

VIP opening for centre

PREPARATIONS are being finalised for the grand opening of the VIC Centre in Haslingden on Wednesday June 25th during Armed Forces Week.

Because there is such a large number of people we want to invite, we are holding three sessions during the day.

At 11.30am there will be an official opening for VIPs by Brigadier CMB Coles, Commander of 42 (North West) Brigade.

He will be unveiling a plaque inside the building and be officially declaring the VIC Centre open.

At 1pm we will be inviting our many partners to come and have a look around and then, from 3pm, the centre will be open for the community to tour the premises.

It will also be the debut 'gig' for the VIC Singing Group who will be performing



on the day.

Manager Bob Elliott said: "We have worked hard as an organisation to bring the centre back into full use and we are delighted that everything has been completed in time for the official opening.

"We were very fortunate to be gifted such a large building with the scope to further our work within the community of East Lancashire.

"The work of VIC has developed and grown in the last 18 months and we now

have a presence throughout East Lancashire and Rochdale, Heywood and Middleton.

"Having a permanent base has provided a catalyst to further extend the projects we piloted in Rossendale to be able to offer more veterans the chance they deserve. To return, belong and prosper within their communities.

"Everyone at VIC is looking forward to welcoming people to look around our centre on Wednesday June 25th."

For rent

ALL of the rooms in the VIC Centre have now been refurbished and are available for rent.

The training and conference room has been booked by Lancashire Care Trust to run a mindfulness course while the IT suite has been booked by the Rossendale Healthy Minds Team to run a computerised Cognitive Behavioural Therapy session.

VIC manager Bob said: "There are a further two offices available for rent and a therapy room available for rent.

"Tenants need to be charities or someone who is working with the armed forces community to fit in with our ethos."

Contact 01706 833180.

Tommy on patrol after going AWOL

A WILLOW soldier created by a VIC member to commemorate the First World War was stolen but fortunately an eagle-eyed gardener found him.

Tommy was taken from Healey Corner in Whitworth where he had been planted next to a First World War tank willow sculpture, both of which were created by David Joddrell, from Bacup.

VIC outreach and community development officer Suzanne Preston said: "We

were contacted through the Facebook page Making Whitworth a Great Place to Live by Stephen Scrivens who said he had seen the sculpture discarded in bushes in Heywood."

Stephen, a gardener from Heywood, said: "When I saw it, it just looked like a pile of sticks but when I went closer I could see it was a soldier. One of my customers told me about the missing sculpture and I realised what it was.

"I am so happy to have



been able to return it because it means a lot to people and I have a lot of time for veterans. There is so much community spirit around here."

Unwittingly, the thief did some good, because he brought the community

together to search for Tommy and residents have been delighted that he is back. David said: "I am just glad he has not been damaged and hopefully the willow will root again so that the branches can grow. A big thank you to Stephen."



CUBS and Beavers from Trinity Baptist Church in Bacup along with the Whitworth Horticultural Society joined with VIC

members to plant poppy seeds in the grounds of Whitworth Memorial Gardens. Cub and Beaver leader Liz Hamilton approached VIC to

see if the Cubs and Beavers could help with work on the gardens. They are working towards their Partnership Award.

Suzanne's new role

THANKS to funding from East Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group, VIC has a second full-time member of staff.

Suzanne Preston has now been appointed outreach and community development worker.

Suzanne said: "Manager Bob Elliott takes care of operational matters and the running of the VIC Centre and staff while I take care of what is going on outside.

"With the outreach service I am a mentor and am there to help those who are running the service achieve the projects they set out. They come up with the ideas and I will use my contacts to help their ideas become a reality.

"It is a veterans to veterans programme and I mentor those who are running it.

"I also provide practical support when the veterans who are running our outreach services find they have difficult cases that come forward."

In Darwen Suzanne was able to secure a free venue in Darwen Town Hall where the outreach service is based.

She also works in partnership with Military Veterans' Service to provide activities to bridge

the gap for veterans when celebration times such as Easter and Christmas leave them vulnerable and without support.

At Easter, veterans took part in water sports, watched football and went fishing.

Suzanne said: "In partnership with MVS we are providing a service for those vulnerable veterans so they avoid the pitfalls of a relapse.

"Following on from our Easter activities, a Social Inclusion Fund-Raising Committee has now been established chaired by veteran Tony Stubbs. The aim of the committee is to plan social activities and fund-raise to enable these events to take place."



Artistic honour

VIC artists were invited to exhibit work at the Association of Animal Artists display at Castle Park Art Gallery, Frodsham.

The exhibition is on for four weeks and is open to the public. VIC is hoping to hold its own art exhibition at the venue in the near future.

Vets on parade

VETERANS will be flying the flag at Bacup and Stacksteads Carnival by joining the procession and holding a stall in Moorlands Park.

VIC member Simon Barlass is organising events and is looking to set up an army tent complete with hammocks, show visitors army clothing and kit through the ages and rations.

The PT instructor also hopes to put some of the carnival goers through their paces. The event is on Sunday June 29th with a procession through the town in the morning and events in the park in the afternoon.

Charity cash bid

VIC may be in line for a £3,000 boost.

Thomas Nelson, and three friends at Bacup and Rawtenstall Grammar School, interviewed VIC members as part of their Personal Social and Health Education Course.

They had to find out about a local charity, interview trustees and directors and research what the charity does.

They will then present their findings in the hope VIC is chosen as the charity to benefit from a £3,000 boost.



A sale held on May Day in the yard at the VIC Centre raised more than £100 for the charity



Blooming wonderful back yard

THE back yard at the VIC Centre has been given a makeover thanks to Veterans' organisation Dig In North West.

Donna Rowe-Green, founder of the Preston-based organisation Dig-In, organised veterans to come along to the centre in Haslingden to plant bushes and flowers and spruce up the back yard.

Manager Bob Elliott said: "It looks a whole lot better and we are very grateful to Donna and Dig-In for all the work. They are also going to be maintaining the area in the future."

There are plans to introduce a greenhouse and workshop shed in the yard.

Operation War Graves 100 begins in earnest

OUR war graves project has begun at Bacup Cemetery where the graves of First World War heroes are being located and properly marked.

Operation War Graves 100 has been backed by the Heritage Lottery Fund and will see veterans and Lancashire Community Payback scheme working in the cemeteries.

For VIC outreach worker Steve Butterworth there is a special poignancy to the project as his great uncle Enoch died in Ypres in 1917.

He said: "We know of 120 graves that are in the cemetery and we have had meetings with Rossendale Council to discuss the work that we are doing. The council has also provided a detailed map to help with locating the graves.

"We have had new plaques made and we will be installing a concrete plinth for these to be placed on.

"We will also be planting poppies on the graves of those who fell.

"We want people to be aware of the work that we will be carrying out in Bacup Cemetery for the next six months and we will be putting signs on the cemetery gates and notices at the library so people understand what we are doing."

It is hoped to have all the

memorial stones in place in time for Remembrance in November when a service will be held.

VIC is also working with primary and secondary school pupils on projects to commemorate the First World War these include planting poppy seeds, creating a calendar of artwork and building stone cairns.

Steve said: "My great uncle was remembered in a memorial stone in the former Thorn Wesleyan Chapel on Alma Street in Bacup. Unfortunately the memorial stone has since been removed.

"I am sure my uncle is not the only one of Bacup's forgotten sons."

However Steve is ensuring his uncle, along with many others, will be remembered in a time capsule.

This will be buried in the cemetery with instructions for it to be dug up in 100 years time

A letter appealing for food parcels for the forces from Grove Mill in Bacup in 1915 is also to be included in the capsule along with replica newspapers from the period.

VIC has been helped with research by Steve's cousin David Butterworth, from Stacksteads, and Vivien Pascoe from Colne, whose relative Fred Ridings is buried in Bacup.



Poignant painting

A PAINTING of a First World War soldier killed in action has been presented to his relative.

VIC arts and crafts co-ordinator Darren Horsnell presented the painting of Enoch Butterworth to his great nephew David Butterworth of Stacksteads.

VIC outreach officer and David's cousin Steve painted the portrait from an old sepia army photograph.

Enoch served with 8th Battalion Border Regiment and died aged just 25.

He was killed in action on July 13th 1917 and laid to rest at Battery Corner



Cemetery, Belgium. He was killed along with six comrades as part of a work party. A further 17 were wounded at the Swan Chateau 3rd Battle of Ypres.

VIC War Graves 100 project officer Peter Webster has been presented with a solid silver commemorative First World War coin and has dedicated it to the memory of Enoch.

What's On and Where



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.

VIC update

NEXT month we look forward to showing you round our fantastic new centre, but even before the official opening there is loads going on.

We have an essential public health course starting next month led by Kerry Place from Lancashire Health Improvement Service, part of Lancashire Care Trust.

There will be a series of health checks held at the VIC Centre in September.

We are also working in Buckley Hall Prison in Rochdale holding health chats veteran to veteran. These are both with prisoners and staff.

VIC will soon be very visible working in Bacup Cemetery on the Operation War Graves 100 project and we want to reassure all families who have loved ones in the cemetery that the work will be carried out to the highest of standards and with the utmost respect for all who have been laid to rest in the cemetery.

If anyone has information, memorabilia, photographs or letters from the First World War that they would like to see added to the time capsule that will be buried in the grounds of the cemetery please can they contact VIC on 01706 833180. All items will be copied with the originals returned to the owner.

In summer we should have poppies blooming all over Rossendale as we have worked with school children and uniformed groups to plant seeds all over the Valley. We will never forget.

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

VIC – 01706 833180

Manager Bob Elliott

bobelliott@veteransincommunities.org

07961 554 006

Outreach and Community Development

Worker Suzanne Preston

suzannepreston@veteransincommunities.org

Outreach Worker Steve Butterworth

stevebutterworth@veteransincommunities.org

Arts and Crafts Co-ordinator Darren Horsnell

darrenhorsnell@veteransincommunities.org

War Graves Project Co-ordinator Peter Webster

peterwebster@veteransincommunities.org

VIC supported by:

