

Operation War Graves begins

WAR graves in Bacup Cemetery are being catalogued and cleaned up by members of VIC in a project that has been code-named 'Operation War Graves 100'

VIC manager Bob Elliott said: "We were approached by the councillors and Stacksteads Countryside Park Group to see whether we'd be interested in doing something to mark the 100 years commemoration of the start of the First World War. The group was concerned that many of the graves no longer had headstones and many were in need of repair."

Local historian Wendy Lord from Bacup Natural History Society said: "There are at least 60 graves up there, some need cleaning

up, some no longer have headstones and some have 'disappeared'."

Wendy has written an illustrated book about the local war graves.

VIC will be working with a numbers of organisations to achieve Operation War Graves 100: Rossendale Borough Council, the War Graves Commission, The Royal British Legion and it is hoped to get the support from local schools, cadets and community groups.

Bob added: "We will be replacing missing headstones if possible with some simple crosses and clean up the headstones where possible. VIC has 12 months to make sure everything is completed in time for the 100th anniversary.



We would like arrange a special event next year to mark the centenary and we would like to try to find any surviving relatives.

"Once the graves have been cleaned up we hope the relatives will take over the future maintenance."



Anyone who would like to help VIC complete the project can contact 01706 871730 or email info@veteransincommunities.org

Why not volunteer?

TO CELEBRATE Volunteers' Week VIC will be attending events in Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale.

On Thursday June 6th members of VIC will be in Rawtenstall Town Centre next to Do Dah's Cafe on Bank Street.

On Friday June 7th VIC will be in Nelson town centre near the library and on Saturday June 8th members will be in Burnley at the Band Stand and the Charity Arch.

All of the events are

on from 10am to 1pm.

VIC Manager Bob Elliott said: "We are looking at ways of reaching serving and ex-service personnel living in the community, these days can be ideal as we can speak to members of the armed forces community and members of the public."

"The aim of VIC attending the volunteer days is to show off the work we do and to recruit new members to help on our many ongoing projects."

Flying start to outreach sessions in Heywood

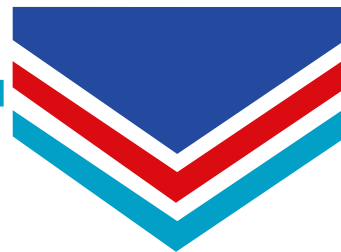
THE new outreach service in Heywood got off to a flying start with the first client calling in just half an hour after the sessions began.

VIC administrative officer Suzanne Preston, *pictured*, is leading the project. Outreach sessions are held every Wednesday at Heywood Sports Village between 10.30am and 3pm.

VIC manager Bob Elliott said: "Our sessions have got off to a great start. We have had three veterans call-in in the first two weeks and Suzanne is making sure they get the right advice. We have had lots of further meetings with Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council and Link4Life about how to take it forward and develop the programme into other areas of Rochdale and Middleton in the future."

The programme has been funded by a grant from Heywood Middleton and Rochdale Clinical Commissioning Group.





Honour for Dorothy – Woman of the Year

TRUSTEE of REAL and supporter of VIC Dorothy Mitchell was named as Rossendale Woman of the Year 2013.

The Rossendale Hospice award was presented to her at a glittering lunch at the Red Hall Hotel, Shuttleworth, when guest speaker was former MP Edwina Currie, a keen supporter of the hospice movement.

Manager of VIC Bob Elliott said: "Dorothy and REAL have been very supportive of VIC over the last two years and we would not be in the position we are today without the work she has been doing behind the scenes.

"On behalf of the members of VIC, we thank you and hope you continue to support veterans and their families across East Lancashire. She has truly made a difference to the people of Rossendale."

As well as founding Rossendale Hospice and setting up Haslingden Community Link, Dorothy helped to set up PEER Support (People Encouraging Enterprise in Rossendale) and charity REAL.

Photograph: Anna McMullan from AJM photography



Art show takes shape

A STUNNING arts and crafts exhibition celebrating the work of veterans already has more than 100 pieces ready to go on display.

Rossendale charity VIC, that works with veterans and their families to help them prosper when they return to their community, is holding the exhibition at Alder Grange High School's AG6 building in Rawtenstall on Saturday July 20th.

Veteran Darren Horsnell runs the art group for VIC at the REAL office in Bacup and also in Heywood.

He said: "I am hoping that we will have about 150 different pieces of work on show. Already I have artwork

from veterans who are supported by Combat Stress, from our own art groups; we have a sculpture, models, a poem and paintings in a variety of different media.

"I have written to several art companies and they have generously donated prizes to be awarded to the work considered the best by three independent judges."

The exhibition will be on from 12 noon to 4pm. Refreshments and light snacks will be available and a percentage of all sales will be donated to VIC.

For more information call 01706 871730 or email info@veteransincommunities.org

College courses

VIC has been in discussion with AccRoss College with the aim of running a number of courses being offered to veterans.

VIC manager Bob said: "We have confirmed two courses for our members that run over the summer; Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS) and Information, Advice and Guidance Level 3."

The courses will be run at the REAL offices in Bacup. The PTLLS course will be advertised across Bacup and it is hoped that many other community groups will have volunteers interested in attending.

Health management

SIX members of VIC are in the middle of an eight-week Manage Your Health course.

It aims to enable veterans and their partners to manage their disorders, support each other and make positive contributions to their communities. It is hoped those who complete the course may also be able to train as support workers so they can use their newly acquired skills to help others.

Fancy a spot of fishing?

VIC will be holding a fishing and family day trip on Wednesday 29th May in Heywood. Heywood and District Angling Society have kindly allowed us to use their lake for the day.

For more information on the above items contact 01706 871730.



Introducing: Diane Executive Director

PARTNERSHIP working is top of the agenda for Diane Owen VIC Executive Director.

Diane is a Registered Mental Health nurse by profession and has worked in a range of different jobs including mental health, adult teaching and in the drug and alcohol field.

Latterly she was Lancashire's Public Health Network lead and sub-regional lead for alcohol which involved promoting partnership working across the North West and strategic alcohol policy development. She has a degree in Psychology with Health Studies and has an MBA (Masters in Business Administration).

She brings her wide experience to her role with the remit to develop the infrastructure and organisation of VIC and develop partnership working.

Diane said: "I had a stroke last year and due to NHS reorganisation when fit for work I didn't have a job to go back to. One of VIC's trustees Dorothy Mitchell convinced me I needed to put my skills and abilities to good use in volunteering to work with the VIC team which subsequently led to the role of Executive Director.

"I am confident that we are building a strong team and we are making sure that we do it with the members and not to the members. They have to take the lead and they have to be the basis from where we start.

"Ex-service personnel have already served their country but they are also very good at serving their community.

"VIC can help them make a difference to others and improve their own lives at the same time. Of course we must not also forget the sacrifices made by the ex-service personnel families and



the impacts of service life on them."

She said what was also important was that the gap was bridged to help those who had served to be able to go back into civilian jobs once they had finished their military careers.

Diane is now looking for more volunteers with a military or emergency service background to become members of VIC.

Remembering that the Armed Forces Community Covenant is a partnership with the general community, Diane is also keen to promote volunteers from the wider community to become involved with VIC to help deliver activities and outreach services.

"To help you need to have good listening skills and need to be able to relate to the needs of veterans," she said.

"We are making great progress and VIC is going from strength to strength to make a difference to the armed forces communities and their families."

To find out how you can help contact VIC on 01706 871730.



Hyndburn

Signing to support

VIC is now working with the five boroughs in East Lancashire to take forward their Armed Forces Community Covenants.

On Tuesday the 7th May members of VIC attended the signing of Hyndburn AFCC and Blackburn with Darwen AFCC along with the public, private and third sector organisations to commit to making a difference to the lives of veterans and their families

VIC is also involved in Ribble Valley where the covenant is being prepared and will be signed in June. Members were also closely involved in developing the Rochdale covenant, which was signed last November.

Manager of VIC Bob Elliott said: "It is important that the covenants that are signed lead to real promises and pledges that can make a big difference to the lives of the veterans and families living in the areas.

"We are delighted to be able to get involved and make our own pledges regarding the actions VIC will be taking in those areas to help veterans return, belong and prosper in the communities to which they live."



Blackburn



What's On and Where

ROSSENDALE

VIC Outreach Service

MONDAY

11am-3pm

Haslingden Community Link, Bury Road, Haslingden, BB4 5PG.

WEDNESDAY

11am-3pm

REAL Office, St James Square, Bacup, OL13 9AA.

VIC Art Group and drop-in

FRIDAY

11am-3pm

REAL Office, St James Square, Bacup, OL13 9AA

Walking Group

THURSDAY

Walks are arranged on the 2nd and 4th Thursday, weather permitting.

VIC Family Support Group

FRIDAY

A support network that meet every week at 1pm at Crystal Rocks, Bacup Road, Waterfoot, BB4 7AW.

HEYWOOD

VIC Outreach Service

WEDNESDAY

10.30am-2.30pm

Heywood Sports Village, West Starkey Street, Heywood, OL10 4TW.

Walks will be held fortnightly on **Thursdays** combined with the Rossendale walking group.

Art Group sessions will be held on alternate **Wednesdays**.

Combat Stress Helpline

0800 138 1619

PCT Military Veterans Service

0161 253 6638

The Royal British Legion

08457 725 725

Rossendale Citizens' Advice Bureau

0844 499 4121 (from a landline)

0300 456 2552 (from a mobile)

The Samaritans

01706 830999

LCFT Veteran Special Interest Group

Lisa Graham 01254 226013

Useful Contacts

VIC

Manager Bob Elliott

bobelliott@veteransincommunities.org

07961 554 006 / 01706 871730

Suzanne Preston

suzannepreston@veteransincommunities.org

VIC Art Group

Darren Horsnell

darrenhorsnell@veteransincommunities.org

VIC supported by:



Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale
Clinical Commissioning Group

Putting people first



VIC update

THE Worrall family have moved into the house in Clayton-Le-Moors this month, there are still some smaller jobs to be finished off and Andrew is in the process of doing these jobs.

VIC has had a number of meetings across East Lancashire and Rochdale this month; we have met with Remploy with a view to working together to support veterans back into employment, East Lancashire Chamber, the Royal British Legion, Link 4Life and many more .

In Pendle we are working with a new group consisting of other representatives from the RBL, SSAFA, housing, East Lancashire CCG, Pendle borough Council and Salute. This group has been named 'Pendle Armed Forces Community Group'. The group is looking to open a 'one-stop shop' in Nelson where veterans and their families can access a range of services.

VIC will be attending a number of Armed Forces Days across East Lancashire and in Heywood we will be partnering up with Link4Life.

VIC, and some of its members, were invited to give feedback on some of the difficulties ex-service personnel and their families experience accessing NHS services. This piece of work by the Joint Services Needs Assessment team was commissioned by the NHS.

