

VIC Newsletter



Bacup



Clitheroe



London

We will remember them



Haslingden



Haslingden



Burnley



Weir



Stacksteads

MEMBERS of VIC marked Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day at services all over the UK and on Gibraltar.

VIC's Standard Bearer Jacko Pearce attended many services and remembrances across our area of benefit.

Administrator Amy Thompson paraded the Lancashire County Standard for The Royal British Legion at the Festival of Remembrance service at the Royal Albert Hall in the presence of King Charles III and Queen Camilla.

For the first year Amy was Parade Marshal for the Haslingden procession on Remembrance Sunday and so her daughter Millie proudly carried the RBL Standard.

The VIC Centre in Haslingden was open before

and after the service for anyone who wanted to call in.

Our intrepid walkers Operations Manager Phil Speddy and Bob Brindley concluded their cross-Valley memorial walk by attending services in Accrington, Haslingden and Rawtenstall.

The VIC Choir sang at Stacksteads. There was a short service and wreath laying at the Cross of Sacrifice at Bacup Cemetery attended by Veteran Bill Ogden and VIC's Publicity Officer Catherine Smyth. Bill had earlier installed memorial crosses in honour of all those remembered in the cemetery.

Catherine marched with Cubs in the Bacup Remembrance Parade on Sunday and walked with Northern Primary School children for an Armistice Day service at one of England's highest memorials on Deerplay Moor above Weir.

An Act of Remembrance at Burnley Hospital was attended by the Lord Lieutenant of Lancashire Amanda Parker JP along with VIC Chief Executive Amanda Walton and

Standard Bearer Jacko.

VIC member Duncan Phillips laid the wreath at the Clitheroe Remembrance service on Sunday and, when Armistice Day coincided with the weekly VIC Redoubt Coffee Morning at Trinity Methodist Church, members also attended a Remembrance event at the gates of Clitheroe Castle.

Project Worker Ray Sharkey said because the coffee morning was on Armistice Day, a lot of new veterans, including female veterans, came in and learnt about what VIC can offer.

While, VIC veterans John Docker and Andrew Holder were on Gibraltar for the island's fortnight of Remembrance services.

On Armistice Day, members of VIC held a short service at Haslingden's Cenotaph attended by veteran Graham Limb, Joe Davis, Carol Duckworth and Samantha Kelly.

Graham's sculpture of 'The History Of A Broken Man' was also on display at the Howarth Art Gallery in Accrington.

Remembrance walk



VIC members completed a three-day 50-mile memorial trek around Rossendale and then paid their respects at three services on Remembrance Sunday.

During the hike respects were made at nearly 60 sites where veterans are remembered.

On the first day, veterans Operations Manager Phil Speddy, Bob Brindley and Bill Ogden and supporters walked 17 miles from Weir to Bacup, on to Whitworth then back to Britannia and on to Stacksteads.

Operations Manager Phil Speddy said: "The public were unbelievable – cars beeping and pulling over, people coming out of their homes, others donating at bus stops or on the street. We were truly

humbled."

The walk started at one of England's highest war memorials on Deerplay Moor when Phil was joined by veterans Bob Brindley and Bill Ogden and VIC members Joe Davis and Sam Kelly; the weather was atrocious.

Despite being unable to walk on day two, Bob drove the route and provided support for veteran Bill Ogden who was accompanied then by veteran Willie.

Bill too was sporting a hip injury, but soldiered on to complete the walk from Cowpe to Water, across to Dunnockshaw and down to Rawtenstall.

The final walking day started in Rawtenstall and took in 28 memorial sites through Edenfield, Stubbins and back to Helmshore and Haslingden.

Phil said: "The home run



always feels a bit lighter, there was great company, camaraderie and laughter made the miles fly by, even if Bob and Bill might disagree on the 'less painful' part."

On Remembrance Sunday Phil and Bob Brindley walked the final trail – parading with the Lancashire Army Cadet Force Accrington's Detachment, at Accrington's Remembrance and with the Haslingden's Detachment, at Haslingden and Rawtenstall's parades.



Revving up for Ring of Red

Stonemason appeal

A HUGE piece of sandstone has been donated to VIC and the charity is now on the look-out for a local stonemason who could help to carve it into a memorial.

Chief Executive Amanda Walton said: "We'd love to turn it into something truly special for our community and to install it in the back yard at the VIC Centre.

"We're looking for a local stonemason who will donate their time and skills to carve our VIC logo and an inscription: 'In honour of all from our communities who served and sacrificed.'"

Anyone who can help can call 01706 833180.

A HUGE thank you to everyone who took part in the amazing Ring of Red M60 ride on Remembrance Sunday.

Motorbikes, trikes and sidecars packed Birch Services and the VIC Minibus was also there. The Ring of Red organisers kindly donate to support the work of VIC and Chief Executive Amanda Walton was in attendance. We also

had a presence in the Ring of Red with several VIC veterans riding the route including Kev and Bob the dog in a sidecar and by VIC trustee Bob Elliott on his motorbike.

Amanda said: "We would like to thank Ring of Red M60 for their very generous support over the last few years."

In April, Ring of Red donated £4,000 to VIC from the 2024 event.





This stunning Remembrance blanket was won by Tracy Gavan. On hearing that we had raised £309, Tracy kindly gave an extra £41 to round it up to £350. A huge thank you. The blanket was crocheted with love and care by a VIC supporter.



Concert

A HUGE thank you to Rossendale Valley Sounds for organising a fundraising Remembrance and Celebration charity concert which made a fabulous £320 for VIC.

Chief Executive Amanda Walton said: "The concert was fantastic and we are really grateful to them for raising money for VIC."

"It was really nice to speak to people and to explain to them what we do. The table decorations showed the tri service flags and scattered poppies; it was just a lovely evening."

"It was especially nice for me because my daughter Abigail was playing clarinet with the band."

VIC member Jane Tandy said: "What a brilliant performance – I thoroughly enjoyed it albeit I had to wipe my eyes a few times."

"A great tribute to those in service, veterans and the fallen – thank you all so much."

The musicians also enjoyed the event and said: "We loved playing the concert and celebrating our armed forces. Thank you so much for coming and supporting us."

Choir appeal

PLEASE support the VIC Choir by helping to collect money while they sing.

On Saturday December 6 they will be singing at Tesco Haslingden from 1pm, then on Saturday December 13 they will perform at Tesco Rawtenstall at 1pm.

They will also be at Asda in Rawtenstall on Sunday December 21 from 1pm. Helpers should contact 01706 833180.

HMS Holcombe

A SPECIAL service was arranged on Armistice Day by the son of VIC Outreach Worker Steve Butterworth Adam – who is a himself a veteran.

Adam is now a teaching assistant at Holcombe Brook Primary School, where he has led the school in a research project lasting more than 12 months.

The school unveiled a memorial to HMS Holcombe, one of a class of ship named after British hunts and the only Royal Navy ship with that name.

Holcombe was lost on December 12 1943; sunk by U-593 with loss of 84 lives.

Families of survivors, and those who perished, attended some travelling from as far afield as London, Essex, Darlington and Stockport.

VIC Administrator Amy Thompson was also in attendance and carried the RBL County Standard.



Motorsport day out

A JOINT trip involving VIC and our friends at Burnley Football in the Community veterans' project led to another thrilling trip to Mission Motorsport.

The generous drivers provided their high-powered sports cars to give veterans an exciting passenger seat ride around the Three Sisters Circuit in Wigan, and there was lots of banter and brews.



Thank you from everyone who attended.



Art shop proves big hit

A POP-up art shop in Bury's busy precinct has proved a huge hit with shoppers.

Veterans In Communities opened the 13-week shop in the Mill Gate Shopping Centre this month, and were delighted to welcome comrades from the Crown Veterans' Breakfast Club, which meets at the Mosses Centre, Bury, who called in.

VIC's Standard Bearer Jacko Pearce was also in attendance.

VIC Chief Executive Amanda Walton said: "Since we opened the shop on November 5, every Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, we have had a terrific response from the public.

"We would like to say thank you to the



management team at Mill Gate for giving us the opportunity to open the shop and for being really supportive and helpful."

Russ Magnall and Jim Jones, who have championed veterans' issues for over a decade, were among the first to visit the shop.

Outreach Worker Steve Butterworth said:

"I would also like to put on record how much the work of our volunteers is so crucial to the work we do at VIC.

"I am very grateful for the efforts of Peter Shinzel from Heywood Veterans' cafe, and Wilma McCarrick from The Crown Veterans' Breakfast Club, Bury.

"Thanks so much to Russell for purchasing one of my paintings."



Carnforth trip – first of many

A LOVELY trip to Carnforth Railway Station and the Heritage Centre was enjoyed by members of VIC.

They had an interesting day at the venue made famous in the film 'Brief Encounter'.

They also enjoyed good food, good weather and great company.

It is great that trips out are back on

the agenda and it is lovely to see VIC member and trip organiser Pat MeEvoy back.

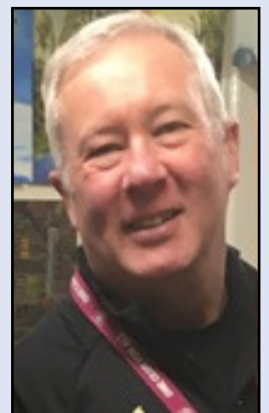
The next one will be on December 10 to Barton Grange Garden Centre to see the Christmas displays and enjoy lunch. Transport cost £6, meal extra. For more information, and to book a place, contact Administrator Amy Thompson on 01706 833180.

Welcome to John

VIC has a new Community Capacity Builder John Pluckwell who took over from Brian Hawke on November 11.

There was a handover period and John has brought with him extensive experience and contacts having worked on the veterans' projects at Burnley Football Club in the Community for many years.

Chief Executive Amanda Walton said: "We know our project is in safe hands and it will continue to thrive and go from strength to strength."





Work begins on VIC action plan

FACT-finding meetings are being held which will lead to an exciting action plan being drawn up for VIC to forge the charity's future.

In 2024, VIC was honoured to be selected as one of just 24 charities to receive a business support package from The Weston Charity Awards. In total 180 had applied, however VIC had to defer the start date of the project to 2025.

Chief Executive Amanda Walton said: "The Pilotlight 360 coaching and mentoring will start on December 1 with information gathering meetings."

"The team will then be having a site visit on January

22 when we will be inviting as many people as possible to the centre to speak to them.

"Once they have gathered all the information, they will help us to develop an action plan of where we want to be and how we want to get there."

The information gathering and planning will last for eight months and once the action plan is accepted, there will be a follow up after six months to see how it has been implemented.

Of charities that have been helped in the past by Pilotlight, 100 per cent said it had positively impacted the effectiveness of their senior management team.



VIC joined forces with Burnley FC in the Community's veterans projects to attend a match at Turf Moor against arsenal.

After the match, the groups socialised at Burnley Miners' Club.



Mental health support

SPECIALIST mental health training specific to veterans was delivered at the VIC Centre.

Richard Hodgins, an Assessor from Manchester HQ CIC and NHS Safeguarding Supervisor, delivered the training.

Richard kindly gave his time and expertise to deliver what was an incredibly valuable session which helped our staff and volunteers strengthen their understanding and support skills for veterans who are facing mental health challenges.



Food hamper appeal

AROUND 70 hampers will be distributed to veterans in time for Christmas, and VIC is appealing for donations.

VIC Chief Executive Amanda Walton said: "We have already been given lots of tinned vegetables but, to make sure that the hampers have the ingredients for a substantial meal, we require donations of protein egg tins of tuna,

ham, corned beef, stewing steak or tinned pies."

Hygiene products and toys for families are also requested.

The hampers will be for veterans and families of all sizes and single parents.

If anyone wants to donate items, or help to distribute the hampers, please contact the VIC Centre on 01706 833180.

What's On and Where



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

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.

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.

HYNDBURN

Outreach / Drop-In/ Model Railway Club/ Art Group

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

RIBBLE VALLEY & PRESTON

TUESDAYS

Redoubt Coffee Morning and Outreach

10am-noon

Trinity Methodist Church, Wesleyan Row,

VIC – 01706 833180

Chief Executive Amanda Walton

amandawalton@vic.org.uk

Operations Manager Phil Speddy

philspeddy@vic.org.uk

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

John Pluckwell

john.pluckwell@vic.org.uk

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

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

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

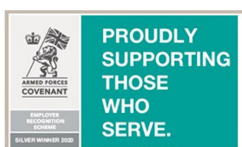
Veterans In Communities
Charity Number 1151194

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