

Review



The journal of
Blind Veterans UK

October 2025



Taking on the Ultra Challenge

Inside:

Golf Week at Rustington
Dougie learns to live again
Robert's first novel at 90



Rebuilding
lives after
sight loss

The Christmas Raffle is now open!



Listen
here



BIG WIN

£15,000

Tickets cost £1

and help to rebuild blind veterans' lives



Phone **0300 111 2233**

Play online raffle.blindveterans.org.uk/review

Raffle closes 19 December. Draw takes place 2 January.

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



GambleAware
begambleaware.org



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



Above: Golf Week at Rustington, page 18

Contents

- 02** Blind Veterans UK Christmas raffle
- 04** Chairman's welcome
- 06** News
- 10** In your community
- 12** HMS Sultan Summer Camp
- 15** Robert publishes his first novel at 90
- 16** Piece by piece: Glynn Palmer
- 18** A refreshing week of golf at Rustington
- 22** Dougie learns to live again
- 26** Screen magnification
- 30** Taking on the South Coast Ultra Challenge
- 38** The end of Windows 10?
- 40** Tips for staying well in winter
- 43** Member voice
- 45** National Creative Project
- 48** Quiz
- 49** Family news
- 50** In memory
- 46** Contact details

On the cover
Members and their guides celebrate finishing the South Coast Ultra Challenge in August.





Our mutual support

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

As our CEO, Adrian Bell, wrote in his message to you last month, the charity is set to hold five regional conferences across the country to consult with Members on a number of key issues.

The conferences will take place in Hampshire, Gloucestershire, Nottinghamshire, Cheshire and Northumberland, and the deadline for



Barry Coupe

registering your interest to attend one is 10 October. So, there should still be time to get your name down when you receive this.

The quickest way for you to register is by completing the short online form at blindveterans.org.uk/conference. If you require any assistance with this you can call us on **0300 111 22 33** or contact your community team.

I've been pleased to see so many already registered at the time of writing this. As Chairman, I can tell you that getting a steer on your views and opinions makes a huge difference to the decisions we make, so thank you to all those who are able to attend.

In other news, some of our Members enjoyed a week of golf at our Rustington Centre recently (see page 18), while others challenged themselves to the long and arduous South Coast Ultra, trekking a range of

“This wonderful camaraderie really is the very thing that makes our charity so special”

impressive distances, from 25km to 100km. You can read all about it on page 30.

It's so inspiring to see so many of you getting out and about, despite your sight loss. And the best thing for me is seeing how much you support one other along the way – the more experienced vision-impaired golfers showing the novices the ropes; the Ultra Challengers encouraging one another to take the next step. This wonderful camaraderie really is the very thing that makes our charity so special.

Sadly, I've never been a particularly keen golfer or long-distance walker. My passion has always been for classic cars and motor racing. It's a passion I inherited from my blind veteran father, Des, who loved to get behind the wheel wherever it was safe.

I remember being in the back seat of his Jaguar 3.8 Mk2 as a little lad with my uncle in the front, to give guiding messages. As Dad sped across

Chairman



Member Wayne prepares to take on the South Coast Ultra Challenge

an airfield, my enthusiastic shouting of, “Go on Dad, nearly 120mph!” unfortunately almost drowned out my uncle shouting, “Des, for God's sake brake NOW,” as we fast approached the end of the runway!

Thankfully all was fine in the end and we lived to tell the tale. And, although I definitely wouldn't recommend you follow suit, I'd be more than happy to chat to any fellow petrolheads out there about our shared passion.

Please do get in touch. You never know, we might be able to arrange a drive somewhere! 🏎️

News

Blind veteran portraits feature in sight loss exhibition

An portrait exhibition in London has featured two of our long-standing Members, Clive and Penny.

The Seen Exhibition aims to challenge perceptions of people with sight loss. Hosted by the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), it consists of 22 portraits exploring the lives of blind and partially sighted people who are thriving in their careers, pursuing their passions and overcoming barriers.

Photographer Joshua Bratt has been working on the project for two years, travelling the country in order to capture their stories through his lens. Joshua sought people with interesting backgrounds and stories to tell who were blind or partially sighted - and blind veterans Penny and Clive were two of those selected. He says:

“I decided to take on this project to try and change the perceptions some people may have of what is possible for people with disabilities. Each subject has their own interesting story



The exhibition portrait of our Member Clive Jones by Joshua Bratt

that highlights the sky is the limit for anyone, regardless of their disabilities.

“I found the project incredibly interesting, I learnt a lot about myself, as well as the my sitters. It has changed the way I picture subjects; I now include them far more in the creative process as well as explaining to people why I do certain things and how I set up an image.”

■ **The exhibition is available to view on www.RNIB.org.uk.**

Ten wreaths for ten years of support

Thea Pharmaceuticals is gifting ten wreaths so that blind veterans to take part in Remembrance events in their own communities.

Now in its tenth year of fundraising for our charity, the Keele-based pharmaceuticals company will be gifting ten wreaths to mark each year of their support.



Wreaths at Remembrance

“The Keele-based pharmaceuticals company will be gifting ten wreaths to mark each year of support”

Thea has been supporting our ‘Gift a Wreath’ campaign for four years, gifting wreaths to veterans from across the UK, ensuring they are able to take an active part in their local commemorations.

Over the years, Thea staff members have raised money for us in a variety of ways including bike rides, bake sales, marathons and even donkey walking, raising a total of £76,000.

In May, six colleagues from the organisation completed a skydive to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day, to remember and celebrate blind veterans who took part in the Second World War, as well as those who have served since.

We’d like to say a big thank you to all at Thea Pharmaceuticals.

■ **If you know of any organisations that may be interested in our Gift a Wreath campaign, please go to www.blindveterans.org.uk/support-us** →



Our Head of Centre, Lesley Garven MBE, opening her leaving gift

Thanks and farewell to Head of Centre, Lesley Garven

After 13 years as our Head of Centre at Rustington (and previously Ovingdean), Lesley Garven MBE is stepping away from her role to spend more time with her family.

Many of you will have met Lesley over the years and seen her tireless dedication to the charity. She led the centre through a time of transformation with great empathy and

care for her staff and residents, and has always been focused on creating an environment where Members can thrive, connect, and feel empowered and nourished. Lesley said, "I've met some incredible people and my memories will last a lifetime. Time to wind down and spend some quality time with my family."

We're sure those of you who know Lesley will want to join us in thanking her for all her hard work. We wish her all the best for the future and hope she gets a well-deserved rest. 🍷



In your community

Some of the social gatherings that have taken place this summer, bringing together Members in their local areas

In Rustington

On a wet and blustery morning, our intrepid Blind Veterans UK Community and Centre Volunteers took on a beach clean with heart – and we couldn't believe what they found!

What looked like a fairly clean stretch



Our volunteers tackling the beach clean in the rain at Rustington

of beach in front of our Rustington Centre was actually covered in 154 pieces of litter, weighing in at 4kg. Sadly, plastics topped the leader board, reminding us just how persistent and harmful they are to our marine environment.

All items found along the 100-metre stretch in front of the centre were carefully recorded and submitted to the Marine Conservation Society, whose beach survey programme has been running for over 25 years.

After all their hard work, our wonderful volunteers were then warmly welcomed back to the centre for hot drinks, delicious cake and a chance to reflect on the morning's efforts.

Huge thanks to everyone who took part. You proved that, even in the rain, community spirit and care for the planet can shine through!

In other news, a more personal story to come out of Rustington this month was David's - it was a visit to the →

centre that helped him back to his long lost passion: fishing. He says, "Being told over the years that I couldn't continue my love of fishing because of my wheelchair made me feel extremely low. However, when booking my stay at Rustington, I mentioned the fishing and, to my amazement, they said they'd try to make it happen."

"On arrival, I was greeted by Jean who told me we were all set to fish on the Wednesday afternoon. I was so ecstatic that if I'd been wheelchair-free, I would have danced around the room."

