

Review



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The journal of
Blind Veterans UK

July 2025

Commemorating VJ Day

Memories of service in Burma

Inside:

Bowmen Club latest
Member Conference report
Sight loss-friendly holidays



Rebuilding
lives after
sight loss

The VJ Day 80 VIP Raffle is now open!



**Win
£15k**

Tickets cost £1
and help to rebuild blind veterans' lives

Phone **0300 111 2233**

Play online **raffle.blindveterans.org.uk/review**



Raffle closes 19 September. Draw takes place 26 September.

No under 18 allowed to enter. No prizes will be paid to anyone under 18 years of age. Full terms and conditions apply, please visit raffle.blindveterans.org.uk/rules for more details.



GambleAware
begambleaware.org



Person responsible for the raffle and lottery: Claire Rowcliffe, Blind Veterans UK, 3 Queen Square, London WC1N 3AR. Blind Veterans UK is a registered charity no. 216227 (England & Wales) and SC039411 (Scotland). Licensed by the Gambling Commission under the 2005 Gambling Act. Registered license number 008297.



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There won't be an August edition of *Review* but we will be back to our regular scheduling from September.

On the cover

Photograph of
Member Douglas
Marsh displaying his
medals from his time
in Burma.

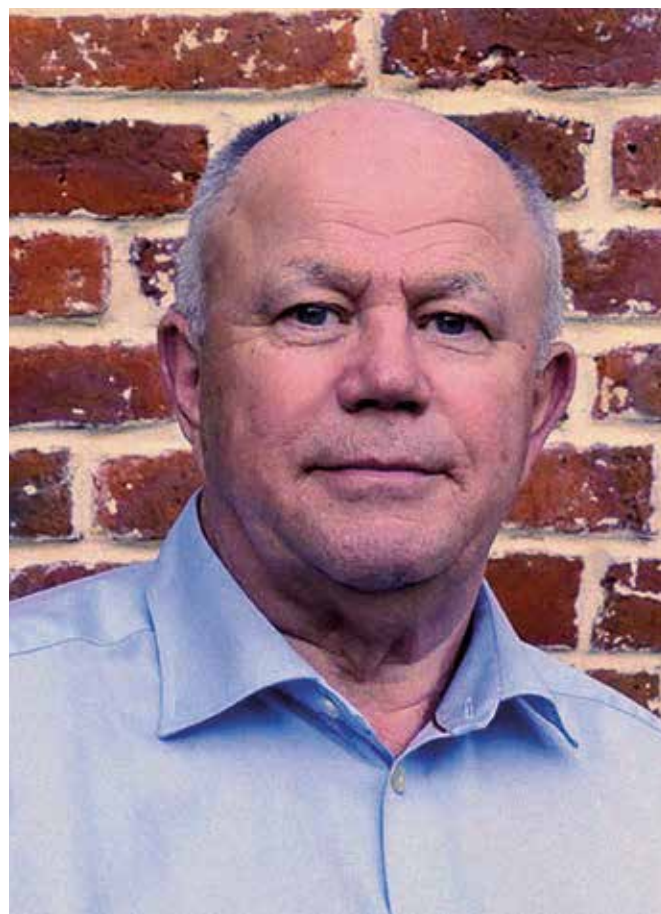


Thanks to Colin

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

I hope you are well and that the lovely weather we're all enjoying as I'm writing this is lasting. Or, if everyone is sick of the heat by now, then I hope that we've had some much-needed showers and cooler weather!

By now, you should have received a letter from our Chief Executive Adrian



Barry Coupe

Bell explaining that Colin Williamson, our President, has decided to retire from his role at the end of this financial year, which will be March 2026.

We still have plenty of time to thank Colin for all he has done, but I would like to begin by showing my sincere gratitude to him for the real difference he has made to Blind Veterans UK, and the support and advice he's given me personally.

It's amazing to think that in more than 110 years of Blind Veterans UK, Colin is just our sixth President. It's a very small club, and Colin has added his name to the history of this amazing charity.

As Adrian's letter explains, our Articles of Association are clear that the role of President must be filled by a Blind Veterans UK beneficiary. The Articles also state that a condition of the role is to serve on our Board of Trustees.

Could you be our seventh President? Any Members interested in taking over from Colin can apply by emailing their



President Colin Williamson lights the beacon at Rustington Centre

CV of relevant experience, with a cover letter outlining why you would be right for the role, to Anna Longden at anna.longden@blindveterans.org.uk. If you require assistance with completing or submitting your application, please call us on **0300 111 22 33**.

The closing date for applications is 15 August 2025 and we foresee interviews taking place in September.

“It's amazing to think that in the more than 110 years of Blind Veterans UK, Colin is just our sixth President”

It was a pleasure to join Colin at the recent Member Conference in Birmingham and to get the chance to hear from those of you who were able to attend. You can read a short summary of the topics discussed with a link to watch highlights on page 17.

I had the particular privilege of presenting Member Wayne Pope with a Founder's Award at the conference and want to congratulate him again for all he has achieved since losing his sight.

I have been asked to remind everyone that there will be no issue of Review in August and would like to end by once again wishing you all an enjoyable summer. 🍷

Joyce turns 105

On the 30th April 2025 Joyce celebrated her 105th birthday! Joyce Poolman is a delightful Member and such an inspiration. During our visit



Joyce celebrates her 105th birthday

we Googled the oldest person in the UK and in the world and she was very proud that it's women that live the longest.

Throughout the day, Joyce was surrounded by family and friends with her one son and daughter-in-law making the journey from America to spend this special day with her. She has received several visits from the Mayor since her 100th birthday and declined a visit this year.

Top ten lessons Joyce's family have learnt from 'Nana Joy'

- She helped her country by cleaning the weapons in WWII
- The value of exercise in keeping healthy and fit
- Showcasing tremendous independence
- Positive attitude
- Learning to ride a bike gives you freedom
- Humility and modesty
- Competitive spirit
- Sense of humour
- Keeping your mind sharp
- The power of a phone call

Maybe we all need to adopt these principles for longevity.



Phil Lewis during his incredible 70,000 step challenge in the Gower

26 mile Fundraiser

On Sunday 1 June 2025, Phil Lewis took on a fundraising Gower Coast marathon walk challenge from Rhossili to the Mumbles. Completing the incredible challenge in just under 14 hours, he walked just over 70,000 steps, accompanied by Sam Thomas from the charity and his two friends, Colin and Chris.

Sam said, "We were honoured to be part of this incredible experience. The walk was challenging with various terrains and steep inclines that Phil overcame with great determination and confidence.

"Phil used a wide range of mobility skills and was able to follow in many

places but used guiding skills for the more complicated areas on the route. He used the new 'no jab' cane on the rough terrain.

"This is an incredible achievement and Phil should be feeling very proud of what he has overcome and achieved. At this moment in time, he's raised over £1000 for the charity and is now thinking of what the next challenge is. Watch this space!"

Planning to remember? Request your wreath now

Last year, the number of you actively taking part in your local Remembrance commemorations grew. →



Blind Veterans UK Wreath

Colin Adamson laid a Blind Veterans UK Remembrance Wreath at the Horwich War Memorial as part of the commemorations in his local community in 2024.

Colin says, "It means so much to me to have had the opportunity to lay a wreath in my local community as there are so many from my community who have sacrificed so much across so many conflicts."

"Last year, in addition to laying my wreath, I was also asked to recite the Kohima Epitaph: 'When you go home, tell them of us and say, for your tomorrow, we gave our today,' which was a real honour."

If you are planning to take part

"It means so much to me to have had the opportunity to lay a wreath in my local community"

in your local Remembrance commemorations this November and would like to lay a Blind Veterans UK wreath, please contact your Community Support Worker before 1 September. They will need the name of the memorial or church where the commemoration will take place.

Wreaths are limited and will be available on a first come, first served basis. As with previous years, we will be reaching out to individuals and organisations to fundraise or make a donation in order to support this activity and the continued provision of support in our communities.

If you're part of a group or know a local business that could be part of our Gift a Wreath campaign, email fundraising@blindveterans.org.uk or call **0300 111 2233**.

■ **For more information about Gift A Wreath campaign visit blindveterans.org.uk/support-us/fundraise-for-us/gift-a-wreath/**



Listen
here

In your community

Just some of the social gatherings that have taken place across the country over the summer, bringing together Members in their local areas

In Rustington

June was a month packed full with activities and events at Rustington. The 81st anniversary of D-Day saw some of our veterans gather for a Remembrance service in the memorial garden, led by Padre George Butterworth.

Meanwhile, Jock and his guide dog Cassie cooked up a storm in the kitchen, baking a batch of flapjacks. Jock said how much he enjoyed the experience and is already looking

forward to trying some new recipes when he gets home.

There was also a team of Members motivating each other in exercise classes along the seafront. You won't find a better location for a good stretch of the legs!

And, finally, we welcomed our wonderful Rustington volunteers together for a coffee morning in celebration of Volunteers' Week with thanks for all their amazing support.



Volunteers at Rustington

In Huntingdon

Members took to the water on a gentle trip along the river via barge from Huntingdon to Godmanchester, →

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.



Huntington boat trip

Once moored up, the crew all enjoyed a fish and chips lunch delivered to the boat and then cruised along home on the deck, enjoying the sun with full stomachs and smiles on their faces.

In Scotland

We were delighted to bring together



Scottish Members



Tandem cycling in South Wales

some of our Members and volunteers to celebrate Volunteer Week at the Forth Valley Sensory Centre.

It was a great afternoon of discussion. ROVI Simon Eamonson spoke about rehab support and Members shared their experiences and supported one another. And, of course, there were some good laughs and cake too!

In South Wales

Blind Veterans UK volunteer Paul joined one of our Members for a tandem cycling session. They had a fantastic time riding together and managed to cover an impressive 8 kilometres on their first outing! Both were full of energy and enthusiasm, and they are already planning their next ride, with a goal to go even further. Amazing to see such great teamwork and shared motivation. 🇬🇧



News from the Bowmen Club

All the latest archery news, from a beginner's course in Worthing to Archery Week at our Rustington Centre, to the recent Archery Indoor Championships...

Beginner's course

The latest Bowmen Club beginner's course took place in April at the Worthing Archery Club, introducing archery to four Members interested in giving the sport a go.

The club also hopes to show local clubs around the country that sight-loss is not an obstacle to inclusion.

The five-day intensive beginner course took the group of complete beginners through the basics of holding the bow, body position, posture, safety and ways in which archery can be adapted to meet different levels of sight-loss, including tactile sights.

Clive Jones, Chairman of the Blind Veterans UK Bowmen, says: "The aim of the week was to take a group →



Clive Jones with Members on the beginners course

of complete beginners with very little experience of archery and by the end of the week to have given them skills, knowledge and the confidence to approach a local club and carry on with the sport.

“Our club is about more than archery; we bring people together and build the kind of camaraderie they experienced in the Armed Forces. We show them that anything is possible.”

Member Peter O’Malley, who attended the beginner course, says:

“Archery is challenging but also relaxing. When you have a bow in your hand, you’re in the moment and can forget about everything else.

“Having my beginner certificate is an achievement in itself but also means I can go to my local club with the proof that I’m safe and I know what I’m doing. Those of us with sight loss are just as capable as sighted people, sometimes more so.”

The next beginner course will take place on 18 August.

“Our club is about more than archery; we bring people together and build camaraderie

Archery week

The club’s latest archery week took place in June with 22 Members in attendance. The week started off on the Monday evening with the club’s AGM before the action got underway on the Tuesday, beginning with a moment to remember longtime

Bowmen’s Club member Tom Roddy who passed away in May.

Clive Jones says: “Tom was a valuable member of the club, and he was always willing to help out. He was a quiet and unassuming person who didn’t say a great deal but when he did, it always brought a smile to people’s faces. It was an honour to shoot alongside him and to be able to lead a moment of quiet reflection for him.”

The week continued with competitions among the club



Members gather at Rustington for Archery Week



The Indoor Archery Championships



Peter O’Malley learns the ropes

members before four of them took on a team of sighted archers from Worthing Archery Club on the Saturday. There was some remarkable shooting from the Blind Veterans UK team leading them to victory.

Clive says: "The week was finished off by a BBQ and presentations back at the Rustington Centre on the Saturday which was a fantastic social occasion for the whole centre, not just the archers. I'm looking forward to our next archery week in September."

British Blind Sport 2025 Archery Indoor Championships

In April, Clive Jones, Carol Davies, John Wilkinson, and Terry Piper participated in the British Blind Sport 2025 Archery Indoor Championships at the Lilleshall National Sports Centre in Shropshire.

Clive was delighted to take home the gold medal in the B1 category, reclaiming the British championship for his classification. Sadly, Carol, who entered the combined B2 and B3 classification, was forced to retire midway through the shoot due to an equipment malfunction.

Despite being a B3-classified archer, John competed in the VI Open

"On Sunday there was a friendly match between visually impaired and sighted archers"

category and set personal best scores in what was an exceptional shoot. Meanwhile, Terry secured second place in the VI Open category, breaking his previous WA 25-metre British record and establishing a new British record for the WA VI indoor round.

On Sunday, in a friendly match against the sighted archers, our vision impaired archers emerged victorious, thanks to their calculated adjusted scores.

Clive Jones was awarded the John Schofield Memorial Cup, which is presented to the highest-ranking blind archer.

■ If you're interested in taking up archery, please contact **Clive Jones, Blind Veterans UK Bowman Chairman** at dragoneye67@sky.com.

You can also visit the **British Blind Sport Archery website** at bbsarchery.org.uk for further information.



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Carrying the Torch: A family's gift to the future

The Ansell family have a history of courage, resilience, and commitment, both to our country and to their fellow veterans. Beginning with the legacy of **Colonel Sir Mike Ansell**, this has now been passed on through a heartfelt gift to Blind Veterans UK by his son, **Major General Nick Ansell**. This is the remarkable story of the Ansell family



Sir Mike Ansell meeting Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 1985

Colonel Sir Mike Ansell's life was shaped by service. He was just nine years old when his own father, Colonel George Ansell, was sadly killed in action while leading the 5th Dragoon Guards at the Battle of Néry in 1914.

Despite this loss so young he still chose to join and serve his country in the cavalry. He also became a member of Britain's international polo and show jumping teams, competing in Europe and America.

By 1940, he had become the youngest commanding officer in



the British Army. But that same year, his world changed forever. During the chaos following Dunkirk, he was severely wounded. He lost his sight and was taken prisoner. In an instant, everything he knew was gone.

When he returned home in 1943, Col. Sir Mike faced a future full of uncertainty. But Blind Veterans UK – then known as St Dunstan’s – was there to help him rebuild. With this support, he started a new chapter: running a market garden and winning prizes at the Chelsea Flower Show. Despite being totally blind, he went on to found the Horse of the Year show and became the Chairman of both the British Equestrian Federation and the British Showjumping Association.

Col. Sir Mike once said, “St Dunstan’s is a great Regiment... they inspired us all to try and try like mad to be ordinary people and live useful lives.” He became President of Blind Veterans UK from 1977-1986 and remained a dedicated supporter until he passed away in July 1994.

His son, Major General Nick Ansell, delighted his father by also choosing a military career in The Skins, following in his family’s footsteps. He always regarded his years commanding the Regiment as the highlight of his career.

“The help provided by Blind Veterans UK was life-changing. It stuck with my husband for so many years”

A natural horseman like his father, racing was his favourite sport. He was delighted to win The Grand Military Gold Cup, making his father proud.

Major General Nick Ansell saw firsthand the difference Blind Veterans UK made, not just for his father, but for their whole family. That’s why he chose to leave a gift in his Will to the charity.

His wife, Vivien, shared: “The help provided by Blind Veterans UK was life-changing. It stuck with my husband for so many years. That’s why he left a gift in his Will to the charity.”

Through their support, the Ansell family is helping ensure the charity is there for future generations, carrying the torch for those still to come. 🇬🇧

■ **To find out how to leave a gift in your Will, call Alice on 020 7616 7923, email giftsinwills@blindveterans.org.uk, or visit blindveterans.org.uk/leaveagift**



CEO Adrian Bell speaking at the 2025 Member Conference in Birmingham

An informative conference

This year’s Member Conference was attended by around 50 Members, as well as family, carers and staff. They gathered together over two days at Aston University in Birmingham

The conference included a number of discussions and workshops which will help shape the future of Blind Veterans UK.

The focus of the conference, led by the charity’s CEO Adrian Bell, was the future of the charity. There were talks

and Q&A sessions on the current state of the charity’s finances, the centres and the decision to close Llandudno, and on the potential to create a new Membership organisation.

Adrian was very clear that the Members voice and experience



“All the Members gathered for dinner after the first day and the importance of that socialising was seen”

is extremely important in these discussions. It was made clear to those in attendance that decisions being made at the moment are done so to best serve our Members, families and carers today, and hopefully well into the future.

Adrian also spoke about how he and his team are considering how we convene future Member conferences. It was felt that going to a single venue in London or Birmingham, for example, can be really challenging for many Members to attend so Adrian said the charity will investigate running a series of conferences at different venues across the UK, all at the same time.

The aim would be to link all the conference venues together for key presentations and Q&A and then separate for discussions before coming back together for further discussion. Effectively each conference would act as its own breakout, but it gives the opportunity for more Members to gather together,

to talk, to discuss, and to contribute to the future of the charity.

Alongside this important activity, Adrian spoke of a hope that this initiative will allow more Members the opportunity to socialise, make new friends, and catch up with old friends and acquaintances.

All the Members gathered for dinner after the first day and the importance of that socialising was seen. Member Wayne Pope was presented with the Life Beyond Sight Loss Founder's Award in recognition for his achievements in taking on a number of challenges, raising money for the charity.

Following the main conference, a number of pop-up conferences took place across the country. At the time of publishing these pop-ups are still taking place. Those attending the pop-ups could watch and listen to a series of highlights of Adrian's presentations and then ask their own questions which will be fed back to Adrian and the senior leadership team. 🎧



The highlights video that all those attending have and will watch is available to all and can be viewed at blindveterans.org.uk/conferencehighlights



Ian and his family and friends gathered for the Bimble

Blindfolded Bimble marks Armed Forces Month

30 people gathered to undertake a blindfolded bimble to raise money and support Ian

As June came to a close with celebrations and remembrance for our Armed Forces, one local veteran made significant strides, quite

literally. Ian Summers, a 45-year-old former soldier from Shanklin on the Isle of Wight, led his second annual fundraising walk, the



Ultra Blindfolded Bimble, on 29 June. The event supported Blind Veterans UK's Armed Forces Month campaign, which invited people to host activities that celebrated service and raised vital funds.

A Veteran's Journey

Ian enlisted into the Army in 2002 and served with the 2nd Battalion, Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, completing tours in Iraq, Kuwait, and Northern Ireland. His life took an

“My life changed overnight but discovering Blind Veterans UK turned things around”

unexpected turn in 2017 when he suddenly lost his sight.

He describes the impact:

“My life changed overnight but discovering Blind Veterans UK turned

things around. They helped me learn to use a cane so that I could walk safely unaided, provided equipment like a talking microwave, and enabled me to meet and spend time with other blind veterans which helped me to imagine a life for myself beyond sight loss.”

Since 2018, Ian has been supported by the charity, which has offered him life-changing tools and a community that helped him rebuild his independence.

The Blindfolded Bimble

Last year, Ian organised the first “Blindfolded Bimble”, in which participants walked in pairs, each taking turns blindfolded, for about 3 km each along the coast between Shanklin and Sandown.

Inspired by last autumn's South Coast Ultra, where he and fellow blind veterans covered distances ranging from 25 km to 100 km, Ian aimed to raise the bar this year. →



A blindfolded participant and her young helper



Participants in pairs taking turns to walk blindfolded along the route



The Bimble - a journey of trust, resilience, and community



Participants collected donations throughout the journey

“I want to raise awareness of the personal impact of sight loss and also of Blind Veterans UK”

For 2025, he asked friends, family and supporters to cover a combined 102 km, the straight-line distance from Shanklin to Blind Veterans UK's Rustington Centre in West Sussex and back.

Ian says: “I was out in front walking with my white cane and leading the bimble. When we finished, I asked those who took part blindfolded how they had found it; the overwhelming response was ‘horrible’. They fed back that it was particularly scary when we came to walking along the road and I told them I hate that too. It was definitely eye-opening for them.”

He also reflects on his sight loss:

“My own sight loss has had a huge impact on my life. Everyday activities like taking a walk, preparing a meal and spending time playing with my two daughters became difficult.”

And on the impact of Blind Veterans UK:

“I want to raise awareness of the personal impact of sight loss and also of Blind Veterans UK as the support I've received from the charity since 2018 has turned my life around.”

A Call to Action

Ian invited everyone to take part on 29 June or to organise their own Blindfolded Bimble. Whether walking just a few steps blindfolded or covering several kilometres, each contribution celebrated our Armed Forces and directly supported veterans like Ian.

“The bimble was an opportunity to come together to celebrate the efforts of our Armed Forces →



Blindfolded walkers being guided along the route



Father and baby walking together



Walking along the coastal path.



Ian leading the group along the coast.



The group take a rest

“The bimble was an opportunity to come together to celebrate the efforts of our Armed Forces”

and thank them for their sacrifice, and those of their families, I want to ensure that other veterans like me can receive life-changing support for years to come.”



The kids refuelling

Supporters were encouraged to donate via Ian's JustGiving page, and many took the opportunity to find new ways to honour National Armed Forces Day through the charity's website.

Ian's Blindfolded Bimble was more than a walk, it was a journey of trust, resilience, and community. Participants laced up their shoes, donned blindfolds, and took steps in solidarity. 🇬🇧

Commemorating Victory in Japan

As we commemorate the 80th anniversary of VJ Day and the end of the war on 15 August, RAF veteran, **Douglas**, 102, shares his memories of his service in Burma

Douglas was born in 1923 in London. As his father had been in charge of a frontline ambulance unit in the First World War, Douglas was keen to serve, too. He joined the RAF cadets in 1939 and then signed up when he turned 18 in 1941.

After a few weeks of flying, he was told he would never make a pilot but with his exceptional navigation skills, he was chosen for a new group called the Air Defence of Great Britain (100 Group). There, he was introduced to the brand new Airborne Radar.

Douglas and his pilot took on the Luftwaffe until June 1944 when the Allies invaded the mainland. After that, he was selected to head East and sailed from Liverpool, avoiding the U-Boats stationed off the coast of Ireland. He headed down the Suez canal, across the Red Sea →



Douglas during his service



Douglas proudly displays his medals

and the Indian Ocean before arriving in India in July. In Calcutta, after joining 176 Squadron's Beaufighters, he was given a new pilot and tasked with protecting the 14th Army from the air.

Next stop was Burma. As one of the first sent to check out the area around the landing strip in Meiktila, Douglas then had to stay there as the Army advanced on Rangoon in May 1945. Not a fan of Burma's wildlife, he remembers inadvertently setting



With one of his beautiful paintings

up camp over a snake pit and also coming across some truly enormous spiders!

The Japanese had been set on capturing Burma as it was such a crucial pathway into India. However, thanks to Douglas and his RAF crewmates, the 14th Army were able to fight on stoically even throughout the monsoon season, where the rain fell steadily for days and nights on end. The RAF's commitment and dominance in the air meant that

“As well as a skilled navigator, Douglas was also an incredibly talented artist”

troops could continue receiving vital supplies and remain strong, despite the challenging conditions.

Their resilience and dedication should be honoured by us all this August, and every day.

After peace was declared and the celebrations began, Douglas remembers a feeling of “anti-climax”. He was then put in charge of the ground radar and exactly one year on from VJ Day, set sail from India. He finally arrived home 15 months after peace was declared in the Far East.

As well as a skilled navigator, Douglas was also an incredibly talented artist. In fact, when his service ended in the Far East, before he left India, he chose to enrol onto a three-month art course in Siliguri, at the foot of the Himalayas. He stayed at the Everest Club, in a room that faced west.

Each morning he would look out at the view of Everest, watching as dawn turned the colour of the snow on the mountains from pink to white.

Douglas put down his beloved paint brush when he lost his sight in later life due to macular degeneration. It was devastating for him. However, during his Blind Veterans UK induction week, he was introduced to magnifying equipment and techniques that has enabled him to pick it up again.

He says it's been wonderful to be able to be creative again. He's even had a go at pottery and enjoyed the National Creative Project gardening kits.

Douglas's community support worker Lizzie has also given him the support he needs to keep up the other things he loves – reading, writing and staying on as secretary of a club.

Lizzie says: “Douglas has been a real inspiration and I was thrilled to be invited to his 100th birthday, two years ago. It's an honour to be able to support him as he turns 102.”

We wish Douglas a very happy 102nd birthday! 🎉

Douglas says the name “The Forgotten War” is very apt as in 1945, he says, “They quite literally forgot about us.” This August, we will all remember.

When support comes full circle: Graham gives back

Over the last 18 years, the journey for blind veteran Graham has come full circle, from reluctantly walking through our doors in 2007, to being one of our dedicated volunteers today

Graham's life was turned upside down 18 years ago when he was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa, a condition that led to his sight loss. When he discovered Blind Veterans UK, he attended an induction at our Rustington centre. The supportive atmosphere gave him a renewed sense of positivity.

Graham said, "I didn't know what I was going to do, but I knew I was going to do something." What Graham eventually did was reconnect with his passion for sport, and in doing so he

gained his life back. Graham's sporting journey began in 2006, after reading about the London Triathlon in our monthly beneficiary magazine.

Despite being a novice, he took up the challenge, discovering halfway through his training that he would need to compete in the Olympic-

"I didn't know what I was going to do, but I knew I was going to do something"



Graham celebrating his gold Para championships in Vancouver

distance event, not a sprint-distance as he initially thought. He wasn't fazed and completed the race – becoming the only vision impaired athlete in the competition.

His passion for sports grew as he joined Project Viper, a team encouraging other vision impaired athletes to participate in triathlons. In 2007, he was invited to represent the GB AWAD (Great Britain Athletes with a Disability) team at the Paralympic Championships in Hamburg, with Blind Veterans UK supporting his training

and travel. By 2008, Graham became the Blind World Triathlon Champion after winning gold at the Vancouver Para Championships. That same year, he was named Disabled Sportsman of the Year at the West Oxfordshire County Awards.

His achievements are especially admirable, given he was balancing training with being a single father of four and managing a craft business that was losing its way under the strain of his sight loss and separation from his wife.





Graham crafting resin in his workshop

Despite the obstacles life has thrown at him – including a career-ending injury and the devastating loss of his son – Graham has found comfort in creativity and giving back.

Encouraged by his children, he resumed his passion for crafting resin butterflies which are sold through an Etsy shop.

As well as getting back into his craft, Graham continues to contribute to



A beautiful example of one of Graham's resin butterflies

Blind Veterans UK. For the past two years, he has volunteered weekly, visiting and supporting a fellow blind veteran, helping others find purpose, just as he did years ago.

Graham visits every week, which has brought structure to his week and given him more purpose. They are quite housebound and, although they have support at home from a carer, cleaner, and others, Graham's visits are appreciated. They share many common interests, such as RAF mechanical engineering and motorsport. Graham updates them weekly on Formula 1 news, explains how the races unfolded, and shares his progress with his business. 🇬🇧



Listen
here

PASKO MAKSIM / ADOBE STOCK



Two holidaymakers on deck chairs on a beach in the sun

Sight loss- friendly holidays

Advice and information for finding the perfect break

Sun, sand and sangria... A summer holiday sounds like the perfect escape. But for those living with sight loss getting away can often feel more stressful than relaxing.

The good news is there are organisations out there offering accessible, supportive holidays designed with your needs in mind

– so you can truly unwind and enjoy the break you deserve.

Specialist travel operators

The following external organisations organise or advise on holidays for people with sight loss. If you'd like →



Sunset in the Peak District

to find out more about what they do, please contact them direct.

Traveleyes

This travel operator offers group global destinations and experiences designed for vision impaired and fully sighted people travelling together. They welcome holidaymakers travelling solo, as a couple or with friends, and take groups to all kinds of wonderful places, from the Peak District to Peru.

■ Visit www.traveleyes.com

Seable

This award-winning social enterprise provides accessible, tailored, and group holidays for the vision impaired community. Seable sets out to craft your perfect holiday and look after you through a 24-hour emergency helpline and local chaperones.

■ Visit seable.co.uk
or call 020 3375 6947

Responsible Travel

This eco-friendly travel operator provides a wide range of accessible

holidays and tours, from cruises to safaris to family activity breaks. They also have a large range of holiday guides with year-round weather charts, travel advice and things to do.

■ Visit responsibletravel.com/holidays/accessible or call 01273 823 700

Limitless Travel

Founded by and for disabled travellers, Limitless Travel pride themselves on understanding how much planning and worry can go into getting away. Their wide range of holidays, include cruises and coach trips, and they offer fully accessible transport, carefully selected accommodation and balanced itineraries.

■ Visit limitlesstravel.org
or call 0800 711 7112

Holidays for Members

We offer a fantastic range of breaks all year round for our beneficiaries and their carers at our fully accessible beach-front centre on the south coast in Rustington. From walking to archery, and art to dancing, our subsidised activities cater to all ages, abilities and levels of sight loss.

■ Visit blindveterans.org.uk/member/ or call 01903 945300

RNIB

Sight loss charity RNIB has a Sightline Directory of specialist hotels and other places to stay which cater specifically for blind and partially sighted people.

A “specialist” hotel might have staff specifically trained to offer support to people with sight loss and additional features such as colour contrasting surfaces, talking menus and alarm clocks.

■ Visit sightlinedirectory.org.uk
or call 0303 123 9999



An accessible cruise break

How to prepare

As tempting as it can be to just pack your bags and jet off, the more prepared you are, the better. The following tips can make all the difference:

- Contact your accommodation and transport providers in advance and be honest about your accessibility needs so they can assist you when you arrive.
- Be organised – have all documents and information to hand or in your phone, including emergency contacts just in case you get lost.
- If you use a Smart phone, you could try out a few sight loss apps before you go such as Seeing AI and Be My Eyes to see if you find them useful, plus magnification, Google Maps



Google Maps is a useful app when it comes to getting around

“A talking alarm clock is also an essential for some, particularly if you’re likely to be jetlagged”

- and language translation.
- Plan day trips before you go, and book assisted travel if required so that you get to all the attractions you really want to visit.
- Lots of holiday destinations offer guided walking, bus or boat tours which can be more relaxing than trying to find your own way around.
- If you’re getting a flight, stick something bright on your luggage to make it easier to identify at the airport. And if you’re travelling with someone else, ask them to wear something bright so they stand out in the crowd.
- Hotels and other accommodation should ask you to complete a Personal Evacuation Plan (PEP) – a customised plan for people who may need help evacuating.

What to pack

When you have sight loss it can be difficult navigating unfamiliar territory, so take anything with you that might be of help. Here are some ideas:

PANAMA / ADOBE STOCK



Lots of holiday destinations offer guided walking, bus or boat tours

- A spare cane is a good idea just in case one gets lost or broken and, of course, whatever glasses or other specialist aids you rely on.
- Take a small cross-body bag for essential items like money and phone, and always keep it on you when you’re out and about.
- Some Members like to pack a torch, so they have it to hand in dimly lit spaces.
- A talking alarm clock is also an essential for some, particularly if you’re likely to be jetlagged.
- A few brightly coloured ties can be wrapped around door handles and bed posts to help you navigate your way around your room.
- Also, Bluetooth key trackers that help find keys by beeping can be used to help locate the bathroom in your accommodation.

- Bump-on stickers could be useful for helping you identify or locate objects such as a shampoo bottles or the buttons of the safe in your hotel room.
- Pack a solid stick of sun cream – they’re much less messy and easier to apply than the lotions.
- Don’t forget your liquid level indicator to help prevent spills and burns when making a cuppa.

Worth remembering

Wherever you choose to stay, the most important thing is to let them know beforehand that you may need extra support getting there and finding your way around.

According to the Equality Act 2010, a hotel can’t refuse to serve you for a reason related to your disability, or offer you a lesser standard of service.

Based on the experiences of many of you, we can safely say that most places will be more than happy to accommodate your needs. 🌍

Do you have any sight loss holiday tips or recommendations? Please email us at revieweditor@blindveterans.org.uk

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 July 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 a pack on the Member's 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.

Woodland trio – hedgehog: The second of our woodland trio models is now available. This hedgehog model has around 20 pieces and is suitable for both beginners and more experienced model makers. You will receive a step-by-step graphic guide with your model. The mouse is still available if you haven't done this one yet, and the Squirrel will be available in the Autumn.
(Beginners/easy)

Fish mosaic: We hope you enjoy this bespoke mosaic Reanna has designed for you to complete over the summer. It contains a mixture of iridised tiles which reflect the light and appear to change colour like real fish scales. It also comes with blue grout to create



Woodland hedgehog model



Fish mosaic

a special decoration for your home or a gift for a loved one. Tiles will be pre-sorted for you into labelled bags, and you'll receive a step-by-step instruction guide.

(Difficulty – moderate/confident beginners)

Cactus: A project for our indoor gardeners. This kit contains a decorative ceramic bowl on a stand. Included are all you need to nurture your own little cacti. There are a variety of cactus seeds and a large plastic bag to keep them covered

while they germinate. If you have a warm greenhouse, you can try growing the seeds in there. We have also included some nasturtium seeds to grow in the pot instead, if you'd prefer a trailing plant instead of a cactus.

(Beginners/easy)

Taj Mahal model: A few members have requested models of buildings, and we hope you love this Taj Mahal model. Despite having 171 pieces, it's extremely symmetrical and a lot of parts are repeated – orientation →

doesn't matter too much and it's easier than it might seem. The dimensions of the finished model are 18cm x 22cm x 22cm. You'll receive a step-by-step graphic guide to help you complete it with some glue and sandpaper.

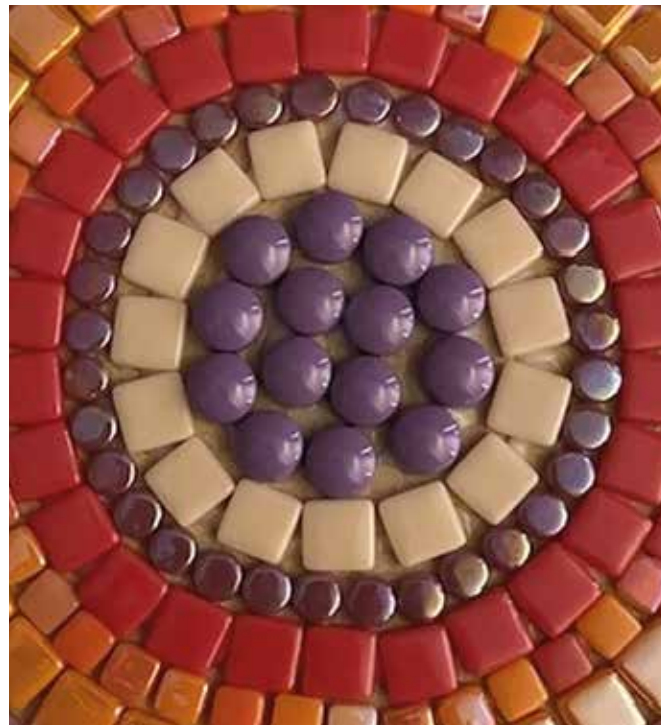
(Difficulty – intermediate)

Also Available:

- Summer mandala mosaic
- Botanical sketchbook

Your feedback matters:

Thank you for taking the time to fill in feedback forms and send them back to us. As they're anonymous, we can't get in touch with everyone individually, so here's some answers to some frequent questions and comments:



Mandala mosaic

What do I do with my finished projects?

- Not everyone has the space to display items, but taking part is still really enjoyable. Some of your fellow members have varnished their models and displayed them outside, or by the front door as a "welcome". You can also attach a hook to the back of the MDF mosaic base and hang it on the wall. Remember to varnish it if you're hanging it outside.
- We've heard some lovely stories of members giving their finished craft projects/drawings to family Members and friends as gifts – a special home-made item will make someone's day!

Upcoming projects:

- Here's a few teasers of projects coming soon based on your fantastic ideas – tank model (with moving parts), Christmas decoration mosaics, Christmas card collage making kit, autumn indoor gardening. We're also testing other wooden models based on your suggestions of vehicles, animals and buildings to make sure they're not too difficult.

Difficulty ratings:

- It's a great idea to rate projects via difficulty – thank you. We acknowledge that this is subjective



Taj Mahal model

– what is easy for one person could be very challenging for someone else. We will be rating difficulty relative to other NCP projects. We'd always encourage you to give anything a go if it sounds interesting regardless of the difficulty, even if you're a beginner. Just see how you find the process, and you might surprise yourself!

- Going forward, we'll try and provide a variety of difficulties for our most popular projects – mosaics and wooden models. You can take part

in as many as you like, regardless of experience or skill. We'll put a rating next to the description in the Review. Please get in touch if you'd like to discuss further.

- **We always love hearing from you, whether it's to share photographs, request a project or just to have a chat about your crafting activities. Please don't hesitate to get in touch via ncwt@blindveterans.org.uk – we hope you have a lovely summer! Lucy & Reanna – NCP team.** 🍷



Quiz time

Our Members test your general knowledge.

1. Which planet is closest to the sun?

2. In anatomy what does the “hallux” refer to?

3. Jim Henson is the creator of what beloved cast of characters?

4. Weighing around 8 pounds, what is the body’s largest organ?

5. Leonardo Da vinci’s Mona Lisa hangs in which museum?
6. According to the Guinness book of world records, what is the best selling book of all time?

7. Who is considered the father of relativity?

8. What is the fifth sign of the zodiac?

Answers on Page 47



Crowds gather to admire the Mona Lisa, but where?



Family news

Birthdays

Thomas Brown who celebrates his 101st birthday on 31 July 2025.

Frank Gidlow who celebrates his 101st birthday on 12 July 2025.

Bernard Holt who celebrates his 101st birthday on 20 July 2025.

Joyce Malcom who celebrates her 102nd birthday on 17 July 2025.

Douglas Marsh who celebrates his 102nd birthday on 8 July 2025.

Kenneth Millard who celebrates his 101st birthday on 13 July 2025.

Cyril Park who celebrates his 100th birthday on 16 July 2025.

Alan Pyefinch who celebrates his 103rd birthday on 24 July 2025.

Victor Ralphs who celebrates his 100th birthday on 18 July 2025.

Marie Redshaw who celebrates her 100th birthday on 29 July 2025.

Joan Tanton who celebrates her 101st birthday on 11 July 2025.

Arnold Wilkinson who celebrates his 101st birthday on 15 July 2025.

Michael Woods who celebrates his 101st birthday on 12 July 2025.

Condolences

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

Kay Rosalind Wheeler who died on 10 June 2025. She was the wife of John Wheeler.

Jill Jupp who died on 9 June 2025. She was the wife of Peter Charles Jupp.

Molly Reid who died on 1 May 2025. She was the wife of James Reid.

Wendy King who died on 5 June 2025. She was the wife of Peter King.

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

Donald George Bagley of Wolverhampton died on 26 May 2025 aged 96. He served as an Able Seaman in the Royal Navy.

George Arthur Barnes of London died on 17 May 2025 aged 102. He served as a Gunner in the Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment).

Frank Beanland of Aylesford died on 1 May 2025 aged 98. He served as a Private in the Middlesex Regiment (Duke of Cambridge's Own).

Charles Beck of Eastleigh died on 1 June 2025 aged 100. He served as a Corporal in the Royal Air Force.

Leslie Henry Beckley of Petersfield died on 17 May 2025 aged 95. He served as an A.C. 1 in the Royal Air Force.

George Henry Brice of Liverpool died on 1 June 2025 aged 95. He served as a Gunner in the Royal Artillery.

Donald Carter of Littlehampton died on 1 May 2025 aged 96. He served as a Warrant Officer 2nd Class in the Royal Army Educational Corps.

Peter Carter of North Walsham died on 1 May 2025 aged 98. He served as a Driver in the Royal Army Service Corps.

Ronald Arthur Cooper of Sutton Coldfield died on 20 March 2025 aged 90. He served as an A.C. 1 in the Royal Air Force.

Clive Edward Cox of Weston-Super-Mare died on 11 April 2025 aged 85. He served as a stoker in the Royal Navy.

Frank Herbert Cutmore of Hemel Hempstead died on 11 June 2025 aged 99. He served as an A.C. 2 in the Royal Scots Regiment.

Stuart Davies of Wokingham died on 12 May 2025 aged 90. He served as a Private in the R.A.O.C / R.E.M.E.

William Gann of Bexhill-On-Sea died on 21 May 2025 aged 101. He served as a Driver in the Royal Army Service Corps.

Gilfour Ghani of Newtown died on 2 June 2025 aged 84. He served as a Warrant Officer 2nd Class in the Parachute Regiment.

Stephen Edward Montague Goodall of Kingsbridge died on 27 May 2025 aged 103. He served as a Brigadier in the Royal Engineers.

Derek Charles Gowers of Bungay died on 9 June 2025 aged 90. He served as an L.A.C. in the Royal Air Force.

Brian Hall of Beaconsfield died on 4 June 2025 aged 92. He served in the Royal Air Force.

Joseph Hallett of Banbury died on 1 June 2025 aged 93. He served as a Private in the Mercian Brigade.

Frederick George Heal of Cardiff died on 25 May 2025 aged 97. He served as a Corporal in the Royal Pioneer Corps.

David Hotchin of Plymouth died on 14 June 2025 aged 90. He served as an Able Seaman in the Royal Navy.

Trevor John Howell of Gosport died on 23 May 2025 aged 92. He served as a Warrant Officer 1st Class in the Royal Electrical And Mechanical Engineers.



Stanley Jones of Buckley died on 19 March 2025 aged 94. He served as a Gunner in the Royal Artillery.

John Stephen Lacey of Bridgwater died on 4 June 2025 aged 90. He served as an R.P.O (A) in the Royal Navy.

David Morgan Llewellyn of Pontyclun died on 12 June 2025 aged 87. He served in the Royal Regiment Of Wales.

Vincent Matthews of Plymouth died on 23 May 2025 aged 91. He served as a Chief Petty Officer in the Royal Navy.

Charles William Mcknight of Southampton died on 20 May 2025 aged 99. He served as an A.C. 2 in the Royal Air Force.

David Arthur Memmott of Andover died on 22 March 2025 aged 86. He served as a Major in the Royal Electrical And Mechanical Engineers.

Geoffrey Martin Morris of Wokingham died on 8 June 2025 aged 82. He served in the Royal Corps Of Transport.

Brian Muir of Swindon died on 14 June 2025 aged 79. He served as a Sergeant in the Royal Air Force.

Stephen Noble of Sheffield died on 1 June 2025 aged 68. He served as a Private in the R.A.O.C / R.E.M.E.

Gerald Norman of Brixham died on 15 June 2025 aged 90. He served in the Royal Air Force.

Ronald Osbaldestin of Durham died on 31 May 2025 aged 87. He served as a Lance Corporal in the Royal Military Police.

Jack Palin of Cheltenham died on 1 May 2025 aged 99. He served in the Grenadier Guards.

Kenneth Parcell of Ealing, died on 11 May 2025 aged 99. He served as a Trooper in the 8th King's Royal Irish Hussars.

Donald James Petford of Bracknell died on 15 June 2025 aged 90. He served as a Sergeant in the Royal Army Pay Corps.

John Frederick Poyner of Borehamwood died on 1 June 2025 aged 95. He served as a Private in the Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment).

Richard Rawlinson of Chichester died on 15 March 2025 aged 89. He served as a Senior Aircraftsman in the Royal Air Force.

James Reid of Motherwell died on 15 April 2025 aged 89. He served as a Rifleman in the Cameronians (Scottish Rifles).

Thomas Patrick Riley of Chorley died on 1 May 2025 aged 91. He served as a Signaller in the Royal Signals.

Thomas Arthur Roddy of Darlington died on 1 May 2025 aged 86. He served as a Sergeant in the Royal Air Force.

David Rutherford of Dronfield died on 19 March 2025 aged 94. He served in the Royal Air Force.

James Shirley of Prenton died on 1 October 2024 aged 63. He served as a Senior Aircraftsman in the Royal Air Force.

Alexander Smith of Letchworth Garden City died on 27 February 2025 aged 94. He served as a Corporal in the Highland Light Infantry (City Of Glasgow Regiment).

Denis Spurgin of Southampton died on 1 June 2025 aged 91. He served as an Apprentice in the General Service Corps.

George Thorpe of Mansfield died on 23 May 2025 aged 93. He served as a Lance Corporal in the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers.

Leo Peter Alphonso Toy of Plymouth died on 15 May 2025 aged 94. He served as a Senior Aircraftsman in the Royal Air Force.

Peter Alan Trevor of Lincoln died on 12 February 2025 aged 90. He served as a Gunner in the Royal Artillery.

Geoffrey Walker of Coalville died on 13 June 2025 aged 94. He served as a Private in the Royal Leicestershire Regiment.

Joan Lily Alice West of Poole died on 1 June 2025 aged 101. She served as a Wren HSR in the Women's Royal Naval Service.

Douglas Witt of Aylesford died on 1 June 2025 aged 95. He served as an L.A.C. in the Royal Air Force.

Gerald David Woodard of Halstead died on 3 June 2025 aged 89. He served as a Corporal in the Royal Electrical And Mechanical Engineers.

Michael Cyril Woodcock of Milton Keynes died on 20 May 2025 aged 87. He served as a Senior Aircraftsman in the Royal Air Force.

Clifford Howard Wrate of Woodbridge died on 11 May 2025 aged 92. He served as a Senior Aircraftsman in the Royal Air Force.

Frank John Wright of Fareham died on 6 May 2025 aged 93. He served as a Warrant Officer in the Royal Navy.

Did you know that we can set up online Tribute Pages for the loved ones of staff, Members and Supporters? Find out more about setting up a Tribute Page here: blindveteransuk.muchloved.org



Contact details

Contact address Blind Veterans UK,
126 Fairlie Road, Slough, SL1 4PY
0300 111 22 33

Member Support Hub (MeSH):
01273 391 447

New Members: Anyone who may be eligible to join Blind Veterans UK, can phone our Membership Department on freephone **0800 389 7979**.

Rustington Centre: 01903 945 300



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Quiz answers – from page 40

1. Mercury **2.** The big toe **3.** The Muppets **4.** The skin **5.** The Louvre **6.** The bible **7.** Albert Einstein **8.** Leo

A different format?

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VJ DAY