



# VIC Newsletter

## VIC centre and shop reopen

**THE latest easing of Covid restrictions has meant VIC has been able to reopen our centre in Haslingden.**  
Although the Bury

Road premises was available for pre-arranged contact, the door had to remain closed to ad-hoc callers.  
We have also reopened our shop and drop in at

Accrington's Arndale every Friday, from 10am to 3pm. Veterans will be manning the shop, so why not call in for a chat?  
We are also planning to reopen

The Sandbag Cafe in Heywood and The Mess Tin in Middleton as soon as permitted.  
Reopening of drop-in sessions in Burnley and Rochdale and an expansion into Clitheroe town centre

are also imminent.  
Thank you to everyone who has helped VIC over the last year, both in terms of support, fundraising and providing grants to sustain the charity.

## Artists back in residence

**ARTISTS are now back in residence at VIC as our art groups can reopen thanks to restrictions easing.**

At all art sessions, we can have a maximum of five people in attendance, along with Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator Darren Horsnell.

Art groups are now held on Tuesdays and Fridays from 10.30am to 3.30pm and a charge of £6 is made for attendance, which includes £1 for tea and coffee.

All materials will be supplied, but artists can also bring their own. Places are limited and need to be booked in advance.

Participants are only

allowed to book for one of the days so we can maximise the number of people who are able to attend art sessions.

Our popular painting in the style of Bob Ross classes will now be held as a combination of in person and on Zoom.

Darren said: "The next class will be held on Saturday May 22. We can have five people attend at the centre, while a limited number of others can join in on Zoom.

"It costs £45 and all materials are supplied. Every participant will go away with a completed painting."

Contact Darren to book a place at any of the art sessions – call 01706 833180.



## Walks make a return

**NOW that up to six people can meet outdoors, our walking group is back on enjoying the beautiful scenery and a healthy walk organised by Outdoor Activities Co-ordinator Ivy Limbrick.**

The first walk took in stunning views around Oswaldtwistle Moors. Places on future walks are limited because of Covid restrictions so please book in advance if you want to attend.

## Operation Marshal is coming to an end



**THE veteran and volunteer support for the Vaccination Hubs in Rawtenstall and Accrington is being scaled back as our face-to-face services reopen.**

Operations Manager Bob Elliott said: "This month is looking like it will probably be the last

month when we can provide full-time marshalling.

"It has been a great experience for the veterans as well as the many community volunteers who have helped with the outdoor marshalling of the car parks.

"They have got so much out of it, being able to come out of

their homes and make people feel at their ease before they went in for their vaccinations.

"The operation required logistical organisation and structure and that is just what veterans are expert at.

"I would like to say a personal thanks to each and every one of

the volunteers and marshals who have supported the hubs and been a part of the solution to the pandemic."

● As a mark of respect following the sad death of Prince Philip, craft group volunteer Janet Attwell kindly made marshals black armbands to wear.

# Paul's home sweet home



**A VETERAN with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, who found himself homeless, now has the keys to his own flat thanks to a team effort.**

Paul Nixon was born and brought up in Rossendale and in 1997 he joined the Horse Guards Cavalry and was posted to Windsor.

After discharge from the regulars, he joined the Reserves, and finished his military career with the 4th Battalion Parachute Regiment and his combined service included four tours in Bosnia, the Falkland Islands, Iraq, Afghanistan and Northern Ireland.

Incidents that happened while he was serving, including losing comrades to 'friendly fire' in Iraq, left Paul with PTSD.

He said: "I got jobs in security, but I could see visions of things that weren't there and so I had to leave."

Paul, 43, had been living with his parents in Stacksteads, but his

mum had a serious operation and when she returned from hospital needed her own room so there was no longer anywhere for Paul to live.

He said: "I found myself homeless and so I contacted Healthier Heroes in Burnley, but they were full."

Healthier Heroes CIC contacted Rossendale Council Housing Options Team and emergency accommodation was located at a bed and breakfast in Blackburn, but there were unsuitable people in the same property and Paul said he didn't feel safe living in Blackburn.

Since February, VIC has been working with multiple agencies to find Paul more suitable accommodation in Rossendale.

VIC Project Worker Ray Sharkey, coincidentally veteran Scots Guard, said: "Following a multi-agency meeting with ourselves, Rossendale Council's housing team, Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS



*From left VIC Project Worker Ray Sharkey, Paul Nixon, and veterans and Chaplain Glen Lewis and Barry Clarke from the Salvation Army from Blackburn outside Paul's new home.*

Foundation Trust and the Calico Next Step Programme team, a plan was put into place to get Paul rehoused in his local area.

"He has now received the keys to his own flat in the Waterfoot area. This is the start of his new life; he can now look forwards not backwards. I think this will give him the stability he needs.

"Part of his tenancy agreement is that he must keep on engaging with us and other services."

The flat was unfurnished, but VIC

had received a call from Jane Whitaker, whose cousin had sadly died, and she said she would have wanted the furnishings in her flat to go to a veteran.

VIC was able to store everything at its Accrington shop and then veterans Barry Clarke and Chaplain Glen Lewis from the Salvation Army from Blackburn stepped in to help move the furniture into Paul's flat.

Glen said: "Paul has been coming into our centre and he was struggling where he was living. He would come

in twice a week and he asked if we could help him to move into his new flat. I felt really good being able to help."

Paul added: "My new flat is just a mile from my parents and I have two brothers who live in Bacup. My other brother is out in Australia. When I am in the Rossendale Valley I feel safe because it is where I know, this is where I grew up.

"I am a runner and I will be looking to do a run to raise money for VIC in the future."

## Paul says thank you

**BY CHANCE, Paul Nixon got to meet and say thank you to Jane Whitaker, who provided him with furnishings for his new home when she called into the centre.**

It was Jane's cousin and friend Priscilla Richardson who had a

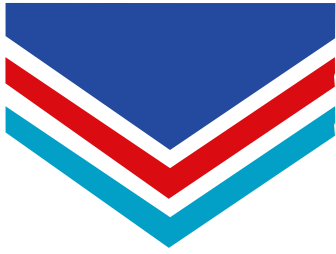


flat full of of pristine goods when she passed away, which

were donated to a veteran who was in need.



*Thank you to Craig Fort, Manager at Haslingden's Co-op Store who provided VIC with a full collection tin. We would like to say a thank you to the store's customers and staff for their donations which raised £146.84.*



# IN MEMORIAM

## TONY STUBBS

**IT IS with much sadness that we have to report the passing of VIC member Tony Stubbs.**

He was one of our first Outreach Workers across Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale and passed away in Bolton Hospital.

Tony had been ill for a number of years, but this did not prevent him doing the things he liked.

He became a member of VIC in 2013 and within 12 months he was a veterans' champion with the Military Veterans' Service in Bury and one of our volunteer outreach workers.

Tony helped on numerous community projects in Middleton and Heywood, and established our Middleton allotment.

Operations Manager Bob Elliott said: "Although he had health issues, it didn't stop him getting involved in some of our more adventurous outdoor activities; including rafting, canoeing, high ropes, go carting, bushcraft and team building challenges.

"He was quickly recognised for his achievements in helping other veterans recover from alcohol and substance misuse, and those with mental health conditions.

"Tony made numerous TV appearances on regional breakfast TV programmes, radio shows and won many awards for his work.

"He was one of the champions for the Veterans' Gateway when it formed and worked closely with The Royal British Legion."

Tony became a role model for many and went on to show others how they could improve their own mental health and change their behaviours by accessing the right support services.

In 2018, he stepped back from his many roles to spend time with his family.

His funeral will be at Southern Cemetery in Didsbury and Glen Crossland of Salford Breakfast Club will be providing a drap. Standards will hopefully be on display and veterans will be in attendance.



## JACK CUNNANE

**THE funeral for D-Day veteran Jack Cunnane will be held on Monday April 26 at Hollinwood Crematorium.**

Jack, who passed away at Salford Royal Infirmary, was among the first wave of soldiers to set foot on the Normandy beaches, although initially, as a teenager, he didn't want to join up and serve.

He was born in Oldham and enlisted in 1942, after receiving a letter saying he would have to go to Wales and work down a coal mine.

After training, he joined the Royal Ordnance Corps and 12 months later REME was set up.

He was transferred to 20th Beach Recovery Unit, a small unit of just 40 soldiers, and they landed on Sword Beach in the first wave of the D-Day landings.

From Sword Beach they went to Arromanches and in April 1945 he was involved in Operation Plunder – a military operation to cross the Rhine.

After serving, he returned home to his wife Emma and they went on to have two children and four grandchildren.

