



Leave a message for our veterans this Armed Forces Month

In celebration of Armed Forces Month, we have set up an online message wall where you can leave a message to all our blind veterans or to a specific veteran who's inspired or supported you.

This is a wonderful way to show your appreciation for our veterans and reach out to other blind veterans to encourage each other. You never know what your words might mean to someone who may be feeling isolated or just a little down. Our veterans have all achieved so much, from living more independently day to day to sky diving, marathons, Paralympics and much more. There's no better time to celebrate all these achievements than during Armed Forces Month.

Need help leaving a message?

If you need help uploading your message, please don't hesitate to get in touch:

email: supporter.services@blindveterans.org.uk

telephone: 0300 111 22 33

We're available Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm, excluding bank holidays.

■ Leave your message at <https://message.blindveterans.org.uk/>



Quiz answers from page xx A1. Australia A2. Diamond A3. Diabetes A4. Wolf A5. Beethoven A6. Golf A7. Elephant A8. Moby-Dick A9. The Persistence of Memory by Salvador Dali A10. Glossophobia

Review

The journal of Blind Veterans UK
June 2026



Marathon superstars

The stories of five blind veterans and their guides who smashed the London Marathon

Inside:

- Our New President
- Pride in LGBT Members
- How our Members live life to the full





BIG WIN Spring Raffle



Closing date
19
June



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Raffle closes 19 June. Draw takes place 26 June.

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.



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West Yorkshire Members enjoyed a canal boat trip

On the cover

Photograph of Andy Leitch and Jay Whybrow with their medals at the finish of The London Marathon 2026



A New Chapter

By **Adrian Bell**, Chief Executive

By now you will have hopefully received a letter from our Chair Giles sharing the important news that Alan Holderness has been appointed as the new President of Blind Veterans UK.

Alan has been part of the Blind Veterans UK community for almost twenty years and, during that time, has built a reputation for commitment, insight, and generosity of spirit. Alongside his involvement with the



Adrian Bell

charity, Alan is also a successful business owner, bringing valuable experience and perspective from the commercial world as well as being a sitting magistrate with over 20 years' experience. Importantly, he has already contributed greatly to our governance through his seven years of service as a Trustee, helping to guide and shape the organisation at board level.

The role of President is an important one, acting as both an ambassador for the charity and a champion for those we serve. I know that Alan will approach this role with dedication, authenticity, and a clear focus on what matters most: our Members.

As we welcome Alan into this role, it is equally important that we recognise the extraordinary contribution of Colin Williamson, who stepped down earlier this year after nine years as President.

Colin's service to Blind Veterans UK extends far beyond his presidency. Over a remarkable 23 years with the charity, he has made an outstanding contribution to the lives of blind

“The role of President is an important one, acting as both an ambassador for the charity and a champion for those we serve”

veterans. His leadership, advocacy, and unwavering commitment have helped shape the organisation we know today.

On behalf of all at Blind Veterans UK, I want to express our profound gratitude to Colin. His contribution has been extraordinary, and his legacy will endure in the lives he has touched and the opportunities he has helped create.

Please join me in thanking Colin for his exceptional service and in welcoming Alan as he steps into this important role.

At the time of writing, I am half-way through getting around the country and meeting many of you at our Member conferences. These events are always a highlight, giving us the chance to hear directly from our Members, share ideas, and shape the future of our services together.

It has been particularly encouraging to see such strong engagement this



Alan Holderness

year, with thoughtful and constructive discussions taking place across all the conferences. Your views, experiences, and feedback are invaluable.

We will be sharing a full writeup of what was discussed at the Member conferences in the next issue of the magazine, so do look out for that. In the meantime, a summary is already available in the Members' Area of the website, where you can explore key themes and updates.



You can access this at blindveterans.org.uk/conference or by scanning the QR code on the left. 🇬🇧

News

Three Peaks Challenge raises over £5,000

On 27 April Anna, 21, and from London, began her Three Peaks Challenge which would see her attempt to reach the summits of Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon in just 24 hours. Anna was joined by her mum Rebecca and together they made memories that will stay with them forever.

Anna's dad, Mark, is a blind veteran; he lost his sight suddenly in December 2023 and Anna set herself a New Year's resolution to take on this challenge and raise vital funds for blind veterans like her dad.

She says: "My dad was very athletic in his prime. He is arctic warfare trained and spent years hiking, training and pushing himself in the mountains. In honour of his achievements. I decided to do something I've never done before and challenge myself."



Rebecca and Anna

Anna and her mum, Rebecca, gave the challenge their all and went into it fully prepared, but sadly conditions at Snowdon meant they were forced to abandon the challenge for their own safety and for the safety of anyone who would potentially be called upon to rescue them if something went wrong.

Both Anna and Rebecca are keen to try the challenge again or at the very least return to Snowden.

Anna has already raised over £5,200

for the Charity by taking on this incredible feat with her mum. Our thanks goes to Anna and Rebecca for their hard work and for having the courage to turn around when things got dangerous.



Read more of their story and get involved with fundraising at www.blindveterans.org.uk/news/two-epic-challenges-born-from-family-connections, or by scanning the QR code above.

or by scanning the QR code above.



Rebecca and Anna at the peake of Ben Nevis



In your community

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

In Newton Aycliffe

Once again this month we took some of our members along for their monthly visit to a local veterans woodwork shop, this is a fantastic place ran by veterans for veterans, where everyone



Albert and John at their local veterans woodworking shop

is welcome to participate in wood turning, or simply where they can meet to have a chat over a cuppa.

Here, we have a brilliant example of our blind veterans working together, we have two younger members Albert and John with no prior knowledge of woodturning, one teaching the other and another two senior members Bill and Charles, sharing their knowledge and talking about their love of joinery.

We have six blind veterans now attending regularly, who before they were brought here together, never had met, now, they have their own little community going and keep in touch outside of the charity. We couldn't feel more proud in watching their growth, which is the best job satisfaction one could wish for. Those down at the veterans support hub do a fantastic job, well done Chris especially, who was instrumental in getting this place off the ground and is keeping it running.

In West Yorkshire

Members enjoyed a canal boat trip this week along the Calder & Hebble Navigation, a broad inland waterway that follows the River Calder valley in West Yorkshire. They set sail in Mirfield with Safe Anchor Trust who are an award winning charity providing trips on the waterways.

Sailing on two boats - E. Austen Johnson and the Safe Anchor Lady, Members navigated locks, talked about local history and even got to drive the boats! They had a fantastic turn out and Members had a thoroughly enjoyable time. →



West Yorkshire Members enjoy a canal boat trip



Llandudno Buddies gather for lunch

In Llandudno

The sun was shining on members, spouses and volunteers alike as Members came together for their Buddies Club lunch this month. With a wonderful turnout of 21 people at the Maesdu Golf Club, Llandudno, the event was full of warmth, laughter and good company.

It was lovely to see so many familiar faces gathered around the table, enjoying good food and even better conversation. The sunny weather added to the cheerful atmosphere, making it a truly uplifting afternoon and a great example of the sense of friendship and community that the Buddies Club is all about.



North Nottinghamshire Members at Felley Priory Gardens

In North Nottinghamshire

Spring truly arrived in North Nottinghamshire as some of our members enjoyed a wonderful trip to Felley Priory Gardens and Nursery. We were blessed with sunshine throughout the visit, making it the perfect day to explore the peaceful sights and sounds of the gardens, including the gentle presence of horses grazing in the field behind.

At this time of year, the gardens are awash with tulips, daffodils and bluebells, providing a vibrant and colourful display for everyone to enjoy. While our community support

workers plant knowledge was tested as they did their best to describe the flowers to members, it opened up a great conversation about using apps to help identify plants and even tell the difference between flowers and weeds!

