



VIC Newsletter



Lest we forget

WE PAID our respects all over the county and beyond and, for the first year, thanks to the Haslingden Army Cadets the VIC standard was on display.

On Remembrance Sunday, the VIC Van and stall was at Birch Services for the M60 Ring of Red motorcycle ride.

Operations Manager Bob Elliott said: "Myself, Chief Executive Amanda Walton and volunteer Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator Darren Horsnell went along and it was a great experience, just a shame about the weather which did impact on numbers."

VIC was chosen to benefit from monies raised from the Ring of Red M60 by the organisers.

The VIC Choir sang at Stacksteads Countryside Park Group's Remembrance in Stacksteads and, on the same day, VIC joined

schoolchildren for a service at England's highest War Memorial above Weir, Bacup.

VIC members also attended ceremonies across East Lancashire and Greater Manchester.

VIC members including: Darren, Outreach Worker Steve Butterworth, Billy Benson. Keith Shepherd and Phil Chamberlain attended schools across the area to share their stories and discuss the importance of Remembrance.

At the VIC Centre, a selection of handmade Remembrance items were on sale and, following the Haslingden parade and service on Remembrance Sunday, the centre was open for veterans to visit and enjoy refreshments.

Veterans paid their respects at the Burnley Football Club match against Crystal Palace and Volunteer Pat McEvoy laid a wreath in Florida.



Remembrance artwork on show

VETERANS visited St Saviour's Primary School in Bacup to inspire pupils to design Remembrance artwork.

Volunteer Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator Darren Horsnell and Outreach Worker Steve Butterworth visited the school to chat to pupils.

The Remembrance art was included in the school's celebration evening when awards were handed out.

The school works with Trinity College London to deliver the prestigious Arts Award programme.

An external assessor visited to evaluate the pupils' portfolios – Year 3 Discover, Year 5 Explore and age 11 Bronze level. This year 36 certificates were awarded.

Headteacher Deanne Marsh said: "Art is just as important as any other subject in school and our annual Arts Awards Presentation gives us a chance to invite parents to come in and see the portfolio

of work that their children have produced, and to welcome back our pupils who are now at high school."

Darren was invited to look at the artwork on the evening and talked to the staff and pupils about his journey into art.

He was very impressed with the standard of work produced by the young pupils.

Darren took up art while at Combat Stress and it has helped him cope with issues arising out of his military service; now he uses his art to help others.

He said: "Art is good for mental health, it is so uplifting, good for self-esteem, self-expression and for confidence."

The pupils had done a lot of work about wars and the poppy and it had inspired their artwork

Darren said: "I think it is brilliant. It is good how they have looked at the war in a non-combative really peaceful



way; they have got some really good ideas."

One pupil's artwork will be selected by VIC to be used as a Lest we Forget mug which will then be sold by the charity.

Jonah Edwards, who is now in Year 7 at The Valley Leadership Academy, used mixed media to create a wartime scene of a plane dropping poppies.

He said: "We were learning about the World Wars in English and in art I wanted to make a picture for it.

"I had an idea to do the



background in pastel, then stuck buildings on made of paper and a plane and I decided to have poppies dropping from the plane."

His work was described by Darren as 'resonating peace by bombing the battlefield with poppies'.



Beautiful Christmas Cards with artwork and photographs taken by VIC members are on sale.

The packs, which feature six cards, cost £3.50 and are available at the VIC Centre and, by prior arrangement at our outreach meetings. Contact Administrator Amy Thompson or volunteer Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator Darren Horsnell on 01706 833180 for orders.

Bespoke merchandise

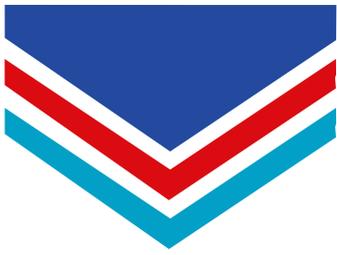
A LARGE collection of Lest We Forget items are for sale at the VIC Centre in Haslingden.

Items include Christmas baubles, coffee mugs, travel mugs, water bottles, place mats, mouse mats and coasters and more.

Christmas baubles can also be personalised with a picture. Send a favourite photo and VIC will do the rest. Each bauble costs £5. Contact Administrator Amy



Thompson or volunteer Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator Darren Horsnell on 01706 833180.



Steve fulfils Falklands book dream

IN LESS than a year, a Facebook group set up to help fellow Falklands veterans recount their experiences through prose and verse has led to a book being published.

