



# VIC Newsletter



## Ops Manager Bob retires in May

**AFTER 13 years as Operations Manager of VIC, Bob Elliott will be retiring from the role on Thursday May 15.**

Bob was instrumental in the foundation of Veterans In Communities, which evolved from his work with another veterans' charity. In the early years, VIC was based at the REAL Centre in Bacup, before the charity was gifted the VIC Centre in Haslingden.

The organisation has grown, developed and evolved over the years, but the core and objectives have remained the same.

VIC exists to help veterans, blue light personnel and their families to return, belong and prosper within their communities.

The charity works across Lancashire, Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale.

To mark Bob's final day,

specially invited guests will be at the VIC Centre in the morning and then, from 1pm, there will be an open house when anyone is invited to drop in and wish Bob well. At 2pm there will be a special quiz on Bob's time with the charity.

Although he will no longer be Operations Manager, Bob will continue to be linked to VIC as he is going to become a trustee.

## Standard Bearer Amy's success

**CONGRATULATIONS to our Administrator Amy Thompson who is now the North West Regional Standard Bearer for The Royal British Legion.**

As a result of her success in the competition at St Michael's High School in Chorley, Amy will now represent the North West in the RBL National Standard Bearer competition on Friday May 16 at the Harrogate Convention Centre.

One of the 10 regional winners from England, Wales and Northern Ireland will compete to be selected as the National Standard Bearer.

Amy said: "I have been Standard Bearing for about seven years now and last year I won the Lancashire Standard Bearer Competition, but I did not win the North West competition.

"However, I did get to go to the RBL Festival of Remembrance at London's Albert Hall last year as the Lancashire Standard Bearer.



"This time I will be there as the North West Standard Bearer so I will be one of only 10 regional Standard Bearers and we are nearer the front.

"There were four people in the North West competition, three men and myself.

"Judges started with an inspection of our uniform and then we had to do a series of drill movements which were marked."

Last year, Amy achieved a score of 211 out of 300, but this year she achieved 243 out of 300 winning her the North West title.

She added: "In Lancashire, there is only one training session a month, so I have spent every Wednesday travelling to Stafford because they hold standard bearing training sessions each week."





# Marathon charity cycle-ride

**AN AMBITIOUS fundraising bike ride will see three cyclists tackling a 260-mile journey between London and Haslingden during Armed Forces Week.**

The Riding for Forces and Families challenge will raise money for three charities: VIC, Scotty's Little Soldiers and Friends of Lancashire Army Cadet Force.

Veterans Bob Brindley and Phil Speddy, and Phil's wife Mandy, will leave the Cenotaph in The Mall on June 22 and use canals and riverside paths, where possible, to make their way back to Lancashire.

On Saturday June 28, Armed Forces Day, there will be an open day at the VIC Centre from 12 noon to 3pm when dignitaries, veterans, military families and Lancashire Army Cadets will be invited to the centre



to welcome back the cyclists.

Operations Manager Bob Elliott said: "We have had a bike donated from the Armed Forces Community Support Hub in Warrington, another that was given to VIC and a third that was donated by a veteran."

A support team will accompany the cyclists and includes Bob, Bill Ogden, veteran Kev and Bob, Willy and Sam. Arnie and Mark from the Warrington Hub also provided

some spares and advice on general maintenance for the challenge.

Phil said: "After the fundraising 60-mile Remembrance Walk Bob Brindley and I

did last year, we wanted to do something else to raise money.

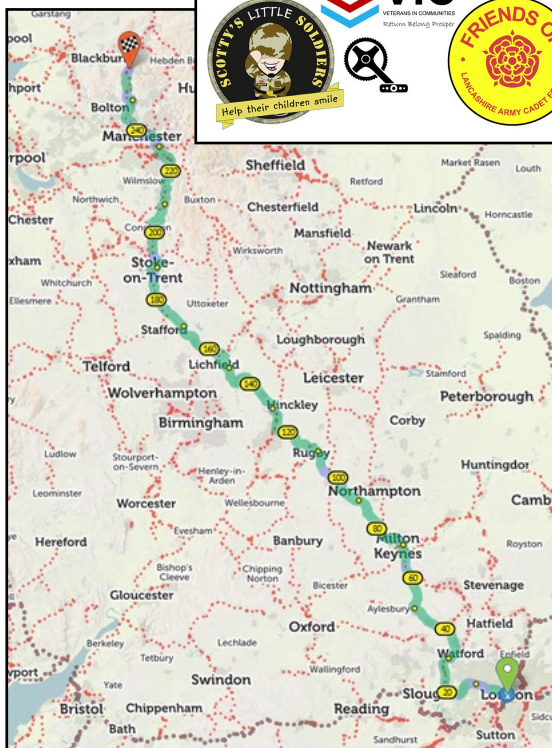
"It was Bob Brindley who came up with concept. He has also been to the gym for a month in training; I am going to start training soon."

To help cover any costs incurred while the week-long cycle ride is in progress, including fuel and campsite fees, VIC will be at Asda Rawtenstall on May 3, in Tesco Haslingden on May 31 and Tesco Rawtenstall on June 7.

The trio are also offering businesses a chance to boost their profile by sponsoring the cyclists.

Phil said: "We are offering brand visibility, media exposure, community engagement and recognition for our sponsors, as well as them knowing they have helped and supported the challenge and the three charities that are going to benefit from the money we raise."

For more information on the Riding for Forces and Families challenge follow the VIC Facebook Page and Group.



**To sponsor, donate or help the challenge in any way, please contact the VIC Centre on 01706 833180.**

## Choir in Accy

**A FANTASTIC return to Accrington Tesco was made by singers from the VIC Choir and staff and customers kindly donated £289.71.**

RAF Veteran Jacko Pearce kindly supported the singers and collected money.

Anyone who can offer to help hold collecting buckets and help to raise money when the choir sings can contact 01706 833180.

## La Latte offer

**VETERANS visiting La Latte Lounge Community Café CIC in Rawtenstall can get 10 per cent off menu items.**

Any veteran visiting the café on Bank Street, should make staff aware of their service history when ordering.

## Energy talk

**VETERANS learnt more about how Rossendale Valley Energy is working in the Rossendale area.**

VIC was visited by the team from Rossendale Valley Energy who held a clinic for people to have a chat with them.

Following the Greggs RV and weekly quiz, they also gave a short presentation and followed by a Q+A to clarify any issues that could arise.

## Garden party

**VETERAN Phil Chamberlain has been accepted by The Not Forgotten Veterans Charity to attend a Royal Garden Party on Friday May 16.**





# Thrive Together takes root in North West

**MORE than 120 people attended the launch of Thrive Together at the Forces Wellbeing Collective held at The Edge in Wigan.**

Throughout the region, Capacity Builders are being employed to create a network of different organisations to work with veterans, families and their carers.

At The Edge, VIC was represented by Chief Executive Amanda Walton,

Operations Manager Bob Elliott, Phil Speddy and our own Community Capacity Builder Brian Hawke, *pictured above right*.

Speakers attended from Step Together Volunteering, Burnley FC in the Community and Tom Harrison House with Ian Millen, who came from Veterans Outreach Support, based in Portsmouth, and explained how similar work is being carried out in his region.

Brian also visited Roots to

Branches Forest School CIC, *pictured below*, which is based at Weeton Barracks in Preston for their open day.

The Defence Gardens Scheme, DGS, is partnering with Roots to Branches to offer nature-based therapy for veterans, service leavers, and personnel at Weeton Barracks, Preston.

He said: "My role is to work within the community and to build its capacity to work with organisations and services

across Lancashire that support veterans to create a network so that organisations are not working independently and are sharing best practice and working together to support veterans, families and their carers."

Thrive Together is the legacy phase of the VPPP – Veterans Places, Pathways and People using what was learnt in the programme to provide safe places for veterans to access.



## Stunning artwork

**A BOB Ross painting class saw veterans and members of the community creating their own individual masterpieces.**

The classes are led by Volunteer Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator Darren Horsnell and held every month at the VIC Centre in Haslingden. Contact 01706 833180 to book a place, class cost is £45, with a non-refundable deposit of £15.







# Poignant Battlefields tour in Sept

by Charlotte Robinson

**FOR a small group from VIC, September will bring a journey like no other – one filled with reflection and a deep sense of respect for those who made the ultimate sacrifice.**

From September 1-5, they will set off in a minibus, travelling together to some of the most significant battlefields of the First and Second World Wars.

Their route will take them to the Normandy beaches, Pegasus Bridge and the

Somme before reaching the final, most poignant stop – Menin Gate.

There, at 8pm, they will stand in silence for the Last Post Ceremony, a tribute that has been carried out every evening since 1928 to honour the fallen.

The trip isn't just learning about history, instead it is about feeling it, standing on the very ground where soldiers once fought and paying respects in person.

Those who took part in last year's trip described it as 'humbling'.

Personally, I have visited numerous memorials as a 15-year-old with my school.

I will never forget the words from my tour guide: *"You can read about it, but until you stand there yourself, you don't really understand."*

With eight places already filled, there are just three spaces left.

The trip costs £400 which covers the ferry, hotel, food and fuel for the VIC minibus.

If more people want to go, a reserve list will be drawn up.

Spending five days in close quarters brings about its own

experiences.

Many who went last year spoke about how the time together reminded them of the bonds formed in military life – sharing stories, supporting each other and reflecting on what the journey meant for them.

For anyone who want to go, it isn't just a trip, it is a chance to honour the past, connect with others and experience history in a way that words alone can never capture.

**To book a place, or find out more contact VIC, on 01706 833180.**







# Bespoke gifts made to order

**OUR Creative Hub is expanding its range of items and taking them direct to the public.**

This month, the Creative Hub held a stall to sell bespoke products and take orders at Haslingden Tesco, and next month they will be at Rawtenstall Tesco on April 5 and 26, and again at Haslingden Tesco on April 24.

Among the new products are stunning clocks mounted on wood or slate which can be designed to meet the client's specifications.

An A4-size wooden clock is £16 or a slate one is £20.

Also new is a selection of hip flasks and pen sets which can also be personalised.

Volunteer Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator Darren Horsnell said: "These all make great personal gifts for Fathers' Day, birthdays or



any special occasion. For more information on all that we do please call 01706 833180."

Other personalised items have been introduced including personalised dog tags or ICE – In Case of Emergency – tags, dog lead holders and many more.

## Where should VIC go?

**TRIPS and outings are being planned by VIC and we want to know where you want to go.**

In recent years we have been to military museums, National Trust properties, on trips to Blackpool to see the Hot Ice show and on a steam train.

Where would you like the VIC minibus to take you?

Please contact 01706 833081 or email [philspeddy@vic.org.uk](mailto:philspeddy@vic.org.uk)



## Scenic railway backdrop takes shape

**A HUGE mural which will provide a backdrop to the stunning scale-model of the Glenfinnan Viaduct railway track is coming together in Accrington.**

Volunteer Arts and

Crafts Co-ordinator Darren Horsnell and Outreach Worker Steve Butterworth are creating a background for the VIC's Model Railway Club's viaduct which was made famous in the Harry Potter films and has been built in the cellar of the

Accrington Veterans' Drop-in.

The Railway Club meets every Wednesday and Friday.

For more information of how to get involved please contact the office on 01706 833180.



## Quiz time

**A NEW Quizmaster was in charge at Ribble Valley VIC's Outreach.**

Shirley did a sterling job and delivered not one quiz but even had a second one up her sleeve. Everyone had a great time and they all hope that our missing members had a great time at Bovington Tank Museum.

Sessions are held every Tuesday from 10am-noon at Trinity Methodist Church, Parson Lane, Clitheroe, BB7 2JY.



## ROSSENDALE

Activities at the VIC Centre, Bury Road, Haslingden, BB4 5PL, unless otherwise stated.

### Outreach Service

**MONDAY-FRIDAY**

9am-4.30pm

For a home appointment call 01706 833180

**MONDAY**

### Crafty Chatters

10am-12 noon

**TUESDAY**

### Art Group

10am-3.30pm

Cost £6 places limited book on

01706 833180

**WEDNESDAY**

### Allotment

Help on the allotment in Holcombe Road, Helmshore. Contact 01706 833180

**THURSDAY**

### Greggs RV

1pm-3pm

**THURSDAY**

### VIC Choir (weekly)

6.30-8.30pm

**FRIDAY**

### Art Group

10am-3.30pm

Cost £6 places limited book on

01706 833180

**SUNDAY**

### Drop-in

10.15am-12.30pm

**SECOND SATURDAY IN THE MONTH**

### Rossendale Armed Forces and Veterans' Breakfast Club

10am-12.30pm

Haslingden Community Link Cafe, Bury Road, Haslingden BB4 5PG (book in advance)

**EVERY MONTH**

### Painting in the Style of Bob Ross art classes

Contact Darren 01706 833180

### Walking Groups/ Social Inclusion trips

see Facebook or website for details

## BURNLEY AND PENDLE

### Outreach Service

**MONDAY**

10am-noon

Breakfast Club at Burnley Miners' Social Club, Plumbe Street, Burnley, BB11 3AA.

Contact 01706 833180 for dates of outreach at: Burnley FC in the Community; Pendle Armed Forces Support Group, Holmefield House, Gisburn Road, Barrowford; Morrisons in Nelson and Asda in Colne.

## HEYWOOD, MIDDLETON AND ROCHDALE

### VIC Outreach

**TUESDAY**

### The Mess Tin - cafe and drop-in

1pm-2.30pm

The Lighthouse Project, Middleton Shopping Centre, M24 1AB.

**THURSDAY**

### Rochdale Veterans' Breakfast Club and VIC Outreach

9am Flying Horse Hotel, Packer Street, Rochdale, OL16 1NJ.

## RIBBLE VALLEY & PRESTON

**TUESDAYS**

### Redoubt Coffee Morning and Outreach

10am-noon

Trinity Methodist Church, Wesleyan Row,

Parson Lane, Clitheroe, BB7 2JY.

### Sandbag Cafe

10am-12.30pm

St George's Church, off Lune Street, Preston PR1 2NP. This is a joint session with Lancashire Armed Forces Association.

## VIC – 01706 833180

Chief Executive Amanda Walton

amandawalton@vic.org.uk

Operations Manager Bob Elliott

bobelliott@vic.org.uk 07961 554 006

Administrator Amy Thompson

amythompson@vic.org.uk

Outreach Worker Steve Butterworth

stevebutterworth@vic.org.uk

Project Worker Ray Sharkey

raysharkey@vic.org.uk 07741 902 188

Community Capacity Builder Brian Hawke

brianhawke@vic.org.uk 07741 902 343

Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator Darren

Horsnell

darrenhorsnell@vic.org.uk

VIC Choir Bookings Barry Hyde

barryhyde@vic.org.uk

### Veterans at risk of homelessness

or organisations working with them are encouraged to contact OP FORTITUDE

0800 952 0774 or visit [riv.org.uk/opfortitude](http://riv.org.uk/opfortitude)

### Combat Stress Helpline

0800 138 1619

### NHS Military Veterans Psychological Therapies Service (NW)

0300 323 0707

### The Royal British Legion

0808 802 8080 7 days a week 8am-8pm

### SSAFA

email [Lancashire@ssafa.org.uk](mailto:Lancashire@ssafa.org.uk)

01772 260 462

### Citizens Advice East Lancashire

0808 278 7975 freephone Mon-Fri 9am-5pm

### The Samaritans

01282 694929 Mon to Fri 9am-9pm

Freephone 116 123

### Op Courage

0300 373 3332 email

opcourageNORTH@cntw.nhs.uk

### Veterans UK Free Helpline

0808 1914 218

### East Lancashire Single Point of Access via

GP or self-referral

0800 0130 707

### Armed Forces Support Group

01282 613132

## HYNDBURN

### Outreach / Drop-In/ Model Railway Club

**FRIDAY** 10am-3pm

VIC Hyndburn, Accrington Arndale Centre, BB5 1EX.

### Accrington Stanley Breakfast Club/ Drop-In

**LAST SATURDAY EVERY MONTH**

**10.30am-noon**

Stanley Sports Hub, Thorneyholme Road, Accrington, BB5 6BD.

## BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN

### Veterans' football

**MONDAY** 8-9pm

Blackburn Rovers Indoor Centre, Ewood Park, Blackburn BB2 4JF. A cost applies.

### Outreach Service

**TUESDAY** 10am-noon

Rovers Breakfast Hub, Legends Lounge, Darwen End, Blackburn Rovers FC, Ewood Park, Blackburn, BB2 4JF.

Contact Chris McGrail 07787 585109

Veterans In Communities  
Charity Number 1151194

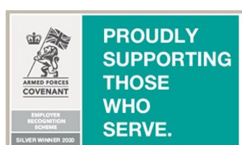
Want to help?

To support VIC  
scan this QR code



BOPP

VIC supported by:



Find us on  
Facebook

[www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)  
VIC Veterans In Communities