



VIC Newsletter



Peaceful canal trip

A DOZEN members of VIC enjoyed a leisurely trip on the canal boat **Community Spirit**.

Setting off from Portland Basin, they cruised along the Ashton Canal enjoying beautiful scenery and even nicer weather.

They were guests of the East Manchester Community Boat Project. Derek Tunnicliffe also celebrated his birthday on board.

Future secure thanks to CCG

VIC'S successful programme can keep marching forward thanks to the East Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group agreeing a further year of funding.

Last year we were delighted that charity REAL assisted VIC to secure £80,000 for our work to improve the lives of veterans and their families.

Now a further £80,000 has been agreed to ensure the work of the charity is secure for a further year.

Manager Bob Elliott said: "It is fantastic to be recognised for the work that we started last year, which was possible thanks to the funding we received from the

CCG in 2013.

"Now we have been awarded a further £80,000 we can continue with our work and expand over the next 12 months.

"So much has happened in the last year. As an organisation we have made many changes and taken positive steps that have already made a massive difference to the lives of veterans and their families.

"Although we started work in Rossendale, we soon spread our wings and introduced outreach into Heywood and then into different areas across East Lancashire with another outreach service opening this month.

"We provide a wrap-

around model that offers veterans and their families a host of different services and activities.

"The range of interventions is from complex and therapeutic to social interaction.

"VIC's unique knowledge of the requirements to promote the wellbeing of Military Veterans gives an expertise that would not usually be found in general NHS services.

"Our motto of Return, Belong and Prosper sums up the work of VIC. If we can help those who have served their country to feel a part of their community and be able to prosper within civilian life, then we have met our aims."

The funding will enable

VIC to continue to be an active member of each of the five East Lancashire Armed Forces Community Covenant Partnership Groups.

Bob added: "This funding secures our future for the next year. We will continue with the work we have pioneered and will be able to further develop our network of volunteers who bring individual knowledge, experience and expertise to enhance and support the work of VIC.

"We will continue to train our staff and volunteers to the highest of standards so they can deliver outreach effectively across East Lancashire."



Helping hand for veteran

VIC helped 92-year-old veteran James Burge who was struggling to cope round his home in Haslingden.

Darren Horsnell visited him on behalf of The Royal British Legion and managed to arrange for a new carpet throughout his ground floor flat, a new bed and bedroom furniture.

Because James did not have anyone to help him, VIC members moved all his old furniture to the tip, built all his new flat packed furniture and did other essential jobs around his home.

VIC has now offered to demolish a rotten shed in the back garden of an 82-year-old veteran because it is dangerous and a health risk.

Health Chat training

NEXT month will see the first of two Health Chat training sessions.

These will be held at Heywood Sports Village on Wednesdays April 16 and 23. The two half-day training courses are for veterans and their families.

The new project will lead to participants gaining a Royal Society of Public Health level 2 Award in Understanding Health Improvement.

They will then be tasked to share their knowledge with other veterans and their families.

The courses concentrate on a better understanding of key health messages including healthy eating, increasing activity, mental health and reducing alcohol and tobacco intake.

ARMED FORCES DAY

FLAGS will be flying high in Haslingden after VIC secured a grant to ensure service personnel are remembered.

Manager Bob Elliott explained: "We applied to Lancashire County Council and Ann Cheetham agreed to fund the £270 needed to purchase a Union flag and a flag of St George to be used in official ceremonies.

"We want to make sure Haslingden has an official celebration for Armed Forces Day and not just Rawtenstall and Helmshore.

"We will also be officially opening the VIC Centre on Wednesday June 25 during Armed Forces Week."

Rossendale MP Jake Berry has also donated £50 towards an Armed Forces Flag.



Imperial War Museum visit thanks to Rosso

VIC members enjoyed a lovely day out thanks to Rosso, the bus company in Rossendale, who took them to the Imperial War Museum and The Lowry in Salford.

Manager Bob Elliott said: "We had 30 VIC members from Burnley, Rossendale and Manchester make the trip and they were joined by family and workers at Rosso. It was an enjoyable day out.

"We have got a great partnership with Rosso and we hope to be running other trips in the future."

Rosso kindly let VIC collect on bus routes in November and the money raised helped to fund a Christmas party for veterans.

New home for wheelchair

A WHEELCHAIR which was donated to VIC has found a very good home.

The family of a veteran who had passed away gave the electric wheelchair to VIC and manager Bob Elliott said: "We put an appeal out through our Facebook group and the chair has now been given to a veteran who was facing a number of operations and needed the chair to increase his mobility.

Rotary talk

VIC was invited by Rossendale Rotary Club to speak to members about the charity and it's work.

Last September VIC helped man some of the checkpoints for the annual Round the Hills Walk.

VIC was presented with a cheque for £250. We look forward to working with the Rotary Club further this year.

Centre booking

THE VIC Centre's training room is now going to be a regular venue for courses run by Lancashire Care NHS Trust.

The trust used the centre for an orientation session on mindfulness. A further eight week programme is now being planned and two members of VIC have already signed up for the course.

Yard sale

A YARD sale will be held at the VIC Centre on Easter Monday April 21.

For more information on booking a stall contact Bob Elliott on 01706 833180.



OBITUARY



Jimmy Barrett

IT IS with sadness that we have to report the death on February 22 of Jimmy Barrett.

He was a veteran of the Second World War having served in the Royal Navy as a Petty Officer. He was a member of the VIC art club and also

attended the VIC outreach in Rochdale.

Jimmy was 92 and attended the VIC Christmas Party for veterans held at the IDL Club in Haslingden. Our condolences are with his family.

Choir call up

VIC's military choir has got off on the right note.

