

# Young volunteer stuns with artistic talent

**TEENAGER Robert Shingler, who is completing his Duke of Edinburgh award by helping out at VIC, astounded veterans with his incredible painting talent.**

The Deputy Head Boy at Alder Grange School initially came to the centre in Haslingden to assist older veterans improve their IT skills.

Robert, who is 15 next month, has been working with former Merchant Navy seaman Joe Davis to help him to better understand computers.

Operations Manager Bob Elliott said "Robert has been coming in after school on a Thursday and is enjoying it so much he also came in over the

weekend and at Easter.

"He helped with the on going refurbishment of the centre and also assisted with admin work. He said that he quite liked painting and decided to go in the art room and have a go. He had a few tips from Steve Butterworth and his first painting stunned everyone."

The vibrant landscape also overwhelmed Robert's mum Gemma who posted on Facebook: "Robert has painted this? He amazes me! He is putting his school holidays to good use."

Once he has completed his volunteer work with VIC as part of his D of E, Robert has already decided that he wants to continue to help our organisation.



## Greggs grant

**A BIG thank you to the Greggs Foundation Local Community Grants for supporting the work of Veterans In Communities to the tune of £1,790.**

VIC Chief Executive Liz Hamilton was successful in gaining the grant which will go towards a team building day, outdoor activities, social inclusion trips and help to pay for a number of Wellbeing Sessions.

Liz said: "We would like to thank Greggs for their support. This grant will enable us to continue our planned activities for the coming year."

We already have a host of activities planned including walks and social inclusion trips and for more information check our website.

## VIC Easter opening

**OUR Open All Hours project saw 15 members of VIC visit the centre in Haslingden on Easter Monday.**

As some had been on a trip to London on Good Friday there was plenty to discuss and members enjoyed a relaxed social occasion.

VIC obtained funding from the Armed Forces Covenant to pilot opening the centre at times when it

would normally be closed.

It proved hugely popular, especially over the Bank Holiday, Christmas and New Year period, which are always a particularly difficult time for some veterans.

Operations Manager Bob Elliott said: "This time we didn't organise lots of different activities, but the members who attended enjoyed the chance to sit and chat and discuss Good Friday and also what they had been up to at Easter.

## Fireman Sam finds a pal

**OUR latest social inclusion trip saw VIC members visiting the Fire Services Museum in**



**Rochdale**

A good time was had by all, especially former Merchant Navy seaman Joe Davis who decided to try to join Fireman Sam.

On Friday May 12 there will be a social inclusion trip to Greater Manchester Police Museum and the crew van will leave the centre at 9am. On Saturday May 20, VIC will be attending Bury Breakfast Club followed by a visit to the Fusilier Museum. To book call 01706 833180

## Vandals wreck school shed...

*but ex-pupil offers new one*

**SCHOOLCHILDREN were left devastated when their play shed installed by our veterans was destroyed by youths.**

The shed, in the playground of St James CE Primary School in Haslingden, was part of playground improvement being carried out by VIC.

However, a former pupil of the school Musfequr Choudhury, who jointly owns of Hall and Hanley in Manchester has contacted VIC's Operations Manager Bob Elliott and offered the pupils a new shed.

Musfequr said: "I used to go to the school in the 1980s and my mum Sufia retired three years ago as a teaching assistant. I have happy

memories.

"When I read about what had happened I discussed it with my business partner Urfan Bhatti and we agreed that our business would donate a new shed to the school."

Operations Manager Bob Elliott said: "We have used recycled pallets to make a new fence and we removed all the parts of the old shed and we have recycled them at our centre in Bury Road."

The sides of the shed have gone to form a bespoke bin storage for the centre and the roof will be recycled for a notice board that is being made for Weir Pride.

VIC provided the shed so children could keep garden tools inside and it could be



used as a potting shed to help with the garden area in that part of the school.

VIC will be getting raised beds ready for planting flowers and pupils have asked to plant: roses, forget me nots, poppies, mint, strawberry plants, marigolds, sunflowers, tulips, daffodils and herbs.

## Veterans get out and about

**A SLIGHT diversion saw walkers enjoying Rivington Pike and Liverpool Castle.**

The walk was scheduled for Winter Hill, but those who attended enjoyed the change of route as they also got to see the dovecote and terraced gardens. Lunch was enjoyed at Great House Barn Visitor Centre

A second wet and muddy walk saw members taking in the

Alden Valley in Helmshore.

On Thursday May 11 walkers will ascend Indian Head at Dovestone Reservoir, Saddleworth, and a social inclusion trip to Brockholes Nature Reserve, near Preston, is planned for Thursday May 25. Both leave the VIC Centre at 9.30am.

To book a place on either trip call 01706 833180.



## Spreading the message of VIC

**A SERIES of talks have been held to spread the message about the good work that VIC undertakes.**

Operations Manager Bob Elliott said: "Our Project Worker Liz Davies was interviewed by community station Roche Valley Radio, while carrying out outreach.

"This was a fantastic opportunity to explain to a

really wide audience in the Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale areas the services that we can offer to veterans.

"Liz and I also gave a presentation to staff at HMP Wymott and we have been invited back at a future date to speak with prisoners in HMP Garth.

"We are giving a presentation to the wellbeing

champions in the North West as well as explaining what VIC does to the Integrated Neighbourhood Team in Clitheroe."

In Haslingden, we gave an awareness raising session to staff at The Surgery in Manchester Road, to explain what VIC can offer to help veterans who are patients of the practice.

## PoW visit

**A SPECIAL social inclusion trip will be made to Eden Camp in Malton, North Yorkshire, on Saturday August 19.**

The former Prisoner of War Camp huts have been converted into a living museum telling the history of wars and conflicts around the world. The trip will leave the VIC centre at 8.30am and costs £10 to cover admission and fuel.

Places must be booked in advance and a non-refundable £5 deposit paid.

## Art class

**THE 14th Painting in the style of Bob Ross group will be held on Saturday April 29.**

The class starts at 10.30am and will finish around 3.30pm. It costs £35, which includes all materials. There are limited places, to book call Darren Horsnell on 01706 833180.

## Fine voice

**OUR Singing Group was in fine voice at Tesco in Bury and raised £151.70 by entertaining shoppers.**

They also sang for residents of Raven Croft in Haslingden and will be performing at Tesco in Haslingden on Saturday May 6. Anyone who can help to collect donations is most welcome.

## Birds fly

**KNITTED Easter chicks complete with eggs, which were made by the Crafty Chatters, flew out of the centre and raised £54.82 for VIC.**



# VIC among best in the country

**VETERANS** enjoyed the glamour and glitz of a prestigious military awards' celebration in London and dined on food cooked by a Michelin starred chef.

Four members of VIC: Chief Executive Liz Hamilton, Operations Manager Bob Elliott and members Bill Ogden and Carole Mills attended the Soldiering On Awards.

Bob said: "The presentation was at the Park Plaza, Westminster Bridge.

"When we arrived there was a Taittinger Champagne reception and the whole awards



evening was a very prestigious event and one we were honoured to be selected as a finalist for.

"It was a very humbling experience. We did think that we were punching above our weight, but we shall be entering again next year.

The awards were hosted by Angela Rippon and the function had around 470 invited guests and finalists with other distinguished guests.

VIC was a finalist in the Working Together category along with five other hopefuls and the eventual winner was the Forces Friends Project from Nottingham.



## Team appeal

**A WALKING 5-a-side football team is needed for a tournament being organised by Blackburn Rovers Community Trust on June 4 in Haslingden.**

The Trust has received a grant from the MoD Covenant Fund to expand its walking football programme into six local boroughs.

Veterans aged 50 and over are invited to put their name down for the VIC team – anyone wanting to take part should contact 01706 833180.



## Veterans In Production

**PREPARATION** is well under way for the launch of our latest project – **Veterans In Production (VIP)**.

The shed/workshop in the rear yard of the VIC Centre is now ready to take on commissions and we have already been tasked with creating a bespoke notice board for Weir Pride.

Councillor David Stansfield has generously donated a wooden workbench and this was used by Peter Webster to make a cold frame. This will provide the



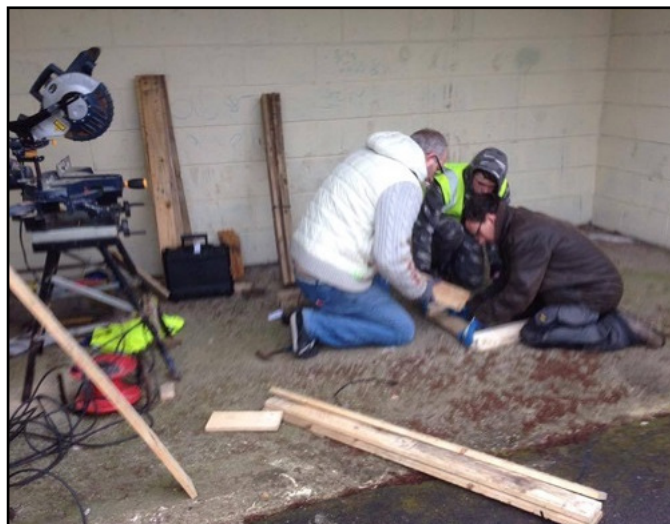
perfect start for the seeds we are growing for our garden and the allotment in Helmshore.

Members have also been preparing the beds in the rear garden for this year's planting.



**STUNNING** scarves are on sale at VIC for the Haslingden Branch of The Royal British Legion.

The scarves are only £10, the quality is great and there is an army, navy and RAF scarf. To order yours, call in at the VIC Centre.



## Get active

**VIC members are being encouraged to join activities organised by Rochdale-based Activate.**

The organisation arranges everything from walks for families to advanced climbs and also offers education and training including map reading, navigation and basic survival skills.

Activities will be posted on our Facebook group and page.

## Help needed

**WE ARE** helping out the local Food Groups by providing volunteer drivers to attend FareShare in Leyland to collect food.

The trips need to be made on a Tuesday and Thursday, to supply the groups in Accrington and Rawtenstall.

Anyone who can drive or second man the VIC Crew Van or the REAL minibus should contact the centre on 01706 833180.



## ROSSENDALE

All activities are held at the VIC Centre, Bury Road, Haslingden, BB4 5PL, unless otherwise stated.

### Outreach Service

**MONDAY-FRIDAY**

10am-3pm

To book a home appointment call 01706 833180.

### MONDAY

**Crafty Chatters**

10.30am-12.30pm

### WEDNESDAY

**Community Arts and Crafts**

10am-noon

**Computer Functional Skills**

9.30am-12.30pm

**Art Classes**

2pm-4pm

Jubilee Court, Jubilee Road, Haslingden, BB4 4DD.

### THURSDAY

**Rossendale Citizens' Advice (weekly)**

by appointment only

### Shelter (second Thursday only)

Morning

**Singing Group (weekly)**

6.30-8.30pm

### TUESDAY AND FRIDAY

**Art Group and drop-in**

11am-3pm

### Walking Group

Morning

Walks will be held on alternate **THURSDAYS**, weather permitting. Log on to VIC Facebook page to see where the next walks will be.

### Outdoor Activities

Log on to our website and follow the link on *Projects and Activities* to see what we have planned and how to book a place. A full leaflet is available.

### Positive Art

Our art shop is now based at the *VIC Centre, Bury Road, Haslingden, BB4 5PL, contact 01706 833180 for details.*

## HEYWOOD, MIDDLETON AND ROCHDALE

### Outreach Service

**MONDAYS**

1-3pm

Sandon House Community Centre, Taylor Street, Heywood OL10 1EF.

**THURSDAY**

9.30-10.30am Rochdale Breakfast Club, Rochdale Town Hall Bistro OL16 1AB.

10.30am-noon **VIC Outreach**, 1 Riverside, Rochdale OL16 1UB.

**THURSDAY**

11.30am-1.30pm

Lighthouse Project, Unit S6b/c Middleton Shopping Centre, Limetrees Road, Middleton M24 4EL.

**FRIDAY - alternate weeks**

11am-3pm

Allotment, Latrigg Crescent, Langley, Middleton M24 4LU.

**Walking Football**

**First Thursday only** 1pm-3pm

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

**Walking Group**

Walks will be held on alternate **THURSDAYS** and are combined with Rossendale.

## VIC – 01706 833180

## Contacts

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### Volunteer Outreach Worker Tony Stubbs

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### Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator Darren Horsnell

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### Outdoor Activities Co-ordinator Ivy Limbrick

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### Volunteer Outreach Worker Carole Mills

carolemills@vic.org.uk

### Singing Group Bookings Barry Hyde

barryhyde@vic.org.uk

### Combat Stress Helpline

0800 138 1619

### NHS Military Veterans Psychological Therapies Service (NW)

0161 253 6638

### The Royal British Legion

0808 802 8080 7 days a week 8am - 8pm

### SSAFA

email Lancashire@ssafa.org.uk

01772 260 462

### Rossendale Citizens' Advice

0300 456 2552 Mon to Fri 10am-4pm

### The Samaritans

01706 830999 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

01772 426930

### Veterans UK Free Helpline

0808 1914 218

### East Lancashire Single Point of Access

via GP or self-referral

01282 657116

## PENDLE

### Outreach Service

10am-noon

**MONDAY - first week only**

Place de Creil, near Wilkos, Nelson.

**MONDAY - second week only**

Market Place Car park, Town Square Colne.

**MONDAY - third week only**

Town Square, Albert Road, Barnoldswick.

## HYNDBURN

*Outreach Service coming shortly*

## Want to help?

To donate to support the work of Veterans In Communities please visit our website and click on the secure BT MyDonate page

[www.veteransincommunities.org](http://www.veteransincommunities.org)

VIC supported by:



East Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group



Supported by NHS Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale Clinical Commissioning Group's social investment fund



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