the 1930s.

Our former Chairman Lord Fraser later wrote of Huskinson that 'He had no official rank but we called him the Adjutant....he was a good friend to all of us'. He can be seen in many of the photographs from our early years, and it is evident from these that he must have given much of his time to us.

Book reviews

Huskinson wrote book reviews and other pieces for the *Tatler*; it may perhaps have helped that his brother Edward was its editor! He also wrote a number of books, some of which drew upon his pieces for the *Tatler*. 'Passion and Pot-Pourri', published in 1918, was dedicated 'in friendship and gratitude' to our 'staff and "boys".'

It is not clear exactly when Huskinson ceased his active association with us, but during the Second World War we benefitted from his help again, after our training and rehabilitation work had moved from Brighton to the safer environs of Church Stretton in Shropshire. Fraser explained that: 'Richard King Huskinson re-appeared, parked his caravan in the grounds, and helped many newcomers to learn the ropes. "Mr H," as they called him, was as popular at Church Stretton as he had been at Regent's Park.'

We are fortunate to have in our archives a photograph album, donated to us by Northampton Museum, which must have been that of Richard King Huskinson. There are numerous photos from our early base of St Dunstan's in Regent's Park, but also a smaller number of what are clearly family pictures, some of which are identifiable as being in Epperstone, a village in Nottinghamshire. Richard's grandfather

"Patrick lost his sight in April 1941 during an air raid while working at his London flat...he wanted to continue working for the war effort"

Thomas Huskinson acquired Epperstone's manor house in 1867, and Richard's parents lived there too.

The existence of the photo album has helped us make the link to our other Huskinson, Patrick. Richard was one of 10 children, all boys. His brother Charles went on to serve in the army. He was commissioned into the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Regiment, or Sherwood Foresters, rising to the rank of Colonel. Charles' son Patrick, like his father, served in the First World War. Patrick was initially commissioned into the Sherwood Foresters but soon afterwards was seconded to the Royal Flying Corps. He was awarded the Military Cross for actions during the war, having shot down a number of planes while himself under heavy fire.

Patrick's citation for a later award of Bar to the Military Cross provides a vivid illustration of the dramatic and hazardous environment for an RFC pilot - '...when firing at roads →

from a low altitude, he received a direct hit from a shell, which carried away a portion of his machine. He, however, regained control, and, landing upside down in a shell hole full of water, was suspended in the water until nearly drowned. After his rescue, he remained all day working under shell fire until he had salvaged the engine.'

Bomb designs

Patrick continued serving with what had then become the Royal Air Force after the war. He also got married, to Ada, in 1920. During the Second World War he worked on bomb designs in the Ministry of Aircraft Production. He was married for a second time, to Molly, in 1940.

Patrick lost his sight during an air raid while working at his London flat in April 1941. Although he joined us soon afterwards he wanted to continue working for the war effort and therefore it was decided that his loss of sight should not be publicised. As a result, Patrick did not have the opportunity to join his uncle Richard at Church Stretton. Instead we provided him with a teacher to undertake training in Braille and typewriting.

Although he was formally discharged from the RAF in January 1942, Patrick nonetheless shortly afterwards became President of the Air Armament

“Our former Chairman Lord Fraser later wrote of Huskinson that ‘He had no official rank but we called him the Adjutant”

Board. He worked on bomb design and armament issues and collaborated with such notable figures as Barnes Wallis. Patrick was also responsible for organising the rehearsals for the involvement of the air forces in the D-Day landings.

Patrick wrote a book, 'Vision Ahead', which was published in 1949. This is predominantly concerned with his military experiences and war work but he also writes interestingly in the introductory chapter about his loss of sight. His description of his thoughts as he adjusts to what has happened is unsurprising - 'It was hard to believe that I should never see again. I simply couldn't imagine not being able to do things for myself; being led around by my wife....knowing myself, as I did, to be an impatient, irascible, bull-at-a gate sort of fellow, that looked like being a hell of a life for both the leader and the led.'

However evidently Patrick, with our support, was quite soon able to think more positively about his future. In



Caption: Air Commodore Patrick Huskinson CBE MC

addition to deciding that he wanted to continue his work if he possibly could, he decided to write what became 'Vision Ahead', in order to share his experiences - 'What I wanted to write was a book, not about myself, but about my job, from the time when I first joined what was then the Royal Flying Corps, and began to learn how to do that job, to the time, whenever that might be, when I had to give it up.' Patrick's fascinating book certainly justifies what he gives as his reason for writing it - '...I believed and hoped that some of the things I had to say would be of use, and so worth saying.'

Achieving a desire

Richard King Huskinson sadly died soon after the war, in 1947 at the age of sixty eight. Then resident in Brighton, not too far from the seashore, Richard must at least have come close to achieving a desire he had written of back in 1921: 'I should like to pass the twilight of my life in a garden from which there would be a view of the sea. A garden is nearly always beautiful, and the sea always, always promises adventure, even when we have reached that time of life when to "pass over" is the only chance of adventure left to us.'

Richard's nephew Patrick remained very much a part of the charity in the post-war years, attending some of our reunion meetings and keeping in touch with our Chairman Lord Fraser, with whom he shared an interest in fishing.

He left his Air Armament Board role after the war and became Chairman of a London printing company. He died in 1966 at the age of sixty nine, leaving a daughter, Patricia. Our records give no indication of the relationship between Richard and Patrick at the time they were both with us, so we do not know if they were close. Both in their own ways were clearly fascinating characters who showed great commitment to their chosen path in life. 🍷

The perfect try

After Simon Brown was wounded in Iraq, he thought he'd never play rugby again. **Lynette Denzey** tells the story of how he got back on the pitch

When Member Simon Brown was experiencing his darkest moments, having lost one eye and most of the sight in his remaining eye while serving with the Army in Iraq, he never envisaged himself running out onto the pitch at Liverpool FC's famous Anfield stadium to play rugby league.

He had played both league and union rugby in the Army and for his local team, Morley, near Leeds in Yorkshire. He remembers his last game for his home team before flying out to Iraq involved a bit of a scrap with another player, "Just handbags stuff", he explains. After his injury he thought his playing days were well and truly over.

But Simon has found himself part of the fast-growing Physically Disabled Rugby League (PDRL) set-up. Started two seasons ago, Simon plays for Leeds Rhinos PDRL team and their first match was against arch rivals Warrington, who were led by 'The Last Leg' TV presenter Adam Hills, himself physically disabled with a prosthetic limb. The Rhino's won

that first game 22-10 and Simon scored a try.

At the forefront

Leeds Rhinos has been at the forefront of promoting rugby for the disabled,



Caption: Simon in action

both physically and mentally, and for wheelchair users, and they were keen to have Simon, a life-long supporter of the club, involved.

As he explains, "This enables those who thought their disability had taken from them the ability to play, those who had played in the past, and those who never had the opportunity of playing before but had followed the game, to play in a very competitive environment".

The PDRL rules level the playing field, with players wearing coloured shorts, indicating whether the player is full contact, and can be tackled to the ground, or just tagged.

So, back to that magic weekend in Liverpool. Both teams were given the full Anfield treatment, with 20,000 spectators watching the PDRL match which was played during the half time break in the Huddersfield v Hull football game.

Not sympathy sport

Simon accepts the football spectators probably had no idea what to expect, whether they would or should feel sorry for the teams being all shapes and sizes and with differing disabilities.

He says he was really nervous, worrying he would not be able to see the ball if it was kicked to him, but he

was soon in the action and the crowd responded to what they were seeing with shouts of encouragement - "Oos" when hard tackles went in, plus the usual booing and cheering.

Simon's team mate Chris, a huge Liverpool supporter who has just one arm, ran in a try, at the famous Kop End, in front of the home supporters which was later shown on Sky Sports TV.

The atmosphere in the changing room afterwards was like all changing rooms apparently - lots of banter, shouting and laughter, then some raucous singing on the coach back to Leeds.