The Veterans In Communities choir, which is open to ex-service personnel, their families and the community holds sessions at the VIC Centre in Bury Road, Haslingden.

Choirmaster and VIC member Peter Webster said: "I am delighted by the response. On the first week Karen Rothwell, who is ex-army, spotted the poster while walking her dog, took her dog home and then came back to join the group.

"Then we had the managing director of Rosso Brian Juffs come along and join us as he is also ex-services."

The choir meets every Thursday from 6.30pm to 8.30pm and anyone wanting to know more information can contact Peter on 01706 833180.

Heywood open day

A SPECIAL open day is being held at Heywood Sports Village on Thursday April 3.

The open day will be from 10am to mid afternoon when a host of different organisations will be represented

Outreach worker Steve Butterworth said: "We would like to say thank you to Link4Life, who run the centre, for letting us put the open day on.

"We will have a number of organisations represented in the community rooms including Mind, Inspire and the drug awareness team and we will be displaying examples of veterans' artwork.

"There will also be a discounted swimming offered in the afternoon for members and there will also be a badminton court available at a cost of just £1."

Heywood outreach is held every Wednesday from 11am-2.30pm with badminton from 3-4pm.

Sculpture takes shape

WORK to construct a willow tank on the gateway into Rossendale at Healey Corner, Whitworth, has begun.

The half-size sculpture will be created by VIC member David Joddrell who is weaving willow to create a First World War tank. Once finished, poppies, that have been specially imported from Belgium, will be planted around and within the sculpture.

It is part of a larger project being undertaken by VIC members to complete restoration work on Whitworth Memorial Gardens.

Grant aids VIC work

OUTREACH in Blackburn with Darwen has received a £500 boost from the council. The service, which will be starting this month at Darwen Town Hall, will be run by Pat O'Reilly and Danny Flaherty on a Tuesday from 10am to 1pm.

Pendle outreach opens

PENDLE Armed Forces Group has opened a one stop shop at the Ace Centre in Nelson. Suzanne Preston, from VIC, is now holding outreach sessions every Wednesday from 10am to 1pm.

Meet VIC's mascot Ori

HE'S only 2ft tall, has never served his country but Ori has become the latest member of VIC.

He is not much of a conversationalist, unless he is with his 'keeper' Darren Horsnell, arts and crafts coordinator, who has a strange way of making Ori talk.

But that hasn't stopped him becoming the charity's mascot.

"Not everything has to be seri-

ous," said Darren. "My fiancée Tracey bought me Ori the orangutan hand puppet for Christmas because she knows I love wildlife and especially gorillas.

"Now it has turned into her worst nightmare as Ori has become our mascot and so goes wherever VIC goes.

"He is even going to start up his own mascot committee along with Gus the gorilla."





VIC update

THIS month VIC received the best possible news – that we have received a grant from the CCG to secure our future for 2014.

Our relocation is complete and the new centre in Haslingden now boasts a galley – thanks to the hard work of members.

Many of the rooms are now shipshape and finished and we had our first 'paying guests' in the form of Lancashire NHS Care Trust who rented a room.

We would also like to say a big thank you to the widow of author Bill Turner who donated a cheque for £100 to VIC.

Among other books, Bill wrote about the Accrington Pals who died in the Battle of the Somme. He was always very supportive of the community centre which is now our base.

His widow Ruth toured the building and was delighted with the IT suite and art room, both of which she said her husband would have been a keen supporter.

Our popular walks continued last month and Darren led expeditions around Calf Hey Reservoir and Irwell Vale. On March 20 a walk will take place along the canal towpath in Church and this will be combined with a fishing trip.

Outreach sessions have opened in Pendle and will be opening shortly in Blackburn with Darwen.

Our website is nearing completion so please log on to www.veteransincommunities.org to keep up to date with all VIC news.

ROSSENDALE

VIC Outreach Services

MONDAY-FRIDAY

11am-1pm

VIC Centre, Bury Road, Haslingden, BB4 5PL.

MONDAY

10-12 noon

Bacup Library, St James Square, Bacup, OL13 9AH

VIC Singing Group

THURSDAY

6.30-8pm

VIC Centre, Bury Road, Haslingden, BB4 5PL.

VIC Art Group and drop-in

FRIDAY

11am-3pm

VIC Centre, Bury Road, Haslingden, BB4 5PL.

Walking Group

THURSDAY

Walks are arranged on the 2nd and 4th Thursday, weather permitting.

HEYWOOD

VIC Outreach Service

WEDNESDAY

11am-2.30pm

Heywood Sports Village, West Starkey Street, Heywood, OL10 4TW.

Badminton

3pm-4pm

Heywood Sports Village, West Starkey Street, Heywood, OL10 4TW.

Walks will be held fortnightly on **Thursdays** combined with the Rossendale walking group.

BURNLEY

VIC Outreach Service

TUESDAY

10am-2pm

Retreat 'n' Recover Centre, 21 Hammerton Street, Burnley, BB11 1NA.

PENDLE

VIC Outreach Service

WEDNESDAY

10am-1pm

Ace Centre, Cross Street, Nelson, BB9 7NN.

Contacts

VIC – 01706 833180

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Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator Darren Horsnell

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War Graves Project Co-ordinator Peter Webster

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Combat Stress Helpline

0800 138 1619

PCT Military Veterans Service

0161 253 6638

The Royal British Legion

08457 725 725

Rossendale Citizens' Advice Bureau

0844 499 4121 (from a landline)

0300 456 2552 (from a mobile)

The Samaritans

01706 830999

Mental Health Helpline

0500 639000

Monday to Friday 7pm - 11pm Saturday &

Sunday 12 noon to 12 midnight

East Lancashire Single Point of Access via GP or self-referral

01282 657116

VIC supported by:

