

# VIC helps to put Andy on right track

**IT IS four years since Fusilier Andy Greaves left the army and at first he was struggling, but thanks to support from VIC he has turned his life around.**

He left the 1st Battalion in February 2014 with anxiety, depression and symptoms of PTSD, but these went undiagnosed for about eight to 12 months and were compounded by his autism.

Andy said: "I was in a very dark place and at times I was suicidal. Everyone threw me away because of my mood swings.

"In the Infantry I wasn't aware of my problems it was only when I left that they

became obvious. Everything in my life fell apart."

He was 20 when he joined up and because he already had an autism diagnosis it took an extra three weeks before he was accepted for basic training. He then went on to serve in Afghanistan.

Andy joined VIC in early 2016 after being signposted by his GP and began volunteering on a number of projects, some of which have been funded by a grant from the ABF: The Soldiers' Charity.

His story is now being used as a case study and a team from the charity's London base came to interview Andy and photograph him at work at VIC's

allotment in Helmsshore.

He said: "I have had a lot of time to sit and think about what I want out of life and I started volunteering at Stubbylee Greenhouses in Bacup.

"With their help and VIC I have completed a foundation course in horticulture and I may become a gardener in the future."

Andy, 28, from Baxenden, is currently working as a labourer with an online auction house.

He still goes to the greenhouses once a week and pops into VIC when he is not working and joins the team on social inclusion trips.



Photos: Naomi Gabrielle Photography



Operations Manager Bob Elliott said: "Andy is a changed person to the one who came here two years ago. He has benefited directly from projects at VIC that were

funded by the ABF: The Soldiers' Charity.

"We are delighted to see the progress he has made in his personal life and pleased to have been able to play our part in it."

## Art sells as paint dries

**THREE** newbies came along to the latest Bob Ross class run by Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator Darren Horsnell including a complete novice.

All left with stunning pink flamingo paintings and Lesley Barlow's work was so appreciated she sold it before it was even dry,

She contacted Darren to



say: "Thanks Darren. It was so enjoyable and guess what - I've sold my canvas already even before it's dry

so whilst you have it could you get it scanned and a large print and mount done for me please."

VIC will be holding the 22nd painting in the style of Bob Ross on Saturday February 24; cost £35 per person including all materials plus tea and coffee.

Darren said: "You don't have to be an accomplished artist to attend, but everyone is guaranteed to come away with a finished painting they will be proud of. Spaces are limited so please book on 01706 833180."

Sessions are from 10.30am to 3.30pm; bring a packed lunch.



*VIC was delighted to be among the recipients of money collected during Remembrance Week at Alder Grange School, Rawtenstall. Staff and students attended the VIC Centre to hand over a cheque for £200.*



## Course to aid mental health

**SIX VIC members benefited immensely from a Mental Health First Aiders course.**

Admin Officer Amanda Walton said: "It was very interesting and I learnt absolutely loads.

"There were things that I had not thought about and not come across before and it was all very new to me.



"I also found it very emotional and I thought the instructor was amazing as he was able to talk from his personal experience and that helped to make the messages sink in with the

delegates."

The two-day course was held at Burnley FC in the Community working in partnership with the Defence Medical Welfare Service using funding from the Morrison's Foundation.



## Welcome Project Worker Jaqui

**AFTER serving for 32 years, Jaqui Collins found it hard to get a job so is delighted to have landed the role of Project Worker at VIC.**

Jaqui, who was a Regimental Sergeant Major in the Royal Military Police, said: "I had been raising money for charity and asked if it was ok to post information about fundraisers on VIC Facebook's group and said I was finding it hard to get a job."

As VIC was recruiting for a Project Worker, she

decided to apply and she was successful at interview and has been in post since January.

Jaqui has taken over from Liz Davies and is responsible for Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale as part of the Integrated NHS Neighbourhood Teams working with different agencies.

She said: "I feel like I have come home.

"Everyone here is very friendly and welcoming. It is nice to be a part of soldier banter, which is something I am very used to."

## Career switch?

**VETERANS considering a future career in the Ambulance Service are invited to attend a special service leavers' and veterans' insight day at Bolton Ambulance HQ on March 2.**

From 10am to 1pm, the session will give people the chance to meet staff and find out about employment opportunities within the service. To book a place email [inclusion.workforce@nwas.nhs.uk](mailto:inclusion.workforce@nwas.nhs.uk)

## Book a bargain

**A TRIP to the supermarket could soon offer a good read and a chance to support the work of VIC.**

Project Worker Jaqui Collins has arranged for book bins to be placed at Haslingden's Co-op and the Co-op in Norden and for a small charge the books can be bought.

Anyone with any ideas of small supermarkets that Jaqui can approach about hosting book bins can call 01706 833180.



## VIC going underground

**A VISIT to the National Coal Mining Museum in Wakefield proved to be a huge success with veterans.**

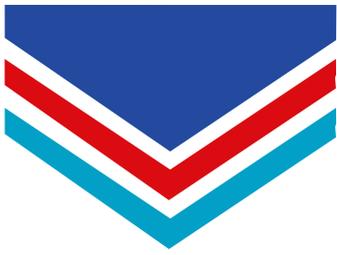
Although not scheduled to attend the trip, Operations Manager Bob Elliott found himself driving the crew van to take the party across the border.

He said: "It was absolutely brilliant and the best £4 I have ever spent. The tour down the mine was amazing. The coal miner who gave us the guided tour had worked down the pit for 26 years and was passionate about his job."

Before they could go into the lift, every member was kitted out with a helmet and had to hand in a miner's brass check, similar to a coin, to show they had gone underground.

Bob said: "The tour was scheduled for an hour and 15 minutes, but we were underground for longer. Some members went through the miners' crawl tunnel and we all learnt a lot.

"Boys went down the pit aged four, girls aged five, and sometimes whole families would be working in the mine."



# New café taking shape

## Job success

**VIC has helped member Michael Murray, from Oldham, to land a job working with the North West Ambulance Service.**

Michael is full-time carer for his wife Shelley who has multiple sclerosis, but lost his job when she was admitted to hospital after a major relapse and he took time off to care for her.

He served in the Royal Engineers for 12 years and wanted to apply for a job with the ambulance service, after seeing first-hand the care they administered to his wife.

Michael said: "Bob Elliott at VIC helped me with the application form and it is thanks to Bob and VIC that I was able to get the job working on passenger transport. I would like to become a technician."

## Outdoor fun

**TWO outdoor activity days will be held at Whitehough Outdoor Education Centre in Roughlee, Pendle.**

The sessions are free to VIC members and involve archery, walking, orienteering and high ropes and a free lunch. Members can attend on Wednesday February 28 or Tuesday March 27.

To book call 01706 833180. the centre is run by Burnley FC in the Community.

**VETERANS have done sterling work to help transform a shop into space for a community café in Burnley.**

What was expected to be a couple of days' work, has ended up in a five-day project.

Operations Manager Bob Elliott said: "I am very grateful to all of our veterans who have carried out the work to convert the space.

"Originally we were asked just to remove the shop fittings, but the project has increased over time and we will now be painting the interior ready for the café to be installed.

"I am delighted that the chosen colour is magnolia, because as everyone at VIC knows, the future is... magnolia!"

Burnley Football Club in the Community is developing the premises with a number of organisations and a food bank, teaching kitchen and community café will be opening.

VIC's Burnley outreach will also be relocating to the new café.



## VIC in quiz honours

**CONGRATULATIONS to the VIC Pickleballers who won the Bacup and Stacksteads Carnival Organisation quiz.**

VIC entered three teams into the quiz at the Rose 'n' Bowl in Stacksteads.

Chairman Catherine Smyth said: "A big thank you to everyone who attended and gave generously raising £600 for BASCO. Thank you VIC for your three teams and well done for winning outright."



## London visit for award finalist Tony Stubbs

**VOLUNTEER Outreach Worker Tony Stubbs, who is also a Peer Mentor with Military Veterans' Service, was invited to a special reception at the House of Lords as a finalist in the national Soldiering On awards.**

Tony is one of six finalists in the Inspiration Award category.

The overall winners will be announced at a Black Tie gala reception, dinner and awards' ceremony at the Park Plaza Westminster Bridge Hotel on April 20.

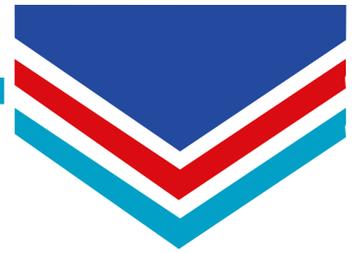
# Trio of art exhibitions

**THREE major art exhibitions will be held to showcase work produced at VIC.**

On Tuesdays and Fridays an art group and drop in session is held at the VIC Centre and every Wednesday Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator Darren Horsnell runs an art group at Jubilee Court in Helmshore.

In April, at the Haworth Art Gallery in Accrington, VIC will be displaying work as part of the centenary celebrations of the Royal Air Force.

Towards the summer, VIC artwork will be on show at Churchfield House, Great Harwood, and veterans have been invited back to display at Touchstones in Rochdale near the end of the year.



## ROSSENDALE

All activities are held at the VIC Centre, Bury Road, Haslingden, BB4 5PL, unless otherwise stated.

**Outreach Service**

**MONDAY-FRIDAY**

10am-3pm

To book a home appointment call 01706 833180.

**MONDAY**

**Crafty Chatters**

10.30am-12.30pm

**WEDNESDAY**

**Community Arts and Crafts**

10am-noon

**Art Class**

2pm-4pm

Jubilee Court, Jubilee Road, Haslingden, BB4 4DD.

**THURSDAY**

**Rossendale Citizens' Advice (weekly)**

**by appointment only**

**Singing Group (weekly)**

6.30-8.30pm

**TUESDAY AND FRIDAY**

**Art Group and drop-in**

10.30am-3.30pm

**SECOND SATURDAY**

**Veterans' Breakfast Club**

10am-12-30pm

Bumbles' Cafe, Haslingden Community Link, Bury Road, Haslingden BB4 5PG

**Walking Group**

Walks will be held on alternate **THURSDAYS**, weather permitting. Log on to VIC Facebook page to see where the next walks will be.

**Outdoor Activities**

Log on to our website and follow the link on *Projects and Activities* to see what we have planned and how to book a place. A full leaflet is available.

**Positive Art**

Our art shop is now based at the VIC Centre, Bury Road, Haslingden, BB4 5PL, contact 01706 833180 for details.

## HEYWOOD, MIDDLETON AND ROCHDALE

**The Sandbag Cafe and drop in TUESDAY**

10am-noon

Sandon House, Taylor Street, Heywood OL10 4EF.

**TUESDAY AND SOME FRIDAYS**

11am-3pm

Allotment, Latrigg Crescent, Langley, Middleton M24 4LU.

Call Tony 07534 381723.

**THURSDAY**

9.30-10.30am Rochdale Breakfast Club, Rochdale Town Hall Bistro OL16 1AB.

10.30am-noon

**VIC Outreach**

1 Riverside, Rochdale OL16 1UB.

**THURSDAY**

11.30am-1.30pm

Lighthouse Project, Unit S6b/c Middleton Shopping Centre, Limetrees Road, Middleton M24 4EL.

**Walking Group**

Walks will be held on alternate **THURSDAYS** and are combined with Rossendale.

## HYNDBURN

**Outreach Service**

**MONDAYS OR TUESDAYS (check with VIC)**

1-3pm

Second floor Accrington Market Hall.

# VIC – 01706 833180

# Contacts

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**Outdoor Activities Co-ordinator Ivy Limbrick**

ivylimbrick@vic.org.uk

**Singing Group Bookings Barry Hyde**

barryhyde@vic.org.uk

**Combat Stress Helpline**

0800 138 1619

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

0161 253 6638

**The Royal British Legion**

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

**SSAFA**

email Lancashire@ssafo.org.uk

01772 260 462

**Rossendale Citizens' Advice**

0300 456 2552 Mon to Fri 10am-4pm

**The Samaritans**

01706 830999 Freephone 116 123

**Mental Health Helpline**

0800 915 4640 Mon to Fri 7pm - 11pm Sat &

Sun 12 noon to 12 midnight

**Royal Air Forces Association**

01772 426930

**Veterans UK Free Helpline**

0808 1914 218

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

01282 657116

**Bolton Armed Forces Centre 4 Veterans**

www.bafc4v.org 01204 776628

## PENDLE

**Outreach Service**

10am-noon

**MONDAY - first week only**

Place de Creil, near Wilkos, Nelson.

**MONDAY - second week only**

Market Place Car park, Town Square Colne.

**MONDAY - third week only**

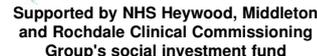
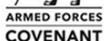
Town Square, Albert Road, Barnoldswick.

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