As always, the all important tea and cake gave us time to relax, share gardening interests, exchange tips, and enjoy each other's company.

For one member in particular, the visit was especially meaningful as it marked the first time he has been out of the house on his own for some time. The trip provided a real confidence boost for him and much needed respite for his wife.

A huge thank you goes to our fantastic volunteer Michael, who supported with transport and assisted members throughout to ensure everyone felt safe, comfortable and able to fully enjoy the experience.

In Hertfordshire

This month saw a trio of Member lunches enjoyed in Hertfordshire. Hemel Hempstead, Welwyn Garden City and Watford members met for their monthly lunch and catch up. The sun was out each day and all the members were in great spirits. Lots of smiles, laughs and good conversations.



Herts Members at Hemel Hemstead

Peter and Ruth ((99yrs & 100yrs respectively), both Naval veterans, sat together and reminisced for 2 hours, sharing stories and becoming good friends. This was so lovely to witness.

As always, our volunteers were amazing, keeping conversations flowing and making sure all members had the assistance they needed. We couldn't do it without them. 🍷

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.



...and Watford



Shamed out of service

At 16, blind veteran **Tom** joined the Navy – but a baseless investigation ended his career overnight. Decades later, he’s reclaimed his dignity

I joined the Royal Navy in 1988 when I was just 16. I’d planned to become a stores accountant, but the paperwork put me off, so I switched to being a steward.

I remember signing the Official Secrets Act and seeing a question about sexuality. It struck me as odd, but I ticked the heterosexual box without much thought. I had no idea then that being gay barred you from serving.

Training went smoothly. While on leave, I’d go out with friends – usually female friends. Looking back, I think I knew deep down I was gay, but I wasn’t ready to face it. At work, it never came up. Life in the Navy was busy and focused.

Over time, as I came more curious

about my sexuality, I realised I needed to split myself into two people – Navy Tom and Civvy Tom – and keep them separate. That worked well for a while. I got on with everyone, and the banter onboard was light-hearted. No one questioned me.

But everything changed when I was posted to HMS Caledonia in Scotland. A few months into the job I was called to the Master at Arms Office. I thought it was to man the refreshments, but instead I walked into a room of senior officers and two men in suits.

“Do you know why you’re here?” they asked.

“You’re short-staffed?” I ventured. “No. It’s due to your homosexual tendencies.”

I was completely stunned.

“Everyone knew what had happened, but surprisingly, I didn’t face any hostility from my colleagues”

The two men turned out to be from the Special Investigation Branch – the Navy’s police. They ordered me to take them to my locker and accommodation so they could conduct a search. I shared a three-man mess. One of my roommates was there when we arrived and was told to leave. I just stood there, shocked, as they stripped the beds, checked pillows, went through my belongings, read my letters, and took my address book away.

The next day, I was interrogated. They questioned me about a man I’d supposedly spoken to in a bar and asked intrusive questions about my sexuality, accusing me of lying. They claimed to have photographs and threatened to show my family. They also went through every name in my address book. It went on for hours.

A medical examination was ordered, but fortunately the officer refused to carry it out, saying it would prove nothing. He instead placed me on suicide watch, which at least meant I was left alone overnight.



Tom Boal pictured at the wedding of a fellow Member

That effectively ended the investigation. I returned to work and tried to carry on as normal while waiting for the outcome. Everyone knew what had happened, but surprisingly, I didn’t face any hostility from my colleagues. I focused on my job and tried to put it out of my mind.

Months later, I was called back. I was told I was a disgrace, my cap was removed, and I was dismissed on →



the spot. At the gates, a guard swore at me, saying, “We don’t want you here.”

I stood outside, completely numb, wondering how I was going to explain any of this to my parents. Instead, I went on a four-day drinking binge. That was really the beginning of my problems with alcohol. When I eventually got home, I told them I’d been made redundant.

One small kindness was that my Chief Petty Officer and Divisional Officer helped me secure a job on a cruise ship.

But my drinking followed me for years. In my thirties, I started having issues with my eye. After several days in hospital, I learned that high cholesterol had caused severe damage, and my eye had to be removed. The following year, the same condition began affecting my other eye and I was soon registered blind.

I moved back to Scotland and, eventually, attended a social with Blind Veterans UK, or St Dunstan’s as it was then. At first, it felt strange to be back in a military environment - I didn’t think of myself as a veteran - but over time, I formed strong friendships. Even now, we laugh when we’re out, trying to guide each other around and ending up completely lost.

During the COVID lockdown, my drinking spiralled out of control, and I suffered a seizure. That was the turning point. I haven’t touched alcohol since.

Soon after, the Prime Minister apologised to those affected by the homosexuality ban in the Armed Forces, and in 2024 a reparations scheme was introduced. I decided it was time to confront my past. With help from my community support worker, I requested my records from the Ministry of Defence.

Reading them was shocking. Key details were missing, names redacted, and there was no trace of the “photographs” they’d used to threaten me. The hardest part was that my work had been rated exemplary.

Last year, with help from the organisation Fighting with Pride, I applied for reparations. I’m proud to say, I’ve since received formal recognition of the injustice, financial compensation, and I’ve got my cap back.

Now, I just hope that others who went through the same awful treatment come forward. The process has been painful but so cathartic. I had a chip on my shoulder for years. I finally have what I needed – a sense of closure. 🌈

The LGBT Financial Recognition Scheme

If you have been affected by The Military Gay Ban, there is still time to engage in the **LGBT Financial Recognition Scheme**.



LGBT veterans charity, Fighting with Pride, are here to support you through the process and can also offer opportunities for social events and peer support from other LGBT veterans.

On 12 December 2024, the Government announced the LGBT Financial Recognition Scheme (FRS). This enables those impacted by the Ban while serving in HM Armed Forces, between 27 July 1967 and 11 January 2000, to apply for recognition payments/Compensation. The LGBT FRS was developed to meet Lord Etherton’s LGBT Veterans Independent Review (IR) The deadline for application is 2359 hrs on 12th December 2026.

This is a confidential process and nobody outside of those involved in

the application process will know of your engagement with the scheme.

Beyond the financial recognition scheme there are 14 further non-financial restorative measures. There include, but aren’t limited to:

- Armed Forces veterans badge
- Disregards and pardons for those convicted of same-sex sexual offences
- Military awards
- Armed Forces Pensions
- HM Armed Forces Veteran Card
- Letter of Apology and recognition of harm

■ **For more information and to get started with your application please visit www.fightingwithpride.org.uk/reparations/. If you would like support with getting in touch with Fighting with Pride please speak to your community support worker or call 0300 111 22 33. 🌈**

Our London Marathon super stars

Five Members started the London Marathon on Sunday 26 April, and five Members triumphantly crossed the finish line

They showed a huge amount of determination and grit pushing their bodies to complete the gruelling 26.2-mile course alongside their guide runners and an additional 30 supporters.

Our 2026 participants will be celebrating their own personal achievements and our Members can feel proud that they have shown what is possible after sight loss. Together they have raised awareness of the life-changing support we provide and raised over £80,000 which ensures we can reach and support even more blind veterans.

Our Members

Wayne

Wayne, 44, took part in the London Marathon for the first time alongside his guide Matt and finished in five hours and 53 minutes. He says:

“At the moment I’m still trying to process what I’ve achieved. It was absolutely amazing.

“I was emotional along the way as I thought about my incredible journey since sight loss and I couldn’t believe what I was actually doing. None of it would have been possible without the charity.”