Turning his life around

Since his injury Simon has turned his life around with our help. Lying in his hospital bed, he had heard the news that two of his army colleagues had been killed in Iraq. He quickly realised he still had his life and, to make sense of their deaths, he had to do something with it.

As well as being a Member, Simon also works for us as our national engagement officer involved with advocacy and liaising with statutory services such as the NHS and other service deliverers.

Simon's success playing with Leeds Rhinos PDRL team is not just a sporting victory but also a true example of Victory Over Blindness. 🏈



Family News

Birthdays

Jean Lacock who celebrates her 101st birthday on January 19.

Arthur Sullivan who celebrates his 100th birthday on January 30.

Samuel Tibbo who celebrates his 100th birthday on January 16.

Violet Rees who celebrates her 100th birthday on January 12.

James Cavender who celebrates his 101st birthday on January 26.

William Armstrong who celebrates his 100th birthday on January 10.

Allan Lester-Jones who celebrates his 100th birthday on January 15.

George Kimber who celebrates his 101st birthday on January 22.

John Creaton who celebrates his 102nd birthday on February 23.

Page 40 Review

Mary Clouston who celebrates her 100th birthday on February 13.

Frederick Richardson who celebrates his 101st birthday on February 28.

Dervish Niazi who celebrates his 101st birthday on February 12.

Geoffrey Carey who celebrates his 100th birthday on February 29.

Stephen Tapster who celebrates his 101st birthday on February 2.

Lily Jepson who celebrates her 103rd birthday on February 23.

Joan Evans who celebrates her 100th birthday on February 20.

Willis Sadler who celebrates his 100th birthday on February 22.

Terence Best who celebrates his 100th birthday on February 10.

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.

June Dawson who died on 1 November 2019. She was the wife of John Dawson.

Margaret Dodd who died on 2 December 2019. She was the wife of Alan Dodd.

Peter Haddow who died on 1 December 2019. He was the husband of the late Grace Haddow.

Jean Hearnden who died on 14 December 2019. She was the wife of the late Ernest Hearnden.

Thelma June Hoare who died on 1 December 2019. She was the wife of the late Albert Hoare.

Ethel Rae Jeffery who died on 23 November 2019. She was the wife of the late Brian Jeffery.

Beryl Juchau who died on 1 November 2019. She was the wife of Ronald Juchau.

Muriel Kirkup who died on 1 November 2019. She was the wife of James Kirkup.

Florence Joyce Morgan who died on 21 December 2019. She was the wife of the late Frederick Morgan.

Grahame Morris who died on 31 December 2019. He was the husband of Rebecca Urwin-Smith.

Jean Parkin who died on 10 December 2019. She was the wife of the late Colin Parkin.

Marion Parkinson who died on 16 December 2019. She was the wife of Richard Parkinson.

Betty Porter who died on 31 December 2019. She was the wife of Maurice Porter.

Alice Stevens who died on 1 November 2019. She was the wife of the late Leslie Stevens.

Caroline Taylor who died on 30 December 2019. She was the wife of the late Robert Taylor.

Joyce Thomas who died on 15 December 2019. She was the wife of the late George Hudson.

Elizabeth Worden who died on 1 December 2019. She was the wife of the late George Worden.



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

Ronald Ambrose of Bournemouth, Dorset died on 1 January 2020 aged 60. He served as a Private in the Royal Pioneer Corps.

Cyril Armshaw of Romsey, Hampshire died on 13 November 2019 aged 96. He served in the Royal Air Force as a Leading Aircraftman.

Winifred Armstrong of Leicester, Leicestershire died on 31 December 2019 aged 97. She served in the Royal Air Force as a L.A.C.W.

Dennis Armstrong of Guernsey died on 13 January 2020 aged 86. He served as a Private in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps.

William Barnes of Wisbech, Cambridgeshire died on 19 December 2019 aged 99. He served as a Craftsman in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps.

Reginald Beeson of Skegness, Lincolnshire died on 9 November 2019 aged 90. He served in the Royal Air Force as an A.C.

