

VIC Newsletter



IN Bikers red ride raises £4,000

PROJECTS that aid veterans received £4,000 from the Ring of Red M60 (Manchester) Remembrance ride.

On Remembrance Sunday 2024, thousands of bikers and supporters lined up at Birch Services wearing red and then, in convoy, they left to complete a circuit of the M60 motorway that loops around Manchester.

For the second year, Veterans In Communities was selected by the event organisers to benefit from money raised through donations on the day and the sale of merchandise.

The Haslingden Centre was opened up on a Sunday to welcome the team from the Ring of Red including organisers Jeanette Netty Kiely and Mandi Latham-Holmes and riders from Throttle Twisters MCC who rode over from Oldham.

VIC Chief Executive Amanda Walton said: "We

have not decided how the funds will be used, but they will all go for the benefit of our veteran members to help subsidise trips and other activities.

"It is important to me, that donations kindly given to VIC are not spent on core costs of running the business and that our members benefit from the generosity of others."

In May, VIC has been invited to the Throttle Twisters for their annual camp at Alderley Edge.

VIC Operations Manager Bob Elliott said: "It was a great opportunity to bring together the Throttle Twisters Motor Cycle Club and the Ring of Red, as both support VIC and we also had members of VIC bring their own bikes along.

"We would like to say thank you to Ring of Red for supporting us again this year and some of their members will also be on the camp in May.

"We were able to show



both groups around the VIC Centre and they also learnt a lot more about what goes on there and met some of our members."

Amanda added: "We are so grateful for the continued support from Ring of Red

and to everyone who donated on the day; it makes such a difference to the support we can provide."

VIC has again been selected as the charity for November's Ring of Red.

Forces films cinema date

ALL three Stories in Transition films will be shown at the Reel Cinema in Rochdale on Friday May 16 at 9am.

Return, Belong Prosper not only saw members of VIC working with Anglian Ruskin University to tell their stories in front of the camera, but they also got to be involved in the making of the film.

The doors will open at 8.30am for 9am start and will be followed by Q and A session. The screening has been organised in conjunction with Jamet Elmsley Armed Forces Champion for Rochdale.

Also being shown are films made about Waterloo Uncovered and Return to Starboard.

VE80 celebrations



THERE are lots of events being held to celebrate the 80th anniversary of VE Day.

VIC is organising two celebrations, one in Haslingden and a second in Clitheroe.

On **Thursday May 8**, exactly 80 years since Victory in Europe was declared, VIC is organising a breakfast and meet up for veterans from all over Rossendale at Haslingden Community Link from **9.30am to 11.30am**.

The breakfast costs just £2 per person and has been subsidised by a grant from Lancashire County Council.

In the afternoon, the VIC Centre in Bury Road will be

open to all and a special VE themed quiz will be held.

Also on **May 8**, veteran Bob Brindley will be lighting a candle at Rakefoot Methodist Church, Crawshawbooth.

While VIC Ribble Valley will be holding its usual meet up at Trinity Methodist Church, Wesleyan Row, Clitheroe, on **Tuesday May 6** and all activities will have a VE-Day celebration theme.

Project Worker Ray Sharkey said: "At 10am we are all getting suited and booted as a mark of respect to all who fell during the Second World War."

"Quizmaster Ron Flowers will deliver a VE day quiz to the Trinity community people at the

'Warm Hub' after our own Coffee Morning and Quiz.

"We will also be visited by Steven Walmsley from Healthwatch Lancashire who will be accompanied by the CEO of Healthwatch England."

VIC Creative Hub is also stall selling a selection of craft items.

Trinity Remembrance Garden, which VIC wrote a supporting letter for, will be officially opened.

Members of VIC Amanda Walton, Chief Executive, and Phil Speddy will be present at a special VE Day 80 Civic Evensong at Blackburn Cathedral on **Saturday May 11 at 4pm** and at Lancaster Castle for a beacon lighting ceremony.

Other VE events

Mon May 5: noon to 8pm – free open-air music festival at Witton Park, Blackburn, organised by Royal British Legion; **noon to 5pm** – display of military vehicles, stalls, food and games at Read and Simonstone Constitutional Club.

Thurs May 8: 7.30pm – Church and Oswaldtwistle Royal British Legion concert at Immanuel Church, Oswaldtwistle with East Lancs Concert Band and Accrington Pipe Band; evening beacon lighting Crown Point Road, Burnley; **8.45pm** – civic event at the Flag Market Preston and beacon lighting; beacon lighting at Clitheroe Castle.

Sat May 10; noon-4pm – event hosted by Haslingden Roots Team along with the Friends of Haslingden Cemetery at Holden Hall Cemetery, Haslingden.

Sun May 11: 1pm-5pm – VE celebration at The Ashcroft, Whitworth.



Ops Manager final day

OUR Operations Manager Bob Elliott is retiring from his role on Thursday May 15 and an open house will be held in the afternoon at the VIC Centre in Haslingden.

There will be a special themed quiz about Bob and his time at VIC and all are welcome to attend.

Horses scent of adventure

A PIONEERING project, which veteran Bob Brindley has been involved with, was featured on Channel 5's Springtime on the Farm.

Kathryn Williams from Spring Vale Farm – Adventure Neighbourhood in Green Haworth, and Maria have developed an inspiring project training horses as sniffer animals and VIC's Bob Brindley is an integral part of the team.

Bob has given his time every week for several years to exploring scent-work with horses.

This June, all three have been shortlisted to attend an international equine behaviourist conference to present their work and findings.



Team building

A TEAM building event will be held at Woodland Xperience in Kirkby Stephen, Cumbria, on Saturday May 10 and a team from VIC, and others will be taking part.

The centre provides a safe outdoor space for respite and recovery for Armed Forces, emergency services and the veteran community.

VIC has held previous team building events at Alternate Forces, Burnley Football in the Community's Whitehough and Outdoor Elements in Simonstone.

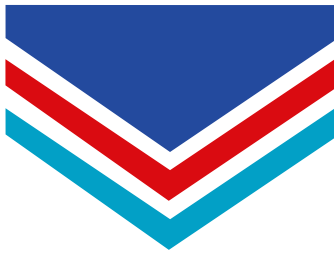
Hearts to hold

MEMBERS of the Crafty Chatters are making twin hearts for bereaved relatives that pass away in hospital.

One is placed in the hand of the loved one and the second is kept by the relative.

Open all hours

THE VIC Centre was open for veterans to drop in on the Bank Holidays over Easter – Good Friday and Easter Monday.



Camping trip with bikers

VETERANS and supporters will enjoy a camping weekend away from May 15-18 with the Throttle Twisters Motor Cycle Club in Alderley Edge.

The Chadderton club, which has members from VIC, kindly invited us to join them on last year's camp and a great time was had by all.

VIC will be serving hot dogs on the Friday night and there will be a fundraising evening on the Saturday when fabulous band Smudge will be playing.



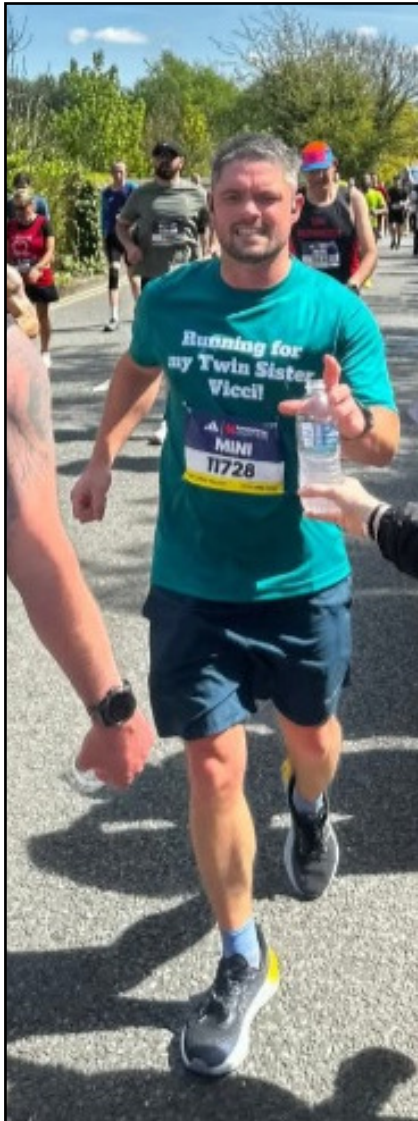
Mini faces marathon injury battle

RUNNER Michael 'Mini' Leather soldiered on to complete the Manchester Marathon in aid of his twin sister's cancer treatment, despite being injured.

Ahead of the event, veteran Mini had already injured his ankle and, after running on it for 11 miles, he caused further damage. Undeterred he ran the remaining 15 miles to the finish line.

Mini was running to raise money for his twin sister who is fighting an aggressive form of cancer and needs money to fund her treatment.

To donate visit <https://gofund.me/aa08ecae>



Bike ride challenge sponsor appeal

BUSINESS sponsors are being sought to back our marathon Riding for Forces and Families cycle ride from London to Haslingden.

The ride, during Armed Forces Week in June, will see Veterans Bob Brindley and Phil Speddy, and his wife Mandy, using rivers and canals where possible to make the 260-mile journey.

Phil said: "We are looking for businesses to support us and we have different packages available.

"We will be cycling for a week, and will have a support crew, so we will be booking

campsites on the way up, as we will need to have somewhere to have a shower and wash kit after a day's cycling.

"We are getting sponsored to complete the ride and will be raising money for three charities – VIC, Scotty's Little Soldiers and Friends of Lancashire Army Cadet Force."

Speddy will be in Asda Rawtenstall with a static bike on Saturday May 3 to promote the fundraiser and encourage backing from shoppers.

Businesses can contact 01706 833180 to find out how they can support the ride and promote their company.

Share your experience

A TEAM of volunteers with lived experience of the Armed Forces are being recruited by Step Together

Volunteering, a partner of the Thrive Together NW programme.

The team will be helping



veterans and personnel who are facing medical discharges to access all the support available in their area.

For more information visit <https://step-together.org.uk/armed-forces-community-programme>

Fundraising fishing



Five artists from the VIC Art group enjoyed a trip to Hardcastle Crags, above Hebden Bridge, when they gained inspiration for future compositions.

FABULOUS fish were caught in the latest Carp Social to benefit VIC.

VIC Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator Darren Horsnell attended the event which was organised by his son Barry.

He said: "Last year, through all the Carp Social events, £3,500 was raised for VIC.

"The weather was great, plenty of fish got caught, there was great company, great food and drinks; what more could you ask for.

"Huge thanks to Carl Freshwater for supplying and cooking the food for the Walthamstow Reservoir carp charity event. We are already looking forward to the next one at Sandhurst Fisheries. Thanks everyone for making another great success."



Thank you plaque

A BESPOKE slate plaque was made and presented as a thank you to Melba Swintex.

VIC veterans Bob Brindley, Willie, Phil Speddy and Operations Manager Bob Elliott visited the company at Stubbins Vale Mill, Stubbins to present owner Michelle Dawson and a member of staff Sharon Gilligan with a laser-engraved slate they had produced.

Last November, when the

members of VIC were completing a Memorial Walk around Rossendale, they were enjoying a well-earned bacon butty in Stubbins when Michelle spotted them as she was driving past.

She pulled over and approached them with a kind heart, some uplifting words of support and a donation.

VIC wanted to personally thank the business for its generous gesture.

Candle making workshop

A CANDLE making workshop will be held at VIC and anyone interested in taking part should contact Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator Darren Horsnell for more information.

Last year, Darren's giant painting of a rhino was raffled off and the proceeds have helped to reduce the price of new workshops.

The candle making workshop would normally cost £65, but the funds raised from the painting mean the workshop is only £20.

Contact 01706 833180.





Art is my lifesaver

Battlefields Tour 2025

OUR minibus is now full for this year's Battlefields Tour which will be leaving on Sunday August 31.

The trip will take in the Normandy Battlefields and many historically important places of interest across Northern France.

The tour will continue onto Ypres and the participants will witness the nightly service and poignant Last Post.

The itinerary for the trip has now been approved, hotel bookings are being made and monthly meetings are being held to keep everyone who is attending informed of the plans.

by Bonnie Wilson

SPECIAL VE80 Day items and Fathers' Day presents have been made by VIC's Creative Hub.

The hub offers bespoke engraved keepsakes and the product range is seasonal to make sure there is always a perfect gift for any occasion.

The keepsakes can be personalised with words, a design or a logo.

It is run by Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator Darren Horsnell who likes nothing more than sharing his love of art.

Darren said: "I never thought art would be such a life saver; it

would be easy to dismiss it, but to me art is more beneficial than any medication.

"When I paint all the bad stuff is pushed to the back of my head.

"Given the opportunity to do what I do is a life saver."

Art was one of the foundation projects at VIC when it opened in 2012 and two classes run every week on Tuesday and Friday at the VIC Centre.

Stalls have also been held in Tesco Haslingden and Rawtenstall and Asda Rawtenstall to sell items and artwork direct to the public.

The stall also provides an opportunity for veterans to meet

new people and raise awareness of the work of VIC.

When an artists'

print is sold by the charity, 25 per cent of the profit goes to VIC.



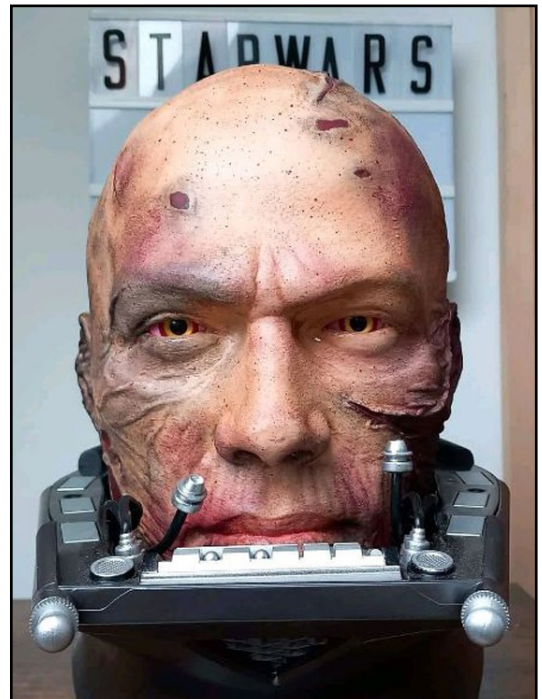
For more information on items and prices please call Amy Thompson on 01706 833180 or email amy.thompson@vic.org.uk

Win Darth Vader head

OUR friends at the Imperial Alliance Star Wars costume group are raffling off this incredible Darth Vader head with all proceeds going to VIC.

Tickets are £1 each and the head will be going on view at the Star Wars Fan Fun Day, at Ewood Park, Blackburn, on May the 4th (of course).

Contact VIC on 01706 833180 for tickets.



Raffle shared between charities

A HUGE thank you to the Patient Participation Group at Irwell Medical Practice, in Bacup, for donating £250 to VIC.

Operations Manager

Bob Elliott said: "We would like to thank the PPG, and Chairman Margaret Talukdar, for this kind donation."

A raffle was held which raised just under £600 and the practice made

the total up to £1,000.

The funds were split between four good causes, VIC, Beacon Dementia and Wellbeing, Bacup Family Centre and Stubblee Community Greenhouses.

What's On and Where



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

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.

RIBBLE VALLEY & PRESTON

TUESDAYS

Redoubt Coffee Morning and Outreach

10am-noon

Trinity Methodist Church, Wesleyan Row,

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.

VIC – 01706 833180

Chief Executive Amanda Walton

amandawalton@vic.org.uk

Operations Manager Bob Elliott

bobelliott@vic.org.uk 07961 554 006

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 Brian Hawke

brianhawke@vic.org.uk 07741 902 343

Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator Darren

Horsnell

darrenhorsnell@vic.org.uk

VIC Choir Bookings Barry Hyde

barryhyde@vic.org.uk

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

Armed Forces Support Group

01282 613132

Veterans In Communities
Charity Number 1151194

HYNDBURN

Outreach / Drop-In/ Model Railway Club

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

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