Wayne Pope and Matt Spruce with their medals.

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

His sight loss journey only began at the end of 2022 when he was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa and he began to receive our support in the spring of 2023. He says:

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

“I couldn’t have asked for a better guide, it was two humans working together as one team”

here I am just three years later with the medal around my neck.”

Wayne found aspects of the marathon challenging but his guide Matt was there for him every step of the way. He says: “I found that I couldn’t get into a proper pace because of how busy it was and the heat was phenomenal. My guide, Matt, was incredible and really mindful of my safety. I had a couple of slips on bottles that had been dropped and near misses with other runners who stopped sharply in front of me to take selfies. As the marathon went on and I became tired, my sight got narrower. My retinitis pigmentosa has never been like it, I really pushed my body to the max.

“I couldn’t have asked for a better guide, it was two humans working together as one team, we were arm in arm the whole way until right at the end when Matt let me go and encouraged me to run ahead saying “Wayne go and grab that marathon.”

Wayne is hoping to return to take on the London Marathon next year and he says he now has the buzz for it. →



Andy Leith and Jay Whybrow with their medals

Andy

Andy, 51, is one of our London Marathon experts having now completed the course 11 times. He joked:

"I was hoping to chase down the leader but he finished before I even started! But I now have 11 London Marathon medals to display; those of us with a visual impairment should never be written off, we can live full and active lives and achieve incredible things.

"As ever the atmosphere was cracking and I got to meet some of the supporters who had come out to cheer us on. I've already signed up for next year.

"Blind Veterans UK has done so much for both me and my family. That's why I'm so passionate about giving back by supporting the charity and helping them to make a difference for others, just like they did for us."

As Andy threw himself into training for this year's London Marathon he decided to keep things going throughout the year with a 200 mile a month challenge.

He says: "The routine and physical and mental impact of getting out on my training walks and runs is clear to me. The knowledge that what I'm doing is supporting Blind Veterans UK keeps me focused and boosts my self-worth and confidence.

"The day after the marathon, I took myself out for a little ten-mile run as I still had 35-miles to complete before the end of April.

"Blind Veterans UK isn't just a charity, it's a lifeline. It's changed my life and I know it's done the same for many others. I'll always champion what they do and do my bit to support and fundraise for them whenever I can."

Andy joined the Army in 1992 and spent 19 years with the Royal Logistics Corps. At 37, he only had two years left to serve and had begun to plan

for his future outside of the Army but was forced to retire early after he was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa. We have supported him since 2011 and his rehabilitation has been aided along the way with sport and fitness.

Kelly

Kelly, 44, ran her first London Marathon in 2015 and was excited to get back out there to do it again this year.

Just two weeks ago, Kelly fell on her ankle during a training run and chipped her ankle. She was worried that it would signal the end of her London Marathon hopes but she was still able to put weight on it so was determined to carry on. She says:

"I had a beaming smile the whole way around the course. The crowd were fantastic and were shouting out my name. I was thanking them for coming out and supporting us."

Kelly partnered up with Wayne as her guide and met him for the first time the day before the marathon. She says: "Wayne and I clicked and found that we helped each other. Wayne is a fantastic guide and was my eyes throughout the course ensuring my safety. It was an absolute pleasure to run with him; I couldn't have done

it without him. In return, I pushed Wayne's pace and challenged him.

"After the marathon, my daughter put Wayne on the spot and asked if he would be running with me again next year. We are going to give it a go and hopefully, as a team, improve on our time."

Kelly joined the Army in 1998 and served until 2005 with the Adjutant General's Corp. She suffered a stroke at the age of 23 as a result of an autoimmune condition that causes blood clots. The stroke changed her life overnight and she found herself becoming a blind veteran. She says: →



Kelly and Guide runner Wayne Lakin with wife Sarah and daughter Bethany



Chris Kennedy and Phoebe with their medals

"I lost my sight and my career. Blind Veterans UK saved my life. I owe them a great deal. They took me in after I lost my sight and have taken care of me ever since. I am so proud to be a blind veteran; I wouldn't be who I am today if I wasn't. I wore my Blind Veterans UK T-shirt with pride."

Chris

Chris, 65, took on his first ever marathon on Sunday alongside Phoebe who works for our charity and stepped in two weeks before the event. The pair crossed the finish line in four hours and 51 minutes.

Chris says:

"It's too soon to say if I would do it again but it was a brilliant experience."

I usually run cross-country so I found it tough pounding on pavements for 26-miles.

"I want to say a huge thank you to Phoebe for stepping in as my guide; it's a tough job and I have a lot of respect for them. I'd also like to thank all the supporters that showed up on the day and Teresa and Rich who work at the charity's centre for their support."

Chris served in the Territorial Army in the late 1970s and early 1980s and later he served as a firefighter with Surrey Fire and Rescue Service. It was during his career as a firefighter that he began to realise something was wrong with his sight. We've supported Chris for the past nine years. He says:

"I took on the London Marathon because I wanted to fundraise for the charity that has been there for me for the last nine years. They have provided me with physical support, with technology and gadgets to help me live day to day life, but above all I've benefitted hugely from the camaraderie of being in the company of others who have lost their sight and have a military background to bond over."

Alan

Alan, 45, completed his 15th London Marathon this year making him our most experienced London Marathon

runner of the group. Together with his guide Helen, they finished the course in three hours and 48 minutes.

He does not take the enormity of the task for granted though. He says:

"This year seemed particularly tough and was the closest I've ever come to walking at the end. I'm a year older and it was very warm. I'm very grateful to my guide who was Superb in guiding me around a very busy course."

"I've been a blind veteran for over 20-years and the charity has had a hugely positive impact on myself and



Alan Lock and guide runner Helen Crossurth

my family so it's an honour to be able to give back."

Alan joined the Navy in 2002 but just three years later, when he was 24, a rare genetic condition, similar to macular degeneration, took his sight and forced him to retire from the Armed Forces. He says:

"I felt so lonely and was full of worry and uncertainty for my future. I'd been committed to a career with the Royal Navy; it's what I expected to do for life but that was snatched away from me along with my eyesight."

Alan began to receive our support in 2005 and says that the rehabilitation and equipment he's received have enabled him to live independently and continue to pursue the sports that he loves. He says:

"I'm proud to run for Blind Veterans UK and the London Marathon is a terrific opportunity to remind myself I can still take on big challenges and endeavours in spite of my sight loss."

■ **There is still time to show your support to our blind veterans and to donate to their JustGiving page: Supporter of Blind Veterans UK is fundraising for Blind Veterans UK. www.justgiving.com/page/lm26**

Guiding a Blind Veteran Through the London Marathon

A Week's Notice, 26.2 Miles, and the Power of Trust.
Writer **Matt Spruce**

With less than a week to go before the 2026 London Marathon, I got the kind of message that makes your stomach drop and your sense of duty kick in at the same time: "We need a guide runner. Can you step in?"

The runner was Royal Navy veteran Wayne Pope, a man who had lost his sight but not his determination. He was running to raise money for Blind Veterans UK, the charity that helped him rebuild his independence after his life changed forever. As a fellow veteran, I didn't hesitate. You don't leave one of your own without support.

What I didn't fully appreciate at the time was just how much trust Wayne would be placing in me and how much responsibility comes with guiding someone through one of the busiest, loudest, most unpredictable marathons on the planet.

The Expo: Controlled Chaos, Runners Everywhere, and the First Test of Teamwork

Before we even reached the start line, Wayne and I had to survive the madness of the London Marathon Expo at the ExCeL. If you've never been, imagine thousands of runners all buzzing with prerace nerves, weaving through queues, merch stands, charity stalls, and enough Lycra to carpet the entire Docklands.

For Wayne, navigating that sensory overload without sight was its own marathon, dodging people who stop dead without warning, negotiating sharp turns and stepping around bags, boxes and the occasional overexcited influencer filming their "I'm collecting my bib!" moment. He had already earned his first medal in patience, humour and battlefield level situational awareness.

Running Without Sight: The Hazards You Don't Notice Until Someone Else Depends on You

Most runners worry about pacing, hydration, or whether their legs will hold up. When you're guiding a visually impaired runner, the entire world becomes a potential hazard.

Speed bumps aren't just annoyances they're anklebreakers. Uneven roads become traps. Discarded water bottles turn into landmines. Crowds compressing around water stations create unpredictable funnels. And other runners become moving



Member and Royal Naval veteran Wayne Pope

"If you could bottle the atmosphere of the London Marathon, you'd power the national grid"

obstacles you have to anticipate, dodge and navigate in real time.

Every metre requires constant communication: "Step left." "Small rise coming." "Hold onto me." "Slowing runners ahead." "Sharp right in three, two, one..."

It's a strange combination of choreography, vigilance and trust. Wayne couldn't see the course, but he could feel every shift in my stride, every change in rhythm, every moment where I tensed before guiding him around something and he matched me step for step, mile after mile.

The London Marathon Crowd: A Wall of Noise That Carries You Forward

If you could bottle the atmosphere of the London Marathon, you'd power the national grid.

For Wayne, the crowd wasn't just encouragement, it was orientation. The roar at Cutty Sark, the thunder over Tower Bridge, the chants along Embankment... each section had →



its own vibe, its own purpose and each represented a milestone that we were chalking off.

For me, the crowd was a reminder of why this race is unlike any other. People shouted Wayne's name, cheered for Blind Veterans UK and applauded the "link" between us as if it were a medal in its own right. Complete strangers offered support, motivation and the kind of energy that makes you forget how far you've already run.

Wayne's Why: Running for Blind Veterans UK

Wayne's journey didn't start on the start line in Blackheath. It started the day he was diagnosed and had to rebuild his life from the ground up. Blind Veterans UK stepped in when he needed them most, giving him skills, confidence and independence at a time when the world had gone dark and blurry.

Running the marathon was his way of giving back and an aim to achieve something that he thought was beyond him.

Crossing the Line: Independence, Pride, and a Moment That Said Everything

As we approached The Mall, the noise growing and the finish line finally in touching distance, I loosened my grip

"I stayed just behind him, watching a blind veteran reclaim something that sight loss had tried to take away"

and told Wayne exactly where he was. He didn't hesitate. He lifted his chin, squared his shoulders and ran those final metres on his own, independent, determined and absolutely owning his moment.

I stayed just behind him, watching a blind veteran reclaim something that sight loss had tried to take away. No tether, no assistance, just a hand on my arm for 26.2 miles and then, at the end, the freedom to finish under his own power.

Guiding Wayne wasn't easy. It demanded constant vigilance, splitsecond decisions and a level of trust that's hard to describe. But seeing him cross that line alone, running for Blind Veterans UK, running for independence, running for himself, made every hazard, every adjustment, every shouted warning worth it.

The marathon is full of extraordinary stories. This year, Wayne's was one of them. I was just the bloke lucky enough to run beside him. 🐾

Living life to the full

Haydn was 52 when a routine eye examination revealed retinitis pigmentosa. Now 80, he reflects on how he's continued to enjoy an active and fulfilling life

I joined the Royal Army Dental Corps at 16, fresh from the first year of a dental technician apprenticeship and went on to serve for 24 years. My time in the Army was fantastic - I travelled widely, enjoyed some great postings and threw myself into sports like running, hockey, tug of war and, later, windsurfing and sailing.

My sight was never brilliant, but nothing that seemed worth worrying about. But looking back now, I can see there were signs something was wrong. Towards the end of my training, we sometimes had night exercises. Everyone else would be running around while I'd be sitting under a tree wondering why I couldn't see a thing. And every so →



Hayden with his guide dog and ukulele

often I'd miss something that should have been easy to spot.

Only years later did I realise these were early symptoms of retinitis pigmentosa (RP), which gradually robs you of your peripheral vision. The loss can be so gradual you don't notice it happening.

At 52, everything changed. I went for a routine eye check, got referred to the hospital, and came out with a diagnosis I'd never even heard of. No one else in my family has RP, so it was a complete shock. My eyesight wasn't too bad



Hayden with his wife Jenny attending The Cenotaph on Remembrance Day

at that point, but I knew what was coming. By this time, I was running my own dental business, making dentures and the like. I decided to sell up and retire early so I could enjoy the sight I had left.

My wife and I spent a few wonderful years travelling around on a narrowboat, until my vision deteriorated to the point where I had to give up my driving licence. That was tough – I'd always loved driving – but my wife drives, thankfully, and we adapted.

Sport played a big role in my life after I left the Army. I played golf, and because I'd always been a keen runner, I took up triathlons. But when my peripheral vision dropped to around 20 degrees, cycling just wasn't safe anymore. I switched to a tandem for a while before accepting I had to give it up.

Golf lasted longer - big open spaces, not too many people to bump into - and with friends helping me locate my ball, I could still enjoy the game.

Then a couple of years ago, I discovered acoustic shooting. I'd heard of it before but kept putting it off, wanting to hang onto golf as long as possible. When I finally gave it a try, I loved it immediately. It's incredibly



Hayden spent many years travelling by narrowboat with his wife

accessible - you can even do it to a high level with no sight at all, so I'm planning to keep going with it.

The dental technician in me still loves creating things. During lockdown, I bought a ukulele and then thought, "I'm sure I could make one better than this." Before I knew it, I'd made 16 and sold them all. I now have a lathe and a metalworking machine and have moved on to making little steam engines. I'm also restoring a couple of old jukeboxes.

My sight is now down to about four degrees of central vision, with no

peripheral at all. I describe it as looking through a pair of toilet rolls - what I can see is crystal clear, but I can't see anything around it. I have a guide dog, and my wife comes with me when we're out and about. At home, I bump into things a lot, but then again, so does my wife and her sight is fine!

Even so, I stay active. I walk miles every day with the dog, and I keep busy with my hobbies. I try not to think too much about the possibility of losing all my sight one day. RP progresses slowly for me, and I'm grateful for that.

If I've learned anything, it's the importance of a good support network. I played golf for 40 years with the same people. When my sight started going, they didn't make a fuss - but they did make allowances. If I accidentally kicked someone's ball on the green, they'd just put it back and carry on.

I also joined Blind Veterans UK a few years ago. I've visited the Centre and went on a driving day, which was brilliant. It's good to know the charity is there when I need it.

To anyone else struggling with RP or sight loss, I'd say: work out what you need and don't be afraid to ask for help. There are still so many things you can do, and so many people ready to support you. 🐕



Listen here

Manchester Piccadilly

**Member Ambassadors gather outside Manchester Piccadilly**

Stepping up for Blind Veterans UK

Member **Simon Hana** on becoming a Blind Veterans UK Ambassador

At the dawn of this year, a call for volunteers went out to the veteran community: an “all callsigns” request for ambassadors to represent Blind Veterans UK. The mission was clear – to give back to a charity that provides a lifeline to so many. Volunteers were invited to serve as buglers, standard

bearers, or public speakers. Seeing an opportunity to utilize my background as an actor/performer to support my fellow service members, I stepped forward for the latter two roles.

