



Amy raises the Standard

OUR very own Royal British Legion Standard Bearer Amy Thompson will be on national duty on July 11.

VIC's Administrator Amy is the RBL's Lancashire Standard Bearer and also the RBL North West Standard Bearer, which earned her the right to compete with nine others for the national title.

At the RBL Conference in Brighton, entrants from across the UK competed and Amy achieved an amazing third place. That is a big step up from last year when she was seventh on what was her first time competing for the national title.

The winner goes on to carry the National Standard but if the Nationals Standard bearer or Deputy should either not be available then Amy is called on to step up.

She said: "I have now

been asked to complete my first national duty and I will be carrying the National Standard at Islandbridge in Dublin on July 11.

"It was totally unexpected that I got the third place in the national competition and I have so many people to thank for that, there's no way I can thank them all, but they know who they are.

"We took part in the opening of the conference and paraded along the sea front at Brighton and then at the close of conference.

"The wind that was blowing for the parade tried its best to defeat us, but we battled through and even a pothole and a stumble couldn't stop me staying upright.

"We attend Conference every year for the pride it gives us performing our duties as a standard bearer, but equally we know how to relax and unwind too. The

RBL family that attends each year are the absolute best."

Amy's dedication to duty sees her training in both Lancashire and Staffordshire in order to hone her skills, and the extra work has paid dividends.

Everyone at VIC wishes her all the very best for what will be a very exciting year ahead.



Arboretum heralds trips' return

WE ARE delighted to welcome Andrea Whiteley from Cowpe, who has volunteered to help organise trips for our members in the future.

On May 28, she arranged for 11 veterans visit the National

Arboretum in Staffordshire.

Andrea, *inset*, who is involved with Blind Veterans, is visiting all of our outreach services to speak with veterans, gather ideas for future visits and co-ordinate arrangements.

Appeal for trustees

TWO new trustees are being sought by VIC to join the Board that oversee our work.

As VIC enters a significant period of growth, including the delivery of the VALOUR programme across the North West, we are looking to strengthen the Board with additional expertise.

In particular, we are seeking individuals with experience in marketing and income generation to support the organisation's long-term sustainability and reach.

This is an opportunity to play a meaningful role in shaping the future of VIC and support the Armed Forces community.

If you are interested, or know somebody who would like to become a trustee and would like more information, please contact Chief Executive Officer Amanda Walton on amandawalton@vic.org.uk or call 01706 833180.



RAFT / VIC partnership

A NEW partnership has been established between VIC and The Raft Foundation – Rossendale's Foodbank.

It is all thanks to Asda Rawtenstall Community Champion Laura Saxton who brought the two organisations together.

Operations Manager Phil Speddy said: "This partnership will help us provide even more support to local veterans.

"From now on,

every Thursday, The Raft Foundation will be kindly donating a variety of food items to VIC including bread and pastries, fresh vegetables, salad items, fresh fruit and more so if you're a veteran who could benefit from these donations, please feel free to drop by the VIC Centre in Bury Road, Haslingden.

"We are incredibly grateful to The Raft Foundation for their generosity and continued support of local veterans and the



wider Rossendale community."

A spokesperson for RAFT said: "It's our honour and privilege to be able to support the individuals of our local community, and their families, who chose to train, serve and commit their lives to not only protecting the people and communities they grew up in but to protect the future of communities at home and worldwide."

For more information contact VIC on 01706 833180.

Bob Ross

NOT only has another splendid Painting in the Style of Bob Ross class been held – but regular attendees also met up for a social meal out.

A classic Bob Ross image of mountains, a river and stream was created by six artists, and this time Operations Manager Phil Speddy also joined in.

A meal out to Siena Italian Restaurant in Deardengate, Haslingden, was enjoyed by eight regulars who attend the Sunday painting sessions.



Gardening project needs you

VETERANS who want to help a gardening project in Ramsbottom are being invited to step up.

A small, but dedicated, group is transforming neglected council land behind Ramsbottom Library into a community garden and wildlife-friendly

space.

The aim is to create an area where residents can relax, grow food, support biodiversity, and provide outdoor learning opportunities for groups and children.

Raised wooden planting beds are being built on a sloped section of

ground, a willow hedge is being created and there are plans for a beehive, improved pathways and gardening other gardening support.

Veterans who feel they have skills, experience, or simply a willingness to get stuck in are invited to contact VIC on info@vic.org.uk



Fitness programme finishes

VIC-FIT – our health and fitness programme, which was funded by Rossendale Borough Council and run in conjunction with Rossendale Leisure Trust, has come to an end.

We are now evaluating the success of the scheme, which saw 11 VIC members using a range of facilities to improve their health and wellbeing over several weeks. We will then decide the future of the programme.



Middleton outreach

VETERANS in the Middleton area are invited to come along to VIC's weekly meet-up at The Lighthouse Project in Middleton Shopping Centre

The community hub, at the centre on Limetrees

Road, Middleton M24 4EL, is open for veterans every Tuesday from 1pm to 2.30pm.

Call in for a brew and banter in a relaxed space to chat, connect, and support each other. It is completely free and there is no need to book



Support the work of VIC

VOLUNTEERS are being sought to join a new front-of-house team at the VIC Centre, helping to welcome visitors and guide them towards the most appropriate support, activity or service.

This role will act as a key first point of contact, meeting and greeting visitors, responding to enquiries, providing information about VIC programmes, and ensuring individuals are connected to the right person or pathway.

Volunteers will also support appointment bookings and help keep enquiries organised, improving the flow of day to day operations and enabling Project Workers to focus on outreach, engagement, and wellbeing support.

This opportunity is aimed at ex service or blue light personnel, where peer connection and shared experience can make a real difference.

Volunteers will receive training, guidance, and support while working as part of a team.

For more information, email philspeddy@vic.org.uk

Ready for business

INCREDIBLE help from local supporters has seen our new sublimation room completed.

The room, which was previously used for storage, has been transformed by volunteers – assisted by generous

Artisan market

ARTWORK and sublimation gifts created by veterans went on display at an Artisan Market held on the new Big Lamp Square in Haslingden.

VIC showcased a range of sublimation and laser etching projects – all of which are designed and made in-house by talented veterans.

Operations



Manager Phil Speddy said: "A special thank you goes to Bob Brindley, Trustee, Bob Smethurst, and Chris Smethurst for their invaluable help on the day and an extra thanks to Chris for the wonderful homemade

sandwiches, cakes, and coffees that kept us all going."

VIC members got to speak to visitors and explain more about what the charity offers to help and support to veterans and their families.

Spectacular showcase

A SHOWCASE, organised by VIC, was held at Chorley Fire Station to celebrate the successes of the Forces Wellbeing Collective.

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's Rod Steele was present and there were 32 attendees representing 19 different organisations from across the county.

VIC Chief Executive Officer Amanda Walton said: "Members made short presentations on the work they had carried out and there was a question and answer session.

"As a result of the presentations that were given, out of the 10 organisations represented who

were not members of the collective, three have now made contact to become members.

"Ian McLeary, who was representing Blackpool Football Club, said he thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to meet new members of the collective.

"He described the presentations as both engaging and thought-provoking."

VIC's Community Capacity Builder John Pluckwell took on the organisation and administration of the event, and Amanda said he did a fantastic job arranging the event.

As part of the showcase, John also presented the work he has done as Community Capacity Builder at VIC.

donations.

Tracy Lister, Manager of Howdens, helped by providing three worktops, and four breakfast bar legs, along with joiners and edging to help us create a practical and professional space.

Local businessman Shane, from S Derbyshire Carpets and Flooring, not worked with his suppliers to secure a discounted price on the vinyl flooring, he completed the installation free of charge.

The sublimation and laser etching workspace is now a fully functioning area enabling the



veteran volunteers to manufacture a range of items for sale, which benefits VIC.

Contact 01706 833180 for more information.



Camp

VIC members are invited to join the Throttle Twisters Motor Cycle Club at an annual camp in Cheshire from June 12 to 14.

This year they will be using a different campsite – Boundary Park, Chelford Road, Ollerton, Knutsford, and the cost is £6.50 per night.

To book a place email trustee Bob Elliott on bobelliott@vic.org.uk

Plants

A FABULOUS donation of rhubarb, strawberry and chilli plants was made by Kathryn Williams from Adventure Neighbourhood in Green Haworth, Accrington.

They were very quickly given new homes – thank you to Kathryn.

Breaky

ROSSENDALE Veterans and Forces Community Breakfast Club now meets up at 10am every second Saturday at The Circle in Bacup.

Parade

VIC will be having a stand at the two-day Padiham on Parade event which will be held at the end of Armed Forces Week on Saturday June 27 and Sunday 28.



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

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.

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

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

johnpluckwell@vic.org.uk

Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator

Darren Horsnell

darrenhorsnell@vic.org.uk

VIC Choir Bookings Barry Hyde

b.hyde@ntlworld.com

Veterans In Communities
Charity Number 1151194

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