



Commemorating WW1

A CLEVERLY crafted half-scale model of a First World War tank has been constructed on the gateway into Rossendale from Rochdale.

The tank is part of VIC's War Graves 100 project, which has also seen work being carried out to renew a dry stone wall at the rear of Whitworth Memorial Gardens.

Ex-serviceman David Joddrell created the living sculpture from willow on the main road at Healey Corner, Whitworth.

Because the willow is alive, it will continue to grow throughout the summer and the trees' branches will be continuously woven into the

structure making it more solid.

David was an armourer in the Royal Electrical Mechanical Engineers and was based in Germany and Cyprus and had two tours in Northern Ireland.

He has been a member of VIC for two years.

Whitworth Neighbourhood Forum allocated a grant to VIC for the project and David hopes to create a further willow arch over steps in the gardens.

David said: "I created a First World War Mark 4 male tank. It has a gun sponson on either side, which holds a cannon, and a willow machine gun at the front. I also created a willow soldier.

"I have deliberately left

the back of the tank open so that children will be able to go inside it."

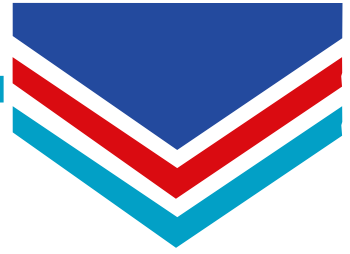
The area around the sculpture will be planted with poppy seeds that have been specially imported by VIC from Belgium.

In the memorial gardens VIC members were trained to build dry stone walls by Newground.

They were joined by people on Community Payback who also helped to rebuild the wall, which is now 1/3 complete.

Next month the project moves on to Bacup Cemetery. New memorial stones will be added to 50 graves of soldiers who lost their lives in the First World War.





POSH frocks and dinner suits were the order of the day when VIC supported the Mayor of Rossendale's Ball at The Riverside in Whitworth. Members of VIC had a table at the event, which was raising money for Mayor Councillor Amanda Robertson's chosen charity – young people.



ARTISTS from VIC put their work on show at Padiham Arts and Crafts Market held in the Town Hall in Padiham.

Grant boosts artistic plan

VETERANS will be taking their art into the community thanks to a grant from the Ministry of Defence.

VIC now has a dedicated art room since taking over the former Mary Hindle Centre in Haslingden.

Arts and crafts co-ordinator Darren Horsnell said: "It is great having a room just for arts and crafts

"Now the grant has been approved, we are going to use it as a community hub and I would like to have different craft groups running in it each day. We are planning to introduce a knit and natter group, crochet, photography, novelty clock making, costume jewellery, card making, rock painting, salt dough and glass painting.

"We now have a kiln so we will also be starting porcelain painting and glazing.

"We were granted just over

£19,000 and this will enable us to hold art sessions in the community to include people living in sheltered accommodation.

"These will be held at Lacey Court in Haslingden involving



residents of Jubilee Court in Helmshore and a sheltered scheme in Stacksteads.

"We are also going to be working with schools and colleges starting with Alder Grange.

"I will be running a four-hour painting session once a month

to show people how to paint in the style of Bob Ross. This session will cost £40 per person but all materials will be provided and anyone attending will take away their painting."

Art has proved a life saver and a means of escape for Darren, a veteran of the Falkland Islands and Northern Ireland. The horrors he witnessed left deep mental scars but he can escape from his troubles just by picking up a paintbrush.

He has been delighted to share his passion and pass on his skills at the popular Friday sessions.

"Art is much more than just painting," he said. "Now we can extend what we are doing and introduce art to many more people from the community."

Spreading the word

MANAGER Bob Elliott and VIC member Suzanne Preston were special guests at the spring conference for the Lancashire Association of Local Councils.

Bob explained the local support for ex-service personnel making the transition between the forces and Civvy Street and also about the activities and projects the group has undertaken.

Standards honoured

VIC arranged for standards to be at the funeral of ex-soldier Dennis McMahon.

Dennis, whose sister-in-law Carol cleans at the VIC Centre, served in the Queen's Lancashire Regiment for seven years. His funeral was held at St James Parish Church, Haslingden.

Outreach success

OUTREACH in Blackburn with Darwen has hit the ground running and already seven veterans have attended sessions, which are held every Tuesday from 10am to 1pm at Darwen Town Hall.

Floral tribute

A SCHOOL will be aglow with beautiful red poppies in the summer as part of commemorations for the start of the First World War.

VIC members attended St Mary's CE School, Rawtenstall, to help plant poppy seeds.



Friends reunited



SOLDIERS who met at basic training and both ended up homeless on their return to Civvy Street have been reunited 21 years later thanks to the Military Veterans Service (MVS) and VIC.

Chris Jones and Tony Stubbs were just 15-and-a-half when they signed up and they met when they were 16 on a Junior Leaders Course at Nuneaton.

On passing this course, they joined different units. Tony, now 38, completed his training in Newcastle and went into the King's Own Royal Border Regiment for 15 years completing three tours in Northern Ireland and Germany.

When he left the army he struggled to fit

back in and admitted: "I ended up homeless and getting involved in weapons and in with the wrong crowd.

"Two years ago I lost my son; he killed himself and he was only 16. Then 18 months ago I was referred to the MVS and they put me back on the right road."

Tony, from Bolton, became a mentor for the MVS and was asked to visit a former soldier who was also struggling to cope.

When he called at the flat in Bury, it was not long before Chris and Tony realised they had been through basic training together.



Chris, now 39, went on to complete his training in Litchfield and joined the Royal Welsh Fusiliers. However incidents during his training were to haunt him and after three years' service he was discharged. He too served in Northern Ireland.

"Everything that happened while I was training just got too much and I was doing drugs

and fighting," he said.

"Within seven months of leaving the army I was back doing drugs and I tried to kill myself. I was homeless in Liverpool and was in a really bad place.

"Then the MVS stepped in 16 months ago. I was homeless

and VIC helped me to get a flat and then got me involved in a project over Christmas."

Chris was driver and Tony co-driver in the project organised by VIC in association with the MVS.

As holidays are known to be difficult times for veterans, a series of activities were planned from bowling

and helping to feed homeless people in a hostel to badminton and a Christmas lunch.

Chris and Tony also helped in a similar project this Easter. It saw veterans bowling, cinema, fishing and visiting a dry bar in Liverpool to watch the football.

Tony said: "Coming to VIC is enjoyable; there is always someone you can talk to."

Chris added: "I normally just lock myself away and keep myself to myself but MVS and VIC have got me to get involved. I enjoy being a part of the projects and being a part of something.

"I feel at home here. Everyone is ex-services and understands where I am coming from. It has given me a focus."

Fabulous fishing

HEYWOOD and District Angling Society is kindly offering VIC members a concessionary membership of just £10.

The membership runs from August, but VIC members will not have to wait as, in addition to the concessionary rate, they can benefit from free membership until July 31.

They must have an Environment Agency rod licence which is available online or from main post offices.

If you would like to become a member then contact any of the VIC team on 01706 833180 or email info@veteransincommunities.org

Helping hands

VETERANS swung into action to help a comrade who needed a shed clearing because it had become unsafe.

Members of VIC were made aware of the issue by Tracey Vick, whose fiancé is Darren Horsnell VIC arts and crafts co-ordinator.

Tracey said: "I care for John Stewart's wife Marny and the shed in their back garden of their home in Haslingden was in such a poor condition it creaked and groaned whenever it was windy.

"John is 82 and was conscripted to the army as a clerk. He was planning to take the shed down



himself but I couldn't let that happen so I asked the lads to help.

"A team from VIC came out and flattened the shed and it is now going to be removed. The shed was so close to the house that if the wind had knocked it down it would have shattered their bathroom window and could have blocked the back door into their home."

Pupils set to remember those who fell

ARTISTIC secondary school children will be having their portraits of soldiers made into a calendar.

The VIC project, led by Alder Grange Community High School in Rawtenstall, will see pupils from all six high schools in Rossendale painting pictures. The best 10 from each school will go forward for judging and, of those, two will be selected for the calendar.

The project is part of VIC's War Graves 100, which has been funded by a Heritage Lottery grant.

Primary schools will also be involved when next month pupils will be asked to write a soldier's name on a rock and create a cairn of the rocks at each school.



ROSSENDALE

VIC Outreach Services

MONDAY-FRIDAY

11am-1pm

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

MONDAY

10-12 noon

Bacup Library, St James Square, Bacup,
OL13 9AH

VIC Singing Group

THURSDAY

6.30-8.30pm

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

VIC Art Group and drop-in

FRIDAY

11am-3pm

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

Walking Group

THURSDAY

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

HEYWOOD

VIC Outreach Service

WEDNESDAY

11am-2.30pm

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

Badminton

3pm-4pm

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

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

BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN

VIC Outreach Service

TUESDAY

10am-1pm

Darwen Town Hall, Croft Street, Darwen,
BB3 1BQ.

PENDLE

VIC Outreach Service

WEDNESDAY

10am-1pm

Ace Centre, Cross Street, Nelson, BB9 7NN.

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

Mental Health Helpline

0500 639000 Monday to Friday 7pm - 11pm

Saturday & Sunday 12 noon to 12 midnight

Royal Air Forces Association

01772 426930

East Lancashire Single Point of Access

via GP or self-referral

01282 657116

Contacts

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VIC update

APRIL has proved to be a very busy month as we have now established ourselves in our new location and are getting many referrals from a number of agencies.

Our members have also been learning a host of new skills. Courses have been undertaken in risk assessment, tree felling and coppicing and tool maintenance. All run by Prospects of Accrington. Additionally they learnt dry stone walling skills thanks to Newground.

Our artists are making great strides and exhibited at the Red Rose Recovery exhibition at the University of Central Lancashire in Preston and even walked away with prizes.

Some of these will be available to bid on at the yard sale which we will now be holding on May Day May 5 in the yard at the rear of the VIC Centre. Spaces are available – just contact 01706 833180 to book.

We are looking forward to beginning our War Graves 100 project in earnest in Bacup Cemetery next month and giving those who paid the ultimate price the recognition they deserve with beautifully crafted memorial stones created by Chislehursts in Bacup.

Once again, people on Community Payback will be helping in this very rewarding project and we hope the families appreciate the time and effort that has gone into remembering their loved ones.

Don't forget our centre will be officially opened in June during Armed Forces Week.

Find us on
Facebook
www.facebook.com
VIC Veterans In Communities