The journey began in earnest on April 9th. Departing from Bradford with

a single bag and a sense of purpose, I navigated the inevitable hurdles of Northern rail travel. Due to signaling issues at Manchester Piccadilly, I found myself diverted to Victoria station, followed by a brisk twenty-minute walk to our base for the next three days: the Holiday Inn. I must confess, I arrived with preconceived notions of a “budget” stay, but I was quickly proven wrong.

The hotel was exceptional, boasting some of the most spacious and comfortable n arrival, any initial nerves were immediately dispelled. Spotting a group of gentlemen with white canes, I introduced myself and was greeted warmly by Rob. Though this was my first official event with the charity, the transition was seamless. As is the way with veterans, the group immediately looked out for their own, and I felt at home before I had even unpacked

The itinerary was intensive. We were privileged to enjoy an evening meal with CEO Adrian Bell, whose vision for the ambassador program is truly inspiring. Afterward, the atmosphere shifted to the familiar camaraderie of the mess deck; veterans gathered around tables, “pulling up a sandbag and swinging the lantern” late into the night.

The training itself was a masterclass

in communication. Twenty veterans gathered for a “fun-packed” day of workshops, where we moved from initial introductions to high-impact techniques such as “creating anchors” and implementing rhetorical tools for maximum emotional resonance. Despite the professional rigor, the environment remained supportive, bolstered by plenty of tea, coffee, and constructive feedback.

A poignant highlight followed the training. Led by Rob, the group walked to Manchester Piccadilly to visit the “Victory Over Blindness” statue. It was a powerful moment of reflection that clearly resonated with the passing public—a visual reminder of the resilience of the men and women we represent.

The experience culminated in a relaxed, casual/formal dinner, complete with piano music, presentations and shared stories that were, at times, deeply moving. To close, this course was a fantastic experience. Even with my years of experience as an actor, this training added a vital “extra string to my bow.” We are now ready to move forward as ambassadors, dedicated to finding the thousands of veterans still out there and helping them rebuild their lives after sight loss. 🌍

Digital Technology and the 2026 World Cup

Enhancing Access for Blind and Vision Impaired Fans

The 2026 FIFA World Cup in Canada, Mexico and USA promises to be one of the most accessible sporting events ever, thanks to rapid advances in digital technology. For blind and vision impaired fans, following the action is no longer limited to traditional radio commentary. Today's tools offer richer, more immersive ways to watch, listen, and engage with matches in real time.

Watching the World Cup

While “watching” may seem visual by nature, modern broadcasting has made significant strides in accessibility. The main feature is Audio description services (often called “descriptive commentary”) and will be a key feature of many official broadcasts with the BBC having this available for all games aired. These provide detailed narration of on-screen action – explaining player movements, expressions, and crowd atmosphere – bridging the gap between sound and sight.

Streaming platforms are increasingly integrating accessibility settings directly into their apps. Smartphones and

tablets allow users to activate audio description tracks, adjust contrast, zoom into key areas, or use screen readers to navigate menus. For those with partial sight, features such as high-contrast modes and customizable text sizes can make interface navigation significantly easier. Also, for some people having a screen physically closer to eye improves the viewing experience.



DANYLLO/ADOBE STOCK

The 2026 World Cup is available with audio description

Second-screen experiences are also growing in popularity, in which you have the live match on one television whilst using apps linked to the world cup to check to the World Cup may to check real-time statistics, scores form other games and live watch-alongs.

Listening to Matches

Listening remains a core way for blind and visually impaired fans to enjoy football and it continues to evolve. Traditional radio broadcasts, including BBC Radio and international sports networks, are expected to provide extensive live coverage with expert commentary.

However, digital audio platforms now offer even more flexibility. Internet radio apps, podcasts, and official tournament apps allow fans to switch between commentary styles, languages, and levels of detail. Some services even provide “enhanced commentary” streams that include additional analysis, crowd noise balancing, and contextual insights that deepen understanding of the game.

Voice assistant technology such as smart speakers plays an increasingly important role. Fans can simply ask the smart speaker for live scores, match updates, or summaries without needing to navigate screens. This hands-free access makes it easier to stay connected

during daily activities.

Looking Ahead

The 2026 World Cup represents a milestone in inclusive sports broadcasting. With continued innovation in digital accessibility, blind and vision impaired fans can enjoy a fuller, more engaging connection to the game than ever before. Whether through detailed audio description, smart listening tools, or interactive apps, the beautiful game is becoming more accessible and more immersive for everyone.

Official UK Platforms

The 2026 FIFA World Cup will run from Thursday, 11 June to Sunday, 19 July 2026, with the opening match taking place in Mexico City and the final held at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey. In the UK, all 104 matches will be shown free-to-air across BBC and ITV, who share the television rights and split the fixtures between them, with both broadcasters also showing the final. Live TV coverage will be available on BBC One, BBC Two, ITV1 and ITV4, while streaming will be provided via BBC iPlayer and ITVX. For radio listeners, BBC Radio 5 Live and 5 Sports Extra will deliver full live commentary throughout the tournament, alongside digital access through BBC Sounds, ensuring comprehensive coverage for fans who prefer or rely on audio.. 🎧

Cooking appliances for people with sight loss

A run down of the most accessible kitchen appliances and how to use them safely

Modern kitchen appliances are not always designed with accessibility in mind. But with careful selection and a few simple adaptations, it's possible for people with sight loss to choose appliances that are safe, practical and easy to use.

On this page, we share key considerations when selecting and using kitchen appliances.

A few general guidelines
Whether you're buying a cooker, washing machine, dishwasher or food processor, the same key principles apply:

- Prioritise tactile controls.
- Keep settings simple.
- Look for colour contrast between buttons and background.

- Clear visual indicators.
- A visible or audible power light.
- Simple, uncluttered layouts.

Accessible controls
The controls on your appliance are often the most important feature to consider for people with sight loss. Think about the following:

Touchscreens
Many modern appliances use flat touch panels with little or no tactile feedback. These can be difficult to use without vision and may not be the best option, unless they include speech output or strong accessibility features.

Buttons
Raised buttons can be helpful but do check whether they perform multiple

functions. However, some buttons change function depending on the setting, which can make operation confusing.

Dial controls
Appliances with physical dials are often the most accessible option. They provide clear tactile feedback, are usually easy to mark with tactile bumpers and sometimes allow you to leave a dial on a preferred setting.

However, take care with dials that continuously rotate (for example,

those that increase time digitally without a fixed start or end point). If you can't see the display, it may be impossible to know when you have reached the desired setting.

Cooking appliances
Microwaves
The microwave is possibly the most popular appliance among our blind veterans. A simple two-dial microwave is the easiest option for people with sight loss:

- One dial controls power level.
- One dial controls cooking time. →



ANDREY POPOV / ADOBE STOCK

Microwave

The power dial can often be left on a single setting (such as full power). The timer dial can be marked with tactile bump-ons to indicate common cooking times.

Tip: Set the timer while the door is open. On many models, the microwave only starts once the door is closed, giving you time to adjust the dial accurately before cooking begins.

Talking microwaves are available from suppliers such as:

- Cobolt Systems
- RNIB

However, a simple manual model is often more affordable and just as effective.

When choosing power, higher wattage may cook slightly faster, but lower-powered microwaves are often:

- Smaller
- More energy-efficient
- More forgiving if timing is slightly off

Slow cookers

Slow cookers (sometimes called crock pots) are another accessible and economical option.

- Many models have very simple controls - sometimes just a power switch and low/high settings.



AMYINLONDON / ADOBE STOCK

Slow cooker

- Cooking times are usually flexible (for example, 4–6 hours).
- Recipes typically involve preparing ingredients, placing them in the pot and turning it on.
- They are ideal for stews, curries and casseroles, but can also be used for roasts, bread and desserts.
- Because timing is less precise, slow cookers can make cooking less stressful.

Induction hobs

Induction hobs often use flat touch controls, which can be difficult for people without vision. If considering an induction hob:

- Check whether controls provide tactile or audible feedback.
- Practise using the heat adjustment system before purchasing.
- Consider models with clear separation between cooking zones.

Gas hobs may provide more tactile feedback through physical knobs, but safety considerations should always be discussed with a professional if you are unsure.

Air fryers

Air fryers have become increasingly popular for people with sight loss as they minimise the chance of burns. Despite the name, they are best thought of as small fan-assisted ovens.

- Food can be cooked with little or no oil.
- Simple two-dial versions are widely available and relatively inexpensive.
- They usually contain a pull-out basket for food.
- As with microwaves, models with simple dials are often easier to use than digital touchscreens.



You can read our guide on air fryers here: www.blindveterans.org.uk/sight-loss-resources/cooking-with-sight-loss-air-fryers, or by scanning the QR code above.

“Induction hobs often use flat touch controls, which can be difficult for people without vision”

Simple adaptations

Bump-ons – small, raised stickers – are useful for marking functions but use them sparingly as too many markings can become confusing.

Use a separate accessible timer (such as a smart speaker or talking timer).

Turn the oven timer back to zero when finished, rather than relying on built-in timing functions.

Accessible recipes and support

Reading printed recipes can be challenging for some people with sight loss. Accessible options include:

- Talking book libraries from organisations such as the RNIB
- Audio cookbooks specialising in microwave, slow cooker and air fryer recipes
- Smart speakers that can:
 - Read recipes aloud step-by-step
 - Suggest meal ideas
 - Act as accessible kitchen timers

Voice assistants such as Amazon →

Alexa can be particularly helpful for hands-free support in the kitchen.

Talking book libraries from organisations such as the RNIB can be a valuable resource, offering easy access to audiobooks and other spoken content. Audio cookbooks, particularly those specialising in microwave, slow cooker and air fryer recipes, are another practical option.

Smart speakers can also be very helpful in the kitchen, as they are able to read



NURUL/ADOBE STOCK

Air fryer

recipes aloud step by step, suggest meal ideas and act as accessible kitchen timers.

Try before you buy

Whenever possible, try before you buy:

- Handle the appliance in person, ideally with a working demonstration.
- Practise the full sequence: turning it on, setting the time or temperature, and switching it off.
- Take along any magnification aids you use to check displays or controls.
- Choose the model that meets your needs - extra features often mean extra controls which can increase confusion. Keeping functions straightforward can make everyday use much easier.

Next steps

A small amount of planning can make a significant difference to safety, confidence and enjoyment in the kitchen.

For more information, RNIB sells accessible talking microwaves and hobs in their shop, and also provides advice.

Blind Veterans UK beneficiaries can get in touch with our Member Support Hub for advice and support, or contact their community team. 🇬🇧



Listen here



A recent military dinner

Member voice

Our calendar of national events for 2026/27

We are pleased to offer a number of upcoming military dinners and events for our Members and guests to attend. These events bring our Members together and offer opportunity for camaraderie, socialising with peers, and new experiences in a welcoming environment. For the complete list of events taking place throughout the year, visit www.blindveterans.org.uk/events

Military Dinner - The Royal Welsh

A fantastic opportunity to savour our military traditions, this formal dinner with regular members of the British Army, The Royal Welsh at Maindy Barracks promises to be an afternoon of laughter, camaraderie and delicious food. →

Date: 4 September 2026
Registration Closes: 10 July 2026
Venue: 580 Squadron Reserve Centre
Maindy Barracks
Cardiff
South Glamorgan
CF14 3YE

There will be a Founder's Awards presentation during the dinner for a small number of 'Highly Commended' award recipients.

■ www.blindveterans.org.uk/events/military-dinner-the-royal-welsh-2026/ or call 0300 111 2233



Edinburgh City Chambers

Military Dinner - HMS Calliope

This is a fantastic opportunity to savour our military traditions at this relaxed dinner alongside serving members of the Royal Navy and our supporters of Blind Veterans UK.

Date: 4 December 2026
Registration closes: 9 October 2026
Venue: HMS Calliope
Shore Rd
Gateshead
NE8 2BE

There will be a Founder's Awards presentation during the dinner for a small number of 'Highly Commended' award recipients.

■ www.blindveterans.org.uk/events/military-dinner-hms-calliope-2026/ or call 0300 111 2233

Military Dinner - RAF Honnington

This event is a unique opportunity to savour our military history and heritage, so mark your calendars and get ready for a dinner to remember.

Date: 12 February 2027

Registration Closes: 18 December 2026
Venue: RAF Honnington Officers Mess
Bury St Edmunds
IP31 1EE

Founder's Day Awards will also be presented during the dinner for a small number of 'Highly Commended' award recipients.

Remembrance Weekend Events

This year we are expanding our reach even further for Remembrance and will have a presence at the London Cenotaph, Manchester Piccadilly, and The City Chambers Edinburgh.

Events include:

- **Remembrance Service** – City Chambers Edinburgh – Sunday 8 November.
- **Engagement Dinner** – Double Tree Hilton Hotel Edinburgh – Sunday 8 November.
- **Service** – Manchester Piccadilly Station – Saturday 7 November.
- **Engagement Dinner** – Holiday Inn Manchester Piccadilly – Saturday 7 November.
- **Service of Remembrance** – St Peters Square Manchester – Sunday 8 November.



GODOT13 / WIKIPEDIA

London Cenotaph

- **Sir Arthur Pearson Memorial Service** – Hampstead Cemetery London – Saturday 7 November.
- **Festival of Remembrance** – Royal Albert Hall – Saturday 7 November.
- **Victory Services Club Evening** – Trafalgar Room London – Saturday 7 November.
- **Remembrance Parade** – London Cenotaph – Sunday 8 November.
- **You can register your interest in any of the above events at www.blindveterans.org.uk/events or by calling 0300 111 2233.** 🇬🇧

National Creative Project

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



Ice cream

Here are the projects available from the NCP in June. You can take part in as many projects as you like. To request a kit, you can leave a message on the NCP voicemail on **01273 391 447** or email us at ncwt@blindveterans.org.uk. You can also request a kit via the member's area of the website.

Locomotive model:

We have had a lot of requests for model vehicles, particularly trains. We really hope you enjoy this model of a locomotive. Some of you may have done this before, but you are welcome to take part again! This is a simpler model than some of our others with 30 pieces. The finished model is 13cm high, 23cm long and 8cm wide. (Suitable for beginners and more confident model makers).

Ice cream mosaic:

We enjoyed designing this summery mosaic for you to take part in! The

design has five steps to follow and your tiles will come pre-sorted into labelled bags for you. The design is a vanilla ice cream with either chocolate or strawberry sauce, and a chocolate dipped cone – unfortunately made of tiles and not edible! (Suitable for confident beginners).

Greetings cards papercraft:

We have designed this papercraft kit for those of you who enjoy collage artwork. Inside your pack will be a variety of paper and card in complimentary colours. You'll also have a selection of stickers and other decorative items to inspire you. We'd also encourage you to search around for any paper and card you can recycle to create a personalised card!

There will be some blank greetings cards enclosed, and a small blank notebook in case you want to make a scrapbook. This kit makes a lovely long-term project to dip in and out of. (Suitable for beginners)

Tutti frutti mandala mosaic:

We've redesigned our popular mandala mosaics to feature larger tiles. This design is made up of bright, fruity coloured circular and square tiles in concentric circles and is slightly easier than our usual mandalas. As always, tiles will be



Locomotive model

separated for you into labelled bags with a step-by-step large print instruction guide. (Suitable for beginners)

A note about mosaics – we are trialling a new style of instructions with high contrast graphic pictures rather than photographs over the next few months. We hope this will be more accessible and would really value your feedback!

Also available:

- Jeep model
- Holiday landscapes watercolour painting kit
- Deer head model (simple model kit for beginners) →



Your crafting stories:

Terry has created this incredible mosaic artwork depicting the Victory Over Blindness statue (aka “The Lads”).

Terry used to make mosaics using hand-cut tiles – quite a fiddly process! He stopped doing this when he lost his sight because the sharp edges were dangerous. After his community support worker Johnathan encouraged him to try the NCP mosaics to see if he could get back into it, Terry has regained his confidence! With the support of his wife Wendy, he decided to start on this ambitious project but didn’t know where to start with the variety of tile shapes he needed for detailed work.



Terry proudly holding up his finished mosaic



A close up of the design

“Snippet” pieces allow mosaic artists to create a tesserae style mosaic with different shapes, but without the risks of using tile cutters. Terry set up a workstation with a contrast background and made sure to keep the different colours separate in labelled bags.

He has been able to produce an amazing amount of detail in the scene! He shared that he felt a little frustrated at times not being able to see like he used to, but he says he feels “on a high” now and his confidence has grown. He has taken the mosaic to a local coffee morning to share with his fellow members and he hopes this will encourage them to get creative. 🎨

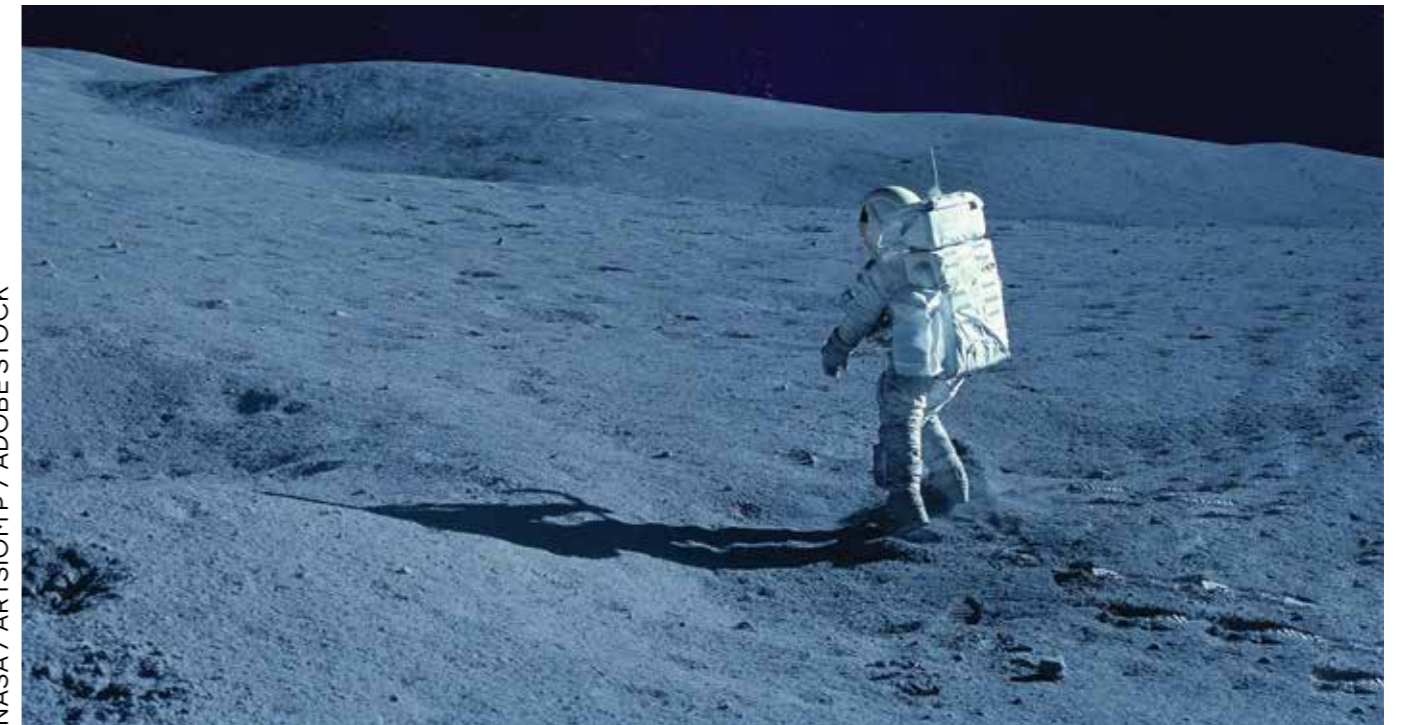


Quiz time

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

1. Which country is both a continent and a nation?
2. What is the hardest natural material?
3. Insulin is commonly used to treat which condition?
4. In Mythology, Romulus and Remus were brought up by which animal?
5. Who composed “Moonlight Sonata”?
6. What is the only sport that has been played on the moon?
7. What is the worlds largest land animal?
8. What novel begins with the words “Call me Ishmael”?
9. What painting features melting clocks?
10. What is the name for a fear of public speaking?

Answers on back page



NASA / ARTSIOMP / ADOBE STOCK

Which sport has been played on the moon?



Listen here

Family News

Birthdays

Samuel Benbow who celebrates his 101st birthday on 15 June 2026.

George Bleasdale who celebrates his 101st birthday on 29 June 2026.

Reginald Draper who celebrates his 101st birthday on 27 June 2026.

Albert Edwards who celebrates his 100th birthday on 16 June 2026.

June Franks who celebrates her 102nd birthday on 12 June 2026.

Leon Green who celebrates his 100th birthday on 15 June 2026.

Harry Hitch who celebrates his 100th birthday on 15 June 2026.

Richard Jones who celebrates his 100th birthday on 29 June 2026.

James Milner who celebrates his 100th birthday on 4 June 2026.

Kenneth Neil who celebrates his 105th birthday on 17 June 2026.

Albert Parker who celebrates his 100th birthday on 18 June 2026.

Raymond Roberts who celebrates his 102nd birthday on 27 June 2026.

Edward Shipley who celebrates his 102nd birthday on 10 June 2026.

Condolences

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

Pearl Bargas who died on 1 April 2026. She was the wife of Alan Bargas.

May Dann who died on 2 April 2026. She was the wife of Michael William Carlton Dann.

Margaret Davies who died on 1 May 2026. She was the wife of Les Davies.

John Freeman who died on 28 April 2026. He was the husband of Sheila Freeman.

Lynda Grain who died on 25 April 2026. She was the wife of David Arthur Grain.

Vernie Griffiths who died on 17 April 2026. She was the wife of Ken Griffiths.

Christine Hall who died on 1 April 2026. She was the wife of Eddie Hall.

Joyce Kirby who died on 1 May 2026. She was the wife of Gerry Kirby.

Minnie McLean who died on 2 April 2026. She was the wife of Lindsay Mcclean.

Edna McGoff who died on 2 April 2026. She was the wife of Jim McGoff.

Christopher Reed who died on 22 April 2026. He was the husband of Kerry Reed.

Esther Smith who died on 27 April 2026. She was the wife of George Smith.

Doreen Thornber who died on 9 April 2026. She was the wife of Roy Thornber.