Trevor Berry of Liverpool, Merseyside died on 12 January 2020 aged 90. He served as a Driver in the Royal Army Service Corps.

Joseph Booth of Rotherham, South Yorkshire died on 12 January 2020 aged 92. He served as a Private in the Army Catering Corps.

Norman Boughton-Smith of Westcliff-on-sea, Essex died on 14 December 2019 aged 103. He served as a Captain in the Royal Artillery.

Donald Brook of Guernsey died on the 8 January 2020 aged 97. He served in the Royal Air Force.

Michael Bruton of Berkeley, Gloucestershire died on 8 November 2019 aged 96. He served as a Private in the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment.

Roy Bryning of Salford died on 11 December 2019 aged 73. He served as a Bombardier in the Royal Artillery (TA).

Derek Burn of Darlington, County Durham died on 5 November 2019 aged 87. He served in the Royal Signals.

Stanley Carter of Liverpool died on 23 November 2019 aged 85. He served as a Private in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps.

Stanley Clishem of St. Helens, Merseyside died on 18 November 2019 aged 80. He served as a Private in the Parachute Regiment.

Peter Cole of Baldock, Hertfordshire died on 2 January 2020 aged 92. He served as a Private in the General Service Corps.

John Collins of Preston died on 28 December 2019 aged 87. He served as a Private in the Royal Army Medical Corps.

Gerald Cooper of Pontefract, West Yorkshire died on 9 January 2020 aged 82. He served in the Royal Air Force as a Corporal.

Reginald Corke of Lewes, East Sussex died on 19 December 2019 aged 93. He served as a Driver in the Royal Army Service Corps.

Derek Corpes of Guildford, Surrey died on 26 December 2019 aged 86. He served as a Corporal in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

William Costello of Lytham St. Annes Lancashire died on 21 November 2019 aged 90. He served in the Royal Air Force as an A.C.

Frederick Crossley of Carnforth, Lancashire died on 31 December 2019 aged 81. He served as a Private in the Loyal Regiment (North Lancashire)

Terence Curtis of Luton, Bedfordshire died on 22 December 2019 aged 85. He served as a Private in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps.

Ronald Davies of Middlesbrough, Cleveland died on 11 December 2019 aged 93. He served in the Royal Air Force as a Leading Aircraftman.

Frederick Devonshire of Shepperton, Middlesex died on 7 January 2019 aged 97. He served as a Trooper in the Life Guards Regiment.

Gilbert Dodd of Cambridge died on 9 December 2019 aged 96. He served as a Act/Sgt in the General Service Corps.

Raymond Downham of Poulton-le-Fylde, Lancashire died on 18 December 2019 aged 83. He served as a Private in the Army Catering Corps.

Gordon Eaton of Solihull, West Midlands died on 5 December 2019 aged 87. He served in the Royal Air Force as an A.C.

Donald Eaves of Weston-Super-Mare, North Somerset died on 17 November 2019 aged 94. He served in the Royal Navy as a Wireman.

Herbert Edwards of Leeds, West Yorkshire died on 13 December 2019 aged 106. He served in the Royal Air Force as a Flight Lieutenant.

William Elliott of Retford, Nottinghamshire died on 2 January 2020 aged 89. He served as a Gunner in the Royal Artillery.

Gladys Elphick of Bembridge, Isle of Wight died on 4 January 2020 aged 95. She served as a Corporal in the Auxiliary Territorial Service.

Frederick Elson of Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire died on 23 December 2019 aged 87. He served as a Sapper in the Royal Engineers.

Barbara Evans of St. Albans, Hertfordshire died on 15 November 2019 aged 95. She served as a Private in the Auxiliary Territorial Service.

Godfrey Finigan of Lymm, Cheshire died on 16 December 2019 aged 93. He served in the Merchant Navy as a Radio Officer.

Henry Flowers of Truro, Cornwall died on 17 November 2019 aged 99. He served in the Royal Air Force as a L.A.C.

Ernest Foard of Liss, Hampshire died on 25 December 2019 aged 104. He served as a Sergeant in the Royal Engineers.