Falklands veteran Steve Butterworth has been involved in compiling a book entitled 'Even the Shadows had Shadows – Poems and Reflections of the Falklands Campaign in 1982'.

The VIC Outreach Worker, lives in Holcombe Brook and spent eight years in the Navy and was on HMS Intrepid in the Falklands, working as a catering accountant and medic – when he would help the wounded.

While clearing his mother Barbara's home after she died, he found a poem she had written when he was in the Falklands, that, alongside Steve's own poem Pale Maiden prompted him to launch the social media group Poems, Songs and Writings about the Falkland Conflict in April.

Now, it has more than 300 members and a second volume of the book will be published early in the New Year.

Steve admitted he needed help with setting up the group and another Falklands veteran John Erskine, who served on HMS Hecla – an ambulance ship – came on board as admin.

Phyllis Wiggins, *pictured top right*, who lives near Glasgow and whose husband is ex Royal Marines, makes scarves for Falkland veterans. She is also an admin and has helped to format the poems and memories and create the book manuscripts.



Steve said: "Alongside the written work, we also have a photo of each contributor and we document their service history.

"We have contributions from families, friends, war widows and islanders. One is particularly poignant as it is written through the eyes of a child who was just 11 when the island was invaded."

Thanks to shipmate Andy Trish, who served on HMS Hermes with Steve before 1982, a GoFundMe page was set up and raised enough to cover publishing costs and advance sales netted £1,700.

The book cover features the shipwreck, Lady Elizabeth and the photographer Chris Gilbert, an islander, has allowed the photo to be used for free. The same image, at different times of the day, will be used in subsequent book versions.

Steve's blurb reads: "Throughout the annals of history, men and women who have experienced the horrors of war and conflict around the globe, have returned home to little or no understanding of the places and situations they have found themselves in.

"The sights, sounds and

smells of war are not something easily forgotten or dealt with. The written word of the combatant rather than the spoken, has through the generations communicated these experiences.

"They are the unspoken conversations put to paper, as diary entries, reflections, short stories, but more often than

not as poetry."

The book can be pre-ordered from the HMS Hermes website, at a cost of £18.99 for hardback or £12.99 paperback visit <https://hmshermes.co.uk>

All proceeds benefit the South Atlantic Medal Association, SAMA 82.

Lucky Phil picked for trip

OUR remaining place on next year's four-day Battlefields trip has been won by Phil Chamberlain.

A generous well-wisher offered to pay for one member of VIC to attend the trip next September to mark 80 years since the D-Day landings began on June 6 1944.

There were six eligible members and, at the last VIC board meeting, chair Ronnie Barker selected one name at random and the lucky winner was Phil.

Phil, has been a member of



VIC for several years and, during Covid, dedicated many hours helping marshal the vaccination hubs. He also is a volunteer driver for the minibus so that

members are able to make trips all over Lancashire and beyond.

He said: "I would like to say a huge thank you to the very kind benefactor who has funded the placement on next year's Normandy trip.

I'm honoured to have been picked and will take plenty of photos to report back with."



Anglers net great catch for VIC

HARDY carp fishers endured horrendous weather, had bivvies blown away and a rod snapped as they took part in the VIC Carp Fishing Social in Chelmsford.

The event was organised by Barry Horsnell, son of VIC volunteer Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator Darren Horsnell who attended the event at Berners Hall and provided the fishermen with a barbecue.

Driving rain and

fierce winds meant that, for the most time, fish stayed well away from the lines.

Darren said: "Despite the horrendous weather, everyone had a great

time and they have all booked in again for the next event in March 2024 so that social is already full up.

"We have two more in 2024 and my son Barry will try to keep to three each year and is looking at different venues across the country.

"On the private Facebook group – Veterans In Communities Charity Carp Socials – we now have more than 200 members and Barry is looking at setting up a

social in France in 2025.

"The latest event raised £2,200, less expenses and paying for the next event. Only three fish were caught, but that is three more than had been caught in the three weeks prior to the event."



Upcoming events in 2024:

March 17-19 Pavyotts Mill Carp Fisheries, Yeovil.

September 20-22 Billy's Lake, Norton Disney, Lincoln.

Contact Darren Horsnell on 01706 833180 for more information

Sandbag Longridge opens

A NEW drop in cafe for veterans and blue light personnel opened in Longridge on Tuesday November 28.

Veterans In Communities Outreach Worker Steve Butterworth is organising the VIC

Longridge Sandbag Café every Tuesday at Christ Church Methodist Church, Berry Lane, Longridge, PR3 3JA.

Steve said: "We will be open every Tuesday morning from 9.30am to midday for veterans and anyone from the police, fire or ambulance

service.