Gloria Williams who died on 1 April 2026. She was the wife of Bill Williams. 🌍

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

Derek Allen of Shoreham who died on 1 April 2026 aged 85. He served as a Petty Officer in The Royal Navy.

Roy Arnold of St Helens who died on 16 March 2026 aged 92. He served as a Private in The Royal Signals.

Anthony Austin of Bexhill-On-Sea who died on 25 April 2026 aged 90. He served as a Chief Technician in The Royal Air Force.

Robert Barnes of Skegness who died on 8 May 2026 aged 98. He served as a Corporal in The Royal Air Force.

Ruby Bennet of Kings Langley who died on 11 May 2026 aged 97. She served as an ACW2 in The Royal Air Force.

William Braid of Livingston who died on 29 April 2026 aged 87. He served as a Private in The Army Ordnance Corps.

David Button of Skegness who died on 8 April 2026 aged 81. He served as a Sergeant in The Army Catering Corps.

William Charlton of Sunderland who died on 22 March 2026 aged 92. He served as a Lance Corporal in The Army Ordnance Corps.

Stan Chatt of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne who died on 30 April 2026 aged 87. He served as a Signaller in The Royal Signals.

Ada Chell of Bangor who died on 9 April 2026 aged 102. She served in The Auxiliary Territorial Service.

Robert Chitty of Plymouth who died on 17 April 2026 aged 94. He served as a Warrant Officer in The Royal Signals.

Alan Cox of Crawley who died on 12 May 2026 aged 87. He served as a Private in The Royal East Kent Regiment.

Ronald Cox of Sevenoaks who died on 2 May 2026 aged 101. He served as a Flight Lieutenant in The Royal Air Force.

Ivan Danby of Consett who died on 31 March 2026 aged 90. He served as a Lance Corporal in The Army Pay Corps.

Michael Dickerson of Hornsea who died on 26 April 2026 aged 84. He served as a Senior Aircraftsman in The Royal Air Force.

Gordon Dodd of Llandrindod Wells who died on 4 February 2026 aged 88. He served as a Craftsman in The Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

Anthony Edgar of Neath who died on 12 April 2026 aged 71. He served as a Private in The Army Catering Corps.

Basil Everett of Brighton who died on 2 May 2026 aged 99. He served as a Sapper in The Royal Engineers.

Walter Exall of Worcester who died on 5 May 2026 aged 100. He served as a Signaller in The Royal Signals.

Brian Fleetwood of The Wirral who died on 18 March 2026 aged 84. He served as a Private in The Parachute Regiment.

Ronald Frost of Wotton-Under-Edge who died on 31 March 2026 aged 92. He served as a Petty Officer in The Royal Navy.

Gerald Gilbert of Watford who died on 7 April 2026 aged 90. He served as a Driver in The Army Service Corps.

Joseph Gill of Brackley who died on 26 March 2026 aged 94. He served as a Lance Corporal in The Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

Brian Graves of Boston who died on 12 April 2026 aged 91. He served as a Private in The Royal Artillery.

Kenneth Griffiths of Port Talbot who died on 23 April 2026 aged 95. He served as an A.C.1 in The Royal Air Force.

Derrick Grub of Chichester who died on 6 May 2026 aged 102. He served as a Squadron Leader in The Royal Air Force.

Harold Hanes of Herne Bay who died on 27 April 2026 aged 94. He served as a Seaman in The Merchant Navy.

Marsden Hewings of Cwmbran who died on 5 February 2026 aged 94. He served as a Private in The Army Service Corps.

Joan Holmes of Bolton who died on 15 April 2026 aged 100. She served as a Leading Wren in The Womens Royal Naval Service.

Edward Johnston of Cheadle who died on 26 March 2026 aged 90. He served as a Acting Corporal in The Royal Air Force.

John Johnston of Aberdeen who died on 16 March 2026 aged 80. He served as a Lance Corporal in The Royal Engineers.

John Jones of Rhyl who died on 5 May 2026 aged 92. He served as a Trooper in The 7th Queens Own Hussars.

Eric Jump of Northwich who died on 30 April 2026 aged 96. He served as a Private in The Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

Gobinarin Kami of Reading who died on 1 April 2026 aged 91. He served as a Sergeant in The Royal Gurkha Rifles.

Vernon Kisby of Boston who died on 5 April 2026 aged 91. He served as a Corporal in The Royal Air Force.

Derek Leagas of Horsham who died on 1 May 2026 aged 92. He served as a Private in The Army Service Corps.

Clifford Lott of Northampton who died on 14 April 2026 aged 87. He served as a Chief Petty Officer in The Royal Navy.

Alan Mcdonald of Cambuslang who died on 6 May 2026 aged 89. He served as a Private in he Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.

Neil Mciver of Liverpool who died on 1 April 2026 aged 69. He served as a Leading Hand in The Royal Navy.

Frank Mcloughlin of Manchester who died on 28 April 2026 aged 96. He served as an A.C.1 in The Royal Air Force.

Norman Meyers of Wrexham who died on 1 May 2026 aged 87. He served as a Sapper in The Royal Engineers.

David Murray of Hartlepool who died on 26 February 2026 aged 86. He served as a Sergeant in the Durham Light Infantry.

James Neeson of Erskine who died on 1 May 2026 aged 91. He served as a Private in The Army Ordnance Corps.

Kenneth Newbery of London who died on 16 April 2026 aged 96. He served as an S.A.C in The Royal Air Force.

David Norris of Aberystwyth who died on 15 April 2026 aged 93. He served as a Signaller in The Royal Signals.

Edward Perry of Poole who died on 10 May 2026 aged 76. He served as a Sergeant in The Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

George Phillips of Birmingham who died on 30 April 2026 aged 94. He served as a Private in The Army Medical Corps.

Richard Phillips of Birmingham who died on 30 March 2026 aged 91. He served in The Royal Engineers.

Dennis Richards of Lincoln who died on 22 April 2026 aged 89. He served as an S.A.C in The Royal Air Force.



Maurice Richardson of Hereford who died on 8 May 2026 aged 93. He served in The Royal Air Force.

Peter Robinson of Rugby who died on 10 December 2025 aged 94. He served as an L.A.C in The Royal Air Force.

Brian Robinson of Haddington who died on 7 April 2026 aged 95. He served as a Lance Corporal in The Royal Air Force.

Doreen Scott of Sidmouth who died on 28 April 2026 aged 104. She served as a Flying Officer in The Womens Auxiliary Air Force.

Trevor Secker of Blackpool who died on 27 April 2026 aged 99. He served as a Sergeant in The Army Service Corps.

Robert Seedall of Aldershot who died on 7 April 2026 aged 92. He served as a Substantive Corporal in The Royal Air Force.

Ian Semple of Barnstable who died on 15 April 2026 aged 90. He served as a Group Captain in The Royal Air Force.

Ronnie Smith of Stanley who died on 1 May 2026 aged 92. He served as a Private in The Durham Light Infantry.

Kenneth Tyrer of Barnsley who died on 10 April 2026 aged 99. He served as a Private in The General Service Corps.

Richard Vickers of Pulborough who died on 6 April 2026 aged 91. He served as a Corporal in The Royal Air Force.

Thomas Wade of Abergele who died on 18 April 2026 aged 92. He served as a Private in The Army Catering Corps.

Alan Wells of Leicester who died on 14 April 2026 aged 79. He served as a Private in The Royal Anglian Regiment.

William Wells of King's Lynn who died on 24 April 2026 aged 80. He served as an S.A.C in The Royal Air Force.

John Wheeler of Doncaster who died on 17 April 2026 aged 79. He served as a Radio Operator in The Royal Navy. 🇬🇧

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