



Commemorating VJ-Day

RESPECTS were paid as members of VIC marked the 75th anniversary of Victory over Japan.

August 15 1945 saw hostilities end in the Far East when Japan surrendered meaning the Second World War was finally over.

Members of VIC were invited by the Mayor of Ribbles Valley Councillor Stella Brunskill to join her early on Saturday, August 15, at Clitheroe Castle to witness the flag being raised.

Councillor Brunskill selected VIC as one of her chosen charities to benefit from funds raised during her year of office.

Later at the centre in Bury Road, Haslingden, veterans and supporters

lined up outside the building to observe the two minutes' silence, the Last Post and Reveille.

The Haslingden Royal British Legion standard was carried by Millie Thompson, 15, whose mum Amy is VIC's administrator.

The building had been decorated in readiness by Outreach Worker Steve Butterworth, Project Worker Ray Sharkey and volunteer Gary Horrocks,

Jack Riley, 96, from Haslingden, was present and he recalled the first VJ Day.

He said: "I was part of the occupation army in Northern Germany in Lübeck when we heard about the victory over Japan. There was a quiet acknowledgement but at

that time there was still a lot to do; I was not demobbed until 1947."

Following the ceremony at the centre Amy and Millie attended the war memorial at Greenfield Gardens in Haslingden where they laid a wreath.

Commemorations continued at The Sandbag Café in Heywood on Tuesday, August 18, when the usual bacon butties were switched for meat pie.

Project Worker Bev Fowler said: "Throughout lockdown we kept in touch with all veterans by phone every week and, in some cases, we were the only contact they received. It has really been appreciated.

"The government advice did cause some confusion and one veteran interpreted the message 'stay home' to mean he was not even allowed to go into his garden; fortunately I was able to explain it properly to him.

"We were delighted to be able to reopen The Sandbag on August 4,

VIC AGM

AN ONLINE Annual General Meeting will be held by Veterans In Communities on Wednesday, September 16, at 7.30pm.

Current government restrictions prevent large meetings, so to ensure social distancing the meeting will be held via Zoom technology – meeting ID 868 3021 9013 passcode 655597.

After the meeting, the thoughts and feelings of the those present will be gathered not only regarding the successes of VIC, but also to discuss improvements that could be made to our services.

For anyone who is not familiar with Zoom, the meeting room will be open from 7pm to enable a prompt start at 7.30pm.

Please inform VIC if you are attending so copies of the report of the trustees and financial statements for the year ended March 31 2020 can be forwarded prior to the meeting.

but with social distancing we have had to limit the numbers attending and so we can only reopen to those who have pre-booked to attend.

"For one of our veterans, Bernard Munton, it was the first time that he had been out of his home since March.

"To mark VJ Day, we decorated the hall with flags and most of the veterans who attended were suited and booted."

Veterans wanting to attend The Sandbag Café on Tuesday mornings should book in with Bev by calling 07741 902 343.



The Sandbag Cafe

Silver standard

THE hard work of VIC to encourage and assist veterans has been acknowledged with the charity being awarded the MoD Employer Recognition Scheme Silver standard.

VIC achieved the Bronze standard in March this year and has already gone one level further.

Operations Manager Bob Elliott said: "It's great to be recognised for all the hard work that has been put in over the last few years and I would like to say a big thank you to all our



Commodore Phil Waterhouse announces the winners on YouTube

members that have made this possible.

"It is not just the team that we have that has won this

award, but the many volunteers and everyone who we work with and have assisted over the years."

Weather thwarts walking plan

SOLO Coast-to-Coast walker Anthony McCormack battled horrendous weather for five days and nights completing 80 of the 190 mile route.

He took on the challenge to raise money for VIC, but said: "I got as far as Kirkby Steven but I was struggling with a very heavy pack, nowhere to charge my phone, and no campsites open as Covid-19 is still very prevalent in that area.



"I had twisted my knee and had no way of contacting anyone and so decided to call it a day when I was unable to get my clothes or my footwear dry."

Despite the set backs he still managed to raise £30.91 in his collecting bucket.

Veteran Dave Kerrigan, a member of VIC, has offered to join Anthony on future walks.



Technology training

THE first training sessions to explain how to use tablets that are available to keep veterans in contact have been carried out.

VIC received funding from the Veterans Should Not Be Forgotten Programme to purchase tablets and sim cards for veterans living across East Lancashire and Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale; areas where VIC operates.

They enable the users to stay in contact with each other and also to participate in online Zoom sessions arranged by the charity, these include arts, craft, photography and coffee mornings.

Operations Manager Bob Elliott said: "Our own IT

expert Peter Ashworth led the tablet training sessions at the VIC Centre so that the veterans understood how to use the equipment.

"Many of the veterans have had to isolate and the tablets give them the means to stay in contact and be able to see, as well as hear, veterans, friends and family. "Zoom technology will be the way forward and we are ahead of the game having already acquired the funding to cover the cost of providing tablets."

Further training sessions will be held at the VIC Shop in Accrington and also at The Sandbag Café for small groups. Veterans interested in getting one of the tablets should contact a member of the team on 01706 833180.

Training support

A DRIVER training company is supporting VIC by displaying the charity's logo and an advert on its vehicles.

Royal Engineer veteran Mark Gaines is a director of MEG Training Solutions in Accrington, that offers training for LGV and CPC driving courses. The link was forged by Ray Sharkey, VIC's Project Worker in Hyndburn and Ribble Valley.

Director Anna, Mark's wife, said: "We are happy to be supporting VIC by putting an advert on our vehicles which will help to get the charity a bit more promotion."

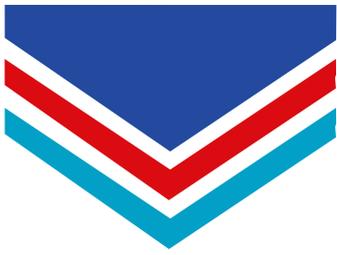
Shop online support VIC

THERE is a quick and easy way to raise money for VIC if you shop online, just by signing up to Easyfundraising and selecting VIC as the recipient.

It costs nothing to sign up and it allows online shoppers to show their support for a charity by just clicking a link as they shop.

There are 4,000 shops and sites offering the opportunity to donate to good causes when you use Easyfundraising while shopping online.

If you want to know more contact VIC on 01706 833180.



Allotment transformation

Veterans art competition

OUR art competition will be launching soon for members of the VIC art group and Veterans Arts Organisation.

Submissions should be under one of the following categories:

- Paintings - either wildlife, landscape, seascape or portraiture.
- Photography; either landscape or portraiture.
- Poetry or creative writing.
- Music.
- Other art, eg sculpture,
- Lockdown artwork in any of the above categories.

For Armed Forces Veterans and Emergency Services Veterans, the entry could be relevant to their service history. Entrants can enter one piece into each category.

Full rules will be published when the competition is officially launched and VIC hopes to have professional and semi-professionals to judge each category.

Once the competition is up and running, weekly Zoom meetings will be held to provide updates and progress reports and most importantly to reinforce the connection between veterans and civilians around the country and further afield, through their chosen art form.

Operations Manager Bob Elliott said: "As the Veterans Arts Organisation attracts members from all over the world, we could have entries from different countries and this competition could end up national and even international."

For more information follow our VIC Facebook page and group.



IN JUST a few weeks the overgrown and neglected allotment off Holcombe Road, Helmshore, has been completely transformed.

As we reported in the July edition of VIC News, Outreach Worker Steve Butterworth, assisted by VIC members Jacko Pearce and Joe Davis, have completely renovated the plot.

Operations Manager Bob Elliott said: "There has been an amazing difference made to the allotment over three weeks. It has been transformed from an overgrown area into beds that have been cleared and planted and trees and shrubs have been cut back to allow light in."

Well done to everyone involved.

I can't thank or praise Darren enough. He has reached out to people isolated in lockdown and given us a contact with the world. We've made great new friends and made wonderful art.

I have not got a jot of innate talent but he's patiently shown us techniques to create paintings we're proud of. We've all had a laugh and encouraged each other.

Darren totally under-estimates how amazing he is.

Michelle Entwistle

Darren's Bob Ross-style art



Railway plans on track

ALTHOUGH not able to start properly yet, plans are being formulated for a model railway layout that will be set up in the cellar of our shop in Accrington's Arndale.

Veteran Jim Smith has completed a few model railway projects during

lockdown including a 7mm scale, O gauge, set of terraced houses.

Operations Manager Bob Elliott said: "We have had some very generous donations of track, locomotives and scenery. A few of those interested in starting the club will be meeting to



agree and plan a layout and to collate what has already been donated to VIC."



A big thank you to Roy Kendall from Top of the Range who kindly donated sewing and personal hygiene kits to VIC; these will be put into food bags and welfare packs for our members.



ROSSENDALE

NOTE COVID CHANGES TO ACTIVITIES

BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

Outreach Service

MONDAY-FRIDAY

9am-4.30pm

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

Call 01706 833180

MONDAY

ON ZOOM

Crafty Chatters

10.30am

ON ZOOM

Art Group

12.30am

WEDNESDAY

ON ZOOM

Developing Veterans Online Photography

10am

All meetings available through Facebook group - contact Administrator Amy

Thompson 01706 833180.

ON LOCATION

Allotment

Help on the allotment in Holcombe Road, Helmshore. Contact 01706 833180.

THURSDAY

STILL SUSPENDED

VIC Choir

6.30-8.30pm

FRIDAY

ON ZOOM

Art Group

12.30pm

EVERY MONTH

ON ZOOM

Painting in the Style of Bob Ross art classes

Contact Darren 01706 833180.

STILL SUSPENDED

Rossendale Armed Forces and Veterans' Breakfast Club.

9.30am-11.30pm

Freezer's Coffee Shop, The Old Chapel, Ebenezer Terrace, Billington, BB7 9NN.

BURNLEY AND PENDLE

Outreach Service

TUESDAY - alternate weeks

Breakfast Club at Burnley FC in the Community Centre, Charter Walk.

9am-11am

Contact 01706 833180 for dates of outreach at Burnley FC in the Community Centre, Armed Forces Support Group, Holmefield House, Gisburn Road, Barrowford, at Morrisons in Nelson and Asda in Colne.

HEYWOOD, MIDDLETON AND ROCHDALE

BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

The Sandbag Cafe and drop in

TUESDAY

10am-noon

Sandon House, Taylor Street, Heywood OL10 1EF.

VIC Outreach

TUESDAY

12.30pm-2.30pm

Middleton Gardens, M24 1AB

The Mess Tin Cakes 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.

RIBBLE VALLEY

Outreach Service

TUESDAYS

VIC – 01706 833180

Chief Executive Amanda Walton

amandawalton@vic.org.uk

Operations Manager Bob Elliott

bobelliott@vic.org.uk

07961 554 006

Admin Officer Amy Thompson

amythompson@vic.org.uk

Outreach Worker Steve Butterworth

stevebutterworth@vic.org.uk

Project Worker Bev Fowler

beverleyfowler@vic.org.uk

07741 902 343

Project Worker Ray Sharkey

raysharkey@vic.org.uk

07741 902 188

Transformational Coach Gill Hughes

gillhughes@vic.org.uk

07741 902 411

Volunteer Support Worker Mel Fitzgerald

melfitzgerald@vic.org.uk

Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator Darren Horsnell

darrenhorsnell@vic.org.uk

Outdoor Activities Co-ordinator Ivy Limbrick

ivylimbrick@vic.org.uk

Sessional Worker Bernard Tighe

bernardtigue@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@ssafo.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

Bolton Armed Forces Centre 4 Veterans

www.bafc4v.org

01204 776628

HYNDBURN

FRIDAY

Outreach Service

10.30am-3pm

VIC Shop, Accrington Arndale Centre, BB5 1PL.

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

VIC supported

by:



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