

# Review



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The journal of  
Blind Veterans UK

**April 2025**



## Remnants of a Brutal War

VE Day reflections from our Members

### Inside:

VE Day Candles for sale

Our Invictus games Champions

Get creative - Veterans Art Project



Rebuilding  
lives after  
sight loss





# After the Darkness: Special Member made VE Day candles available now

A selection of candles to commemorate the 80th anniversary of VE Day can be purchased now with 50% of the profits being donated to our charity.

To explore the available scents and to place an order, visit [seabreezecandles.co.uk](http://seabreezecandles.co.uk)

**“Making candles allows me to channel my thoughts and emotions into something beautiful, and I often think of the warmth and light they bring to spaces, much like the support Blind Veterans UK provide to veterans.”**  
- Tony, Member.

■ Read more about Tony's story on page 18



VE Day  
memories  
- Page 15

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### On the cover

Portrait photograph of Member Alice Wolynsky, shot by Richard Canon for our VE80 Campaign





# Looking Ahead: From competition to commemoration

A message from your Chair, **Barry Coupe**



**Barry Coupe**

At the time of writing, we are still under consultation on our proposal to end the charity's activity at our Llandudno Centre so there is nothing to update for our Members right now.

Thank you to those of you who have written to me to share your thoughts

on the proposal and to those of you have said that you will be attending our Member conference next month.

The conference will be in Birmingham on 22 and 23 May. All being well it will be led by our Chief Executive Adrian and will give you the chance to share your thoughts, feedback and ideas on our future direction. I will be attending and look forward to seeing all those who can attend.

You can register up until 15 April and, due to expected high levels of interest, Members expressing their interest to attend will be chosen via a random ballot.

I would like to congratulate Members Andy Allen and Mark Abel for not only being selected to compete at the recent Invictus Games in Canada but also winning medals. You can read more

about Mark's experiences at the games on page 21.

The country, and our charity, is gearing up for the celebrations that will surround the 80th anniversary of VE Day. Any veteran serving that day will now be at least 98 years old and most are over 100. Taking time to recognise their service and sacrifice for all our freedoms is arguably more important than ever before.

That is why our Engagement Team have been capturing as many of these stories as possible and this also allows us to share them with you in Review. You can read some of these stories in

this month's issue on page 15 and there will be more to come in future issues. Thank you to all those Second World War Members for sharing their stories.

I never cease to be amazed at the different skills our Members can turn their hand to and it is great that Member Tony Haskey has started his own business making scented candles. Tony is now selling a special VE Day 80 candle for Blind Veterans UK, and you can learn more about this on page 18.

Members like Tony, Andy, and Mark really are an inspiration and remind us all that achievement, whatever your goals may be, is always possible. 🇬🇧



**Mark Abel at the Invictus Games 2025**



# News

## Raising money with preloved books

Former Army serviceman Chris Child has raised over £500 for Blind Veterans UK through his long-running charity bookstalls. Chris, who served with the Royal Logistics Corps, has been running bookstalls for over 25 years, dedicating the last decade to regular fundraising at Salisbury Charter Market.

With the help of around 12 volunteers and a steady stream of donated books, Chris has raised money for various charities and schools. He decided to support Blind Veterans UK in November, inspired by Blind Veteran Dave Cole who attends the Salisbury and Amesbury Armed Forces and Veterans Breakfast Club which is hosted at the Field Kitchen once a month. Dave says "I am so grateful to Chris for supporting the charity with the bookstall; I now go along every week to help run the bookstall regardless of which charity is benefitting."

Since then, Chris has hosted three bookstalls in aid of the charity, with another planned for 8 March. Thanks



The BVUK charity book stall

to the generosity of local book lovers, he has already raised more than £500. He hopes to continue growing his total and encourages others to get involved, whether by donating books, helping at stalls, or setting up similar initiatives in your community.

- You can find Chris and his bookstall on facebook by searching for: **The charity bookstall @ Salisbury Charter Market.**

## Annual Member Conference 2025

We are pleased to invite you to the Blind Veterans UK Member Conference on 22-23 May 2025.

The conference, led by our Chief Executive Adrian Bell, will give you

the chance to share your thoughts, feedback and ideas on important decisions regarding our future strategy. At the same time, you will be able to get together with your fellow Members and meet senior staff from across the charity.

### Venue

**Aston Conference Centre  
Aston University, Birmingham B4 7ET**

Starts at 11am, and finishes at 4pm, the following day

### Event running order

The conference will include the following events:

- **First day:** accommodation allocation, welcomes, lunch, charity-wide updates and formal dinner.
- **Second day:** breakfast, group discussions, lunch Q&A, feedback and farewells.
- Members with large travelling distances are provided the opportunity to arrive at Aston Conference Centre between 3pm and 4pm on the first day.

### Accommodation

Free for attendees.

### Transport

The conference is located to minimise travel and cost for attendees.

- **Traveling by train:** nearest train station is New Street Station, Station Street, Birmingham, B2 4QA.
- **Traveling by vehicle:** you will be sent a link to secure on campus parking if accepted to attend. Alternative parking is available at Millennium Point pay and display, B4 7AP.
- Aston Conference Centre is located within a clean air zone. Charges may apply. For more information visit [Brum Breathes](https://www.brumbreathes.co.uk).
- **Express your interest in attending on [www.blindveterans.org.uk/conference25](https://www.blindveterans.org.uk/conference25), by ringing 0300 111 2233 or emailing us at [supporter.services@blindveterans.org.uk](mailto:supporter.services@blindveterans.org.uk)**

## Meet some of our Marathon runners

The London Marathon 2025 is fast approaching, and among the thousands of participants, four remarkable individuals will be running in support of Blind Veterans UK. Each runner has a unique story and a personal motivation that fuels their dedication to this iconic event.

Ettie from Bristol is running the marathon to honour her grandmother's 100th birthday. Her grandmother, a Second World War veteran, has been a recipient →



**Ettie**

of Blind Veterans UK's support after losing her sight. Ettie's participation is a tribute to her grandmother's resilience and the charity's invaluable assistance.

Osman, a passionate blind veterans uk employee, is driven by the extraordinary stories of grit and determination he witnesses among the Blind Veterans he supports. Their unyielding spirit serves as his daily inspiration, and running the marathon is his way of giving back to those who have given so much.

Pete has a deeply personal connection to the cause, as his father was a blind veteran. Running in his father's memory, Pete aims to raise awareness and funds for Blind Veterans UK, which played a crucial role in his father's life. This marathon is a heartfelt tribute to his father's legacy.

Sarah is participating in honour of her best friend, who is a blind veteran. Her friend's unwavering positivity and strength despite the challenges have deeply inspired Sarah. By running the marathon, she hopes to highlight the incredible resilience of Blind Veterans UK and support the charity's mission.

Each of these runners embodies the spirit of determination and compassion. Their participation in the London Marathon 2025 is not just about crossing the finish line, but also about making a difference in the lives of blind veterans. Let's cheer them on as they take on this monumental challenge!

■ **For more details on their stories and to support their fundraising efforts, visit [www.blindveterans.org.uk/runnerstories](http://www.blindveterans.org.uk/runnerstories)**

**Osman Cole**Listen  
here

# In your community

Read about some of the social gatherings across the country that have taken place this spring and brought together Members in their local areas

Our veterans enjoy meeting up, having trips out together and enjoying the company of others who understand what they are going through. Here you can find a brief round up of some of the events that have taken place across the country this month in the communities that have allowed our veterans to come together.