John Fone of Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire died on 3 January 2020 aged 89. He served as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Royal Engineers.

William Ford of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire died on 21 November 2019 aged 94. He served in the Royal Navy as a Leading Torpedo Operator.

Colin Frampton of Winchester, Hampshire died on 30 November 2019 aged 88. He served as a Private in the Royal Hampshire Regiment.

Geoffrey Gent of Darlington, County Durham died on the 18 December 2019 aged 91. He served in the Royal Air Force.

Derrick Graham of Redhill, Surrey died on 25 November 2019 aged 93. He served as a Surveyor in the Royal Artillery.

Colin Griffiths of Hartlepool, Cleveland died on 28 December 2019 aged 92. He served as a Private in the Army Catering Corps.

Elizabeth Hardinge of Fareham, Hampshire died on 17 November 2019 aged 101. She served in the Royal Navy as a 2nd Officer.

Ernest Hearnden of Deal, Kent died on 9 December 2019 aged 93. He served as a Sapper in the Royal Engineers.

William Heron of Hook, Hampshire died on 5 December 2019 aged 90. He served in the Royal Air Force as an A.C.

Richard Hingston of Newton Abbot, Devon died on 21 November 2019 aged 94. He served as a Private in the Gloucestershire Regiment.

Graham Hinton of Dorchester, Dorset died on 15 November 2019 aged 96. He served as a Captain in the Royal Tank Corps.

Arthur Hoare of Southampton, Hampshire died on 30 November 2019 aged 96. He served as a Signaller in the Royal Signals.

Arthur Hollands of Brighouse, West Yorkshire died on 19 December 2019 aged 95. He served in the Royal Navy as a Petty Officer Motor Mechanic.

Rose Holt of Worksop, Nottinghamshire died on 5 November 2019 aged 96. She served as a Private in the Auxiliary Territorial Service.

Francis Hookham of Blackburn, Lancashire died on 7 December 2019 aged 90. He served in the Royal Navy as a Chief Petty Officer.

Susan Hopkin of Cardiff died on 23 December 2019 aged 67. She served as a Private in the Women's Royal Army Corps.



Edward Howarth of Accrington, Lancashire died on 11 November 2019 aged 96. He served in the Royal Air Force as a Corporal.

Hugh Hughes of Swindon died on 3 November 2019 aged 95. He served as a Signaller in the General Service Corps.

Ronald Jackson of Hyde, Cheshire died on 8 December 2019 aged 87. He served as a Private in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps.

Glyn Jones of Tyn-y-gongl, Gwynedd died on 1 January 2020 aged 88. He served in the Royal Air Force as a Corporal.

Brian Kelly of Sheffield died on 21 November 2019 aged 89. He served in the Royal Air Force as an A.C.

Brian King of Penzance, Cornwall died on 23 December 2019 aged 86. He served in the Royal Air Force as a Senior Aircraftsman.

David Lawrence of Dagenham, Essex died on 4 January 2020 aged 80. He served in the Scots Guards.

Christopher Linturn of Winchester, Hampshire died on 27 November 2019 aged 99. He served as a Corporal in the Royal Engineers.

Francis Lynch of Chester le Street, County Durham died on 8 December 2019 aged 89. He served as a Driver in the Royal Army Service Corps.

George Macken of Poulton-le-Fylde, Lancashire died on 11 November 2019 aged 99. He served in the Royal Air Force as a L.A.C.

Charles Malcolm of Dunstable, Bedfordshire died on 10 January 2020 aged 91. He served in the Royal Air Force as an Aircraftman.

Derek Malyon of Daventry, Northamptonshire died on 25 December 2019 aged 87. He served in the Royal Air Force as a Junior Technician.

Frederick Marshall of Eglwysbach, Conwy died on 24 December 2019 aged 91. He served in the Royal Air Force as an Acting Corporal.

Veronica Mathé of Bognor Regis, West Sussex died on 9 January 2020 aged 96. She served in the Royal Navy as a Leading Wren.

Joan McKendrick of Bournemouth died on 26 December 2019 aged 95. She served in the Royal Navy as a Leading Wren.

Ronald Morris of Horley, Surrey died on 9 January 2020 aged 92. He served as a Lance Corporal in the General Service Corps.

Grahame Morris of Colwyn Bay, Clwyd died on 31 December 2019 aged 98. He served in the Merchant Navy as a Radio Officer.

James Morrison of Glasgow died on 2 January 2020 aged 88. He served in the Royal Air Force as a L.A.C.

Philip Oakley of Skegness, Lincolnshire died on 3 December 2019 aged 93. He served as a Private in the Cameronians (Scottish Rifles).

Gary Ogden of Peacehaven, East Sussex died on 20 December 2019 aged 60. He served as a Gunner in the Parachute Regiment.

Robert Page of Peterborough died on 4 November 2019 aged 87. He served in the Royal Navy as an Officers' Cook.

Clifford Peace of Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria died on 2 December 2019 aged 93. He served as a Warrant Officer in the Border Regiment.

Edward Pepper of Brighton, East Sussex died on 4 December 2019 aged 86. He served in the Royal Navy as a Petty Officer.

Eileen Pockett of Bournemouth died on 15 December 2019 aged 100. She served in the Royal Navy as a Wren.

Eric Powell of Weymouth, Dorset died on 26 November 2019 aged 89. He served in the Royal Air Force as a L.A.C.

Ronald Preston of Prestatyn, Clwyd died on 1 January 2020 aged 101. He served as a Driver in the Royal Signals.

Stanley Pritchard of Sale, Cheshire died on 4 January 2020 aged 85. He served in the Royal Air Force as a Lance Corporal.

Reginald Pursey of Gloucester, Gloucestershire died on 12 December 2019 aged 92. He served as a Lance Corporal in the General Service Corps.

Ray Pym of Lincoln died on 25 November 2019 aged 93. He served as a Sergeant in the Army Ordnance Corps.

Reginald Reed of Middlesbrough, Cleveland died on 5 December 2019 aged 97. He served as a Lance Corporal in the Royal Signals.

Harold Rivington of Chester died on 11 November 2019 aged 91. He served as a Private in the General Service Corps.

David Rodwell of Carnforth, Lancashire died on 10 November 2019 aged 94. He served as a Sergeant in the Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment).

John Rolfe of Cwmbran, Gwent died on 2 January 2020 aged 83. He served in the Royal Air Force as a S.A.C.

Edward Rosen of Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex died on 1 November 2019 aged 98. He served as a Gunner in the Royal Artillery.

Harold Ross of Birmingham, West Midlands died on 1 December 2019 aged 83. He served as a Gunner in the Royal Artillery.

Gordon Rowe of Exeter died on 3 January 2020 aged 99. He served as a Lieutenant in the Royal Armoured Corps.

Antonio Scicluna of Chichester, West Sussex died on 4 January 2020 aged 89. He served as a Private in the Royal Sussex Regiment.

Peggy Scourfield of Maesteg, Mid Glamorgan died on 3 December 2019 aged 97. He served as a Corporal in the Auxiliary Territorial Service.

Keith Seed of Preston died on 11 November 2019 aged 87. He served as a Lance Corporal in the Royal Army Service Corps.

Max Selman of Norwich died on 19 December 2019 aged 84. He served in the Royal Air Force as a Corporal.

Terence Shelts of Ramsgate, Kent died on 22 December 2019 aged 81. He served as a Private in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps.

Ronald Simpson of Hartlepool, Cleveland died on 1 November 2019 aged 91. He served as a Corporal in the General Service Corps.

Walter Smith of Lincoln died on 28 November 2019 aged 87. He served as a Private in the Royal Warwickshire Regiment.

Anthony Steadman of Southport, Merseyside died on 19 November 2019 aged 82. He served in the Royal Air Force as a L.A.C.

Reginald Taylor of Norwich died on 24 November 2019 aged 88. He served in the Royal Air Force as a Chief Technician.

Albert Thomas of Harrogate, North Yorkshire died on 26 November 2019 aged 91. He served in the Royal Air Force as a Corporal.

Norman Tinsley of Shrewsbury died on 1 December 2019 aged 97. He served in the Royal Air Force as a L.A.C.

Ronald Tuft of Mansfield, Nottinghamshire died on 18 December 2019 aged 83. He served as a Private in the Army Catering Corps.

Cecil Underwood of Sindlesham, Berkshire died on 1 December 2019 aged 99. He served in the Royal Artillery.

Sybil Unsworth of Lymington, Hampshire died on 14 December 2019 aged 97. She served in the Royal Air Force as a L.A.C.W.

Bryan Wade of Paignton, Devon died on 11 December 2019 aged 85. He served as a Private in the East Surrey Regiment.

Harold Welton of Poole, Dorset died on 30 November 2019 aged 94. He served as a Corporal in the General Service Corps.

Jack Weston of Norwich, Norfolk died on 1 December 2019 aged 88. He served as a Sergeant in the Royal Army Pay Corps.

Henry White of Mitcham, Surrey died on 7 January 2020 aged 95. He served in the Royal Navy as a Petty Officer Motor Mechanic.

Frank White of Nottingham, Nottinghamshire died on 29 December 2019 aged 96. He served in the Royal Air Force as a Warrant Officer.

Derrick Whorton of Colwyn Bay, Clwyd died on 9 November 2019 aged 93. He served in the General Service Corps.

Malcolm Wilding of Rotherham, South Yorkshire died on 11 November 2019 aged 85. He served as a Lance Bombardier in the Royal Artillery.

John Williams of Penarth, South Glamorgan died on 10 December 2019 aged 99. He served in the Royal Navy as a Telegraph Operator.

Desmond Winters of Plymouth died on 21 December 2019 aged 90. He served as a Private in the General Service Corps.

A night at the movies

When Member **Garry Cowan** wanted to see Star Wars he found out that not all cinemas are the same



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Caption: ODEON, Dougalsfield

In the past four years I have struggled to find a great cinema experience. I've tried various outlets and it has been hit and miss.

A totally blind person needs to wholly rely on audio descriptive to enjoy a successful movie or show. In the past few years I have been personally put off going to a cinema to watch a new movie due to this service being unreliable.

I had used Cineworld for years and my first movie was a success, but as time went on the old technology using Infra-red was rather stressful if you needed to reach for a drink or snack - the signal would distort or completely cut out.

This put me off the cinema experience, and rather than sit for roughly three hours guessing what was happening and going into brain meltdown mode,

I chose to wait until the service was updated.

A patient wait

I messaged both ODEON and Cineworld on the social media platform Twitter, and was advised that ODEON was updating all its major cinemas while installing the new audio descriptive technology. Unfortunately, Cineworld did not respond. So, I waited patiently for 18 months for my local cinema to be refurbished until I could finally visit it.

We were able to contact my local ODEON Cinema at Dougalsfield, Dundee direct and asked the staff for advice on the audio descriptive service for *Star Wars*. They informed me that all screens are fitted with it.

Although I had previously had a bad experience with audio description, I was optimistic and was rather pleased when I discovered that all seating had been replaced with 'lazyboy' recliners that had adjustable tray tables for snacks.

The seats and service were very comfortable and surprisingly easy to use, with additional leg room. I was waiting for the audio track to start with the movie and was shown how the receiver box functioned. It's a little WiFi audio box with a standard jack

“This has changed my whole Cinema experience, and I would advise other Members to go and try it out and enjoy the same experience”

plug for a headset that features volume controls on the left side just under the jack port.

I found this simple to use and did not have to reach and move it around to pick up a signal, which is what I used to have to do with minimal success. The audio descriptive technology was crystal clear at all times, even when I was adjusting my seat and enjoying my snacks.

This has changed my whole cinema experience, and I would advise other Members to go and try it out and enjoy the same experience at other ODEON cinemas near them

In a nutshell, I was comfortable from the moment I arrived until when I left, and I really enjoyed my film without any disruption. I shall be testing out my own headset on my next visit, and I look forward to another great screening. 🍿

Getting an upgrade

Our Brighton Centre is having some necessary works done to it - Operations Manager **Chris Kirk** tells you just what's going on

Up on a hill at Ovingdean, four miles outside Brighton and overlooking the English Channel, Blind Veterans UK (then St Dunstan's) built its bespoke and iconic Centre in October 1938.

It was unique in being purpose-built for blind veterans, and they themselves had input into its design and functions. The architect, Francis Lorne, produced a striking six-storey art deco building of fireproof steel and brick, which from a distance looked like an aeroplane, as author Graham Greene spotted and mentioned in his famous 1938 bestseller Brighton Rock.

"Above Rottingdean the new villas began, pipe-dream architecture, up on the downs the obscure skeleton of a nursing home, winged like an aeroplane."

How time flies, as that was over 80 years ago now and understandably, like us, the building has aged and needs updating.

Richard Blyth, our Facilities Manager at the Centre told me, "We take the health and safety of our Members, colleagues and public as a matter of the highest priority. Over the years, improvements in technology and equipment have advanced and at the same time the systems in the Brighton Centre have degraded - for example, parts of the fire detection system are over 50 years old.

"This new programme of works includes upgrading our fire detection system, smoke dampers, emergency lighting, repairing any breaches in the compartmentalisation and



Caption: Our Brighton Centre is undergoing works to improve its facilities

some electrical upgrades and door replacements. While we are working in the spaces, we are also collaborating with our computer department colleagues and upgrading the data cabling throughout the building.

"We are delighted that the successful contractor was appointed, as it really understands the needs of our Members and its willingness to 'work alongside' us was evident."

An impressive reception

The contractors coming to the building were so impressed with the reception they received from everyone that they volunteered to take the same induction that our staff do. They wanted to understand everyone that lives in and visits the Centre so they could be more careful in the way they worked, and

more understanding of the frustrations people may face.

We were overwhelmed by the number of contractors who took part in the induction. They have set themselves up in a little home from home outside the building so as not to disturb residents or holiday makers.

Our Centre is uniquely adapted for the needs of our veterans - our large grounds have designated safe pathways and each floor within the building has the same layout to help people keep their bearings. We ask everyone to keep to a 'rule of the road', which is to walk on the right-hand side and the railings have floor indicators on them. Building work can sometimes disrupt these long-established routes and rules, which is why it is nice to



have contractors who are sensitive to this.

Lesley Garven our Centre Manager is leading from the front, saying "Keep calm and carry on. The Brighton Centre is under-going much needed modernisation of fire safety systems which includes stripping out old and unused electrical and data cables. We are starting at the top of the building and moving down but our teams are still all working hard to make sure that your stay is inconvenienced as little as possible.

"If you are planning to come to us for a holiday, training or just a visit we will do our best to make sure you continue to receive a first-class service. All activities and events are still on track, and our fabulous bookings team will be able to



Caption: Our contractors at their induction

make sure you are kept up to date prior to your visit. Please call us if you are unsure of anything on **01273 391 450.**"

Interesting artefacts

The work has already revealed some interesting artefacts. We found a very old intercom system in the Centre Manager's office. Not quite strings and bells, but certainly something from the 1960s or thereabouts. When the contractors started looking behind the walls in the upstairs gents' toilets, they found the walls of some much older lavatories, complete with old soap dishes.

We have asked the contractors to keep their eyes peeled for any more relics from the past that they might discover hidden in the walls and ceilings of the building. 🍷



Caption: Wearing the famed VI glasses

Contact details

Contact address Blind Veterans UK,
12-14 Harcourt Street, London, W1H
4HD, **0300 111 22 33**

Member Support Hub: 01273 391 447

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.**

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.

Review Editor: You can telephone Chris Gilson on **020 7616 8367** or email him at revieweditor@blindveterans.org.uk



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We value your feedback and use it to improve and develop the services we provide. If you would like to provide feedback on the magazine or any aspect of our services then please email us at feedback@blindveterans.org.uk or call **0300 111 22 33**

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



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