"On Wednesday afternoon, staff member Jean and volunteer John, who is very experienced at fishing, took me for a wonderful afternoon to fish a Mill Farm fishery in Pulbrough. I even caught a few fish, including a 9lb carp, and can honestly say I'll remember this amazing experience for the rest of my life."

"Thank you to Jean, John and all at Blind Veterans UK for making this happen."

In Somerset

Members grabbed the opportunity to take part in a driving experience at Henstridge Airfield in Somerset. Most of them hadn't driven for a long



Our Somerset Members all lined up and ready to drive

time and said they missed the feeling of driving, so they were really excited to get behind the wheel again. They had a wonderful day with their peers – and the top speed was clocked at 92mph!

In Northern Ireland

Our Members have been busy at the Defence Garden Scheme (DGS), completing a 10-week Spring-Summer Programme in growing vegetables and flowers. The scheme's therapeutic



Planting seeds at the Defence Garden Scheme in Northern Ireland

horticulturist, Deborah McDonald, designed the programme especially for our Members to make it accessible, using contrast and other tips and tricks so everyone could participate.

The Autumn Programme is now underway and so our Members are planting seeds for flowers for the new beds at the Somme Nursing Home and DGS garden. This is an exciting time at the garden as DGS are transforming the area around the memorial site at Thiepval Woods, where the 36th (Ulster) Division attacked in 1916.



A Member discusses the planting plans for the DGS garden

New sections and pathways will be renamed in memory of all those sacrificed in the trenches there. As our Members get involved in the planning and design, mucking in and getting their hands dirty, the impact this project has on their wellbeing has been priceless. 🌱

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.



Army veteran and fellow camper, Charlie Parkinson (centre, in orange)

Sports galore at HMS Sultan Summer Camp

Members from across the UK showed off their impressive skills at a varied Sports Day, as part of an exciting programme of activities on offer at the brilliant HMS Sultan Summer Camp

Hoopla, basketball, deck hockey, skittles.... These were just some of the sports played by our Members, aided by their human 'dogs' (their gracious volunteers from HMS Sultan and the retired Service community).

The veterans gathered at the Royal Navy Air and Marine Engineering

Training Base in August, for a week packed full of fun, which also included sailing, archery, indoor climbing, crazy golf, and horse riding. All activities were aimed at encouraging Members to maintain their independence.

Historically supported by the Fleet Air Arm Field Gun Crew, the Blind



Sports Day action: Blind veterans take aim during activities at HMS Sultan

Veterans UK Summer Camp has been successfully hosted by HMS Sultan since 1996, following the closure of HMS Daedalus. Many of those Field Gunners who were associated with supporting the event prior to the move are still involved to this day.

One of the Members who attended, Charlie Parkinson, from the Wirral, is a former infantry soldier with the 1st King's Regiment. Charlie lost his sight in 2010 due to pigmentation dispersion syndrome, a condition that has continued to deteriorate.

As a longstanding Member, he'd heard other Members speak enthusiastically



about the summer camp and was finally able to attend this year as a new camper.

For Charlie, Blind Veterans UK has changed his life. When he first joined the charity, he was in a very dark place and says our support helped save his life - and motivated him to embark on a new career. He's retrained as a reflexologist, giving him a new sense of purpose.

Charlie says, "This camp is life-changing. When I first joined Blind Veterans UK, I was in a very bad place and very close to suicide, but the charity helped change my life. →



Blind veterans take part in sports activities

Other Members kept telling me how good this camp was so I was intrigued.

“The experience has been amazing. It’s all about companionship and enjoying yourself. Getting involved keeps you fit; keeps your mind active; and if you’re feeling down, the lads and ladies will pick you up. We complement each other all the time.

“I live by the three As - accept, adapt, and achieve - and if you take that on board, the world’s your oyster. I would

definitely recommend this camp to other blind veterans. It’s a chance to meet new people, learn different things and experience real camaraderie.”

Captain Mark Hamilton, Commanding Officer of HMS Sultan, said: “It’s a huge honour to welcome the veterans into HMS Sultan for the Summer Camp. The Camp offers blind veterans a unique environment in which to re-engage in the camaraderie of the Armed Forces and the week is crammed full of fun activities that challenge not only those taking part, but also the stereotypes around disabilities. Our campers offer an excellent example to us all of what can be achieved with the will to overcome adversity.”

Our CEO, Adrian, said, “Each time I attend this camp, I’m reminded of why it’s so special. The camaraderie, the challenge of new activities, and the support from HMS Sultan create an environment where our Members can truly flourish.

“As a naval veteran myself, I know how important these bonds are, and I’m proud to see them continuing to make such a positive difference to the lives of our Members. I’m so grateful to everyone at HMS Sultan for their wonderful support in making this exceptional week possible.” 🇬🇧



Robert publishes his first novel at 90

At the age of 90, **Robert Astington** of East Grinstead has published a novel, *For the Love of a Child*

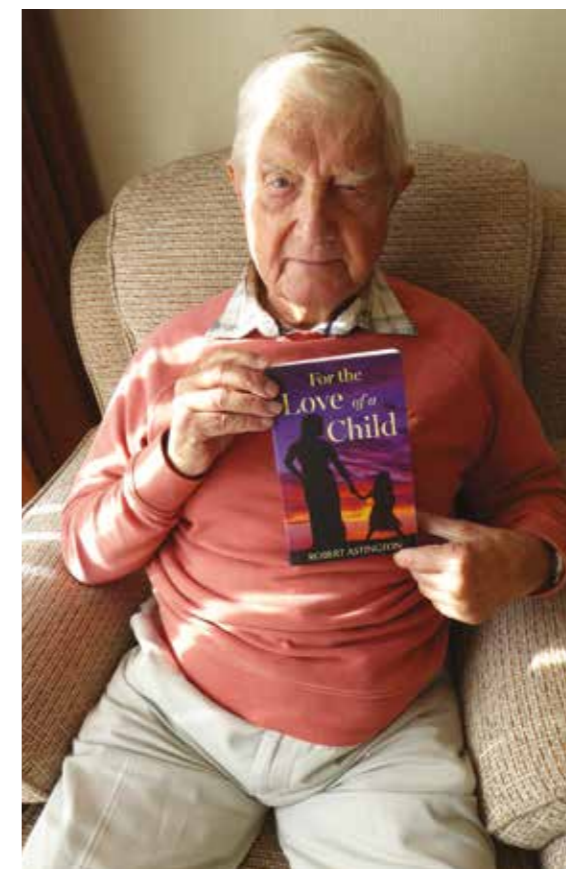
A novel exploring the lives of three ordinary families swept up in the upheavals and heartaches of the first 50 years of the 20th century has been published by Member Robert Astington. The novel follows the story of a child born to a woman whose husband is a POW, an event which will have tragic consequences...

Robert has self published his novel through Trubador publishing, and has dedicated it to Blind Veterans UK. The proceeds from sales of the book will be shared by Blind Veterans UK, RNIB, and Calliber books.

Robert lives with retinitis pigmentosa and is black blind. The RAF veteran

has been supported by Blind Veterans UK since becoming a Member in 2008 and by publishing his book is proving without a doubt that there is life after sight loss. We celebrate this incredible achievement with him.

■ You can purchase Robert’s novel or audiobook via Amazon or at www.trubador.co.uk.



There is also an audio version available on all major streaming platforms including Audible, Spotify, Apple Books and Google Play. These can be found by searching ‘For the love of a child’ on your streaming platform of choice, or via the Trubador website. 🇬🇧

Piece by piece

Member **Glynne Palmer**, whose growing passion for NCP projects was shared in our last issue of Review, describes in his own words how these projects have helped him and brought a renewed sense of purpose to his life



Glynne with two of his creations

I lost my wife last April, which was a great blow. We'd been together for 44 years and, suddenly, she wasn't there. After that, I didn't want to know anything. I live on my own, and even with lots of friends and family nearby, it was no good. I try to keep a stiff upper lip, but nothing is the same as having your partner with you.

My Community Support Worker, Lily, came to see me and asked what I used to enjoy. I told her I used to make things. I'd been a mechanical fitter most of my working life, working with my hands, following drawings. "I think we've got something you'll like," she said.

The first NCP kit I received in the post was a Mandela mosaic. It came with little ceramic tiles in numbered bags, instructions for each step. I just followed it piece by piece and took my time with it. The glue got everywhere, and the tiles were slippery little critters.

I hadn't done anything like that since losing my sight - it took me three or four days to finish it.

I found that I really enjoyed doing it. The kits require quiet and focus, so I sit in my front room and turn the telly off. I use my LED lamp and magnifier that I was given by the charity and find that I can be sitting there for hours. I get so focused that my bones go to sleep. I think I might need a comfier chair!

Since then, I've done all sorts - coasters, a dragon boat, an angel fish, the Taj Mahal, a hedgehog, and now I'm halfway through a battle tank. I have to say, that one's the most difficult. I've had to leave one part for now as I couldn't quite work it out, but I won't let it defeat me. You've got to stick with it. I'm hoping to finish it soon, as another one just arrived in the post. It's a squirrel model, which I found jammed in the letterbox - so I rescued it. The poor thing.

I was encouraged by Lily to bring some of my pieces along to a local lunch club that I attend. Around 18 of us meet every month, get fish and chips and share stories from our time in service. It's a good group and it gives me a real boost. It's great to be around other people who are ex-Forces - a few that share the most brilliant wartime exploits. Their stories can be hilarious.

One day at the lunch club, I was presented with a Founder's Award. I was gobsmacked! Lily had nominated me. All my feathers fluffed up. I didn't know whether I deserved one or not. But she reminded me that I'd done a lot of work.

It came with a certificate, a commemorative coin and a badge. It's framed up now in the front room. People come round and ask what the award is for, and I get to say "Oh yes, that's for being creative!"

I was sort of lost before I started doing all of this. But the people who have come into my life since I started... it feels like it's really opened a new window. People are interested in what I'm doing. Even my family comes round to see what I've made and ask me questions about what I'm doing next. My sister says I need to put up a shelf to display them - I think I will!

I still have my down days, of course... I think anyone who's been through losing their partner will understand. But these kits, the people I've met, the support - they've made a real difference. I would recommend the creative projects to others but, more importantly, I'd say: find something that interests you. It might not be this, but something that gets you interested. That's what keeps you going. 🍷



Members play golf in the sunshine

A refreshing week of golf at our Rustington Centre

From 11-17 August, our Rustington Centre hosted a memorable Golf Week. We welcomed 11 blind veterans, between the ages of 46 to 87, for a week of sport, peer support and personal development...



At the driving range

The Rustington Golf Week began with a fantastic visit to the Goodwood Golf Academy, where our veterans were warmly welcomed by the team.

Two professional coaches provided tailored instruction in driving, chipping, and putting – helping both beginners and experienced players refine their technique and build confidence on the course.

Day two took us to Dibden Golf Course, where we were made to feel very welcome. In the morning, our veterans completed a nine-hole round, navigating the course in teams along



Using technology to practise

with their guides. The afternoon was spent indoors, honing skills on the golf simulator – which was an engaging and accessible way to practise techniques and enjoy the game in a different format.

Day three saw the group take on the challenge of 18 holes at Hill Barn Golf Course. It was a stretch for many, but the veterans rose to the occasion with enthusiasm, determination and lots of laughter. The course was thoroughly enjoyed, and the staff at Hill Barn made us feel completely at home, adding to the all-round positive experience. →



Members focus on their swing as they take a shot

Day four brought us to Rustington Golf Course, where we played a relaxed nine-hole round. The veterans really enjoyed the course, and it was especially rewarding to see our newer golfers finding their feet and growing in confidence. Being part of the local community, the staff at Rustington Golf Course were exceptional, offering warm hospitality and support throughout the day.

Day five, our final day, was a fun day at Rustington Golf Centre, filled with light-hearted competition. Our Members enjoyed time on the driving

range and golf simulator, and took part in friendly games of pool and shuffleboard. It was a perfect way to round off the week – celebrating everyone's successes, as well as presenting a trophy to 'The most improved player' of the week.

Throughout the week, our veterans were supported by a dedicated team of staff and volunteers, ensuring everyone felt safe, included, and empowered to participate fully. Without their help and assistance, a week like this simply would not have been possible.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the teams at Goodwood Golf Academy, Dibden Golf Course, Hill Barn Golf Course and Rustington Golf Course and Centre, as well as our incredible volunteers,. Most importantly, we thank the Members themselves – whose positivity and determination made this week truly special.

One Member who took part said:

"Firstly, I'd like to thank you all for an excellent golf week, in more ways than one for me... I got a great deal from the week; I don't get to meet younger people or other Members locally, so it was refreshing to meet others and have a laugh. I'm still too young to be old."

Another Member said: "A big thank you to all the team at Blind Veterans UK for making this such an enjoyable week... I've not been in a very good place for such a long time, and this has been the tonic needed."

Want to try golfing yourself?

It's perfectly possible to play golf with sight loss. All you need is a guide – often known as a spotter – to assist you. This is how it works:

Position: Your guide or spotter helps put you in position to take the shot.

Distance: They advise on the distance to the hole and any other information.

Swing: You choose the club and make the swing, while your spotter acts as your eyes on the ball.

How to get started

Whether you're completely new to golf or you ditched your clubs after you lost your sight, let your community team know you'd like to have a go so they can try to help.

You could also try the following:

Local golf clubs

Get in contact with your local club and see what support they can offer you. Many golf clubs are becoming more inclusive and may be willing to adapt their facilities or activities to accommodate golfers with visual impairments.

British Blind Golf

This organisation aims to ensure that all sports and leisure activities are accessible to people with sight loss. They provide information and have an activity finder so you can find a suitable club near you.

England and Wales Blind Golf

This is a charity dedicated to making golf accessible to people with visual impairments. They organise golf clinics, provide training and host competitions. You can reach them at enquiries@ewblindgolf.co.uk 🇬🇧

Learning to live again

After Member **Dougie Head's** wife passed away, he found himself completely dependant on carers - but was determined to learn how to do things for himself

Member Dougie Head, 85, lost his sight in 2023. When his wife died later that year, Dougie found himself reluctantly dependant on carers who visited him four times a day to feed him and administer his medication.

Keen to undergo rehabilitation training to gain independent living skills, our Rehabilitation Officer, Jason Scott, visited him to show him how to master skills such as cooking his own meals, doing his washing, taking his own medication and reading his own mail.

Jason says: "Dougie is an extremely motivated, logical and determined man who wanted to succeed and find methods that worked for him. Every time I visited him, he would show me something new he'd achieved and would always have lots of questions for me.

"I started off by assisting Dougie to fill his own one cup machine so that he would be able to make himself a drink whenever he wanted one without relying on his carers. He mastered this in one session.

"We then moved on to preparing and cooking his own meals. For this, we worked together to find a solution that worked to ensure he could use his combi oven and cook food for the correct amount of time. With a bit of trial and error we found if we moved the dial from 12 o'clock to 12.45 and set a timer on Alexa this seemed to work. The following week, I went back and Dougie was already able to cook his own dinner."

The pair next moved on to the administration of Dougie's eye drops. Jason says: "As Dougie is so logical, he



Dougie using his one cup drink maker

sought his own solutions to problems we encountered. He made a box with dividers so he knew where the different eye drop bottles were, and learnt a method to administer his own drops that worked for him."

However, he still needed support to read the medication labels so the pair turned their attention to tech for reading. Dougie settled on a reader and is now able to read all his own printed materials.

Getting out and about

Now independent in his home, Dougie was keen to move his training outside

with the long-term goal of being able to go to the gym in the town centre independently. The pair began long cane training, starting work on grip, arm position, wrist movement, arc width and height (extending the cane to an even distance on both sides of your body to check for obstacles). They were then ready to move to a local park to master walking in a straight line.

Jason says: "Never once have I come across a person who has been able to travel in a straight line on day one, but Dougie's sense of travel was unbelievable!"





Dougie with Jason and Sam receiving his Founder's Day Award

Slowly building on Dougie's skills so he could manage obstacles and corners, they moved on to block travel whereby they would start at a base point and walk in a square around a block. After just a month, Dougie was able to identify where he was by feeling the surface with his cane or knowing which side of him the traffic was on and had also mastered uncontrolled road crossings. They took what they had learnt into the town centre.

Jason says: "I introduced directions and environmental clues. There was



Dougie at home, using his accessible mobile phone

a lot of street furniture to contend with such as trees, tables and chairs, bollards and benches, which he had no trouble navigating. Once familiar with the routes, I would set Dougie challenges such as "Go to M&S", "Find the peas" and "Exit a different way".

"I was scratching my head to know what to do with Dougie before long as I didn't know if I had anything left to teach him! Throughout the time we've worked together Dougie has shown incredible commitment to preparing, practising and engaging in the work. He has never once given up, realising



Dougie using a white cane and getting to know his way around

early on that total independence was achievable and he was determined to grasp it at every opportunity.

An extraordinary year

Dougie is now completely independent in his own home with no care calls needed. He's a competent cane user and has even broadened his social circle by joining in local blind society events."

Dougie says: "Because of the support from Jason and Blind Veterans UK, I can now get a taxi into town and wander around on my own. I'm good

at visualising things and I use my other senses to help place my location, such as the smell of the bakery. I'm happy with what I've achieved and I no longer have carers to my home; I'm fully independent.

"2023 was an incredibly hard year for me but I've always been a positive person and believe you can succeed if you give things a go."

Doug's daughter Sharron says: "If I think back 14 months ago, and what Dad had been through – losing Mum, the cornea transplant and what little bit of vision he had taken away, I never thought he'd be where he is today. As well as Dad's determination, a lot of this is because of the help, kindness and support of Jason and Blind Veterans UK."

To top off Dougie's year, he's just attended an outdoor activity week in the Lake District during which, at the age of 85, he took part in canoeing, climbing, abseiling and sailing! And, in August he was presented with a Founder's Day Award for Outstanding Achievement, nominated by Jason.

Dougie says: "I was really pleased. I believe that to do anything you have to start off positive and then go for it. I hope my story will encourage others to give something new a go." 🍓



Listen here



Digital magnification is a vital accessibility feature on smartphones

Getting the most out of screen magnification

As mobile technology continues to evolve, screen magnification remains a cornerstone of accessible design, bridging the gap between innovation and inclusivity for millions of people worldwide

Screen magnification is a vital accessibility feature on smartphones, tablets and PCs designed to support people with low vision. It allows you to enlarge the content on a smart device screen without physically making the screen bigger.

You can enlarge text, icons, images and sections of the screen. Users can then navigate their devices more comfortably and independently. This feature is especially beneficial for those who may not require screen readers but still struggle with small or densely packed visual elements.

Modern mobile operating systems like Android, iOS (Apple) and Windows offer built-in magnification tools that can be activated through settings or gestures. Users can zoom in on specific areas of the screen, pan across content, and adjust magnification levels to suit their needs. Some devices also support full-screen magnification, allowing users to interact with apps and media in a more accessible format.

Screen magnifiers also often include enhancements such as contrast adjustment, colour filters and focus tracking, which further improve readability and usability. These tools empower users to personalise their experience.

How to get the most out of screen magnification on your device

1. Magnification level

- Choose a zoom level that enhances visibility without making navigation too cumbersome.
- Excessive magnification can reduce context and make it harder to locate items on the screen.

2. Navigation awareness

- Be mindful that magnification often requires panning across the screen.
- You may need to learn gestures or shortcuts to move efficiently and avoid disorientation.

3. Device performance

- High magnification may affect performance on older devices, causing lag or slower response times.
- Ensure your device is updated and optimized for accessibility features.

4. App compatibility

- Some apps may not scale well with magnification, leading to distorted layouts or inaccessible buttons.
- Each app and website is designed differently and some apps may and websites have built in features to enlarge text and simplify the layout, therefore you →

might have to adjust the level of magnification for each app and website.

5. Visual comfort

- Adjust brightness, contrast, and colour filters to reduce eye strain.
- Take regular breaks when first using screen magnification to avoid visual fatigue, most people adapt to it quickly.

6. Accessibility shortcuts

- Enable shortcuts for quick access to magnification tools.
- Customise gestures or buttons to suit your preferences and physical abilities.

7. Training and support

- Familiarise yourself with the device's accessibility settings.
- Seek training or support if needed — Blind Veterans UK has a dedicated Digital Inclusion team to support you to learn how to use this feature independently.

What we mean by 'low vision'

By 'low vision' we mean an uncorrectable eye condition with some usable vision so the person can probably access some print in a newspaper even if this is just the headlines. People with low vision can still be registered Sight Impaired and Severely Sight Impaired.

How to set up screen magnification on your device

On iOS (iPhone and iPad):

1. **Open settings**
Go to the **settings** app.
2. **Accessibility**
Tap **accessibility**.
3. **Zoom**
Under the **vision** section, tap **zoom**.
4. **Enable zoom**
Toggle the switch to turn **zoom on**.
5. **Usage tips**
 - Double-tap with three fingers to zoom in/out.
 - Drag with three fingers to move around the screen.
 - Double-tap and drag with three fingers to adjust zoom level.

You can also enable **zoom controller** for easier access and customisation.

Please be aware

As can happen when you change any setting on a smart device or PC, it might be complicated to revert back to the settings you originally had. So only try setting up screen magnification yourself if you're confident that you will be able to revert back, or have another person with you who can help you.



Settings on iOS and Windows vary

On Android (steps may vary slightly by device):

1. **Open settings**
Go to the **settings** app.
2. **Accessibility**
Tap **accessibility** (may be under Additional settings or System).
3. **Magnification**
Tap **magnification** or **magnification gestures**.
4. **Enable Magnification**
Turn on **magnification shortcut** or **magnify with gestures**.
5. **Usage tips**
 - Tap the accessibility shortcut

- (usually a floating icon or button).
- Pinch to zoom and drag to move around.
- Tap again to exit magnification.

On PC (built-in tool in Windows)

1. **Open settings**
Press **Windows key + I** to open the Settings app.
2. **Go to accessibility**
Click **accessibility** (or **ease of access** in older versions).
3. **Select magnifier**
Under the **vision** section, click **magnifier**.
4. **Turn on magnifier**
Toggle the switch to enable **magnifier**.

Using magnifier: key features and controls

To zoom in and out:

- Press **Windows key + Plus (+)** to zoom in.
- Press **Windows key + minus (-)** to zoom out.

Magnifier views:

- **Full screen:** magnifies the entire screen.
- **Lens:** a movable magnifying glass.
- **Docked:** magnifies a portion of the screen at the top.

Start automatically:

You can choose to start magnifier automatically when Windows starts. 🗄️

Taking on the South Coast Ultra Challenge

In September, ten intrepid Members took on a multi-distance endurance trek along the stunning South Downs. Here, they share how they got on

A team of ten Members challenged themselves to walk a range of impressive distances, from 25km to 100 km, as they took on the South Coast Ultra Challenge on 6 September.

The group set off from Eastbourne to walk along the South Downs Way - and those taking on the furthest distance arrived in Arundel after 24 hours. They supported each other along the way, raised awareness of the support offered by the charity and raising funds so we can support even more veterans with sight loss.

During June and July, the challengers stayed at the Rustington Centre for a training week ahead of the walk to

build up their fitness and resilience and ready themselves for the mammoth task ahead.

The Members were put through their paces with a range of training walks, including a series of 10km loops around the market town of Arundel and routes along the South Downs Way to get them used to the terrain they would be facing.

The team also received information on nutrition, as well as pre and post exercise stretches and exercises. More than anything, it gave them the chance to give their confidence a boost before they set off. This is what some of them had to say after the challenge.



Stuart Rodd and Dave Robinson

Stuart Rodd
Stuart, 51, joined the Army in 1992 at the age of 17 but was discharged due to a medical problem during his first year of service. He walked 57km for the challenge.

Stuart's sight loss occurred as a result of a brain injury due to a delay in being resuscitated following a respiratory arrest. He spent three years in hospital being rehabilitated. He says:

"I am coming up to my first-year anniversary of being out of hospital. I'm lucky to be alive as there was a point where they considered turning off my life support. When I first discovered that my sight loss was not fixable, I

knew I had to take life by the horns and seize any opportunity that came my way.

"I began to receive support from Blind Veterans UK last September and it's been nothing short of phenomenal. I've achieved so much; I couldn't even make myself a coffee back then but now I have the opportunity to get my life back, so I want to give back to the charity."

During his short time with our charity, Stuart has already embraced many activities as part of his rehabilitation including scuba diving, climbing, abseiling, white water rafting, learning how to cook again, driving a car around Brands Hatch and horse riding. He says:

"During the training week, I managed to walk 30km in one go. It was tough and after three miles, I thought I wasn't going to make it but five hours later I was still walking. I'm a stubborn man - I knew I would complete the 57km for Blind Veterans UK, as they have done so much for me, even if I had to crawl over the line on my hands and knees."

Peter O'Malley
Peter 68, served in the Army Air Corp for three years. He lost his sight overnight at the age of 56. He walked 25km. →

“2011 was a really difficult year for me; I lost my wife who had been terminally ill; lost my mother; lost my sight; lost my job as a mini cab driver; and lost my house. I was very depressed and thought I’d no longer be able to do the things I loved like camping, walking and martial arts.”

Peter discovered the charity while catching a train near to the Royal College for the Blind, where he was staying at the time for rehabilitation, He started chatting to a man with a white cane who told him about us. He says:

“Blind Veterans UK has given me a reason to get out of bed. The charity has taught me that I can still do the things I enjoy. Fitness is really important



Peter O'Malley and his guide Jez

to me and sport is a fantastic tool for rehabilitation. The charity has helped me a lot and I wanted to do this challenge to give back. The event has brought attention to the support offered to blind veterans like myself and has hopefully raised awareness among other veterans who were not already aware of the charity.”

Lee Whitfield

Lee, 49, lost his sight suddenly in his mid-40s following a brain haemorrhage and he is now black blind. He walked 25km.

“I went into a coma and woke in hospital a few weeks later. It wasn’t immediately obvious that I’d lost my sight as I was hallucinating and seeing all sorts of things. It was absolutely terrifying.

“When I realised what had happened, I thought my life was over. I was discharged from hospital a day before the country went into the first Covid lockdown, adding to my feeling of loss and isolation.”

Lee began to receive our support later that year. He says: “Blind Veterans UK has been amazing; the charity has given me back the skills and confidence to face up to my new life and to make the most of every day. I’ve been provided with counselling and technology, and



Lee Whitfield and guide Aaron Garratt

having the charity by my side has made me feel safe.”

In May, Lee marked the 80th anniversary of VE Day with a fundraising swim taking on 80 lengths of his local pool. He decided to take on this challenge alongside his fellow blind veterans. He says: “I attended a training week at the end of June; it was really tough, much harder than I had anticipated. Being black blind, I was finding that I was placing my foot in the middle of stones; my feet were in agony; it was gruelling. I decided to do the 25km distance knowing that would be enough of a challenge for me.

“It was good to take on this challenge as part of a team and to be able to



Steve Williams and the team from Evolve Commercial who volunteered to guide

encourage each other. I feel extremely proud of myself to have completed this one and to have done my bit again to fundraise for the charity that has already helped me so much.”

Jerry Bradley

Before he began to receive our support, Jerry, 62, had assumed he wouldn’t be able to do so many things anymore. But with the support of our staff and his fellow Members, rather than asking ‘Can I do it?’, Jerry now asks himself ‘How will I do it?’ He walked 100km.

Jerry served in the RAF for 13 years and during that time lived in nine different places. Problems with his sight surfaced in 1996 when he left the →

RAF, but it wasn't until 2003 that he was diagnosed with the genetic eye condition, Stargardt disease.

He says: "Everyone has one blind spot in each eye but with Stargardt disease you have three and mine are growing; I've lost my central vision and I also have Charles Bonnet syndrome, which means I see things that aren't there."

The charity began to support Jerry last year. He says: "I was in a dark place at times - I was the only blind person I knew - but since finding Blind Veterans UK, my whole world has changed. Within five months I'd been go-karting, paddle boarding, axe throwing, ascended a climbing wall and been around a velodrome on a tandem bicycle.

"I've met other blind veterans and my sight loss no longer defines me. My confidence to try new things has grown. I had never walked 100km in one hit, but the effort of my other blind veterans motivated me to do it."

Richard Cruice
Richard, 59, took on the South Coast Ultra last year and despite the mud making it slippery under foot he completed 57km. He returned to tackle the same distance again.

He says: "I'm not getting any younger;

it's a personal challenge for me to get out and do these things before old age creeps in. Last year was a lot of fun but the mud took a lot of people by surprise and fighting through the bog zapped a lot of energy. It was great to get back out there this year without the mud. This really isn't an easy challenge for anyone, let alone those of us with sight loss."

Richard served with the 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards for seven years and it was when he came out of the Army that he first discovered there was a problem with his sight. He went for a routine eye test upon starting a new job and the optician picked up that something was wrong. Richard was diagnosed with the genetic eye condition, macular dystrophy.

He says: "My mum was blind but it was still a shock and I didn't take it in initially. By the time I was 39, I was registered severely sight impaired. It was a hard learning curve. I had to learn to reach out to people for help."

It was in 2013 that Richard began to receive support from the charity. He says: "It was at this point that my paths began to open up and life looked brighter. A new door had opened for me. A huge thing for me has been the camaraderie that comes with being a blind veteran; the



Richard Cruice and Theresa

support and friendship of others who understand sight loss and have the military connection really spurs me on to do things like this."

Charlie Parkinson
Charlie, 48, took on 100km after his confidence was boosted during a successful training week at the Rustington Centre.

"I was an infantry soldier, so I'm used to walking and in the past I completed the London to Brighton twice with the charity. I was really looking forward to this challenge alongside fellow Members. For me, the challenge was not whether I could complete it but about working together to see us all through as a team."



Charlie Parkinson and Rich

Charlie first discovered he was losing his sight in 2010. He was playing a lot of rugby at the time and started to realise he was dropping the ball. He visited the optician and was sent to the hospital the next day where he was diagnosed with glaucoma.

"After finding out I was losing my sight, I was on the brink of suicide; I even had to tell my mother how I was feeling. Finding out about Blind Veterans UK saved my life without a shadow of a doubt. They stepped in at just the right time. It wasn't a quick fix; it took around five years for me to find my feet again.

"I'll be indebted to the charity for the rest of my life and will always do whatever I can to give back. But →

that still wouldn't be enough to pay back what they have done for me."

Andy Leitch

Andy, 51, also took on the challenge last year alongside his wife Angie as his guide. No stranger to physical challenges, Andy actually completed his tenth London Marathon this year. He walked 57km of the South Coast Ultra.

In 2024, the pair had hoped to complete 100km, but the weather conditions were too much, and they made the decision to stop at 57km.



Andy Leitch

Andy joined the Army in 1992 and spent 19 years with the Royal Logistics Corps. It was at the age of 37 that retinitis pigmentosa caused a gradual decline in his sight which meant he was forced to retire early from the military.

He says, "Blind Veterans UK has invested a lot of time over the years to help me rebuild my life when I'd lost all hope. They made me realise what was possible and gave me the confidence to start doing physical activities again and get back to work.

"I hope that my experiences helped other blind veterans who are newer to the charity. As a team, we all completed our distances and can be proud of our achievements and personal journeys."