## In Durham

Great gathering this month for our Durham members and surrounding area at our Chester le Street group, which continues to grow and go from strength to strength. Fun, good grub and a singalong were all enjoyed! →

**Durham Members gathering for lunch**



## In Peterborough

This month Communities 12 & 15 combined to take members to The Longest Yarn exhibition in the magnificent setting of Peterborough Cathedral. It was amazing with 80 scenes taken from the film the Longest Day, The longest yarn is an exhibition of knitted scenes that is travelling across the UK this year.

Members loved the exhibition and the lunch in the tea rooms afterwards – Thanks go to our volunteer Paul Roebuck for his help and powers of description.



**The longest yarn – Knitted miniature of a Lancaster Bomber**

## In Swansea

We had a great turnout at the Swansea lunch club at the grand hotel, Members had their own private room, and the CSW brought out a little Karaoke which was thoroughly enjoyed by members after they had cleared their delicious food.

## In Sandhurst

Members, guests and staff attended our 1st military dinner of 2025 at RMA Sandhurst on 28th February 2025; home to training the future



**The longest yarn – Knitted miniature of war time map**

leaders of the British Army and recognised as a world leading military training academy.

This stunning and iconic setting enabled members to take part in a guided tour of Old College Building, celebrate remarkable achievements of two Members who each received a Founders Day Awards, enjoy a delicious 3-course meal within the Indian War Memorial Room and listen to the Military Wives Choir sing.

RMA Sandhurst leadership, Brigadier Nick Wight-Boycott and Lt Col Daniel O'Connor joined us, along with one



**Swansea Lunch club meet at The Grand Hotel**

of our Trustee's Tim Seal and his wife Melanie. Lt Col O'Connor kindly gave a speech about the Gulf War, detailing 34-years since the conflict ended on 28 February 1991.

A fantastic day, wonderful to see so many members attend and thank you to all who helped make this day so special for all who attended. 🇬🇧

**Do you want to know what's going on in your local area? Contact your local community team who can tell you everything you need to know.**



**Members outside Sandhurst Old College building**





**M1 Abrams tank during Operation Desert Storm**

# Caring in crisis

**John Hardy's** recollections of his Service in the Gulf War

On 2 August 1990, Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein ordered his armed forces to invade Kuwait. By the next day, his troops had advanced to the Saudi Arabian border, with plans to annex what he called Iraq's "19th province." The crisis quickly gained international attention, prompting

the United States to lead a coalition of 42 nations against Iraq. This effort unfolded in two phases: Operation Desert Shield, which saw a military buildup from August 1990 to January 1991, and Operation Desert Storm, beginning with aerial bombardments on 17 January 1991. British forces

**"We'd hear the American warning system blare 'black, black, black' and rush to shelters"**

played a crucial role, operating under the codename Operation Granby.

The Gulf War saw devastating losses: an estimated 20,000–50,000 Iraqi soldiers killed in action, compared to 292 coalition deaths. Amid this global conflict, countless individuals—like nurse John Hardy – served in essential, often unsung roles. Stationed at the MENA Hospital in Riyadh's King Khalid International Airport, John found himself tackling challenges far beyond the medical.

"The environment was incredibly tough," John recalled. "The hospital wasn't even fully built. Dust and dirt were everywhere, pigeons flew through the wards, and many of us came down with 'kennel cough' due to bird droppings." Despite these hardships, John's team of reservists worked tirelessly to provide care in a hospital with 1,000 beds, operating as the main evacuation hub and refueling point—a situation that made it a significant target for Iraqi forces.

John's role was far from simple.

Initially, the unit was critically under-equipped, forcing him to think on his feet. "We didn't have vital supplies like endotracheal tubes," he shared. "A friend and I took matters into our own hands – literally crawling under a Land Rover to secure transport – so we could visit the American hospital in Riyadh and borrow equipment." His resourcefulness became a hallmark of his service.

Throughout the conflict, John witnessed a spectrum of injuries, from gunshot wounds and fractures to blast-related minor burns and complications like dehydration. "Many soldiers weren't drinking enough in the oppressive heat," he explained. "The air was so dry and humid, you felt like you needed water with every breath." Despite the grueling conditions, John remained grateful. "I consider myself lucky—we didn't have the volume of patients we could have had."

Beyond the medical, the threat of Scud missile attacks loomed large. Between 18 January and 26 February 1991, Iraq launched 46 missiles at Riyadh. "We'd hear the American warning system blare 'black, black, black' and rush to shelters," John recounted. "But for patients we couldn't move, we had to improvise – placing them under metal-framed beds or sealing them in protective CBRN body bags. The →





**John Hardy with his Guide Dog**

constant use of CBRN gear left our hands raw. It was brutal.”

Amid the chaos, John formed bonds that endured long after the war. One particularly moving story involved a member of the SAS who was brought to the hospital with a gunshot wound that narrowly missed his kidney. “We had to surgically debride the wound and care for him over weeks. He didn’t want to leave – he wanted to stay with his unit.” Their shared experiences, including their sons both named Ben, created a strong connection.

When the soldier finally returned to his unit, he left John a gift – a bottle of rum – and words John would never forget. “I told him he was a hero, but he pointed at me and said, ‘I’m not the hero. You are. You left your family to look after us guys. You’re the heroes.’”

The story didn’t end there. Years later, John tracked down his former patient, now living in a care facility, battling Korsakoff’s dementia, PTSD, and acquired brain injury. Despite the challenges, John visits regularly. “Most of the time, he doesn’t recognise me, but on one occasion he did. He put his hand on my knee and said, ‘Is it Doc?’ It was incredibly emotional.”

For John, the Gulf War isn’t just a chapter of his past; it’s a thread woven into his life. His ongoing care for his former patient exemplifies the enduring bonds formed in service. “The Gulf is still with me today,” he said. “Caring isn’t just something you leave behind – it stays with you.”

John Hardy’s story is a testament to resilience, compassion, and the lasting impact of service. Blind Veterans UK is proud to share such extraordinary accounts, honouring the end of the Second World War to those who’ve dedicated themselves to the care and support of others – even decades later. 🇬🇧



# Remnants of a brutal war



While millions celebrated the end of the war, many also felt the weight of loss – the countless lives sacrificed and years of relentless hardship

As we approach the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe (VE) Day, we reflect not only on the triumphs but also on the profound sacrifices made during the second world war. While the end of the war on May 8, 1945, brought immense relief and joy, it

also left indelible marks on many servicemen and women. Three blind veterans – Alice, Derrick, and Joan, share their poignant stories, shedding light on the complexities of that historic day and the enduring impact of war.



**Alice now - Photographed by Richard Canon**

## **Alice’s story: Joy intertwined with sorrow**

At 17, Alice volunteered for the Women’s Royal Naval Service (Wren) and was assigned to Bletchley Park, the epicentre of code-breaking operations. Her role involved operating Alan Turing’s Bombe machines, crucial in deciphering enemy communications. The work was demanding, with round-the-clock shifts and strict secrecy.

Alice recalls the moment the war ended:

“We couldn’t believe it for a





moment, and then...oh, we cried and laughed and danced down the corridor! No more night watch!"

However, the celebration was bittersweet. Among her close -knit group of five friends, two had lost their brothers in the war. This juxtaposition of elation and grief exemplifies the mixed emotions many felt on VE day.

