



VIC Newsletter

Thank you Dorothy Mitchell

IT IS with great sadness that we learnt of the peaceful passing of Dorothy Mitchell.

VIC owes a great debt of gratitude to Dorothy as she was responsible for helping our original Operations Manager Bob Elliott, take his idea for a community-based veterans' charity and make it a reality.

Many will not know, or may not have not heard of Dorothy, or the significance that her contribution made to VIC in its early years except, perhaps, those who were involved right from the start.

Bob was introduced to Dorothy and REAL – Rossendale Enterprise Anchor Ltd – in around 2010.

He had a view to establishing a charity to support veterans and their families in the North-West.

He had the concept and vision, but needed the support to do it,

Dorothy recognised his vision and, over the following few years with her support, VIC was launched in 2012 and gained charity status in

2013.

Chief Executive Amanda Walton said: "Although I wasn't here at the time Dorothy was so involved in the setting up of VIC as an organisation, we are just so grateful to her and for her help in bringing Bob's vision to fruition. She really was an incredible lady."

Dorothy liked to call herself the 'Rossendale Rottweiler' and had an established track record of supporting groups in Rossendale for many years. She had foresight, passion and enthusiasm.

It's probably fair to say, we wouldn't have grown as quickly as we did in those first few years without her guidance.

Dorothy's wealth of experience and knowledge of the statutory, third and community sectors, meant we could get initial funding, get all our policies in place and this enabled us to secure a building which we could call our own – the VIC Centre on Bury Road, Haslingden.

She knew the trustees needed to join our board and introduced people to

Bob who would share his vision and concept – thus a strong board was quickly formed.

Dorothy didn't want to be a trustee as she recognised VIC would have to stand on its own, but she was always there in the background when we needed her to guide us through the pitfalls of establishing a new charity and obtaining the funding we would need to grow.

Although Dorothy had never served in any of the Armed Forces, she was of a generation that understood their value and sacrifices the Armed Forces make.

She was one of a kind with a phenomenal mind, and, in her latter years although her body was failing, her mind remained strong and she would always ask how VIC was doing.

Her funeral will be at Burnley Cremation on March 6 at 11.30am. VIC members have been asked to form a guard of honour. Afterwards, there will be a 'memories and celebration' event at Rossendale Golf Club from 1pm.



Dorothy with VIC Chair of Trustees Ronnie Barker
Photo: Liz Henson Photography



Dorothy with former MP Edwina Currie when she was named Rossendale Woman of the Year

Battlefields Tour No3 is planned

TWO successful Battlefields Tours have been held by VIC and now a further trip is being planned for September.

Anyone interested was invited to attend an information evening on Tuesday March 3 at the VIC Centre on Bury Road, Haslingden.

Operations Manager Phil Speddy said: "Following the hugely successful Battlefields Tours in 2024 and 2025, we're delighted to announce that another tour will take place in September 2026.

"To help us organise the trip, and to give everyone the chance to hear more

about the plans, we held an information meeting."

Anyone interested in joining the 2026 tour is asked to complete the online form, which helps VIC keep track of numbers and ensures everyone receives the latest



updates.
<https://forms.office.com/e/F9eNaZS4y0>.
The tour will cost £500 per person for a

4-5 night stay and that also includes breakfast and lunch and museum admissions.



Remembrance service for Kuwait liberation



THE 35th anniversary of the Liberation of Kuwait saw Blackburn Cathedral packed.

Several VIC members were also in attendance. In her official capacity as Lancashire County Standard Bearer, VIC Administrator Amy Thompson attended and paraded the Union Flag.

Veteran and VIC member Geoff Hutchinson gave a reading and VIC Chief Executive Amanda Walton and Operations Manager Phil Speddy were also present.

Amanda said: "When

we think of Remembrance, we often reflect on those who lost their lives in the First and Second World Wars and The Falklands, but there have been numerous conflicts and modern-day military manoeuvres that are just as relevant and should be remembered."

The service was led by Canon Andrew Horsfall and supported by the Cathedral Youth Choir and the Band of The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment.

Cadet Westerman, from Haslingden detachment Lancashire Army Cadet Force, carried the Standard with pride and honour.

Following the service, the new King's Royal Hussars Lancashire Branch Standard was blessed and dedicated.

Daryl Cartwright's efforts, and funding support from



Lancashire County Council's Armed Forces Champion County Councillor Gary Kniveton enabled, the new Standard to be acquired.

Photographs courtesy of: michaelporterphotography.co.uk



Accrington Pals

A SERVICE to remember the bravery of the Accrington Pals had a special significance for VIC members in attendance as both had been on the charity's Battlefields Tour.

Chief Executive Amanda Walton and Operations Manager Phil Speddy attended last September's tour which visited memorials and key sites from the First and Second World War.

The annual 11th (Service) Battalion, East Lancashire Regiment, The Accrington Pals Service was held at St John the Evangelist Church, Accrington.

The Pals, formed in 1914 from men across Accrington, Hyndburn, Burnley and Chorley, suffered devastating losses on the first day of the Battle of the Somme, with 585 casualties out of roughly 720 men who went into action.

Their sacrifice remains one of the most profound reminders of the cost borne by local communities.

Amanda said: "It was a very moving service and there were quite a few dignitaries in attendance and family members, along with local cadets."



New trip planner

VIC is delighted to announce we have a new volunteer who will be helping to co-ordinate future trips.

VIC member Andrea has taken over as Trips Co-ordinator and will be visiting all our outreach locations to ask members where they want to go and then arranging outings.



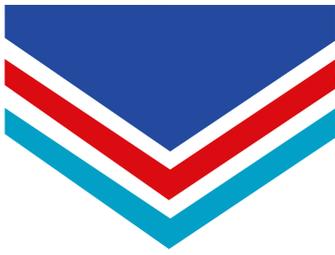
Jacko at Hartshead

A SPECIAL service of remembrance for the soldiers and civilians killed in the M62 coach bombing on February 4 1974 was attended by Veteran Jacko Pearce, who paraded the VIC Standard.

The annual service was held at the memorial at Hartshead Moor Services on the M62 near Brighouse on February 8.

Attendees remembered the four from the 2nd Battalion Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, three from the Royal Corps of Signals and the two Royal Artillery soldiers, along with three civilians, including children aged two and five, who lost their lives.

Jacko represented our veterans and our community with real pride, dignity and respect



Stay safe online

Collectors

HELPERS are being asked to volunteer their time to collect donations while the VIC Choir sings.

The choir already had around 13 bookings for this year and many are in supermarkets where volunteer collectors are needed to hold donation buckets. The choir raises thousands of pounds each year for VIC.

Anyone who can help is asked to call Administrator Amy Thompson on 01706 833180.

Collaboration

VIC is looking forward to working in collaboration with Rossendale Men's Sheds after helping with the interview process to appoint a new co-ordinator.

Kris Corps started with the organisation this month and has already reopened the shed in the grounds of Haslingden Community Link every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9am to 5pm.

New laser

VIC is awaiting delivery of a new laser etching machine so that our sublimation and etching services can be expanded.

Thanks to Lancashire County Council's Armed Forces Champion Gary Kniveton for providing the funding.

Carp fishing

THE next VIC Carp Fishing social will be on March 12-15 at Linear Fisheries, Oxford.

WE ARE working in partnership with Lancashire Police to delivering six Veterans Fraud Protect Advice Sessions across the county.

Veterans are increasingly targeted by online fraud, and Lancashire Police are working hard to combat this by offering practical guidance on staying safe online, recognising common scams, strengthening passwords, and understanding emerging threats.

The sessions will also ensure victims know how to report incidents and access support, while working with partners across Lancashire to build safer, more resilient communities.

VIC is proud to be working alongside Burnley FC in the Community, Armed Forces Support Group and Lancashire

Burnley – 10am Mon March 16
Burnley FC in the Community, Armed Forces Breakfast Club, Burnley Miners Social Club, 27A Plumbe St, Burnley BB11 3AA

Accrington – 10am Fri March 20
Veterans in Communities Drop in Centre, Accrington Arndale

Clitheroe – 10am Tues March 31
Trinity Methodist Church and Community Hub, Clitheroe Wesleyan Row, Parson Lane, Clitheroe BB7 2JY.

Barrowford – 10am Thurs April 2
Armed Forces Support Group, The Annex, Holmefield House, Gisburn Road, Barrowford BB9 8ND.

Haslingden – 12 noon Thurs April 9
VIC Centre, 12 Bury Road, Haslingden, Rossendale BB4 5PL.

Preston – 10am Tues April 14
Lancashire Armed Forces Association and VIC Sandbag Café, St George's Church, Georges Road (Lune Street), Preston PR1 2NP.

Armed Forces Association to bring these sessions directly to our veteran community.

We look forward to seeing you there. All events are free of charge.

PTSD help

A FREE online webinar for families and friends of veterans with PTSD and anger issues is being held on Tuesday March 17 from 12 noon-1pm.

Combat Stress Learning is hosting the free live webinar and in the one-hour session, Dr Vicky Aldridge, Principal Clinical Psychologist, will explore how PTSD and anger are linked.

The session is open to anyone who supports a veteran, whether a partner, parent, sibling or friend.

To attend, register on: <https://learning.combat-stress.org.uk/>

The webinar is supported by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust.



Bob Ross class

OUR next Painting in the Style of Bob Ross class will be on March 29 from 10.30am to 3.30pm.

The class, at the VIC Centre, Bury Road, Haslingden, will be led by Volunteer Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator Darren Horsnell.

The cost is £45 which includes materials and refreshments and this picture will be painted. A packed lunch is recommended.

To book a place contact Administrator Amy Thompson on 01706 833180 and pay a non-refundable deposit of £15.

£1,000 VIC donation

A HUGE thank you to everyone who nominated VIC to receive a Christmas bonus from the Benefact Group Movement for Good Draw.

Chief Executive Amanda Walton said: "VIC won £1,000 through the 12 Days of Giving campaign in December so thank you to all those who nominated VIC as a beneficiary. Please help us again by nominating us for 2026.

"It's really easy to do, it doesn't cost anything and VIC might win again. You've got to be in it, to win it."

To nominate visit: <https://movementforgood.com/draws/1000> – it literally takes seconds.

Fitness scheme

A NEW programme VIC-FIT, which we launched last month, now has 10 members who are signed up.

To ensure continuity, those on the programme have been buddied up, so they will have support from a fellow VIC member on their fitness journey.

The pilot scheme has been funded by a Rossendale Council grant, and allows the chosen veterans free use of Rossendale Leisure Trust facilities.

Although the initial pilot group is small, it is hoped that proven results will enable VIC expand the project and approach other authorities to get involved.



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

Parson Lane, Clitheroe, BB7 2JY.

Sandbag Cafe

10am-12.30pm

St George's Church, off Lune Street, Preston PR1 2NP. This is a joint session with Lancashire Armed Forces Association.

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.

HYNDBURN

Outreach / Drop-In/ Model Railway Club/ Art Group

FRIDAY 10am-3pm

VIC Hyndburn, Accrington Arndale Centre, BB5 1EX.

Accrington Stanley Breakfast Club/ Drop-In

LAST SATURDAY EVERY MONTH

10.30am-noon

Stanley Sports Hub, Thorneyholme Road, Accrington, BB5 6BD.

BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN

Veterans' football

MONDAY 8-9pm

Blackburn Rovers Indoor Centre, Ewood Park, Blackburn BB2 4JF. A cost applies.

Outreach Service

TUESDAY 10am-noon

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

Contact Chris McGrail 07787 585109

RIBBLE VALLEY & PRESTON

TUESDAYS

Redoubt Coffee Morning and Outreach

10am-noon

Trinity Methodist Church, Wesleyan Row,

VIC – 01706 833180

Chief Executive Amanda Walton

amandawalton@vic.org.uk

Operations Manager Phil Speddy

philspeddy@vic.org.uk

Administrator Amy Thompson

amythompson@vic.org.uk

Outreach Worker Steve Butterworth

stevebutterworth@vic.org.uk

Project Worker Ray Sharkey

raysharkey@vic.org.uk 07741 902 188

Community Capacity Builder

John Pluckwell

johnpluckwell@vic.org.uk

Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator

Darren Horsnell

darrenhorsnell@vic.org.uk

VIC Choir Bookings Barry Hyde

b.hyde@ntlworld.com

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

Veterans In Communities
Charity Number 1151194

Want to help?

To support VIC
scan this QR code



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