"We will be serving brews and biscuits and holding quizzes and it will be a social morning for veterans to meet and get to know each other."

Anyone wanting to know more can contact Steve on 01706 833180.

Longridge Sandbag Cafe

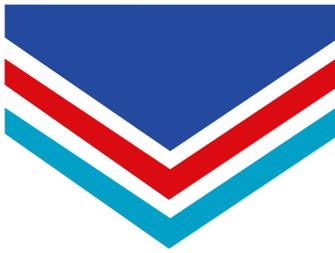
Every Tuesday 0930am - 12noon

Come and join us at the Christ Church, Berry Lane, Longridge PR3 3JA

We meet up every Tuesday for a few hours to catch up over a brew and banter. Tea, biscuits and a quiz

For more information please call the office on 01706 833180

www.veteransincommunities.org



Generous donations to VIC

A HUGE thank you to all the customers of the Co-op in Rossendale for selecting VIC to benefit from money they have spent in the store.

Chief Executive Amanda Walton and volunteer Darren Horsnell were presented with £2,846.33 from the Co-op at the branch in Haslingden.

Amanda said: "We would like to thank the

customers and staff for the donation which was raised through the Haslingden, Waterfoot and Whitworth stores."

All Co-op card holders can nominate a good cause to benefit from money they spend in the shops.

Other beneficiaries were the Whitehorse Project and the Waterwell Foundation CIC.

Rossendale Rotary Club generously gave VIC £1,500 which has been

used to purchase art materials for our bi-weekly art group held at the VIC Centre .

The cheque was presented by Bob Smethurst, who is a member of the Rotary Club and one of our Trustees.

Our Veterans In Production project is also providing a Remembrance bench for Lumb Millennium Green.

Thank you to the Rotary Club for the kind donation.

RIP David Hoyle

IT IS with great sadness we have to report the sad passing of Royal Engineer David Hoyle aged 86.

David served in the Corps of the Royal Engineers during National Service and he was a regular member at the VIC Centre, Accrington and joined many of the social trips.

Our deepest condolences and thoughts are with Maureen, Stephen and his family.

VIC members were present at his funeral at Burnley Crematorium when Standards were carried, there was a piper and the Last Post was played.



The story behind grave of Unknown Warrior

TWO fascinating talks on the 'Unknown Warrior' were delivered by Major (Retd) Geoff Hutchinson of the 14/20th Kings Hussars.

He spoke to members of VIC at the VIC Centre and also delivered his speech to members of Ribble Valley VIC that meets at Trinity Methodist Church and Community Hub, Clitheroe.

At Clitheroe, the short talk was followed by a quiz hosted by Ron Flowers and a warm lunch from the volunteers at Trinity.



Morecambe visit

VIC will be paying a visit to Bay Veterans Association on Wednesday December 13.

Anyone wanting to join the trip to The York in Morecambe should contact VIC on 01706 833180 to book a place on the minibus.

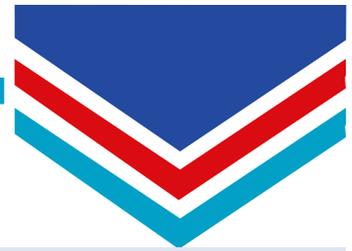
Football win

VIC member Jack Aldis enjoyed a free trip to the football after VIC was offered two tickets by Accrington Stanley.

Project Worker Ray Sharkey was offered the tickets, for two veterans, and Jack said: "I really enjoyed the experience so thank you Ray."

Rail card on track

THE LONG-awaited Veterans Railcard is now being issued. The card offers eligible veterans 1/3 discount on rail fares. To apply visit www.veterans-railcard.co.uk



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

TUESDAYS

Redoubt Coffee Morning and Outreach

10am-noon

Trinity Methodist Church, Wesleyan Row,

Parson Lane, Clitheroe, BB7 2JY.

Sandbag Cafe Longridge

9.30am-noon

Christ Church Methodist Church, Berry Lane, Longridge, PR3 3JA.

VIC – 01706 833180

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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

HYNDBURN

Outreach / Drop-In/ Model Railway Club

FRIDAY

10am-3pm

VIC Hyndburn, Accrington Arndale Centre, BB5 1EX.

Accrington Stanley Breakfast Club/ Drop-In

LAST WEDNESDAY EVERY MONTH

9.30am-11am

Lancashire Carers Link, 54-56 Blackburn Road, Accrington, BB5 1LE.

BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN

Outreach Service

TUESDAY

10.30am-noon

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

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