Jill Humphries

Blind veteran Jill, 65, completed the 25km distance last year and returned to do the same this year. She set herself a personal challenge to complete the challenge in a faster time. The 25km route is certainly not an easy option; it saw Jill climbing the Seven Sisters, a series of chalk cliffs.

Jill enlisted into the Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps in 1979 and served as a nurse for four years. It was in her 30s that Jill first felt that something wasn't right with her sight.

Jill was later diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa which is a hereditary eye condition. She says, "I worked as a nurse and, at first, I was able to make my own adaptations to correct my eyesight. I found for example that the corridor lighting was low; I had to start standing by the window to read prescriptions and when making a cup of tea, I wouldn't attempt to pour myself a full cup. I didn't think much of these things at first so didn't mention them to anyone.

"In 2009, I realised I was starting to miss things and make small mistakes at work which scared me and triggered anxiety, I was worried that it would be detrimental to the patients I was caring for."

Jill started receiving the support of the charity in 2017, She says: "Blind Veterans UK has helped me a lot with IT and technology which has meant I've been able to carry on with using email. I'm also part of their group of veterans who are of working age and this has been brilliant and helped me to get back to work. I've recently completed an internship with the charity which was an amazing experience and saw my confidence flourish.

"Taking part in this challenge has been great for my wellbeing; walking and fresh air are so beneficial. I've always



Jill (left) with Elli, approaching the finishing line at last year's run with guide Elli

been a good walker and I was excited to get out there and complete the South Coast Ultra again."

The team of blind veterans are jointly fundraising for our charity. There is still time to add to their total and help them to reach their target of £600 – the equivalent of the cost of a rehab week stay at our Rustington Centre – enabling other veterans in the future to benefit from these weeks and participate in events like this one. 🇬🇧

[Justgiving.com/page/scu25](https://www.justgiving.com/page/scu25)

The end of Windows 10?

As most users will be aware by now, Microsoft is due to withdraw support for Windows 10 on 14th October

As Microsoft get ready to withdraw their support for Windows 10 this month, it can only mean two things. Firstly, they would really like you to go out and buy a nice shiny new PC running Windows 11 (because after

only making £137 billion last year, they're short of a few bob...), and secondly, but more seriously, it means that there will be no future updates released to cure bugs or fix previously unknown security issues.



RALF / ADOBE STOCK

Windows 10 makes way for Windows 11 soon

Although retail customers can, for the first time, pay Microsoft to carry on supporting Windows 10 for a further year, after that you're still on your own (and I don't expect you will get much for the £30 fee anyway).

There's also a free option if you sign up for a Microsoft account and use Windows backup to store your settings to their cloud, though what Microsoft gets out of this arrangement is unknown, other than a whole new swathe of email accounts to send marketing to...

In real terms, losing support from Microsoft doesn't mean your PC will stop working; it just puts all Windows 10 users in the same boat as those still happily using Windows 7 or 8 and even those still clinging on to Windows XP, over 10 years after support ended.

With huge numbers of Windows 10 PCs around, vendors will still support it with new hardware and the software this needs to connect to Windows. It's very doubtful software companies will release Windows 11-exclusive versions of their software (unless you'd suspect, Microsoft pay them to do so), as the market is just too big to lose.

So, what are the alternatives to buying a new PC if your old one won't run Windows 11? The obvious and

cheapest option is to keep calm and carry on, although it would be wise to invest in a dedicated anti-virus application like Avira, Avast, or Sophos, as this will ensure regular updates to guard against viruses.

It would also pay to be more vigilant with email, but that can be said for every user regardless of operating system. Don't go clicking on links in emails from unknown senders, don't respond to "prizes" from competitions you don't remember entering, or "free gifts" from shops you don't use. And definitely don't use links to unsubscribe.

For all those with assistive software such as SuperNova, Jaws or Zoomtext, the vendors of these products have been playing "whack-a-mole" trying to keep up with Microsoft's updates for Windows 11 for over a year.

Virtually every time a Windows update drops, they're having to update their product to keep it working. Consequently, it's recommended that if your PC will run Windows 11 and you want to upgrade, install the latest version of your assistive software beforehand.

All in all, ending of support for Windows 10 is not, contrary to what Microsoft would have you believe, the end of the world. 🌍

Tips for staying well in winter

We've joined forces with older people's charity **Independent Age** to bring you advice to help keep you well through the colder months. This is drawn from their Winterwise guide, available in multiple accessible formats on their website

Staying warm

Managing your energy costs

- The oven and electric hob tend to use the most electricity, so consider using a slow cooker or an air fryer more often, they use much less energy.
- You don't need to avoid using the kettle, just avoid over filling it.
- Running the lightbulb costs very little and is still useful for keeping spaces lit.

Keeping yourself warm

- Aim to keep your home at at least 18 degrees Celsius both day and night. Feeling cold is not just uncomfortable, it increases the risk of flu, heart attack, stroke or hypothermia.
- Have your boiler serviced annually,



ESCAPEJAJA/ ADOBE STOCK

An air fryer will help save you money

- ideally before winter arrives.
- At night, use a hot water bottle to warm your bed, but don't over fill it.
- Layering clothes and blankets is effective: the trapped air between layers helps to insulate your body.
- If using an electric blanket, check whether it's safe to keep it on while sleeping, or whether you should switch it off before you go to bed. Electric blankets are one of the highest fire risks during the winter months.

Staying safe

Slips and falls (inside)

- Use a non-slip bathmat in the bathroom.
- Mop up any spills immediately.
- Keep a night-light, bedside light, or torch easily reachable so you don't stumble in the dark.
- Eliminate trailing wires from plugs.
- Keep stairways clear of obstacles and ensure they're well lit.
- Avoid overloading electrical sockets.

Outside in icy conditions

- Wear shoes with a good grip and a warm lining, along with thick socks.
- Keep grit and/or salt to treat your paths outside. Your local council may provide grit for free.
- Carry a fully charged mobile phone so you can call for help if needed.



JEFFERY/ ADOBE STOCK

Avoid overloading electrical sockets

Avoiding scams

- Scams thrive in times of uncertainty. Be cautious with deals that seem "too good to be true".
- Never give out bank details to someone who has called you unexpectedly.
- If in doubt, call the organisation directly via a phone number you know is genuine.
- Don't let pressure tactics push you into making snap decisions, legitimate organisations won't demand immediate action. →



Listen here

Member voice

We have some exciting winter events coming up in the calendar, which you can now register to attend

Village Hotel Christmas Dinner - Swindon

This event is taking place on **5 December 2025**, you must register to attend before **24 October 2025**.

Time: 12pm to 3.30pm.

This Christmas dinner promises to be an afternoon filled with warmth, laughter and delicious food. Catch up with friends as you enjoy our Founder's Day Awards presentations and tuck into a three-course, Christmas meal.

Please note: This event is free to registered Members. A cash bar is available for attendees to purchase their own beverages upon arrival.

Venue

Village Hotel
Shaw Ridge Leisure Park
Whitehill Way
Swindon
SN5 7DW

Founder's Awards

Our Founder's Awards will be presented during the dinner for a small number of 'Highly Commended' award recipients. If you'd like to nominate a fellow Member for an award and want them to be in with a chance to receive their award at this memorable event, please fill in the nomination form by 24 October 2025.



For more information and to register your interest please go to [Village Hotel Christmas Dinner - Swindon - Blind Veterans UK](#) (code above) or call **0300 111 2233.**

RMA Sandhurst - Military Dinner 2026

This event is taking place on **13 February 2026**, you must register to attend before **2 January 2026**.

Time: 12pm to 4.30pm. →

“Try to have at least one hot meal per day as this supports both warmth and nutrition”

Eating well

- Try to have at least one hot meal per day as this supports both warmth and nutrition.
- Eat a variety of foods to help provide all necessary nutrients.
- Stay hydrated, aim for six to eight drinks a day. This helps reduce infections, and improves concentration, energy and mood.
- Alcohol dehydrates you, so if you drink, stay within safe limits (14 units per week is the UK guideline) and include non-alcoholic drinks.

Help with affording food

- If you are struggling financially, consider contacting your local food bank. They can provide emergency food and support.
- The Trussell Trust have information about benefits, grants and support. Call their advice line on 0808 208 2138. 📞

Access the Winterwise guide at independantage.org/get-advice/winterwise or call Independent Age on 0800 319 6789.



NASTYAKAMYSHEVA/ ADOBE STOCK

Eat at least one hot meal per day

Staying well

Mental health and wellbeing

- Exercise (within your ability) and maintaining a healthy diet both help your mood and general health.
- Stay in touch with family, friends, neighbours or community groups, by phone or in person, so you don't feel isolated.
- Keep a list of contact numbers handy or use a calendar to remind you to reach out.
- If anxiety or worry is mounting, try to focus on what you can control. Limit exposure to negative news.
- Talk about how you're feeling with someone you trust.

We are pleased to offer a special event at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, home to the future leaders of the British Army. The dinner offers a unique experience located within the prestigious Indian Army Memorial Room, overlooking RMA Sandhurst's stunning grounds and promises to be an afternoon filled with laughter, camaraderie and delicious food.

Don't miss out on this unique opportunity full of history and heritage. Mark your calendars and get ready for a military dinner to remember.

This event is free to registered Members.

Venue

Royal Military Academy
Camberley
GU15 4PQ

Access into Sandhurst: This will be granted via Main Gate, located on the A30, opposite Camberley Premier Inn, GU15 3LP.

Ballot tickets

Due to the expected high level of interest for this event, Members expressing their interest to attend will be chosen via a random ballot. We will let you know if you've been successful via email, letter or phone call by Friday 9 January 2026.



Members outside Sandhurst Old College building

Founder's Awards



If you'd like to nominate a fellow member, carer or volunteer for a Founder's Award and want them to be in with a chance to receive their award at this memorable event, please fill in the nomination form (code above) by **2 January 2026**.



For more information or to register your interest in the event please visit [RMA Sandhurst - Military Dinner 2026 - Blind Veterans UK](#) (code above) or call us on 0300 111 22 33.



National Creative Project

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

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

Tank model

We've had lots of requests for model vehicles – especially tanks! We really



You'll enjoy our new tank model

hope you enjoy this 171-piece model. It measures 16 x 29 x 15cm when completed and has some moving parts. It will come with our bespoke step by step graphic guide, and some hints and tips. **(Moderately difficult. Suitable for confident beginners)**

Christmas cards papercraft

This papercraft kit has materials to make your own Christmas cards and gift tags, using collage techniques. We'll provide a variety of paper, sequins and other decorative items with a Christmassy theme, and we'd encourage you to use your own materials too so you can make some unique cards to send to your loved ones! **(Suitable for beginners)**

Hyacinths

For this year's winter indoor gardening project, we're bringing back the Hyacinth bulbs! This kit will contain everything you need to nurture →



Our circle mosaic kit makes a great gift and a fun project

some winter blooms – there's a plastic pot and some slate chips to add interest. Suitable for indoor gardening, no additional materials required.

(Suitable for beginners)

Circle coaster mosaic kit

As a few Members have expressed enjoyment at making gifts for others, while others have suggested mosaic coaster kits, we thought we'd combine the two! Reanna has designed these two circular coaster mosaics in complementary colours.

You can keep them for yourself, or we'll enclose a piece of ribbon so you can wrap them up as a gift in time for Christmas. **(Suitable for confident beginners)**

Also available:

Woodland trio All three of our simple wooden models are now available on a permanent basis – hedgehog, mouse and squirrel. You can request specific ones you've missed or the whole set.



Our woodland trio

Your feedback matters

Thank you so much for continuing to send in your feedback forms. We shape the NCP service based on your feedback, constantly tweaking and making improvements. As the forms are anonymous, we can't get in touch with everyone individually so here are a few common themes from the comments, and our responses.

“The centre of my mandala mosaic is wobbly!”

We know that some Members use the mandala mosaics as pot stands, but the central dots create a raised, uneven surface. Thank you so much for raising this. Going forward, all tiles in mandala designs will be the same height.

“I needed a lot of help with the project. Is that okay?”

Some Members like to do these independently, others with family and friends. We know that difficulty is subjective, and some may struggle more than others with detailed work. Crafts are a nice activity to do with others, and it's okay to need a bit of support. There's no right or wrong way.

The most important thing is just giving it a go – you might surprise yourself!

“The pieces on my model don't fit properly!”

We get the model kits from a supplier, and hand-draw the step-by-step instructions for our Members using graphics software. Occasionally in the supplier's cutting process of the wooden pieces end up slightly varying in shape.

Taking a bit of time with your sandpaper to ensure all rough edges are smooth can help. Sometimes they do need quite a bit of work. Take your time and remember you've always got glue if something snaps! If you're really struggling with a kit, let us know and we'll send you a replacement.

We always love hearing from you, you can always get in touch via email at ncwt@blindveterans.org.uk with any questions, feedback or to share any photographs if you wish.

Lucy and Reanna



Quiz time

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

1. What is the largest bird in the world?
2. Who succeeded Neville Chamberlain as Prime Minister in 1940?
3. What is the currency of Hungary?
4. Which animal can be seen on the Porsche logo?
5. Who composed the opera Aida?
6. Where did backgammon originate?
7. Named after the mallow flower, mauve is a shade of what?
8. Who played Queen Elizabeth II in the first two seasons of 'The Crown'?
9. What famous man became president of his country after being in jail for 18 years?



CASEY E MARTIN / ADOBE STOCK

Caption: A backgammon board



Family news

Birthdays

Dorothea Barron who celebrates her 101st birthday on 25 October 2025.

Arnold Bradbury who celebrates his 102nd birthday on 20 October 2025.

Olwen Cantlay who celebrates her 103rd birthday on 31 October 2025.

Joseph Covell who celebrates his 103rd birthday on 16 October 2025.

Dorothy Cundall who celebrates her 104th birthday on 29 October 2025.

James Finnigan who celebrates his 103rd birthday on 4 October 2025.

John Haddock who celebrates his 103rd birthday on 16 October 2025.

Evan Jones who celebrates his 100th birthday on 20 October 2025.

Doreen Scott who celebrates her 104th birthday on 20 October 2025.

Garnet Upton who celebrates his 100th birthday on 18 October 2025.

Condolences

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

Jean Knight who died on 1 September 2025. She was the wife of Bernard Knight.

Christine Phillips who died on 1 September 2025. She was the wife of Phil Phillips.

Roshan Taylor who died on 1 September 2025. She was the wife of Richard Taylor.

Sheila Tebbutt who died on 2 August 2025. She was the wife of Geoff Tebbutt.

Eva Wass who died on 1 August 2025. She was the wife of Brian Wass.

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

Francis Adams of Devizes who died on 5 September 2025 aged 94. He served in The Royal Airforce as a Chief Technician.

James Archibald of Gorebridge who died on 26 July 2025 aged 94. He served in The Royal Airforce as a Corporal.

David Bartlett of Chinnor who died on 29 August 2025 aged 94. He served in The Royal Navy as a Sick Berth Attendant.

Hugh Batty of Ripon who died on 31 August 2025 aged 101. He served in The Royal Navy as a Petty Officer.

James Bennett of Wigan who died on 5 September 2025 aged 96. He served in The Royal Signals.

Ivor Bennet of Ashford who died on 31 July 2025 aged 88. He served in The Royal Army Educational Corps.

Edward Brearly of Nottingham who died on 13 August 2025 aged 89. He served in The Royal Signals as a Corporal.

Tom Brooke of Sheffield who died on 3 August 2025 aged 93. He served in The Royal Airforce as an S.A.C.

John Chibnall of Lancaster who died on 1 September 2025 aged 92. He served in The Royal Airforce as a Junior Technician.

Alexander Cook of Sunderland who died on 1 August 2025 aged 95. He served in The Royal Airforce as an A.C.1.

Ken Shipley Currier of Birmingham who died on 27 August 2025 aged 98. He served in The Royal Signals as a signalman.

Richard Dadford of The Isle of Man who died on 1 August 2025 aged 90. He served in The Royal Armoured Corps as a Trooper.

Eric Davey of Fleetwood who died on 7 August 2025 aged 91. He served in The Royal Airforce as a Sergeant.

Douglas Downie of Edinburgh who died on 13 July 2025 aged 88. He served in The Royal Navy as a Signaller.

Edward Edrich of Southampton who died on 3 September 2025 aged 89. He served in The Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers as a Private.

Neville Edwards of Rhos on Sea who died on 3 September 2025 aged 97. He served in The Royal Airforce as an A.C.2.

Brian Elford of Norwich who died on 30 August 2025 aged 87. He served in The Royal Navy as a Petty Officer.

Bernard Entwisle of Bury who died on 21 August 2025 aged 89. He served in the Lancaster Fusiliers as a Lance Corporal.

Basil France of Tavistock who died on 10 July 2025 aged 97. He served in The General Service Corps as a Gunner.

Peter Gambold of Swansea who died on 16 August 2025 aged 72. He served in The Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers as a Lance Corporal.

Keith Garner of Scunthorpe who died on 22 August 2025 aged 89. He served in The Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers as a Sub Corporal.

Gladys Goodbridge of Llandudno who died on 15 August 2025 aged 101. She served in The Auxiliary Territorial Service as a Sergeant.

Alan Gray of Cardiff who died on 3 August 2025 aged 92. He served in The Royal Airforce as a Corporal.

Brian Gresham of Swindon who died on 7 August 2025 aged 97. He served in The Royal Navy as a Commander.

Ronald Grubb of Leamington Spa who died on 7 August 2025 aged 90. He served in The Royal Catering Corps as a Private.

Thomas Halsey of Swadlincote who died on 1 August 2025 aged 89. He served in The Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers as a Sergeant.

Roger Hayes of Littlehampton who died on 7 August 2025 aged 83. He served in The Royal Military Police as a Corporal.

Charles Hemingway of Hull who died on 11 September 2025 aged 97. He served in The Royal Army Service Corps as a Corporal.

Frank Hodson of Towcenter who died on 21 August 2025 aged 94. He served in The Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers as a Sergeant.

Keith Homewood of Tonbridge who died on 9 September 2025 aged 89. He served in The Royal Airforce as a Leading Airman.

Henry Hunter of Inverness who died on 1 August 2025 aged 97. He served in The Royal Airforce as a Chief Technician.

Gordon Isaacs of Uxbridge who died on 19 August 2025 aged 95. He served in The Royal Airforce as a Leading Airman.

Robert Jones of Hayling Island who died on 24 August 2025 aged 100. He served in The Royal Navy as an Able Seaman.

John Jones of Rhyl who died on 14 August 2025 aged 88. He served in The Royal Airforce as an A.C.1.

Joseph Kearns of St Helens who died on 1 August 2025 aged 88. He served in The Royal Artillery as a Gunner.

Norman Kenwright of Stockport who died on 1 August 2025 aged 89. He served in The Royal Army Medical Corps as a Corporal.

John Lacey of Preston who died on 3 September 2025 aged 103. He served in The Royal Army Medical Corps as a Sergeant.

Arthur Lee of Hedon who died on 29 July 2025 aged 95. He served in The Royal Armoured Corps as a Trooper.

Ian Liddle of Rugby who died on 4 September 2025 aged 96. He served in The Royal Electrical and Mechanical Corps as a Sergeant.

Joyce Malcom of Brentwood who died on 6 August 2025 aged 102. She served in The Womens Royal Naval Service.

Ian McCormick of Liverpool who died on 3 September 2025 aged 83. He served in The University Officer Training Corp as a Captain.

Badon Middleton of Camberley who died on 1 September 2025 aged 97. He served in The Fleet Air Arm as an Air Mechanic.

Kenneth Mole of Cranbrook who died on 3 July 2025 aged 95. He served in The Royal Airforce.

Richard Northam of Wellington who died on 24 August 2025 aged 102. He served in The Royal Airforce as a Leading Airman.

Cyril Park of Matlock who died on 17 July 2025 aged 100. He served in The Royal Engineers as a Private.

Henry Pattison of Polegate who died on 27 July 2025 aged 93. He served in The Royal Engineers as a Sapper.

Barry Philpot of West Drayton who died on 12 August 2025 aged 98. He served in The Royal East Kent Regiment as a Private.

Alan Pyefinch of Slough who died on 1 July 2025 aged 103. He served in The Royal Navy as a Telegraphist.

Derek Reffell of Plymouth who died on 1 August 2025 aged 85. He served in The Royal Navy as an Able Seaman.

Keith Rivett of Felixstow who died on 30 August 2025 aged 87. He served in The Royal Army as a Signaller.

Shirley Robinson of Blackpool who died on 5 September 2025 aged 91. She served in The Royal Army Medical Corps as a Lance Corporal.

Michael Rodgers of Southsea who died on 1 August 2025 aged 85. He served in The Royal Navy as a Lieutenant Commander.

George Rushworth of Edinburgh who died on 9 July 2025 aged 95. He served in The Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers as a Lance Corporal.

Frances Scantlebury of Bodmin who died on 11 August 2025 aged 100. She served in The Women's Auxiliary Air Force as an ACW1.

Alan Sharp of Lytham St Annes who died on 17 July 2025 aged 96. He served in The Royal Air Force as an L.A.C.

Leslie Simmons of Spalding who died on 12 September 2025 aged 97. He served in The Royal Army Pay Corps as a Corporal.

Peter Slade of Carmarthenshire who died on 28 August 2025 aged 90. He served in The Royal Air Force as an S.A.C.

Harold Smith of Manchester who died on 11 August 2025 aged 88. He serves in The Royal Airforce as a Senior Aircraftsman.

Robert Steer of Carmarthen who died on 1 August 2025 aged 96. He served in The Royal Engineers as an Engineer.

Harry Stubbs of Stockport who died on 5 September 2025 aged 91. He served in The Lancastrian Brigade as a Private.

Michael Sweeny of Hassocks who died on 3 August 2025 aged 90. He served in The Royal Air Force as a Senior Aircraftsman.

Alexander Taylor of Buckingham who died on 15 September 2025 aged 97. He served in The Royal Artillery.

Eric Taylor of Newcastle Upon Tyne who died on 1 August 2025 aged 103. He served in The Royal Marines as a Private.

Steven Thompson of Guernsey who died on 5 September 2025 aged 91. He served in The Royal Air Force as an A.C.1.

Roy Truan of St Albans who died on 26 August 2025 aged 92. He served in The Royal Air Force as a Junior Technician.

Joshua Walsh of Clitheroe who died on 2 September 2025 aged 90. He served in The Royal Engineers as a Sapper.

Alan Warrington of Swaffham who died on 13 July 2025 aged 87. He served in the Royal Artillery as a Gunner.

Thomas Wassell of Barnsley who died on 11 July 2025 aged 88. He served in The Royal Artillery as a Gunner.

Alec Williams of Olney who died on 31 August 2025 aged 93. He served in The Royal Navy as a Chief Petty Officer.

Wilfred Wilson of Chesterfield who died on 18 August 2025 aged 99. He served in The Royal Artillery.

David Wodds of Bath who died on 1 August 2025 aged 96. He served in The Royal Navy as a Captain.

Raymond Wright of Barnsley who died on 25 July aged 91. He served in The Royal Army Service Corp as a Lance Corporal.

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Quiz answers – from page 48

- 1 Ostrich
2. Winston Churchill
3. Forint
4. Horse
5. Giuseppe Verdi
6. Persia
7. Purple
8. Claire Foy
9. Nelson Mandela

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