

# Review



The journal of  
Blind Veterans UK

**December 2024**



## A proud day

Your Remembrance photos  
from around the country



### Inside:

- Christmas messages
- Keeping your money safe
- Sight loss inclusive gift ideas



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**Reminder that there will be no Review in January, regular editions will resume in February**

### On the cover

A selection of photos from Remembrance events in London and across the country.



# A Remembrance to be proud of

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

As we approach the end of 2024, it's natural for us to reflect on what has happened over the past year and look ahead to the one to come.

In the last few issues, our CEO, Adrian Bell and I have both written about



**Barry Coupe**

the current transformational work underway to ensure the charity can support blind veterans for as long as we're needed. I'm pleased to say that this work is progressing well and every decision made by the Trustees has been based around the question of what's best for you all both today and, importantly, in the long term.

Last month, I had the honour of representing the charity at the Festival of Remembrance at London's Albert Hall, and was also fortunate enough to attend the Remembrance Sunday march at the Cenotaph. As always, it was an incredibly moving experience. In fact, this year even more so as I was marching next to two granddaughters of D-Day veteran and Member, George Chandler.

Sadly, George passed away just a few weeks before he was due to march with us, but his granddaughters did him proud marching in his honour. As we chatted, it became clear that their

“I was delighted to hear that more than 50 Blind Veterans UK wreaths were laid by Members across the country”

grandfather must have crossed paths with my father before he was blinded in 1943, as they both served on motor torpedo boats in Malta. Amazing.

I was also delighted to hear that as many as 50 Blind Veterans UK wreaths were laid across the country. What's more, we were represented at a Remembrance event held by the Mayor of London in City Hall.

The event was attended by Member Wayne Perry and staff member Glynis Gillam, and guests were treated to the stunning series of portraits we commissioned of our D-Day veterans to mark D-Day 80. Wayne is one of our standard bearers and I was very proud to attend his dedication ceremony in June in Rugby (pictured).

You can read more about all our Remembrance activities on page 12.

On a more sombre note, long-term Members may remember Gerard Frost who joined us as Finance Director in 1986 and became CEO until 2000.



**Chairman**

**Standard Bearer Wayne, right, with wreath layer Jeffrey Parker**

Gerard's daughter has very kindly let us know that, sadly, he passed away in July. Although I never met Gerard, I understand that he played an crucial role in steering the charity through its own transformation to widen the membership. His daughter says that before his death he still enjoyed having the Review read aloud to him. I'm sure you will join me in sending my sincere condolences to his family.

Life is so fleeting. Please take care and I wish you all a wonderful Christmas and a happy New Year. 🎄

# A special time

Christmas messages from **Colin Williamson** and **Padre George**  Listen here

As the year draws to an end, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all, on behalf of everyone here at Blind Veterans UK, a very Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.

I'd also like to thank you for your patience and understanding whilst the charity goes through a period of transformation. Your support during this time is truly appreciated.

This year has been difficult for many people around the world and many families will not be able to spend Christmas together. There's no greater gift this festive season than being with those who mean the most to you. This time of year helps us to really appreciate the love in our lives which we often take for granted.

Growing up, I used to think that receiving gifts at Christmas was the best thing in the world. Now, as the father of two beautiful girls and the grandfather of four amazing grandchildren, I realise how wrong I

was. How we spend Christmas is far more important than how much we spend, and the best thing is spending precious time with one another.

Christmas is a time to take a moment to reflect on what's really important. Many of our fellow blind veterans don't have family around and, sadly, Christmas Day for them could just feel like another day.

When all is said and done, this time of the year is about caring for others, so let's all take a few moments out of our day this Christmas to let them know that we're thinking about them. Let's pick up the phone for a chat, or send a text message wishing them our season's greetings.

It may only take a few minutes of your time, but it could make all the difference to their day.

Merry Christmas!

**Colin Williamson**  
President, Blind Veterans UK

Most of us are looking forward to another festive season. For Christians, the birth of the saviour of the world; for our Jewish Members Hanukah or Festival of Lights; for Hindu Members Diwali, another festival focusing on light over darkness and, for Pagans, it's Yuletide. Meanwhile, for non-religious people, the season is, well, I suppose nothing really, just the 25th December; another bank holiday.

However you may observe this time of the year, I wish you peace in your heart, peace in your home, peace in your life.

Christmas is a festival of the church, pure and simple. Many people have a vague idea about the true meaning of Christmas - Bethlehem, Mary, Joseph, three kings, "no room in the inn," and such things.

These are all important parts of the Christmas story and must have a central place in a proper observance of Christmas, but we all know deep down in our hearts that there is more to it. There has to be. Otherwise what's the point of it all?

I'm not going to mince my words, my dear friends: Christmas is about God's love for a world that He made and loves, but a world gone horribly

wrong. As members of the military community, we've all seen the worst that human beings are capable of, and we have tried to play our part as peacemakers and peacekeepers.

The night Christ was born, angels sang in the sky, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace goodwill toward men." By sending His son to earth over 2,000 years ago, The Father said to the world, "I'm giving you another chance to live together in peace and harmony with each other, and I'm giving you another chance, each day to turn back to me and be reconciled to me."

Our lovely Christmas trees, decorations, special dinners, and parties are our human way of celebrating these things, and thanking God for the best Christmas present ever given - the gift of His Son.

If you're able to, try to get to a service at your local church - the denomination doesn't matter. And if you're a member of another faith, you too are welcome to celebrate the festival of Christmas alongside your own festivals.

I wish you a very happy Christmas to you and yours,

**Padre George**

## The passing of former CEO Gerard Frost

We are saddened to announce the passing of Gerard Frost, former Chief Executive of St Dunstan's. Gerard joined St Dunstan's in 1986 after a distinguished career at Oxford University Press, initially taking on the role of Finance Director. His commitment and passion quickly led him to become Chief Executive - a position he held with pride.



Our former CEO, Gerard Frost

This role was close to Gerard's heart as he felt immense satisfaction in working with and advocating for blind veterans. He felt a profound responsibility to understand the unique challenges faced by those he served. Throughout his career, he was honoured to represent St Dunstan's at numerous Remembrance Day ceremonies, marching alongside veterans to pay tribute at the Cenotaph. He was also privileged to attend several garden parties at Buckingham Palace, where he represented the charity in the presence of the late Queen.

In his later years as CEO, Gerard's commitment was so valued that he was asked by the chairman, Admiral Sir Henry Leach, to extend his tenure. Gerard graciously agreed, ensuring a smooth transition and continued stability for the charity.

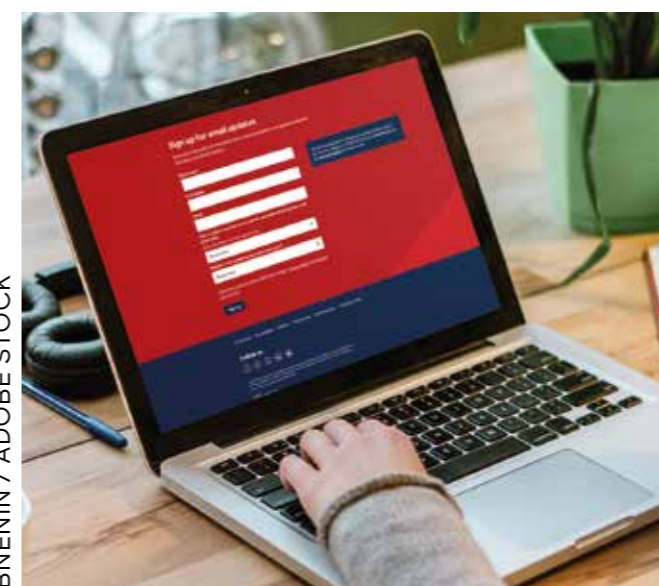
Gerard's legacy at Blind Veterans UK is one of compassion, respect and unwavering dedication to our blind veterans. His leadership during his tenure was instrumental in enabling us to continue our work to this day. Gerard's passion for our work

continued to the end of his life, with his daughter reading the Review magazine to him, keeping him up to date with the charity. Our deepest condolences go to Gerard's family at this time.

## Sign up to our monthly e-newsletter

Did you know, you can receive all the latest Member news, announcements and opportunities for you and your family in your e-mail inbox every month?

■ **Whether you're a Member, a family member or a carer, all you need to do is visit the Member area on our website at [blindveterans.org.uk/member-updates](https://blindveterans.org.uk/member-updates) and sign up. Simple.**



Our online newsletter sign-in



## Second World War vehicle at Llandudno's Military Week

## Military Week at our centres

Both centres put on some wonderful activities for Members this year including a tactile weapons display, a tea dance, talks from military history experts and trips out to museums. The week ended with Remembrance where Members were able to pay their respects to fallen comrades alongside one another.

Each year, as part of Military Week, our Llandudno Centre marks Remembrance with an incredible poppy display. This time is to celebrate our military connections, share stories, connect with other military groups in our community and most importantly, remember those who have fought for our country and freedom. 🇬🇧

# In your community

Just some of the social gatherings across the country which have brought together Members in their local areas

## In the North East

An Independent Living Advisor at the Royal British Legion visited the Ferryhill group to talk about independent living, local council services, adult care and the help available.

Elsewhere, Members in Nottingham received a visit from friends in the RAF Military Police during a coffee morning.



**Member Tony Harbour, right, presenting RAFP with an award during the dinner at RAF Honington**

## In Northern Ireland

Community 1 were joined by friends from Blesma and the Defence Garden Scheme at a creative community space in the heart of Belfast. The National Creative Project provided everything they needed for Members to craft beautiful and colourful mosaic coasters.



**The Northern Ireland Community 1 group crafted mosaic coasters**

Pompey Pals, who shared incredible stories about First and Second World War veterans from Portsmouth.

## In East England

On 11 October, RAF Honington hosted a military dinner for over 80 guests. The dinner consisted of entertainment, welcome drinks, canapes and a three-course meal, as well as the presentation of three Founder's Day Awards.

## In the South West

Members of Community 9 attended a Veterans' Brunch, kindly put on by a care home local to them. They were joined by Chris from the charity,



**Member Peter wins our Rustington Bowls Championship**

a month-long poppy trail around Llandudno in commemoration of the 80th anniversary of D-Day. Members and visitors have also enjoyed trips to Greenfield Valley Heritage Park, Penderyn Distillery, plus karaoke, casino and bingo-themed nights.

## In North Wales

Members and volunteers from Community 4 enjoyed a visit to the Veterans Hub café, 'CaffiNaafi', in Connah's Quay for a coffee morning. It provided an excellent opportunity to catch up and support the local community and fellow veterans.

## At our Llandudno Centre

The Llandudno Centre has been part of the tour of The Longest Yarn,

## At our Rustington Centre

The Chelsea Pensioner Singers visited the Rustington Centre as part of the RHC Veterans Outreach programme, Southern Roadshow, and gave a wonderful musical performance for Members. The Rustington Centre also hosted the first Blind Veterans UK Bowls Championship – with Member Peter winning the prized cup! 🏆



Listen here



Clockwise, from left: John Ball preparing to lay the wreath in St Cleer, Cornwall; Members and staff at the Sir Arthur Pearson Memorial; Janet Hazlewood and her great-grandson Dillon at the Cenotaph in London

Clockwise, from left: D-Day veteran George Chandler's granddaughters with photographs of him; Member Michael Woods with his wreath at the Cenotaph; Wreaths laid at the Rustington War Memorial

# A proud and solemn day

As it will always continue to be, the National Day of Remembrance proved to be one of the most important events in our annual calendar this year

As ever, this year marked memorable anniversaries for our veterans, not least the 80th anniversary of key WWII battles in 1944 and the 25th anniversary of Kosovo.

Our Members up and down the country headed out to Remembrance services over the weekend to pay their respects to old comrades and friends who perished in battle.

Once again, a proud group of over 80 blind veterans and guides took part in the televised march to the Cenotaph in London.

The oldest of our group joining the march in London this year was 100-year-old Michael Woods.

Following the march, he said: "What an amazing experience, I've never →

felt anything quite like it. The crowds cheering for us as we made our way around made me feel ten feet tall. I'm so proud to have finally marched here in my 100th year. And it was all the sweeter knowing that my wife and family were watching me on TV."

Remembrance is a solemn time for Michael. As a young RAF mechanic in the Second World War, he worked mainly on Lancaster Bombers and saw many a crew set off in their aircraft never to return.

He says: "When I was in the Air Force, we used to get a brand new Lancaster arrive and you get a new crew and their very first operation, sometimes on that very first flight they'd lose their lives, wouldn't come back."

Michael was discharged in 1947 with the rank of Leading Aircraftman. He lost his sight much later in life due to macular degeneration and glaucoma. Being given the opportunity to march with us at the Cenotaph is one of the many reasons that Michael is grateful

that he started receiving support from Blind Veterans UK.

He says: "Joining Blind Veterans UK has been ever so helpful to me. Every month or so we meet up as a group in the local area and all the staff are so helpful and kind. But being given the opportunity to march at the Cenotaph with Blind Veterans UK was fantastic. I felt ever so proud."

Michael was due to be joined by fellow WWII Member George

Chandler but, sadly, George, who fought in D-Day, passed away just weeks before the parade. Two of his granddaughters marched with us in his honour, carrying pictures of their grandfather.

Falklands veteran Stephen Tuffen joined Michael leading our contingent alongside our President Colin Williamson and Chief Executive Adrian Bell.

He said: "I sadly lost a number →



St Dunstan's Standards, Rustington Parish Church



Blind Veterans UK contingent at Rustington Village Remembrance Parade



Member Lindy Elliot after laying a wreath in Torquay



Member Ron Jury with staff member, Glynis, at the Cenotaph in London



of colleagues during the Falklands campaign so I was thinking of them. It's so important that the sacrifices of those who died serving this country are not forgotten."

Stephen entered the Parachute Regiment in 1982 and almost immediately was sent out to the Falklands when war broke out in April. During the Battle of Goose Green he was shot twice through the head. When he woke up on the ambulance ship he was totally blind.

Fortunately, around ten years later he found out about our charity and started receiving support.

We're proud to say that our blind veterans took part in events across the whole country. Over 50 wreaths were laid on behalf of the charity across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Our two centres in Llandudno and Rustington both hosted a special Military Week for those staying

with us. These themed weeks included visits to museums and military bases, tea dances, equipment demonstrations, and formal military dinners.

The theme at our Llandudno Centre was the 80th anniversary of D-Day, and portraits of our D-Day veterans were displayed throughout the week. We were also proud to host Second World War blind veterans, Mary Cliff and Arthur Lilley, who both laid wreaths at the Remembrance Sunday ceremony in the town centre, joined by Afghanistan veteran Anthony "Coops" Cooper.

Our wreath layers led over 20 blind veterans and staff representing the charity at the Llandudno march along the promenade.

Meanwhile, staff and Members at our Rustington Centre laid a wreath and crosses of Remembrance on the Garden of Remembrance in Bear Road Cemetery, close to our former centre in Brighton. The memorial bears the name and cap badge of 350 veterans at the large St Dunstan's plot. A cross was also placed beside each of the 230 individual headstones.

Also, Rustington resident, 103-year-old Member Nancy Bowstead, laid a wreath at our war memorial in

**"We're proud to say that our blind veterans took part in events across the whole country"**

Rustington and blind veterans, staff, and volunteers marched proudly through the village. Nancy said: "It's important to me that as long as there is breath in my body, I will go to a war memorial, to a service of Remembrance, and I will lay a wreath."

To mark the Remembrance period, five of the St Dunstan's Standards from our history were put on display in the parish church of St Peter and St Paul in Rustington.

These standards, which were previously seen in the Brighton Centre chapel, will be laid up permanently in the parish church.

And in London, Standard Bearer, Wayne Perry, represented the charity at the Mayor of London's Remembrance service. The charity was invited as City Hall hosted our exhibition of photographic portraits of 16 veterans who served in Normandy.

The exhibition, previously seen in the National Army Museum marks the 80th anniversary of D-Day. 🇬🇧



**From left: Northern Ireland Members Alec Lundy, Hugh Megarry and Michael Surgenor, with Tommy Linton from Start 360**

# Get support from MeSH

Everything you wanted to know about our Member Support Hub... but were too confused to ask

## What exactly is the Member Support Hub?

We are a dedicated helpline for Members who need information and advice on a whole host of different things. You can contact us via phone and email.

## What does the Hub help with?

We offer a plethora of helpful information related to IT, sight loss equipment and eye care, ranging from how to work your computer, tablet or mobile phone to changing the colour contrast on your desktop magnifier. We can also support with ordering equipment, sorting out fault finding and arranging for repairs where appropriate.

## What can I expect when I use the helpline?

The helpline team consists of sight loss advisors, who will take some

details from you, for example your name, address and telephone number. We'll never ask for your bank details or for any passwords.

We'll ask you a few questions about your enquiry and do our best to resolve the matter in the same call. If this isn't possible, we'll refer you onto the most appropriate person within our team, for example one of our vision rehabilitation specialists (VRS/ROVI), technology practitioners or IT technicians.

On occasion we may need to refer you to another team, for example the Digital Inclusion Team, or organise a visit from a VRS/ROVI for a home visit.

## How long does it take to deal with my enquiry?

We aim to deal with enquiries as quickly as possible. Of course, each

enquiry we receive is unique and so it's impossible to give a specific timeframe, but we'll always deal with it as quickly as we can. If the problem can't be resolved quickly, we'll discuss the most suitable options with you.

## How to contact MeSH

You can get in touch with us in the following ways:

- Telephone **01273 391 447** on weekdays (excluding public holidays) between 9am and 4pm.
- Email [mesh@blindveterans.org.uk](mailto:mesh@blindveterans.org.uk).
- Visit [blindveterans.org.uk/mesh](https://blindveterans.org.uk/mesh)
- We also publish information resources on our website on living

“The team will ask you some questions about your enquiry and will aim to resolve the matter in the same call”

with sight loss, which you may find useful. You can find these at [blindveterans.org.uk/resources](https://blindveterans.org.uk/resources)

- If you need some help with getting in touch, you are welcome to ask your volunteer or named employee of Blind Veterans UK to get in contact with us on your behalf. 🇬🇧



Regional ROVI, Liz, showing Member Margaret new technology

# ‘Writing a Will at 17 was sobering’

Member and Trustee, **Alan Holderness**, who served in the Falklands, on his first experience of Will writing and his father’s inspiring example which encouraged him to look after the next generation of blind veterans in his Will



**Member and Trustee, Alan**

“I left school to join the Royal Marines at age 16, and after training joined 40 Commando. The following year, 1982, we were sent to the Falklands. It didn’t seem real until we got into the cold, rough South Atlantic.

The biggest wake-up call was writing my Will at 17, a week prior to landing. That was sobering. I put my grandad’s wedding ring in the letter to give to my family. The reality of heading to war was overwhelming, but I stood firm in my decision to serve my country.

The day the Argentines surrendered is a day I’ll never forget. It was my 18th birthday and the locals managed to cobble together a bit of cake. One of the islanders also gave me a Falklands pound note, which I still have.

It was in the Falklands that I realised I had eyesight issues. I lost my night

vision and kept falling down cliffs and into trenches, and walking through areas I wasn’t meant to in the dark. They even gave me the nickname, Torchy. I was told to get my eyes checked if I got back alive. Thankfully I served four more years, including a UN tour in Cyprus, before being medically discharged with retinitis pigmentosa.

Returning to civilian life in Blackburn was tough, but I kept busy. I’ve been Managing Director of the family manufacturing business since 2000, as well as a serving Magistrate since 2003, sitting on the adult and youth benches. I’ve also served as a school governor for 26 years.

The military was my family, though, so I maintained that connection by getting involved with the Royal British Legion, eventually becoming Chairman, and starting the Royal Marine Association in East Lancashire, where I’m still President. I joined Blind Veterans UK in 2006 and became a Trustee in 2018. I’m deeply grateful for this community and the support I receive.

Having to write my Will at 17 has stayed with me throughout my life and now I’m 60, my thoughts turn to mortality. I’m inspired by my father’s actions when he was unexpectedly diagnosed with cancer at 57. The moment he got that news, rather than

being selfish, he got everything set up for his family. I take immense pride that he chose to put plans in place for us in his final days. He passed away with peace of mind.

I’ve followed suit and prepared for the future. A solicitor helped make the process easy by asking the right questions and ensuring nothing was overlooked. My Will means that someone else isn’t making key decisions for me, my family is taken care of, and my memories and legacy will be the way that I want.

I’ve also left a gift to Blind Veterans UK. It’s my way of being remembered and supporting the charity, even after my death. I hope it’s there, not just for me, but for veterans in the future.

As a Trustee and, more importantly, as a Member, I hope that, together, our Blind Veterans UK community can help make sure the next generation are supported through their sight loss journey too.”

■ **If you’d like to request a Gifts in Wills guide for information about how to join Alan in pledging a gift, or you want to find out how you can write your Will for free, please get in touch with Alice on 020 7616 7923 or email [giftsinwills@blindveterans.org.uk](mailto:giftsinwills@blindveterans.org.uk).**



 Listen here

**Left: Members helping with the poppy display. Right: The centre's entrance decorated with the stunning poppy blanket**

**Top: Planted poppies on the field. Bottom: Members unpack poppies**

# Llandudno poppy display: a tribute built together

Once again, Members, staff, volunteers and the local community all came together to create a stunning display...

Each year, as part of Military Week, our Llandudno Centre marks Remembrance with an incredible poppy display. This time is to celebrate our military connections, share stories, connect with other military groups in our community and, most importantly, remember those who have fought for our country and freedom.

Since 2016, our Members, staff, volunteers, and local community groups have come together to create a display of knitted and crochet poppies

at the Llandudno Centre. The display, cascading from the building and into the grounds, originally consisted of over 3,000 poppies and each year since then the installation has continued to grow.

A Field of Remembrance now forms part of the display in the grounds, with our visitors able to plant a knitted poppy in the field in tribute to those who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

To create the astounding display, blind veterans, volunteers and staff in our creative studio crafted the donated poppies onto drapes and blankets for the installation on the building and wired thousands of poppies ready for planting in the Field of Remembrance.

This year, we reached out to our community across social media, inviting people to knit, crochet or sew poppies for our Remembrance display at Llandudno.

Thanks to the incredible response, we received donations of knitted and crocheted poppies from more than 40 individuals, groups, and corporate partners throughout the UK. Members, volunteers and staff had the privilege of unpacking these packages, which were filled with handcrafted poppies and notes from across the country. →



**Members, staff and volunteers proudly pose in front of the finished poppy display, with trainee military personnel from Bangor**

With hundreds of donated poppies ready for display, our creative studio at Llandudno became a hub of activity. Blind veterans, staff, and volunteers came together to craft these poppies into drapes and blankets to create the cascading display, while wiring thousands more to plant in the Field of Remembrance.

It was truly a team effort, with each person helping to bring this year's display to life.

Once again, Gwynedd Forklifts kindly supplied a cherry picker to enable us to install the poppy drapes around the entrance to the building, while

learners from Military Preparation College of Training, Bangor joined us for a day to fill our grounds with poppies in the Field of Remembrance.

This year, the installation of poppies was created at the beginning of October so that Blind Veterans UK could be part of Llandudno's Poppy Trail while 'The Longest Yarn' exhibition was on display.

As a charity, we were delighted to be part of this very special event to mark D-Day 80 and it has been lovely to have so many visitors from across the UK coming to the centre to view our poppies. 🌸

# Never forget

This Remembrance, many Members across the country were able to lay Blind Veterans UK wreaths in their communities, all thanks to the individuals and organisations taking part in our 'Gift a Wreath' campaign

On Remembrance, while we love supporting Members to take part in the march past the Cenotaph in London, we are equally thrilled when you choose to mark this important occasion by laying wreaths in your events close to home. The money raised by our 'Gift a Wreath' campaign not only helps us to provide these wreaths but also raises money for our ongoing support of Members in their communities.

This year, we were gifted 14 wreaths, which were laid around the country. Our thanks goes to the organisations who supported us - Thea Pharmaceuticals, Llandudno

**“I lay a wreath every year as a mark of respect to those who I once knew and to those who I didn't”**

funeral directors Tom Owen and Son, Anglesey hotel Chateau Rhianfa, and HomeSmiths interior designers - as well as a number of individuals.

Employees from Thea Pharmaceuticals laid additional wreaths on behalf of the charity.

**Some of the veterans who laid wreaths have told us why it is important to them:**

## **Clive Jones laid a wreath in Market Drayton**

Clive was blinded 23 years ago while serving in the British Army. He has been supported by the charity since 2001.

**Clive says:** “I lay a wreath every year as a mark of respect to those who I once knew and to those I didn't. The sacrifice given by all Servicemen and women should never be forgotten. It's so important to remember and →

also to educate those who don't fully understand why wreaths are laid.

"When laying the wreath, I think of all my friends and colleagues whom I've lost over the years. When I close my eyes and bow my head, I always think of my Great Uncle Richard. I wear his medals on my right side; he was special to me and we are the only members of my family to have served.

"I am so grateful to those who make it possible for myself and my fellow blind veterans to lay these wreaths."

### **Second World War veteran Nancy Bowstead**

Blind veteran Nancy, who's 103, joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service in February 1942. Selected for Officer Cadet Training and commissioned in August 1943, she was then stationed at a gun site in Swansea until the end of the war.

Nancy, who now resides at the Rustington Centre, put on her medals and laid a wreath as part of the Remembrance Sunday service at the centre. The wreath Nancy laid was gifted by an individual who wanted to play her part in supporting our veterans.

**Nancy says:** "It's important to me that as long as there is breath in my

body, I will go to a war memorial; to a service of Remembrance, and I will lay a wreath."

### **Colin Adamson laid a wreath in Horwich**

Colin served in the Royal Navy for 11 years. He laid a wreath at the Horwich War Memorial.

**Colin says:** "It means so much to me to have had the opportunity to lay a wreath in my local community again this year. I also had the honour of reciting the Kohima Epitaph: 'When you go home, tell them of us and say, For your tomorrow, we gave our today.'

"I lay a wreath in honour of all the veterans around me who have sacrificed so much. My grandad served in the Second World War and Remembrance is a reminder to us all of past conflicts and what has been achieved by those who fought in them. I wear my grandad's medals alongside my own as a sign of respect."

### **Howell Richards laid a wreath in Porthcawl**

Howell served in the Royal Ordnance Corp for six years and then joined the Territorial Army for a further 13 years.

**Howell says:** "For me, Remembrance is our opportunity to show respect for what people have gone through to

give us what we have today. Laying a wreath is extremely humbling.

"The name of my wife's uncle who was killed in the D-Day Landings is displayed at the war memorial in Porthcawl. I think of what they went through and just hope it doesn't happen again."

### **Message from a gifter**

Local funeral directors, Tom Owen and Son, has gifted a wreath for the past three years. Funeral Director Kelly Owen once again took part in the Remembrance Parade alongside our Members, and accompanied Member Mary Cliff to lay her wreath. Mary, 98, joined the ATS in 1943 and was attached to 36 Company, Royal Army Pay Corps.

**Kelly says:** "As an attendee, the Remembrance commemorations allow me to personally honour the memory of the fallen heroes, as well as the resilience and dedication of those who have returned from conflict. It's a time to reflect on the sacrifices made by those who served, and continue to serve, in the military.

"It's humbling and inspiring to be part of something so meaningful and emotional, particularly joining Blind Veterans UK again who are always so welcoming to me.



### **Nancy preparing to lay her wreath at the Rustington Centre Memorial**

"Meeting veterans during this special time has given me invaluable insight into their stories of courage, endurance, and brotherhood. Their stories have inspired me to approach challenges with greater determination and a deeper appreciation for the freedoms we often take for granted."

■ **If you're part of an organisation or know a business that might like to support our Gift a Wreath campaign next year, or even an individual, you can find out more about it at [blindveterans.org.uk/GAW25](https://blindveterans.org.uk/GAW25) or email our Community Partnerships team who will be happy to help at [fundraising@blindveterans.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@blindveterans.org.uk)**

# Keeping safe from financial abuse

As the festive season ramps up, sadly so too does the risk of financial abuse. We look at what it is and how to avoid it

Financial abuse can be a hidden and often overlooked form of exploitation, especially among older people. It can leave devastating emotional and financial consequences for those affected.

This kind of abuse can take many forms and is often hard to detect. It usually involves someone taking or misusing someone else's money or belongings for their own gain, but it can also be associated with other forms of abuse, including controlling someone's access to money.

Financial abuse can be committed by anyone, from complete strangers to friends and neighbours. It can even be committed by family members.

## Jim's story

Widower Jim, 85, has lived alone since his wife died. His son, who holds lasting power of attorney, supports him as best he can, and Jim also relies

on a home carer for daily assistance.

Recently, Jim confided in his community support worker about his concerns over his dwindling finances. On reviewing his bank statements, he was horrified to discover numerous unexplained withdrawals, totalling £3,300 over the past year.

This didn't make any sense because the only person with access to his bank card, other than his son, was his trusted neighbour who helped him with grocery shopping.

The loss of money caused Jim a great deal of distress and anxiety as he feared he had been scammed. Fortunately, he was able to speak to his community support worker and tell her what had happened.

His CSW explained that this could well be a case of financial abuse and that a referral to the local authority social care

department for an adult safeguarding investigation was the best way forward.

An investigation took place and Jim was shocked when his neighbour, who had been helping him shop, admitted to withdrawing the funds. She claimed that she had been struggling financially and hadn't realised the extent of her own actions.

Understandably, Jim was left feeling utterly devastated by the betrayal of trust. Luckily, his support worker was with him when he was told. She immediately arranged for his son to assist in securing a new bank card, limiting access solely to close family.

She also supported Jim in joining some of our local activities to help him regain some sense of community, trust and belonging.

## What to do if you think your money isn't safe

Jim's experience shows how any of us can be victims of financial abuse, even by the people we trust.

It also highlights the critical role of our community support workers who are there to help you, whatever happens. It can be scary to speak out if you have suspicions that something isn't right with your finances but, once you take



that first step to open up, your CSW will know what to do and will always handle the situation with care.

## Ways to keep your money safe this Christmas

1. **Be sceptical.** If something seems too good to be true, it probably is. Always err on the side of caution.
2. **Say no to texts, phone calls or people at the door who ask you to sign things.** Don't worry about seeming rude and never give away your personal information.
3. **Talk to someone you trust.** If you're worried about the security of your money or belongings, speak to someone you trust or your community support worker as soon as possible. 🇬🇧

# How the digital world can help you enjoy Christmas

As the festive season kicks off, we wanted to let you know about just some of the benefits that digital technology can bring you over Christmas and all year round

We all know that Christmas can be a wonderful time of the year, full of cherished traditions where people come together. But did you know that digital innovations are changing the way we celebrate Christmas? And that, as the technology and the digital world progresses, it can actually make Christmas more connected and enjoyable, and give you new ways to celebrate and create lasting memories?

**Virtual connections** significantly enhance Christmas by bridging the physical gap between loved ones, no matter the distance. With tools like Zoom, Skype, and FaceTime, families and friends can share in the joy of the season through virtual dinners, gift exchanges and holiday games. These platforms allow for real-time

interaction, making it possible to see the smiles and hear the laughter of those who can't be physically present. This digital connectivity ensures that the warmth and togetherness of Christmas are felt even when miles apart, creating cherished memories and maintaining traditions in a modern, accessible way.

**Online shopping** offers unparalleled convenience for Christmas preparations. It eliminates the need to navigate crowded stores and long checkout lines, allowing you to shop from the comfort of your home at any time. With a vast array of products available at your fingertips, finding the perfect gifts for loved ones is easier than ever. Many online retailers offer personalised recommendations, gift

GATHERINA / ADOBE STOCK



## Online shopping is very convenient

wrapping services, and direct shipping to recipients, saving you time and effort. Additionally, online shopping platforms often provide exclusive deals and discounts, making it a cost-effective option.

**Digital entertainment** can transform Christmas into a vibrant and engaging experience with streaming services like Netflix, Disney+, and Spotify. These channels offer a vast selection of holiday movies, specials, and music playlists, creating the perfect festive atmosphere at home. Families can enjoy classic Christmas films, discover new favourites, and sing along to holiday tunes together.

**Video games and virtual reality experiences** provide interactive fun,

allowing family members to bond over shared adventures and challenges. Additionally, social media platforms and online communities host virtual events, such as live concerts and holiday-themed activities, bringing people together in celebration. This digital entertainment ensures that the joy and excitement of Christmas are accessible to everyone, enhancing the holiday spirit in innovative and enjoyable ways.

**Eco-friendly** options for sending Christmas cards and messages are a wonderful way to celebrate while caring for the environment. E-cards are a popular choice, offering a wide range of customisable designs that can be sent instantly via email or social media, reducing paper waste. Many platforms also allow you to add personal touches like photos, videos and music, making your greetings even more special. Additionally, digital advent calendars and holiday newsletters can keep loved ones updated and engaged.

If you're interested in exploring digital technology and accessing the wonders of digital technology, in time for Christmas or in the new year, we can help. Simply contact Member Support Hub (MeSH) or your local team.

All of us from the Digital Inclusion team wish you a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year! 🎄



# Gift ideas for the vision impaired

Looking for inspiration for what to buy a loved one who's blind or partially sighted? Take a look at our sight loss inclusive gift ideas

The holiday season is the perfect time to show your appreciation for the blind veterans in your life by selecting thoughtful, accessible gifts. Whether you're looking to inspire creativity, enhance daily living, or reignite a passion, here are some great gift ideas to consider...



Amazon Echo

## Gifts for the tech enthusiast

- **Amazon Echo** - Alexa is brilliant for simplifying everyday tasks. You can ask it to tell you the weather, the news, or to play your favourite song or audiobook. It can also assist with shopping lists, timers and alarms.
- **Amazon solar chargers** - these work with iPhones, iPads and Android devices and eliminate any stress about losing phone battery charge without being able to find a charging point when out and about.
- **The Tile Mate item locator** - a smart bit of tech that can be attached to any item (keys, wallet) and connects to your phone. When you hit the button on your phone to find the item, the Tile Mate will play an alarm to help you locate it.
- **A digital voice recorder** - instead of a notebook for making lists or writing down reminders, a digital voice recorder allows you to record and store personal notes.



HURMOX / ADOBE STOCK

## Braille lego

- **A scan reader, video magnifier or another reading aid** - aids and equipment can be great, though dependent on what best suits your loved one's sight.

## Gifts for the other senses

- **Audiobooks** - why not gift an Audible subscription for £7.99 a month and give your loved one access to thousands of audiobooks from fiction to WWII biographies.
- **Spotify or Apple Music** subscription - unfettered access to all their favourite tunes.
- **A massage, aromatherapy or manicure** - the gift of relaxation.
- **Fragrance** - know their favourite perfume or cologne? Pick up their tried and true or have a look at fragrance subscriptions like the

Fragrance Shop's £12 a month Scentaddict subscription.

- **Tactile board games** - Monopoly, Lego, Scrabble, checkers, UNO cards and decks of playing cards can all be bought in Braille, tactile and large print options.
- **Tactile Rubik's cube** - a stocking classic that can be solved without sight and is suitable for those who don't read Braille.

## Gifts to ignite a passion

- **Blind-adapted supercar experience** - an accessible experience for those with a need for speed.
- **Adjustable task lamp for crafters** - can be worth its weight in gold for many crafters.
- **Music lessons** - ignite an old passion or learn a new one!
- **Woodwork, pottery, or arts workshops** - vision impairment doesn't mean that your loved one can't learn new things or reconnect with an old passion.
- **Membership to a golf club, leisure centre or gym** - maybe your loved one is a sports fan or used to love golf or swimming before losing their sight? This is a great opportunity to get them back into what they love.
- **Membership to an accessible museum or attraction** - for example, the Victoria and Albert Museum have accessible displays to touch and feel. →

- **National Parks or Heritage site memberships** – great for history buffs and hikers.

**Practical gifts**

- **A helping hand** – offer your help with home chores, paperwork, home repairs, a weekly trip to the shops etc.
- **Helpful services** – hire cleaning services to help with dusting, vacuuming and other household chores.
- **Transport gift cards** – Lyft and Uber both offer gift cards which



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**A helping hand with the housework**

make getting around easy for your loved one.

- **Talking watch/large print watch** – this everyday essential is a small gift that keeps on giving.
- **Kitchen aids** – liquid level indicator, talking kitchen scale, tactile timer, talking food thermometer, talking measuring jug etc. The kitchen appliances are endless and the perfect gift for the chef or baker in your life.

**Time together**

- **Cinema date** – for the movie lovers. Get a voucher for a film screening with subtitling and audio description and take your loved one out for a movie night. Or, if going out isn't an option, why not bring movie night to them?
- **Something tasty** – a voucher to spend quality time with you at their favourite restaurant or a home cooked meal.
- **Homemade vouchers** – create your own voucher for your loved one to do an activity of their choice with you or with family.

This Christmas, make a meaningful impact by choosing gifts that cater to both the practical and personal needs of blind veterans. A thoughtful present may not only enhance their daily experiences but also shows your appreciation and care. 🎁



# Member voice

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

## Officers Mess, RAF Honington - Military Dinner

Blind Veterans UK attended RAF Honington and was joined by the command element from the station as well as one of our Trustees, Tim Seal, and his wife, Melanie. A delicious four-course meal was served in the Officers Mess and great entertainment was provided by Jayne Darling and the RAF's Military Piper, Laura Daly.

During the meal, three Blind Veterans UK Founder's Day Awards were presented. These awards recognise the inspiring contributions of our Members and their families who exemplify the same spirit and ethos as the charity's founder, Sir Arthur Pearson.

One of the awards was presented to Robbie Hall, who joined the Women's Royal Air Force in 1940, serving during WWII in support of Allied Forces. Robbie received



**The singer Jayne Darling entertains at RAF Honington**

the Inspiring Community Award in recognition of her enthusiasm and energy in providing peer support and encouragement to new Members, and even pushing personal boundaries by flying in a spitfire in September.

During the meal, Station Commander - Wing Commander Max Hayward, presented Blind Veterans UK →

with RAF Honington's Station Crest, a symbol of their enduring friendship. Then, in recognition of their ongoing support for our charity, a WWI silver sterling limited edition coin was presented to the Station Commander, commemorating the first 15 war-blinded veterans of 1915.

Wing Commander, Max Hayward thanked everyone for attending a fantastic afternoon, saying how worthwhile the event was, adding, "Recognising the geopolitical and technological sphere we find ourselves in modern day, serving troops of now will be future beneficiaries of Blind Veterans UK."

Member Tony Harbour presented RAFP memorabilia from his local branch, which is closing, to Officer, Flt Lt Seb Belton. Not wanting the memorabilia to become lost or forgotten, a branch decision was to ensure it was given to the home of the RAFP, RAF Honington. Tony was thrilled to present the memorabilia, saying, "This is a fantastic opportunity and it's great to be at RAF Honington."

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## Military anniversaries - Afghan 10

This month marks the 10th anniversary of the end of combat operations by the British Forces within Afghanistan (Operation Herrick). The conflict officially ended on 12 December 2014 and some 150,000 British troops served within Afghanistan between 2002 and 2014. A total of 457 UK Armed Forces personnel were lost, and many more seriously injured.

This number peaked between 2009 and 2010, where over 100 personnel died due to hostilities between opposing forces. British forces entered Afghanistan in response to 9/11 terrorist attacks within the US, joining Allied Forces in pursuit of the leaders of the terrorist organisation, Al-Qaeda.



**Troops leaving Afghanistan in 2014**

CORPORAL ANDREW MORRIS (RAF) / WIKIPEDIA COMMONS



**Member Brian Naylor's Veterans Art Project illustration**

## Veterans Art Project: VE80

It's not too late to send us your artwork for our exciting initiative, the Veterans Art Project: VE80. The project encourages you to showcase your creative talents to help raise funds for the charity. Artwork is themed around VE80, the 80th anniversary of Victory over Europe, marking the end of the Second World War.

We've received some wonderful submissions so far. Member Brian Naylor submitted a series of fantastic paintings using water colours and fine line pen. Brian took up water colours as a hobby, after a 30-year

break from painting. He has submitted 12-paintings in support of the Veterans Art Project: VE80, hoping to raise funds for the charity.

We continue to look for submissions inspired by VE80. Artwork you submit could be exhibited online and at events, auctioned off, given as gifts and even displayed on our merchandise.

### How to take part Artwork and photography

The project consists of three parts - two artwork kits, suitable for beginners and more experienced artists, and a photography challenge. You're welcome to take part in one, two or all three. →

### Your personal story

We also ask that you include a short personal story with your submission with a brief outline of your service history, your sight loss journey, the techniques used in your work and the inspiration for your work.

If you're old enough to remember VE Day, we'd love to read about your recollections. If not, the project gives you the chance to explore the theme of war and peace and get creative!

■ **If you'd like to take part, please visit [blindveterans.org.uk/vap](https://blindveterans.org.uk/vap) to find out more and request a kit. Alternatively, you can email [ncwp@blindveterans.org.uk](mailto:ncwp@blindveterans.org.uk) or leave a message on the NCWP voicemail at 01273 391 447. Just leave your name and number and a member of the team will call you back.**

## Military Sight Loss Champions Scheme

We launched a pilot scheme last month with the aim of building our connections with the Armed Forces, inviting regulars, reservists and cadets to volunteer as 'champions' for Blind Veterans UK.

These champions are given the

opportunity to fundraise, volunteer, lend us their venue and learn a bit about sight loss and eye care. This is a fantastic opportunity for the wider forces community to become more involved in our work, and for us to foster new relationships and continue to build our network.

■ **Visit [blindveterans.org.uk/champion](https://blindveterans.org.uk/champion) to find out more about the scheme.**

## Give us your feedback

Have you attended a Blind Veterans UK event recently? We would like to know what you thought so we can improve our services and offer more of what you like. Our Members, carers, or even our staff can now provide events feedback to us directly via the Blind Veterans UK website by using our simple [blindveterans.org.uk/event-feedback](https://blindveterans.org.uk/event-feedback) online form.

### Coming up

**Royal Military Academy  
Sandhurst Military Dinner**

28 February 2025

**For the latest information  
about our Member events,  
visit [blindveterans.org.uk/events](https://blindveterans.org.uk/events)**



# National Creative Wellbeing Programme

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

## Get crafting this Christmas

This festive season, we invite you to get involved with the National

Creative Wellbeing Project, channel your creativity and join one of our inspiring Christmas initiatives. Whether you're an experienced artist or a curious beginner, we have a →



**Mosaic crafting workshop**

variety of fun and meaningful projects to help you explore your creative side.

Veterans who've already participated in NCWP projects have created remarkable pieces that reflect their talents, from stunning mosaics to heartfelt paintings.

**Available projects**

**Christmas Leftovers Mosaic:**

A fun kit for all Members, but especially those who have taken part in mosaic projects in 2024. They will

receive three coaster bases and the usual mosaic materials, alongside two packs of Christmas coloured tiles. The third pack will be leftover tiles from NCWP supplies, to encourage recycling and creativity!

■ **Mosaic coasters for community craft groups or beginners still available - please contact us to discuss. A big thank you to those who have taken part so far and shared feedback and photographs with us!**



**Mosaics made by G Jenkins**



**A beautiful completed wooden reindeer model**

**Reindeer Wooden Model:**

A simple wooden model kit suitable for beginners and experienced model makers, this stag wooden model comes with a red pom-pom nose for a fun festive twist. The 35-piece kit will come with a large print step by step guide and graphic designed instructions to help Members put it together independently.

■ **The photo above shows the reindeer wooden model, complete with pom-pom nose!**

**Amaryllis:**

Back by popular demand, these kits contain everything Members need to grow an amaryllis in their own homes.

Suitable for indoor growing, no garden required, just a windowsill and some TLC!

■ **Our Veterans Art Project (see page 37) painting and sketching kits are available for those who would like to take part, either for private use or to share with the charity. Dispatch will be able to resume shortly on this project, so all requests made from September onwards will be processed in due course.**



**Member Frank Barbour with his Christmas Leftover Mosaics**

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# Quiz time

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

1. How many gold rings are there in the song, The Twelve Days of Christmas?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Traditionally, what Christmas treat did single women looking for a husband eat during Christmas for good luck?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Who was known as the 'King of Manchester United'?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Which of the following is a term for an endangered elephant found in Kenya?  
a) Huge footer  
b) Big tusker  
c) Giant area  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What cockney rhyming slang means 'first'?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Which fruit is a Blenheim Orange?  
a) Apple  
b) Pear  
c) Orange  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. How many main emergency services are there in the UK?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Who wrote the classic story, A Christmas Carol?  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Welshman David Lloyd George was an MP for over 50 years and served as Prime Minister and Chancellor, but for which party?  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. According to the proverb, beauty is in the eye of... who?  
\_\_\_\_\_



WIKIPEDIA / CREATIVE COMMONS

**A Christmas Carol**

*Answers on Page 47*



# Family news

**Cristine King** who celebrates her 105th birthday on 21st December 2024.  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Mryddyn Davies** who celebrates his 102nd birthday on 12th December 2024.  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Eileen McAllister** who celebrates her 101st birthday on 25th December 2024.  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Hugh Batty** who celebrates his 101st birthday on 28th December 2024.  
\_\_\_\_\_

**William Gann** who celebrates his 101st birthday on 29th December 2024.  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Noel Sleigh** who celebrates his 100th birthday on 12th December 2024.  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Mikolaj Kudzierko** who celebrates his 100th birthday on 15th December 2024.  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Frances Mullen** who celebrates her 100th birthday on 17th December 2024.  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Francis Grant** who celebrates his 100th birthday on 20th December 2024.  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Robert Jones** who celebrates his 100th birthday on 2nd January 2025.  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Condolences

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

**Janette Goodall Strachan Sutherland** who died aged 91 on 8th October 2024. She was the wife of James Robertson Sutherland.  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Daphne Edith Tippett** who died aged 84 on 10th October 2024. She was the wife of Bill Tippett.  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

# 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

**Thomas Anderson** of Hebburn, Tyne And Wear died on 11 October 2024 aged 95. He served as an S.A.C. in the Royal Air Force.

---

**Bryan Boardman** of Lytham St. Annes, Lancashire died on 15 August 2024 aged 88. He served as a Private in the Royal Signals.

---

**John James Briggs-Harrison** of Oldham died on 31 August 2024 aged 85. He served in the Royal Artillery.

---

**George Apprentice Chandler** of Burgess Hill, West Sussex died on 19 October 2024 aged 99. He served as an Able Seaman in the Royal Navy.

---

**Thomas Clough** of Gloucester died on 19 October 2024 aged 93. He served as a Sergeant in the Royal Artillery.

---

**Harry Connors** of Cheadle, Cheshire died on 22 August 2024 aged 98. He served as a Corporal in the Royal Irish Fusiliers (Princess Victoria's) (87th and 89th Foot).

---

**Patrick Cook** of Didcot, Oxfordshire died on 15 August 2024 aged 98. He served as an Able-Bodied Seaman in the Royal Navy.

---

**Joseph Coutts** of Cramlington, Northumberland died on 8 October 2024 aged 86. He served as a Signalman in the Royal Signals.

---

**Maurice Dawe** of Weymouth, Dorset died on 26 October 2024 aged 91. He served as an Acting Corporal in the R.A.O.C / R.E.M.E.

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**Peter Dean Fielder** of Porthcawl, Mid Glamorgan died on 30 October 2024 aged 86. He served as an S.A.C. in the Royal Air Force.

---

**Barbara Glanfield** of Woodbridge, Suffolk died on 23 October 2024 aged 101. She served as a Wren in the Women's Royal Naval Service.

---

**William Greig** of Aberdeen died on 29 October 2024 aged 95. He served as a Private in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps.

---

**Peter Ronald Habgood** of Hove, East Sussex died on 1 November 2024 aged 89. He served as an S.A.C. in the Royal Air Force.

---

**Anthony James Halliday** of Hove, East Sussex died on 1 November 2024 aged 91. He served as a Senior Aircraftman in the Royal Air Force.

---

**John Hancock** of Folkestone, Kent died on 4 November 2024 aged 91. He served as a Leading Writer in the Royal Navy.

---

**John Hardcastle** of Preston died on 1 September 2024 aged 88. He served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps.

---

**Marion Harris** of Maidenhead, Berkshire died on 1 November 2024 aged 99. She served as a Private in the Auxiliary Territorial Service.

---

**William Joseph Hearne** of Crawley, West Sussex died on 25 October 2024 aged 96. He served as an A.C. 1 in the Royal Air Force.

---

**Richard John Chisholm Holmes** of Burgess Hill, West Sussex died on 24 October 2024 aged 90. He served as a Corporal in the Royal Air Force.

---

**Gordon John Ingate** of Cambridge died on 18 October 2024 aged 92. He served as a Corporal in the Royal Air Force.

---

**Eric James Kavanagh** of Liverpool died on 1 November 2024 aged 94. He served as a Craftsman in the R.A.O.C / R.E.M.E.

---

**Robert Henry Knight** of Newton-Le-Willows, Merseyside died on 3 November 2024 aged 99. He served as a Flight Sergeant in the Royal Air Force.

---

**Peter Lindsay** of Glasgow died on 26 October 2024 aged 46. He served as a Marine in the Royal Marines.

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**Walter Norman Lowry** of Bognor Regis, West Sussex died on 27 October 2024 aged 87. He served as a Petty Officer in the Royal Navy.

---

**Thomas Martin** of Huddersfield, West Yorkshire died on 1 October 2024 aged 88. He served as a Staff Sergeant in the Yorkshire Brigade.

---

**Donald Charles McKay** of Drifffield, East Riding Of Yorkshire died on 20 October 2024 aged 95. He served as an L.A.C. in the Royal Air Force.

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**Frank Moore** of Nottingham, Nottinghamshire died on 27 July 2024 aged 98. He served as a Leading Stores Assistant in the Royal Navy.

**Robert Morris** of Manchester died on 27 October 2024 aged 90. He served as an L.A.C. in the Royal Air Force.

**Dennis Pritchard** of Wolverhampton died on 21 October 2024 aged 98. He served as an L.A.C. in the Royal Air Force.

**Ronald Graham Street Saban** of Tadley, Hampshire died on 22 October 2024 aged 96. He served as a Corporal in the Parachute Regiment.

**David Sherry** of Newmarket, Suffolk died on 21 August 2024 aged 93. He served in the Royal Air Force.

**Joan Lilian Elizabeth Smith** of St. Albans, Hertfordshire died on 21 October 2024 aged 98. She served as an L.A.C.W. in the Women's Royal Air Force.

**Ronald Frederick Tew** of Croydon, Surrey died on 4 September 2024 aged 96. He served as an L.A.C. in the Royal Air Force.

**Raymond Thomas** of Kings Lynn, Norfolk died on 22 October 2024 aged 87. He served as a Signaller in the Royal Signals.

**Joseph Thornton** of Blyth, Northumberland died on 1 November 2024 aged 94. He served in the Royal Air Force.

**Michael Walsh** of Liverpool died on 2 November 2024 aged 90. He served as an S.A.C. in the Royal Air Force.

**John Henry Westlake** of Wadebridge, Cornwall died on 20 October 2024 aged 100. He served as a Corporal in the Royal Air Force.

**William Thomas Williams** of Wirral, Merseyside died on 14 September 2024 aged 86. He served in the Royal Army Service Corps.

**Michael Frank Wright** of Barnstaple, Devon died on 1 November 2024 aged 90. He served in the Royal Army Medical Corps.

**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](https://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**

**Llandudno Centre: 01492 868 700**

**Review Editor: 0300 111 22 33** or [revieweditor@blindveterans.org.uk](mailto:revieweditor@blindveterans.org.uk)

**Feedback:** To give us feedback on any of our services, please email us at [supporter.services@blindveterans.org.uk](mailto:supporter.services@blindveterans.org.uk) or call **0300 111 22 33**.

**Donations:** To make a donation, simply call **0300 111 22 33** or visit [blindveterans.org.uk/donate](https://blindveterans.org.uk/donate).

To listen on Alexa the command is: **Play Blind Veterans UK Review Podcast on Amazon Music**. If you have any problems getting it to work, please contact the MeSH helpline on **01273 391 447**.

**Quiz answers – from page 44**

**1.** 5 **2.** A gingerbread man **3.** Eric Cantona **4.** Big Tusker **5.** Geoff Hurst **6.** Apple **7.** 4 **8.** Charles Dickens **9.** The Liberal Party **10.** The beholder

### A different format?

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



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Listen  
here

# Spread festive cheer with our new Christmas card, designed by blind veterans!

We're delighted to launch our new Blind Veterans UK Christmas card, designed by our Members as part of our National Creative Wellbeing Programme.

The beautiful bauble-inspired card can be ordered now to arrive in good time for the festive season. All proceeds go to Blind Veterans UK.

**For a pack of ten cards,  
simply visit our online shop at  
[blindveterans.org.uk/shop](https://blindveterans.org.uk/shop)  
or call us on 0300 111 22 33.**



Rebuilding  
lives after  
sight loss