Reflecting on her time at Bletchley Park, Alice admits that the significance of their work wasn't fully understood until years later.

"It wasn't until I went back to Bletchley Park for a reunion after the war that I understood what went on there and why it was so important."

### **Derrick's story: Survival against the odds**

Derrick, now 100, served as a pilot with the squadron 112, famously known as "the shark squadron". During a raid over Italy, his aircraft was shot down. After crash-landing uninjured, he was captured and became a prisoner of war.

His captivity led him to Stalag Luft 7, a Prisoner of War camp characterised by rudimentary conditions:

"It was just a ring of barbed wire,

watchtowers, and a lot of six-foot huts like garden sheds."

As the Germans retreated, Derrick and thousands of other POWs were forced on the infamous "Long March" to Germany. Enduring sub-zero temperatures, minimal food, and inadequate shelter, they faced immense hardships:

"We had to march to Berlin... I mainly remember how cold it was. We used to go to sleep in these barns and dig a little hole in the hay."

Derrick's liberation came just before VE Day, Marking the end of a harrowing chapter in his life.



**Derrick now - Photographed by Richard Canon**

### **Joan's story: A narrow Escape**

Joan, now 100, served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) as a morse code operator. After two years in Italy, she was thrilled to return home upon hearing of the war's end.

She was scheduled to return to Italy after a brief leave, but her plans changed unexpectedly:

"When we were due to go back, I couldn't go as my mother was taken very ill so my leave was extended. Well, sadly, the plane crashed. There were 26 women on board, all killed."

This tragic incident remains the largest single loss of female service personnel during the war. Joan reflects on the gravity of the event:

"It is important to commemorate the anniversary. I'll be thinking of the friends I lost, all 26 of them."

### **A new challenge**

Today, Alice, Derrick and Joan face a new challenge: sight loss. All have been very vocal in their gratitude for our support, Alice says:

"Blind Veterans UK has been marvellous. They loaned me a talking magnifier which has become my lifeline as it means I can still read." Whilst Derrick and Joan both value the social



**Joan now - Photographed by Richard Canon**

connections fostered by the charity, Joan:

"I also go to get-togethers and someone comes to visit too, which is very pleasant. Someone's there if you want advice."

■ **The stories of Alice, Derrick and Joan serve as poignant reminders of the sacrifices made during the Second World War and the enduring spirit of those who served. If you would like to learn more about their stories and watch their video interviews please visit [www.blindveterans.org.uk/veday80](http://www.blindveterans.org.uk/veday80)**



# Special blind veteran made VE Day candles available now!



Member **Tony Haskey** is making and selling special candles to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day

Tony, 65, from Poole in Dorset, has been making candles for the past three years from a specially set up room in his home.

Wanting to do something to mark the important anniversary, and to also give back to the charity for the support he has received, Tony has chosen to donate 50% of the profits raised from his VE Day candles to the charity.

Tony says: "I started making candles as a hobby after I retired from work. I was feeling frustrated sat at home and wanted to do something that would allow me to give back to the charities that had supported me but also to

have a reason to stay active and to get up each day.

"I've been selling the candles I make for the past year and for two years prior to that I was working to establish a method of candle making that would work for me with my sight loss. I did get to a point where I became so frustrated that I wanted to give up, but I persevered and have now perfected my candle making.

"Making candles when you're vision impaired presents challenges. But I've got some tricks up my sleeve which help me in the process. For example, I use talking scales to weigh up the fragrance I'm using. I purchase wax in

"I did get to a point where I became so frustrated that I wanted to give up, but I persevered"

blocks of certain weights so I can cut them to the right size consistently. I also have my magnifier which helps me read the labels on the fragrance bottles so I know what I'm making."

Tony hopes that people around the country will join together on 8 May to light a candle and remember the fallen.

He says: "VE Day means an enormous amount to me as a veteran myself. I joined up to the Royal Marines at 16 years old.

"As someone who is still fortunate to be here today, I look back at the legacy that the young men and women left behind and fail to see how anyone couldn't acknowledge their worth. We have our liberty today because of their sacrifice."

Tony was serving on an operation overseas when he first felt something was wrong with his vision; he saw a medic who advised that he had an incurable eye condition and Tony was

told to return to the UK. He says: "I was feeling low, I had to return to the UK alone and leave my unit and comrades behind."

On his return to England, Tony was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa. This condition worsens over time and can affect vision in a number of ways such as night blindness, trouble adjusting to light changes, difficulty seeing colours, and narrowed peripheral vision. →



**Tony Haskey holds up one of his VE Day 80 special edition candles**



**“I was supported by the charity while I was on the course; they were always interested in what I was achieving”**

He says: “I was 27-years-old at that point and my world fell apart. I was absolutely devastated by the news. I went home from the hospital and started to contemplate what I’d been told. I got depressed and felt that was the end for me. The career I’d set up to do well at had come to an end. I didn’t know what job opportunities were available to me. I was frightened and alone.”

Tony continued in a clerical role with the Royal Marines for two years before being medically discharged.

It was in 1993 that Tony discovered Blind Veterans UK. He attended a six-week course which included basic housekeeping, cooking and computer literacy skills. He says: “When I arrived at Brighton, I was in a deep void with no self-confidence, no self-worth and no self-belief. I had not imagined I would be made to feel so welcome and I learnt a lot more than I anticipated. Every day of the course was a new beginning. I was away from my family, but I knew that by spending

the time on myself, I may be able to find a new career.”

Tony came away from the course and had the confidence to return to education, eventually completing an Information Technology degree at Bournemouth University.

He says: “I was supported by the charity while I was on the course; they were always interested in what I was achieving and how I was progressing. On completing my degree, I was employed by a company who knew about my sight problems and took a chance on me. Within five years, I had moved up to be a support manager. A career I could never have imagined would have happened without the support of Blind Veterans UK.

“The charity also installed special lighting in my home which means that I can make the most of the sight I have left. It’s helped no end with my candle making pursuits. I hope the sale of my candles will help the charity to support more blind veterans like myself.”

■ **Please visit the Seabreeze Candles website to order one of Tony’s ‘After the Darkness’ candles. 50% of the profits will be donated to Blind Veterans UK: [seabreezecandles.co.uk](http://seabreezecandles.co.uk)**



# Our Invictus Games champions

Members **Mark Abel** and **Andy Allen** made the journey to Vancouver in Canada for this year’s Invictus Games. We spoke to them on their return to find out how they got on

The Invictus Games brought together over 500 competitors from 22 nations in February to compete in a range of adaptive sports. Since 2014, the games has supported the rehabilitation of wounded, injured and sick service personnel and veterans through the use of sport.

This year’s Invictus Games was the first to feature winter adaptive sports including alpine and Nordic skiing which both Mark and Andy took part in.

Between them, Mark and Andy competed in nine events and returned with seven medals, but the Invictus Games is about far more than winning podium places.

Andy, 36, and from Belfast, has been a Member with the charity since 2008.



**Andy Allen with his medal**





### Andy with Prince Harry

Andy joined the 1st Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment in 2006. He was deployed to Afghanistan in 2008 and in July of that year he was seriously injured in a Taliban bomb attack in the Helmand Province, losing both of his legs along with his sight.

He competed for the first time in the Invictus Games and took part in the one-minute rowing (silver) four-minute rowing (gold), wheelchair rugby (silver) and Nordic skiing (bronze).

Andy says: "Taking part in the Invictus Games brought back the feeling of camaraderie and teamworking.