Jack, 98, was a regular at The Sandbag Café in Heywood until ill health.

He had made a returning journey to the D-Day beaches and was due to go again for the 75th anniversary in 2019, but sadly was too ill to make the crossing.

However, at the anniversary commemorations at the National Arboretum in Staffordshire, he met, chatted to and was photographed with Prince William the Duke of Cambridge.





# Birthday jab

A VERY special birthday present was received by 98-year-old veteran Bernard Munton – he attended the Littleborough Vaccination Centre for his second Covid jab.

Bernard, who was a Second World War Royal Signals Wireless Operator was taken to the centre by Peter Shinzil, Social

Secretary at The Sandbag Café in Heywood.

He said: “He was given the vaccination by a young doctor while the NHS team sang Happy Birthday. A big thank you to everyone at Littleborough Vaccinations Centre for making Bernard’s second lockdown birthday special.”



## Whitehough

COMMUNITY projects are restarting and next month VIC will be helping out at Whitehough where veterans have been given their own room at the centre run by Burnley FC Football in the Community.

Operations Manager Bob Elliott said: “We have had a kitchen generously donated by Janet Attwell so we will have a works party stripping it out on May 5 and then reassembling it into the new veterans room at Whitehough.”

## Op Courage

SPECIALIST care is now being offered to armed forces veterans suffering a mental health crisis as part of Op Courage.

Doctors, nurses and other NHS staff will work with military charities to provide therapy, rehab services and, in extreme cases, inpatient care to hundreds of former soldiers, sailors and RAF personnel each year.

Those needing urgent help will receive a same day referral.

The ‘high intensity’ treatment has already been trialled in some areas and will be rolled out across the country as part of Op Courage, which brings together specialist services for veterans.

## Shop for VIC

ONLINE shopping? Why not click to raise money for VIC.

Every time you buy, go through Easy Fundraising and our members will benefit. For more details call 01706 833180.



## Creative Brian’s busy month

VETERAN Brian McEvoy has had an exceptionally busy month creating artwork for children, renovating a sign and presenting plaques

to supermarket staff.

One of his creations, a map of the world showing continents and animals, used a combination of

pyrography, drawing and painting skills and was presented to Helen Horrocks.

The world map was inspired by his travels and the animals were in a style that young children could relate to. Helen’s partner is VIC member Gary and they are both members of the Brave Church in Oswaldtwistle, where Helen works at the pre-school for 2 to 4 year olds.

Helen said the map



would be great to show to the children and will provide a good learning experience of the world and its animals.

He also cleaned and repainted a community centre sign and presented Co-op and Asda staff with bespoke plaques.





## Online quiz nets £140

**A huge thank you to everyone who attended and supported our 'Bring Your Own' Curry and Quiz night.**

Fundraising has taken a big hit recently and our virtual quiz on Zoom raised almost £140. A special mention has to be given to Jo Shakeel

who provides a fabulous curry.

Former VIC Chief Executive Liz Hamilton and Degs were worthy winners while holding everyone up at the bottom were Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator Darren Horsnell along with one of our trustees Major Bob Smethurst and Chris.



## D-Day journey to be recreated

**A GRANT will enable a band of brothers from the Queens Lancashire Regiment to plan for a historic recreation of a VIC member's D-Day liberation journey.**

Volunteers from the Veterans' Living History Museum in Blackburn, secured Armed Forces Covenant funding of £70k for a two-year project called Operation Banham.

VIC member Lewis Banham, from Weir, is a 98-year-old veteran despatch rider who landed on Gold Beach as part of the D-Day

landings and then made his way across Europe delivering vital messages to front-line troops.

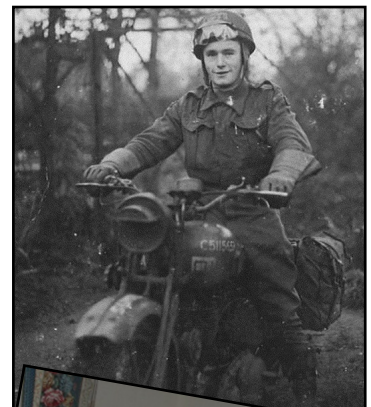
Wayne Hester, from the museum, explained: "We are going to recreate Lewis's story by building a bike identical to the one he used, landing on Gold Beach on June 12 2022 and travelling across Europe, like he did, staying as near to the checkpoints that he did and arriving in Berlin six-seven days later.

"On the second Wednesday of each month we will have veterans coming to the museum workshop to work on the motorbike.

"The covenant money has paid for a film crew, Capture That from Leyland, to document everything over the next two years and we are planning a massive celebration event in March 2023 to mark the end of the project."

The bike will be ridden by veterans with motorcycle licences and some civilians and there will be a military back-up crew and civilian mechanic on hand throughout the journey, which will be made in Lewis's 100th year.

Lewis said: "I think it is marvellous; I only wish I could ride the bike again myself."



## Ivy cleans up moorland route



**OUTDOOR Activities Co-ordinator Ivy Limbrick has taken on a massive new challenge – litter picking Grane Road in Haslingden and the area is looking a whole lot cleaner for it.**

Ivy, along with occasional other helpers, has filled more than 100 bags of rubbish from the remote moorland route and has made a huge difference to the area.



## Breakfast club

**A NEW breakfast club is setting up in Rochdale at the football club at the Crown Oil Arena.**

Rochdale Armed Forces Breakfast Club and Rochdale Association Football Club have teamed to hold the club every Friday from 10am to 12 noon.

If you would like to register to attend please contact Charlotte Griffiths by text to 07958 593121 or email at [Charlotte.Griffiths@rochdaleafc.co.uk](mailto:Charlotte.Griffiths@rochdaleafc.co.uk)



## ROSSENDALE

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

**Outreach Service**  
MONDAY-FRIDAY  
9am-4.30pm

**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**  
*ON ZOOM*  
*VIC Choir (weekly)*  
6.30-8.30pm

**FRIDAY**  
*Art Group and drop-in*  
10am-3.30pm  
Cost £6 places limited book on 01706 833180

**EVERY MONTH**  
*Walking Group*  
Restricted numbers see Facebook or website for details.

*Painting in the Style of Bob Ross*  
Limited places  
Contact Darren 01706 833180.

**SUSPENDED**  
*Rossendale Armed Forces and Veterans' Breakfast Club*  
Haslingden Community Link

## BURNLEY AND PENDLE

*Outreach Service*  
*ON ZOOM*  
**FRIDAY**  
11am  
Contact VIC for details

## HEYWOOD, MIDDLETON AND ROCHDALE

*ON ZOOM*  
*The Sandbag Cafe and drop in*  
**TUESDAY**  
10am-noon  
Sandon House, Taylor Street, Heywood OL10 1EF.

**TUESDAY**  
*The Mess Tin - cafe and drop in*  
1pm-2.30pm  
The Lighthouse Project, Middleton Shopping Centre, M24 1AB.

**THURSDAY**  
9am-10.30am Rochdale Breakfast Club  
Rochdale Town Hall Bistro OL16 1AB.  
10.30am-noon  
*VIC Outreach*  
1 Riverside, Rochdale OL16 1UB.

**SUSPENDED**  
**SUSPENDED**

## RIBBLE VALLEY

*Outreach Service*  
New venue to be announced soon

## VIC – 01706 833180

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Project Worker Ray Sharkey  
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Transformational Coach Gill Hughes  
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Volunteer Support Worker Mel Fitzgerald  
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Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator Darren Horsnell  
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Outdoor Activities Co-ordinator Ivy Limbrick  
ivylimbrick@vic.org.uk

Sessional Worker Bernard Tighe  
bernardtighe@vic.org.uk

VIC Choir Bookings Barry Hyde  
barryhyde@vic.org.uk

## Contacts

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  
Rossendale Citizens' Advice  
0300 456 2552  
The Samaritans  
01282 694929 Mon to Fri 9am-9pm  
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  
0800 018 2361  
Veterans UK Free Helpline  
0808 1914 218  
East Lancashire Single Point of Access via GP or self-referral  
01282 657116  
Armed Forces Support Group  
01282 613132

## HYNDBURN

*ON ZOOM*  
**MONDAY**  
*Model Railway Club*  
10am  
**FRIDAY**  
*Outreach Service*  
10.30am-3pm  
VIC Shop, Accrington Arndale Centre, BB5 1EX.

## Want to help?

To donate to support the work of VIC please visit our website and click on the secure Virgin Money Giving link  
[www.veteransincommunities.org/donate.html](http://www.veteransincommunities.org/donate.html)

### VIC supported by:

