

Thank you to our volunteers

NEXT month is National Volunteers' Week. As an organisation and charity, VIC would not be the success it is were it not for the many volunteers who help us in so many ways. Here are just a few of our unsung heroes.



The Crafty Chatters

A FRIENDLY group of ladies meet every Monday at VIC to knit, natter and craft.

The Crafty Chatters make a variety of items to sell and support VIC and also create teddies for the fire service to give to children who are struggling with trauma.

Air force nurse veteran Chris Smethurst said: "I think sometimes the wrong message goes out about veterans; people think they are all old and they are just men, but veterans are all ages and women as well as men.

"I like coming here for the company and we always have a laugh."

Former mill weaver Irene Peel has tried different knit and natter groups but found they didn't suit her. However she has loved being a member of Crafty Chatters.

She said: "I have tried knitting for ages and I have also done crochet. I made a shawl and am making a trauma teddy.

"I come here for the

company and this is the first group I have been in where everyone always gets along."

Jane Harvey used to have her own craft shop and said: "I enjoy coming here and I like making the teddies because it is for a good cause.

"I just called in to see if there was anything here I was interested in and I found out about the Crafty Chatters and have since made lots of new friends."

A chance meeting with Outreach Worker Steve Butterworth in Colne led Janet Attwell to join the group.

Janet, from Trawden, said: "Steve had a stand in the town centre and I got to talking into to him and asked if I could help the organisation.

"I have done craft all my life and I initially came for the company. I love making the teddies and the chicks at Easter and the covers for Terry's Chocolate Oranges."

The Chatty Crafters meet every Monday from 10am to 12 noon and everyone is made most welcome.

The Sandbag Café Committee

A COMMITTEE of nine volunteers run the popular Sandbag Café in Heywood, arranging breakfasts, speakers, trips out and special events.

Chairman is Ian Rosales, who served for 25 years both with 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines and 5th Brigade Airborne Forces.

He said: "I feel honoured and obliged to help veterans. I will be taking one of the D-Day veterans on the 75th anniversary visit to France. I look after the veterans locally and check up on them regularly."

The committee has two social secretaries Peter Shinzil and Paul Andrew who plan trips out.

Peter spent nine years in the Royal Signals and was attached to the RAF.

He said: "When I retired I thought it was a good opportunity to come and give something back and help fellow veterans.

"I help to arrange trips including to the Imperial War Museum, we will be going to Eden Camp and also to the National Arboretum."

Liz Davies is secretary and her daughter Lauren is assistant treasurer while Bob Fallon is treasurer.

Another committee member is Mitch Mitchell who completed 24 years service having been accepted as a Fleet Air Arm reservist in 1986.

She said: "Last September I started coming to the Sandbag because I was stuck at home because of my PTSD.

"It helps me to meet with the veterans. I also look after the garden, cut the lawn and water the plants."

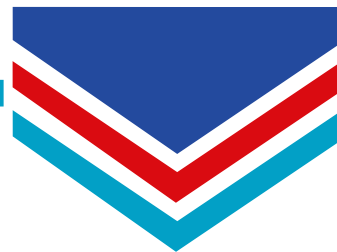
Other committee members are Tony Wolfenden and Ryan Bromfield who served 13 years in the Household Cavalry. He said: "It is interesting to meet newer veterans and to see how things have changed in the short time since I left in 2001.

"People come from all different services, navy, army and RAF and we all take the Mickey, it is like one big family."

The Sandbag Café is on Tuesdays at Sandon House, Taylor Street, Heywood, at 10am.



Thank you volunteers



Carole Mills



WHEN Carole Mills reduced her hours as a nurse, she decided to take on a

voluntary role and found her niche at VIC.

On St Valentine's Day 1977, Carole joined the Royal Navy Hospital Haslar in Gosport, Hampshire, and served for four years before switching to the NHS.

She said: "Five years ago I reduced my hours to 21 a week and semi-retired and I wanted to find something different to do to fill the hours when I wasn't working."

While on a course, she met someone who had done a placement at VIC and she decided to call in. Carole first met Bob and has not left since.

She said: "When I was at the Navy hospital we were like a big happy family and we had a social club – I would never have left the military if I had not got married and wanted a family.

"Most of the time at VIC it is a calming environment. Here I am in my comfort zone and giving back and helping others is my reward."

Carole was the Volunteer Outreach Officer in Accrington and will be helping out when the new VIC shop opens in the Arndale.

Peter Ashworth

WITH a military and police background, Peter Ashworth found himself instantly at home when he became a volunteer with VIC.

He left Rochdale in 1971 and it was not until 2014 that he returned to look after his mother.

Peter, 65, initially joined the Royal Military Police, transferred to the Royal Corps of Transport before six years later leaving the army and joining London's Metropolitan Police.

Although he retired in 2007, he 'got bored' so emigrated to Canada and took up university roles.

Once back in the UK, he worked in the Jobcentre as a job coach and started attending Rochdale Armed Forces Breakfast Club as part of his role; that was where he met VIC Outreach Worker Steve Butterworth. Peter finally decided to give up work and then began volunteering with VIC.

As a geek, Peter has always been one to want the latest gadget and now he offers his wealth of technical expertise for free at weekly drop-in sessions.

He said: "I thought this was my opportunity to pay back and I understand veterans and this is a way to use my enormous skill set to benefit others.

"I had a computer before most people did and am happy to be able to help others be better able to use their devices, computers, tablets or mobile phones.

"The advantage of VIC is I can walk in and there are people who, although I have never met them before, are already mentally on the same page because the military is a shared experience that we all understand."

Peter runs his drop in session every Thursday from 11am to 3pm at the VIC Centre.



Ivy Limbrick

FORMER Police Constable Ivy Limbrick volunteers as the Outdoor Activities

Co-ordinator at VIC and also runs the Crafty Chatters.

She said: "I served 21 years in the police until I was retired because of ill health through depression.

"I had lots of part-time jobs when I was bringing up my children and I got involved with VIC through Rossendale and Pendle Mountain Rescue Team where I used to be a volunteer."

In 2016 Ivy became Outdoor Activities Co-ordinator and has arranged a series of different social inclusion activities from a visit to Eden Camp in North Yorkshire to various military museums, a mining museum and pit and the Antony Gormley statues at Crosby Beach.

She said: "What I enjoy most is the walks because it is great for everyone who attends to enjoy a bit of escapism. We also put the world to rights."

Walks and social inclusion activities are held on a Thursday; check the newsletter and Facebook page for more information.



Accrington shop on track

IT IS all systems go for our new shop in Accrington Arndale which is set to open in June.

A huge thank you to everyone who has donated items for the shop including chairs from Argos, tables from North Lancs Training, a dining room table from The Nowt Poncy Food Company and office furniture from VIC

Transformational Coach Gill Hughes.

It will open two-days initially as a drop-in for Armed Forces personnel wanting advice, information and a place to meet other veterans. An art group will meet every Tuesday.

Opening hours will extend as volunteers increase. Call 01706 833180 to help or email bobelliott@vic.org.uk



A fire safety officer attended the Sandbag Café to ensure veterans were safe in their homes and an awareness stall was held by Project Worker Bev Fowler at the Lighthouse in Middleton.



Scam alert

PLACES are available on a free talk on June 4 about **Fraud, Scams and Digital Safety.**

It will begin at 11am at the VIC Centre in Haslingden with the aim of helping attendees be better able to protect themselves, their families and friends against potential scams.

To book call 01706 833180.

Quiz night

ENJOY a tasty Indian banquet and put your knowledge to the test at the VIC fundraising Curry and Quiz Night on Sunday June 9 at 7pm at North Street Indian Restaurant, off Kay Street, Rawtenstall.

Tickets are £15 including food and the quiz and to book call Admin Officer Amanda Walton on 01706 833180.

Food gift

A GENEROUS donation of food was made to VIC by Emma Ljevar from the food bank at St Mary's Chambers, Rawtenstall.

Choir cash

AN AMAZING £533 was raised for VIC by our choir who were singing in Asda in Rawtenstall. Thank you to the choir, collectors and Asda staff and customers.

Soldier F

A STRONG contingent from VIC attended at a further gathering at Media City, Salford, in support of Soldier F, who is facing prosecution for actions while serving in Northern Ireland.



Like clockwork

A CLOCK created at the VIC Centre is now keeping time on a wall in Canada.

The palette clock was bought by the mother of Brian, a VIC member, for Sheila, a good friend of hers who is

an artist living in a town north of Toronto. Brian said: "My mother chose to have the clock without the easel attached to the back so it would hang better on the wall. Keep up the good work."



Planting futures

VOLUNTEERS have helped to prepare our allotment for a bumper crop.

Outreach Worker Steve Butterworth is masterminding the development of the Helmshore allotment and made a 'call to arms' when four tonnes of top soil was delivered. Ivy Limbrick and Jacko Peace made light work of the soil.

A polytunnel has also been installed and is now providing the perfect place for seedlings to be nurtured.

Steve said: "Please remember that the allotment is there for your use and as the weather is getting nicer it is, by its location, a quiet peaceful place to be, whether you enjoy gardening or not."

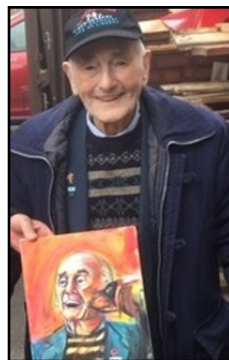
To help call Steve on 01706 831880.

First aid

AN informative three-day first aid at work course was delivered by Peter Ashworth.

He was supported by veteran John Watters from 1st Aid Training North West Limited who provided defibrillator awareness.

VIC is offering first aid training for other groups contact 01706 833180.



Friday's art group has welcomed a new member. Robert is very talented and is giving lessons on portraiture. He has already created some stunning work including capturing this likeness of our very own D-Day veteran Lewis Banham.



The first ANZAC and Gallipoli service of Remembrance was held in Rochdale at the Cenotaph.

Art on show

THANK you to the Chetham Arms Turton in Bolton, for hosting an exhibition of VIC paintings in the pub.

It has already led to VIC being invited to exhibit artwork at the Art in the Garden event at Turton Tower on July 7.

Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator Darren Horsnell said: "We were approached by Margaret Howe, who organises exhibitions at the venue and is also involved with Turton Tower."

Darren, Outreach Worker Steve Butterworth and art group member Liz Taylor attended the pub to open the exhibition, when they explained more about the work of VIC and also talked about how art had helped them personally.

Walks for all

TWO walks will be held in June.

The first, on June 13, is an eight-mile circular walk from Helmshore to Peel Tower. A second, on June 27, is a 7.2 mile walk to Lund's Tower and Cowling Pinnacle.

The crew van will leave the centre at 9.30am on both days and a donation of £3 towards transportation is requested. Contact 01706 833180 to book.



ROSSENDALE

Activities are held 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 AND FRIDAY

Art Group and drop-in

10.30am-3.30pm

WEDNESDAY

Allotment and Veterans In Production

Help on the allotment in Holcombe Road, Helmshore, or manufacture wooden items at the centre. Contact 01706 833180.

Community Arts and Crafts

10am-noon

Art Class

2pm-4pm

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

THURSDAY

Woodworking Course

10am-3pm

Computer and IT help drop-in

11am-3pm

Painting with Pan Pastels

1pm-3pm cost £10

VIC Choir (weekly)

6.30-8.30pm

SECOND SATURDAY

Rossendale Armed Forces and Veterans' Breakfast Club

10am-12.30pm

The Link Cafe, Haslingden Community Link, Bury Road, Haslingden BB4 5PG

EVERY MONTH

Painting in the Style of Bob Ross

Contact Darren 01706 833180.

Walking Group, Social Outings and Outdoor Activities

These are held every **THURSDAY**. Please visit the *Events* section on our VIC Facebook page or log on to the VIC website and follow the link to *Projects and Activities*.

BURNLEY AND PENDLE

Outreach Service

MONDAY - first week only

Place de Creil, near Wilkos, Nelson.
10am-noon

MONDAY - second week only

Market Place Car park, Town Square, Colne.
9am-11am

TUESDAY - every week

Breakfast Club at Burnley FC in the Community Cafe, Charter Walk.
9am-11am

WEDNESDAY - every week

Veterans Community Cafe, 1 Great George Street, Colne, BB8 0SY.
9am-11am

Contact 01706 833180 for dates of outreach at the Pendle Armed Forces Support Group, Holmefield Mill, Gisburn Road, Barrowford.

HEYWOOD, MIDDLETON AND ROCHDALE

The Sandbag Cafe and drop in

TUESDAY

10am-noon

Sandon House, Taylor Street, Heywood OL10 4EF.

THURSDAY

9am-10.30am Rochdale Breakfast Club, Rochdale Town Hall Bistro OL16 1AB.
10.30am-noon

VIC Outreach

1 Riverside, Rochdale OL16 1UB.

HYNDBURN

Outreach Service

MONDAYS

1-3pm

Ground floor near cafe Accrington Market.

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.vic.org.uk

VIC – 01706 833180

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Outdoor Activities Co-ordinator Ivy Limbrick

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VIC Choir Bookings Barry Hyde

barryhyde@vic.org.uk

Contacts

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

The Samaritans

01282 694929

Mon to Fri 9am-9pm

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

0800 018 2361

Veterans UK Free Helpline

0808 1914 218

East Lancashire Single Point of Access via GP or self-referral

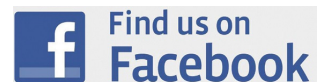
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Bolton Armed Forces Centre 4 Veterans

www.bafc4v.org

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