It felt good to be back in a service environment as you can lose that when you leave.

"The games provide an opportunity to recognise that regardless of disability, we can still achieve remarkable goals, anything is possible. Yes, sometimes we may need some support and help but the Invictus Games shows that there are adaptations available to us and we can take part in the sports we enjoy. Not everyone will want to compete but for you that could mean going to your local gym."

Mark, 58, and from Worcester, joined the Army at 16-years-old and learnt to ski while serving. He thought his days on the slopes were behind him after he became unwell and took himself to bed but woke a few hours later and told his fiancé that he couldn't see and that she needed to take him to hospital. Mark was told there had been damage to the optic nerves caused by multiple sclerosis.

This was Mark's second visit to the Invictus Games having taken part in Orlando in 2016. Mark was selected in May 2024. He says: "The process to being selected for the Invictus Games starts with an open application process in which you send off a one-minute video explaining why you think you should take part which then goes to a

panel. It isn't about being the fastest or most skilled.

"The Invictus Games is about resilience and overcoming adversity by using sport as a means of recovery. It's an honour and a privilege to show others across the world what can be achieved.

"Being back in a military environment feels fantastic; it's one big happy sporting family. I also had my wife and my daughter accompany me to Canada; it's massively important to have the support of family and friends. I would like to thank the Royal British Legion who not only funded my training and travel costs but also funded my wife and daughter to be able to join me."



### Mark Abel with his medals

Mark competed in alpine skiing in which he was put in a different category against able bodied athletes, 50 metre freestyle swimming (silver), 50 metre breaststroke (bronze), 4x 50 metre relay (bronze) and the one minute sprint indoor rowing in which he recorded a personal best of 272 metres in one minute.

Mark says: "I've always been quite sporty and I've kept reasonably fit, Blind Veterans UK have been a great help, the team got me back into skiing. Skiing is my safe space; being in the mountains I'm not tied to my long cane, I'm free."

Mark and Andy told us about some of the adaptations in place:

**Rowing:** Both men had a coach alongside them who read out the details on the screen including pace, distance and time remaining.

**Skiing:** A guide who relays information needed to stay safe such as weather conditions, obstacles, hazards and light and shade.

**Swimming:** Assistance on the diving block.

**Rugby:** Andy had never played wheelchair rugby before. Prior to the Invictus Games there were around seven training camps in which it was important to work on communication with the team and for them to learn about his visual impairment. 🇬🇧



# The Veterans Art Project: VE80



The Member Engagement team and National Creative Project teamed up and asked Members to submit their artwork and photography inspired by the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day

They have not been disappointed and are excited to share with you some of the pieces that have been submitted. These pieces will now be exhibited online and at our upcoming events including military dinners and presented as gifts.

## Bryan's story

**One of the Members who submitted his artwork is 87-year-old Bryan Naylor.**

Bryan joined the Royal Navy in November 1959 after completing an apprenticeship in the Merchant Navy. He spent 12 years in the Navy flying in helicopters. Upon retirement, Bryan joined the Royal Naval Reserve and finally retired in 1999. Bryan shares with us how his love of painting came about:

I had dabbled in watercolour painting

while at sea, mainly cartooning for ship and squadron informal records and family birthday and Christmas cards – all very amateur and just for fun.

After a gap of more than 30-years and having been diagnosed with age related macular degeneration in 2012, I assumed that my amateur art days were over.

In late 2020, I was cleaning out a cupboard and found some art materials. I spent a couple of hours looking at tutorials on the internet and re-sparked my interest; soon I was trying out new techniques and

**“I’m still at the beginner’s stage and much of my work ends up as a muddy puddle in the bin”**



**Brian Widdowson - A VE Day party**

discovering that loose-watercolour painting is still possible. My sight does prevent detailed work and sometimes colours surprise me.

I’m still at the beginner’s stage and much of my work ends up as a muddy puddle in the bin but I’m beginning to understand that “less is more” and avoiding the urge to get into detail. Art, at a very simple level, is now part of my life again and brings both frustration and pleasure – with the occasional happy surprise.

I’m still in the process of translating a picture in my mind to something similar on paper. But the challenge is to try to capture those images, those moments

which make the process and the disappointments worth the effort.

I use magnifiers to get the uniforms right and I search the internet for pictures, using bits of them to get the details correct.

Bryan lived in London during the Second World War. He was collected from an orphanage by his parents on the same day that war was declared in 1939.

I don’t remember VE Day itself but I have memories from that time. I remember being rescued from the basement after the house two doors down from us took a direct hit during the blitz and I remember watching aeroplanes in the sky thinking it was ‘great fun’

VE Day was a day of celebration and of people dancing in the street. But looking back, 80-years later and the celebration was the end of something dreadful. The cost in lives of that war was enormous. We must now learn to stop it from happening again and we must remember the sacrifices.

People ought to remember that sons, cousins and uncles went to war enthusiastically but the last time they were seen was walking away. Then the telegrams arrived. 🇬🇧



# Running 10k to mark VE Day 80



Member **Wayne Pope** from Somerset is running the Worthing 10k just two and a half years after he was diagnosed with a rare sight loss disease and his life was turned upside down



**Wayne Pope runs along the seaside in Rustington**

Wayne, 44 and from Bridgwater, will be taking on the challenge, which starts and ends next to Worthing Pier, on 4 May.

Wayne says: "This run takes place just a few days before a very significant date for many of our fellow blind veterans. The 80th anniversary of VE Day on 8 May. Blind Veterans UK has supported me since I was diagnosed and have also supported men and women who were involved in securing victory in Europe. Those soldiers, sailors and pilots had no choice, failure wasn't an option. They gave their lives – and many their sight - to secure our freedom.

"I'm immensely proud that the money I raise for completing this challenge will ensure that veterans like them, and those who followed, will continue to receive life changing support as I have."

Wayne served in the Royal Navy for four and a half years as an able seaman warfare specialist on board HMS Chatham and HMS Monmouth.

He was diagnosed with the degenerative eye condition, retinitis pigmentosa, in December 2022. The condition worsens over time and can affect vision in a number of ways such as night blindness, trouble adjusting to light changes, difficulty seeing colours and narrowed peripheral vision.

"In September 2022, I noticed some issues with my sight and went to Specsavers for an eye test. While there I was offered a scan which looks at the back of the retina for any issues. This is where the anomalies were detected. The specialist consultant at Specsavers proceeded to arrange for subsequent investigations.

"My life changed completely when I got my diagnosis and walked out of the consultant's office; it all came as a shock. I'd walked into that office as an independent man and walked out knowing my life was going to change. I lost my confidence and sense of purpose. I was in tears, my life turned upside down, not knowing how to digest what I'd just been told. I just didn't understand the disease or how I would go forward.

**"My life changed completely when I got my diagnosis and walked out of the consultant's office"**

"The person I had been before now required an adaptive way of going forward into the future – this is what I called 'point zero – day one'.

"My visual impairment made me feel less confident and safe taking part in my usual day to day activities and other aspects of my life. Taking my daughters to school would no longer be as simple as jumping in the car, I had lost my driving licence upon diagnosis. I knew I was going to have to reassess everyday activities. The residual sight I still have centrally overworks itself leading to immense fatigue and stress, but I was not about to let life just stop.

"The vision I do retain is a tunnel view perspective with no peripheral vision, no colour and difficulty with depth perception. The nature of the disease is unpredictable and no two days are the same."

In Spring 2023, Wayne discovered Blind Veterans UK while searching on the internet for support.





**“With the support of family, friends and Blind Veterans UK I am not going to let my sight loss change me”**

He says: “In the short time I’ve been supported by the charity, I’ve received rehabilitation, advice and equipment that have helped me to get back into running, playing my guitar and completing everyday activities that I took for granted before. I’ve been offered tips to overcome the difficulties presented by my sight loss and Specsavers have provided me with specially adapted yellow tinted prescription glasses.

“The staff and my fellow veterans are a huge support. Someone is always on the end of the phone if I need them and the other Members I’ve met are going to be friends for life.

“While staying at the Rustington Centre, I was asked to share some of the things I’d like to achieve that seemed out of reach to me because of my sight loss. I shared my dream of taking part in the London Marathon.

“The wellbeing team at the centre offered to support my aspirations by helping me train and prepare for

the Worthing 10km, with a view to being able to take part in the London Marathon alongside other Members in 2026. They could see how running was giving me back my confidence, sense of purpose and allowing me to feel like the person I was before sight loss. The fitness also helps with my mental health. I no longer feel like a failure.

“The charity has given me back my independence to be the person I want to be. As a result, I would like to use my journey to help others receive the same support that I have.

“I now live each day with the sight I have, not knowing what I’ll wake up with when I open my eyes but with the support of family, friends and Blind Veterans UK I am not going to let my sight loss change me.”

Wayne is hoping to raise £500 for Blind Veterans UK, if you would like to support Wayne in reaching his target, please visit his Just Giving page: [blindveterans.org.uk/wayne](https://blindveterans.org.uk/wayne).

Wayne is one of many Members and supporters undertaking activities to commemorate and celebrate VE Day while raising vital funds.

■ **If you are inspired by Wayne and would like to get involved, visit our website: [blindveterans.org.uk/](https://blindveterans.org.uk/)**



**Terry and Dave at a Blind Veterans UK coffee morning**

## A tool for freedom

How a simple long white cane helped Member **Terry** regain his independence and use his experience to support a fellow Member

When blind veterans Terry and Dave met at a Blind Veterans UK coffee morning in Sleaford, Lincolnshire, they quickly realised how much they had in common. Both had long military careers, both lost their sight later in

life, and both had hesitated at the thought of using a long cane.

But as Dave soon discovered, Terry had already learned what a difference the right support could make. →



### “It gave me my freedom back”

Terry spent 22 years serving with the Royal Green Jackets, with postings from Berlin to Cyprus and the Falklands. After leaving the Army, he enjoyed civilian life and spent his free time fishing - until he noticed something wasn't right.

“I couldn't see to tie knots when fishing. I went to the optician, and before I knew it, I was being sent to the hospital. I was diagnosed with age-related macular degeneration, and my vision just got worse from there.”

Terry struggled to come to terms with his sight loss.

“I was angry. I kept asking myself, ‘Why me? What have I done to deserve this?’ Everyday things, like making a cup of tea or crossing the road, became so frustrating. I felt like I couldn't do anything without someone guiding me. I felt like I'd lost my independence.”

Things started to change when Terry was introduced to Blind Veterans UK. His Community Support Worker, Lizzie, suggested he attend long cane training. “I thought, ‘That's not for me.’ I didn't want people looking at me differently.” But Terry's wife wasn't having it.

“She told me, ‘People are putting themselves out for you – you should

give something back.’ So, I went. And at first, I was petrified. I was used to holding onto someone's arm, but with the cane, suddenly I had nothing to lean on, and I started to panic. I just couldn't get in step with it.”

The next day, Terry tried again and took the cane outside for the first time. “I started thinking about my Army drill movements. The cane goes right, your left leg moves forward. It's like swinging your arms in drill.”

It suddenly clicked. “I could feel what surface I was on. I could tell if there was something in front of me. And then I realised – I was free. I didn't have to rely on anyone anymore.” Now, Terry calls the cane his “tool for freedom.”

“I used to sit indoors and mope, but now I've got my cane, nothing stops me – I'm off!”

### Helping a fellow veteran

When Terry met Dave for the first time, he immediately recognised the reluctance he once had.

Dave, who spent more than 30 years in the RAF as a pilot and air traffic controller, had also been diagnosed with macular degeneration.

“I thought it wasn't for me, that I

“I used to sit indoors and mope, but now I've got my cane, nothing stops me – I'm off!”

wasn't ready for it. My sight loss has been gradual, so I've managed. I wear good boots for bumpy surfaces, and I can walk about quite freely during the day. I don't generally fall over - I might tumble or bump into things,” he admitted.

But as time went on, things became harder.

“My central vision has gotten worse. At home, I struggle with pouring tea or cooking.” Dave was given practical support, including a magnifier and a talking watch. But, like Terry, he wasn't keen on cane training. That changed when they met at a Blind Veterans UK coffee morning in Sleaford.

“Dave said he didn't want a cane, that he didn't need it,” Terry recalled. “I told him, ‘That was my attitude, mate. But once I got my cane, it opened everything up. There's no shame in it - far from it. It gives you your independence back.”

Dave shared: “Terry told me he'd felt

the same way, but now he wouldn't be without it. We come from similar service backgrounds, so his words stuck with me.”

At the coffee morning, Terry let Dave try out his cane, showing him how to treat it like a drill movement.

“I think that's what pinned it for him,” Terry said. “I hope he does the training and makes it work for him.”

And Dave?

“I've booked my first week of training now,” he shared. “I'm hoping to do some physio too, so I can keep walking for a long time.”

### The power of peer support

For both Terry and Dave, meeting fellow veterans who understood their struggles made all the difference. Now, both veterans make it a point to encourage others.

“At meetups, I make a point of speaking to everyone,” Dave added. “Some people are quiet or don't know what to expect, so I ask about their service or what they've been up to. It's good to connect.”

Because sometimes it's just a conversation over coffee that makes the biggest difference. 🍵





Listen  
here

#

# Accessibility

ZERBOR / ADOBE STOCK

AI is utilised in lots of apps including shopping, streaming and navigation

# Digital inclusion - Glossary

As the world of technology has grown it has developed its own language and terms

In this month's Digital inclusion article, we have put together a glossary of the common terms you may encounter. If this article flags any queries you have about your current technology

or you would like to find out how Digital inclusion can positively impact your day-to-day life, please contact the MeSH helpline or speak to a Blind Veterans UK worker.

## Accessibility

Accessibility in technology ensures that devices, apps, and websites can be used by everyone, including people with disabilities. Features like screen readers, voice commands, and adjustable text sizes help make technology inclusive. This allows individuals to interact with digital content easily and independently, enhancing their overall experience.

## AI

AI stands for Artificial intelligence. AI is technology that gives machines the ability to answer and perform complicated tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as learning, reasoning, problem-solving, and understanding language. AI is utilised in lots of apps including shopping, streaming and navigation services. There are also Productivity tools such as ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, Google Gemini and Apple Intelligence available to the general public.

## Alexa

Alexa is a virtual voice assistant which uses AI to answer questions and do tasks, such as playing music. You use Alexa by talking to it and asking it to do things. It works on Amazon Echo devices. There are other virtual assistants and smart speakers that work in the same way.

## Apps

Apps, short for applications, are software programs designed to perform specific tasks on devices like smartphones, tablets, and computers. They can range from games and social media platforms to productivity tools and educational resources. Apps are typically downloaded from app stores, such as the Apple App Store or Google Play Store, and can help users with various activities, from entertainment to work.

## Backing up

Backing up is the process of making copies of your data to protect it →



PRIMA91/ ADOBE STOCK

Apps work on devices such as smartphones



from loss or damage. These copies can be stored on external drives, cloud services, or other storage devices. If your original data gets lost or corrupted, you can restore it from the backup, ensuring you don't lose important information.

## Broadband

Broadband is a high-speed internet connection that provides fast and reliable access to the internet. It can be delivered through various technologies. Broadband allows for

activities like streaming videos, online gaming, and downloading large files without significant delays.

## Cookies

Cookies are small pieces of data stored on your device by websites you visit. They help websites remember your preferences, login information, and browsing activity. This makes your online experience more personalized and efficient. However, cookies can also track your online behaviour, which raises privacy concerns for some users.



PIXEL MATRIX / ADOBE STOCK

**The Cloud is an online storage space**

When you first access a Website that utilises cookies you are given the option to opt in or out of this.

## The cloud

The cloud is like a giant online storage space where you can save and access your files, photos, and data from any device connected to the internet. This can be a chargeable service, but it can free up space on your device and reduce risk of losing precious photos.

## Data allowance

If you aren't connected to Wi-Fi, using the internet on your smartphone or tablet uses mobile data, which is measured in megabytes (MB) and gigabytes (GB). Most phone and tablet contracts have monthly allowances for data usage. Once you use up your allowance, you might get charged for additional usage, or you might not be able to use mobile data until your allowance renews the next month.

## Notifications

Notifications are alerts or messages that inform you about updates, events, or actions on your devices or apps. They can appear as pop-ups, banners, or sounds, and help you stay informed about new emails, messages, app updates, calendar events, and more. Notifications help to make sure you don't miss important information or activities.



SAMMY / ADOBE STOCK

## Phishing can lead to identity theft

## Operating systems

Operating systems (OS) are software that manage computer hardware and software resources, providing a platform for applications to run. They handle tasks like memory management, file storage, and device control. Common examples include Windows, iOS, Linux, and Android. An OS ensures your device operates smoothly and efficiently.

## Phishing

Phishing is an attempt at identity theft in which criminals direct users to a fake website to trick them into disclosing private information, such as usernames or passwords. →





## Podcasts cover a wide range of topics

### Podcasts

Podcasts are audio programmes that you can listen to on-demand. They cover a wide range of topics, from news and storytelling to education and entertainment. Podcasts are typically released as episodes and can be streamed or downloaded on devices like smartphones, tablets, and computers. Popular platforms for podcasts include Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and Google Podcasts.

### Pop-ups

A pop-up is a small window that suddenly appears (or 'pops up') on a webpage, usually an advertisement or an alert.

### Profiles

Your profile is a description that may include your personal details and is used to identify you on a social media website. This can be set as public (viewed by everyone) or private (only viewed by certain people).

### Smart technology

Smart technology refers to devices and systems that use advanced computing and connectivity to perform tasks autonomously or interactively. These technologies often incorporate AI, sensors, and internet connectivity to enhance functionality and user experience. Examples include phones and tablets, and smart home devices like thermostats and security cameras, wearable fitness trackers, and smart appliances.

### Notifications

Notifications are alerts or messages that inform you about updates, events, or actions on your devices or apps. They can appear as pop-ups, banners, or sounds, and help you stay informed about new emails, messages, app updates, calendar events, and more. Notifications ensure you

don't miss important information or activities.

### Social media

Social media refers to online platforms and applications that enable people to create, share, and interact with content and other people. These platforms facilitate communication, networking, and community building. Examples include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, and LinkedIn. Social media allows people to connect with friends, share updates, and discover new information.

### Streaming services

Streaming services are online platforms that allow you to watch or listen to content in real-time without downloading it. They offer a wide range of media, including movies, TV shows, music, and live. Domestic television providers such as BBC, ITV and Sky also provide their content as a Streaming Service.

### Updates

Updates are improvements or fixes released for software, apps, or operating systems. They can include new features, security patches, and performance enhancements. Regular updates help keep your devices secure, efficient, and up-to-date with the latest technology. It's important to install updates to ensure optimal functionality

and protection against vulnerabilities. You will generally be notified by your device when an update is required

### Wi-Fi

Wi-Fi is a technology that allows devices to connect to the internet wirelessly using radio waves. It enables you to access the internet from smartphones, tablets, computers, and other devices without needing physical cables. Wi-Fi networks are commonly found in homes, offices, and public places, providing convenient and flexible internet access. To access Wi-Fi at home you will require a Broadband connection. 📶



## Wi-Fi allows devices to connect to the internet



# Gardening with low vision

The act of gardening helps us to keep fit and connect with others, to enjoy and be part of nature and to revel in colour, aroma, wildlife and beauty

We are now well and truly into spring and many of our Members will be getting out into the garden to clear the weeds and the mind. Gardening is one of the best hobbies there is for someone with sight loss as it can be as simple or as complex as you like.

Even if you don't have a garden of your own, the joy of a few pots of colour around the house, or a handful of home-grown herbs, can be a big boost.

With a bit of thought, you can fill your space with colours bright enough for you to see, or with beautiful unique scents and textures. Growing your own fruit and veg can also be incredibly satisfying.

These are some of the simple gardening techniques used by our veterans:

## Think about contrast

It can be helpful to buy gardening tools and pots in bright colours that stand out. It's also a good idea to go for flowers or fruits that have bright or contrasting colours.

## Organise your space

Put things where you can find them – not just your tools, but your flowers and plants too. Some of our Members organise their gardens in a very structured way to help them find their way around; others mark plants with fluorescent golf balls or painted stones so that they know where to water and where to weed.

**“As much as possible, keeping everything clean and tidy will help you avoid accidents”**

As much as possible, keeping everything clean and tidy will help you avoid accidents.

## Use seed tapes

If you're planting from seed, you may want to try seed tapes which you can buy from most garden centres. Stuck to a biodegradable cloth, these seeds are much easier to handle and space. You can get seed tapes in various shapes and sizes and even with mixes of vegetables or flowers on the same tape.

## Take extra care

Without the use of your sight, it's far easier to injure yourself on gardening tools and the like, so take extra care.

## For example:

### Protect yourself from canes

If you're using canes to support your plants, always pop a small plant pot or cap on the top.

### Keep tools together

Keep all your tools together in a bucket, pointed downwards.

### Sharpen your tools

As with cooking, a sharp blade will often be safer than a dull one as you have better control and need less force.

### Wear gardening gloves

Always wear gloves to protect your

NANCYVOZ68 / ADOBE STOCK



## Keep everything clean and tidy

hands, even if you're just pulling out a few weeds.

With just a few adaptations you can carry on your gardening hobby or even start from scratch if you've never even gardened before.

Many of our community teams run gardening groups that are either over the phone or in person so speak to your local team if you'd like to join or even set one up. 🌱



# Member voice

Our Member Engagement and Military Lead, **Tim Eckersley**, shares your latest news and updates

## Annual Members Conference

This years annual Blind Veterans UK conference provides the opportunity for members to engage with the Senior Leadership Team in an environment that promotes questioning, feedback and listening during an important time regarding our future strategy.

The conference will be held between the 22 and 23 May 2025 at Aston Conference Centre, Birmingham, B4



**Member Conference**

7ET, where accommodation will be provided for the evening of 22 May 2025.

■ **To register for this event, please visit: Annual Member Conference 2025 – Blind Veterans UK (link below)**



## VE80 event at Petwood Hotel

The VE80 event will take place at Petwood Hotel, Woodall Spa, Lincolnshire, LN10 6QG remembering Victory in Europe, 1945 on the 8 May 2025. This event offers a unique experience to share memories, celebrate together, enjoy a delicious buffet and explore Second World War vehicles and equipment on display,



**Remembrance Weekend, Members at the Cenotaph in 2024**

courtesy of the Military Vehicle Trust. To register for this event, please visit: VE-Day 80 event – Petwood Hotel – Blind Veterans UK

## Remembrance Weekend – Cenotaph 2025

There will be four main events in London for Blind Veterans UK over Remembrance weekend in November 2025. Members are provided the opportunity to register for as many events as they like, however, due to limited spaces available for the Festival of Remembrance and Remembrance Parade, names will be chosen via a random ballot.

■ Sir Arthur Pearson Memorial Service at Hamstead Cemetery, London on Saturday 8 November

between 11am to 12pm.

- Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall, London, on Saturday 8 November, arrival from 1pm.
- Informal evening social event at the Victory Services Club, London on Saturday 8 November between 6pm to 10pm.
- Remembrance Parade at the London Cenotaph on Sunday 9 November between 9am to 1pm.

■ **Further information and to register for Remembrance events: Remembrance weekend – Cenotaph 2025 – Blind Veterans UK (link below)** 🎧





# National Creative Project

This month's VI-friendly creative activities you can take part in – all from the comfort of your own home

Here is the April programme of VI friendly creative activities to take part in from home. Please call **01273 391447** to leave a message on the NCP answer machine and request a project pack. You can also request



**Woodland mouse**

a pack on the Members area of the website. All projects come with VI friendly instructions and the option of audio instructions on a USB stick or by email if you request it. You are welcome to take part in as many projects as you like!

## Woodland trio – mouse

By popular request, we have identified some simple wooden model kits so as many members as possible can take part. Throughout the rest of this year, we will be offering three woodland models, which will then stay available on a permanent basis after the Autumn. The first one is a mouse! This 25-piece kit is perfect for beginners and experienced model makers alike. As with all our models, you'll receive a step-by-step graphic guide to help you identify the pieces. The hedgehog and squirrel will be available later this year.

## Botanical sketchbook:

This is a sketchbook kit for beginners

and improvers. There are specially chosen craft materials for visually impaired artists, some botanical tactile prompts and a supplement from member Steve Halliwell for inspiration.

## Watercolour pencils kit

Our watercolour kit contains a set of watercolour pencils that activate when water is added, along with a variety of brushes and some paper. It also comes with some hints and tips from member and watercolour artist, Peter Murphy.

## Spring mandala mosaic

We are so pleased to hear so many of you have enjoyed making our seasonal mandalas. We've enjoyed picking out some delicate floral colours for the spring mandala, which will come with pre-sorted and labelled tiles in separate bags and everything else you need for your mosaic. The summer mandala will be ready in a few months for you to complete the set!

## Also available:

**Dragonboat:** We still have a few kits left – this is a 141-piece wooden model kit which measures 28cm H x 36cm L x 16cm W when built. Each kit comes with a step-by-step graphic guide to help you find the right pieces.

**Papercraft scrapbook:** We still have some scrapbook kits for you to make your own memory book, using



**Dragonboat**

collage techniques. There are a few specially chosen items in there for those members who take part with grandchildren and other little helpers!

**Acrylic painting:** we have a few acrylic painting kits available, containing a variety of paints, brushes, a canvas and some suitable paper to practice on.

Thank you for continuing to return your NCP surveys, they are so helpful and enable us to shape the service going forward. Thank you for all your suggestions for future projects – we will be looking to make some of these projects a reality in 2025!

■ **We always love hearing from you, whether it's to share photographs, feedback or just to have a chat about your crafting activities. Please don't hesitate to get in touch via [ncwt@blindveterans.org.uk](mailto:ncwt@blindveterans.org.uk)**





# Quiz time

Our quizmaster **Ron Russell** tests your general knowledge



The 13th Duke of Bedford, John Ian Robert Russell

- 1. Where does the Duke of Bedford live?
- 2. What mode of transport featured in the film 'Summer Holiday'?
- 3. Which American city is named 'The Empire City'?

- 4. Which bird hides with its head upside down?
- 5. What is a third of 99?
- 6. What liquid measure is abbreviated as PT?
- 7. What is the Spanish name for Charles?

Answers on page 51



'Summer Holiday' cinema poster



# Family news

**Alan Dickins** who celebrates his 100th birthday on 24th April 2025.

**Alec Penstone** who celebrates his 100th birthday on 23rd April 2025.

**Betty Thomas** who celebrates her 101st birthday on 10th April 2025.

**Catherine Drummon** who celebrates her 103rd birthday on 7th April 2025.

**Peter Murphy** who celebrates his 101st birthday on 12th April 2025.

**James Fenton** who celebrates his 103rd birthday on 21st April 2025.

**Joan West** who celebrates her 101st birthday on 15th April 2025.

**John Morris** who celebrates his 103rd birthday on 22nd April 2025.

**Joyce Poolman** who celebrates her 105th birthday on 30th April 2025.

**Phyllis Vernon** who celebrates her 101st birthday on 4th April 2025.

**Robert Wheelhouse** who celebrates his 104th birthday on 18th April 2025.

**Sidney Jennings** who celebrates his 100th birthday on 18th April 2025.

**Condolences**  
It is with deep regret that we record the deaths of the following, and we offer our heartfelt condolences.

**Wilma Harris** who died on 1st March 2025. She was the wife of Alan Harris.

**Irene Burden** who died on 1st February 2025. She was the wife of Stanley Bruden.

**Elizabeth Hedrick** who died on 1st March 2025. She was the wife of James Brown-Headrick.

**Margaret Skinner** who died on 7th March 2025. She was the wife of William Henry Skinner.

**Brenda Bartlett** who died on 1st of February 2025. She was the wife of David Henry Bartlett.

**Rose Cavanagh** who died on 1st of February 2025. She was the wife of Albert Thomas Nelson.

All birthday information was correct at the time of going to press





Listen  
here

# 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

**Brian John Abel** of Bath, Somerset died on 19 January 2025 aged 93. He served as a Senior Aircraftman in the Royal Air Force.

**David George Antrobus** of Waterlooville, Hampshire died on 29 December 2024 aged 70. He served as a Pilot Officer in the Royal Navy.

**Stanley Albert Booker** of Christchurch, Dorset died on 26 January 2025 aged 102. He served as a Squadron Leader in the Royal Air Force.

**Gerald Brown** of Flint, Flintshire died on 09 January 2025 aged 86. He served as a Fusilier in the Royal Artillery.

**Barry Collings** of Rugby, Warwickshire died on 10 March 2025 aged 94. He served as a Leading Aircraftman in the Royal Air Force.

**Brian Frederick Arthur Constable** of Barrow-In-Furness, Cumbria died on 14 February 2025 aged 92. He served as a Staff Sergeant in the Royal Engineers.

**Wesley Cotton** of Welshpool, Powys died on 16 February 2025 aged 89. He served as a Private in the Wiltshire Regiment (Duke of Edinburgh's).

**Arthur Davis** of Warwick, Warwickshire died on 27 February 2025 aged 98. He served as a Private in the Royal Warwickshire Regiment.

**Kathleen Dodds** of St. Helens, Merseyside died on 28 February 2025 aged 83. She served as a Senior Aircraftwoman in the Women's Royal Air Force.

**Donald Graham Fearnley** of Plymouth, Devon died on 11 March 2025 aged 95. He served as a Warrant Officer in the Royal Navy.

**Dennis Frederick Gamblen** of Liss, Hampshire died on 24 January 2025 aged 98. He served as a Lance Corporal in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps and Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

**George Charles Godfrey** of Colchester, Essex died on 15 March 2025 aged 96. He served as a Leading Aircraftman in the Royal Air Force.

**Brian Arthur Goodman** of London died on 12 December 2024 aged 97. He served as a Warrant Officer in the Royal Army Educational Corps.

**Brian Gould** of Widnes, Cheshire died on 15 November 2024 aged 89. He served as a Private in the Army Catering Corps.

**Henrietta Gow** of Leyland, Lancashire died on 09 March 2025 aged 96. She served as a Private in the Auxiliary Territorial Service.

**Alan Geoffrey Gravestock** of Bradford, West Yorkshire died on 12 March 2025 aged 94. He served as a Leading Airman in the Royal Air Force.

**Peter Harrison** of Cheadle, Cheshire died on 01 February 2025 aged 90. He served as a Corporal in the Royal Air Force Police.

**Alexander Penman Watt Hart** of Telford, Shropshire died on 01 March 2025 aged 88. He served as a Craftsman in the Royal Electrical And Mechanical Engineers.

**Kenneth George Hibberd** of Spalding, Lincolnshire died on 24 February 2025 aged 87. He served as a Senior Aircraftman in the Royal Air Force.

**Marion Hibbins** of Horncastle, Lincolnshire died on 10 March 2025 aged 102. She served as a Leading Aircraftwoman in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force.



**Arthur Higgins** of Sheffield, South Yorkshire died on 30 August 2024 aged 76. He served as a Driver in the Royal Corps Of Transport.

**Edward Hill** of Salford, Greater Manchester died on 01 March 2025 aged 90. He served as a Gunner in the Royal Artillery.

**Peter Hoppe** of Newcastle upon Tyne died on 01 February 2025 aged 95. He served as a Major in the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment.

**Charles Houghton** of Uxbridge, Middlesex died on 10 February 2025 aged 95. He served as an Aircraftman in the Royal Air Force.

**Charles James** of Spalding, Lincolnshire died on 07 February 2025 aged 91. He served as a Leading Aircraftman in the Royal Air Force.

**Sidney Lea** of Newport, Shropshire died on 04 January 2025 aged 91. He served as a Warrant Officer in the Queen's Regiment.

**Cyril James Lewis** of Bridgend, Mid Glamorgan died on 05 March 2025 aged 103. He served as a Private in the Royal Artillery.

**Stanley Ludlow** of Ormskirk, Lancashire died on 02 February 2025 aged 96. He served as a Private in the General Service Corps.

**Terrence Lynch** of Plymouth, Devon died on 16 January 2025 aged 82. He served as a Marine in the Royal Marines.

**Alan Charles Macintosh** of Marlborough, Wiltshire died on 10 January 2025 aged 90. He served as a Private in the Seaforth Highlanders (Ross-shire Buffs, The Duke of Albany's).

**Malcolm Joseph Medcalf** of Boston, Lincolnshire died on 08 March 2025 aged 79. He served as a Corporal in the Royal Army Service Corps.

**Peter Milner** of Warrington, Cheshire died on 01 December 2024 aged 91. He served as a Bombardier in the Royal Artillery.

**Ernest John Moore** of Llandudno, Conwy died on 01 February 2025 aged 88. He served as a Senior Aircraftman in the Royal Air Force.

**Desmond Morgan** of Neath, West Glamorgan died on 30 December 2024 aged 90. He served as a Gunner in the Royal Artillery.

**Ronald Morrison** of Middlesbrough, Cleveland died on 02 March 2025 aged 94. He served as a Private in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps.

**John Orme** of St. Helens, Merseyside died on 25 December 2024 aged 93. He served as a Sapper in the Royal Engineers.

**Brian Joseph Palmer** of Deeside, Flintshire died on 14 February 2025 aged 89. He served as a Leading Aircraftman in the Royal Air Force.

**Betty Parry** of Pwllheli, Gwynedd died on 22 February 2025 aged 99. She served as a Leading Aircraftwoman in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force.

**James Lewis Pellow** of Coventry, West Midlands died on 02 March 2025 aged 95. He served as a Gunner in the Royal Artillery.

**Ronald Percy** of Sheffield, South Yorkshire died on 06 January 2025 aged 96. He served as an Aircraftman in the Royal Air Force.

**Rosalie Helen Randle** of Littlehampton, West Sussex died on 27 February 2025 aged 100. She served as a Nursing Member in the Voluntary Aid Detachment.

**Stella Read** of Ormskirk, Lancashire died on 02 March 2025 aged 101. She served as a Corporal in the Women's Royal Air Force.

**William Oliver Robertson** of Paisley, Renfrewshire died on 10 February 2025 aged 89. He served as a Gunner in the Royal Artillery.

**Robert Robinson** of Durham died on 01 February 2025 aged 84. He served as a Lance Corporal in the Royal Engineers.

**Sheila Margaret Savill** of Hemel Hempsted, Hertfordshire died on 03 March 2025 aged 100. She served as a Leading Aircraftwoman in the Women's Royal Air Force.

**Gordon Sefton** of Bingley, West Yorkshire died on 01 February 2025 aged 86. He served as a Musician in the Army.



**Arthur Christian Shaw** of Thame, Oxfordshire died on 22 February 2025 aged 95. He served as a Craftsman in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

**George Simpson** of South Croydon, Purley died on 03 March 2025 aged 101. He served as a Corporal in the Royal Army Service Corps.

**Peter Simpson** of St. Leonards-On-Sea, East Sussex died on 04 March 2025 aged 87. He served as a Sergeant in the Royal Air Force.

**Rosemary Vera Stone** of Abingdon, Oxfordshire died on 21 February 2025 aged 97. She served as a Captain in the Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps.

**Edward Victor Tann** of Addlestone, Surrey died on 06 March 2025 aged 101. He served as an Able Seaman in the Royal Navy.

**Terence Roland Thomas** of Porthcawl, Mid Glamorgan died on 17 February 2025 aged 93. He served as a Bombardier in the Royal Artillery.

**Ronald Thompson** of Sheffield, South Yorkshire died on 21 February 2025 aged 96. He served in the Primary Training Wing.

**Colin James Timbrell** of Clacton-On-Sea, Essex died on 12 March 2025 aged 91. He served as a Leading Aircraftman in the Royal Air Force.

**Gertrude Tomlinson** of Derby, Derbyshire died on 17 February 2025 aged 96. He served as a Lance Corporal in the Royal Signals.

**Thomas Walsh** of Bognor Regis, West Sussex died on 01 November 2024 aged 92. He served as a Lance Corporal in the Royal Military Police.

**Derrick Whiting** of Smethwick, West Midlands died on 13 February 2025 aged 95. He served as a Leading Aircraftman in the Royal Air Force.

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**Quiz answers – from page 49**

1. Woburn Abbey. 2. A London bus.
3. New York. 4. Ostrich. 5. 33. 6. Pint.
7. Carlos

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