

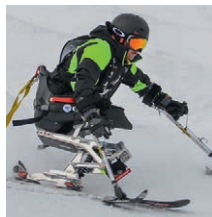
# Blesma

Bulletin Members' Newsletter – Autumn 2016



## Ask not what Blesma can do for you...

Volunteers play all sorts of vital roles in the life of the Association **p07**



## It's time to take up a new challenge

The 2017 activities calendar is going to be packed. Start applying now! **p10**



## You could help future generations

A number of research studies are looking for Members **p20**



# Home is where the heart is

Why the Association is to increase grants and support for Members in their own homes

**Inside: Drive a 4x4 to the Pyrenees with R2R**

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# Blesma Bulletin

## Autumn 2016



This Bulletin is accompanied by a refreshed Membership Card, the new Articles of Association and Rules (the Constitution), and a revised Proposition for Members.

The new Articles were voted in at the AGM in June, and while the Blesma Objects have not changed the rules for membership have. In particular, there is now access for veterans who have lost the use of a limb in a traumatic incident outside Service. This could lead to 10s of new Members annually, but not hundreds.

The first article in this Bulletin is the most important and I ask you to read it carefully. Blesma is about to change the emphasis in the way we support those in need in later life. We are going to do more to support Members in their own homes and in communities. We remain in the care business, so to speak, but in a different way. This stance has been evolving over recent years but is now to receive a significant uplift. Individual grants will be increased on a wider field of assistance. It will take time to gather full momentum, but we are underway.

Unfortunately, the traditional demand for residential care at a single Home, in Blackpool, has fallen dramatically. This has been noted at AGMs and the Members' Weekend for the past two years. The Trustees have made the very difficult decision to release the Home because of the fall in demand. The Home was established to care for the injured of two World Wars and, to the greatest extent, this has been achieved. We can be proud of the standard of care provided over the years and the comfort it has brought. I would like to thank the Home's staff for their

professional contributions and their dedication to residents and visitors.

The respite breaks and activities that the Blackpool Home supported will still go on but in different locations. This has already commenced, and while we have lessons to learn, we look to build new partnerships with other providers so that we create a deliberate rhythm. The BSOs are key to advising on this so please get in touch with them if you have a need. Membership Services at Chadwell Heath can also advise you.

Activities planning for next year is underway and in particular for the Winter elements. Please do get in touch with Emily if you are interested in the Winter programme and have questions.

**Barry Le Grys, Chief Executive**



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# Support for elderly and infirm to grow

**B**lesma has committed to increasing the number of grants it makes to assist the needs of Members and Widows in their own homes. The Association has also pledged to work more closely than ever with Service charities that provide residential and convalescent or respite care.

The demand for assistance by Members who wish to live close to their families and retain some independence, often in their own homes, has dramatically increased over recent years. This is in line with the national demand for later life care, which now sees residential care occurring much later in life.

Following this trend, requests for residence at the Blackpool Home have dwindled year on year. The Home hosted 30 residents in 2014, but only 13 this year despite opening its doors to Widows in 2015. Nine of those residents are from the North West, with a 30-mile radius being the recognised catchment area for a care home.

In 2015, Blesma spent £374,000 on 1,159 grants. Of those, 64% of the recipients (735 Members and Widows) were aged over 75 and the grants were for practical help with assistive and adaptive technology, for example, to promote independent living.

In the same year, Blesma spent £694,000 on subsidising the Home. With all this in mind, the Board of Trustees has reluctantly decided to release the Blackpool Home.

The Board, the majority of whom are Blesma Members and veteran amputees, agonised for 18 months over the decision, having explored every possible option

before finally taking the difficult step in the interest of all the Association's Members. The intention is to use these resources to be relevant and precise in meeting real needs.

"There has been a lot of soul searching but we have to consider the needs of all Members and the changing qualities and quantities of demand for assistance in later life care," said the Association's Chairman Lieutenant General Sir Cedric Delves.

"It has been a very difficult process, and an extremely hard decision to make, but our duty is always to provide the best care to all our Members, for life. We sought professional advice when examining the possibilities, which included relocation, collaboration with Service charities, specialist nursing, and opening the Home to all veterans. The Home has been running at less than 25% of its 45-resident capacity, and the demographics of our membership and national statistics combine to forecast that this downward trend will continue."

The current residents are being resettled to new homes of their choice in consultation with families and guardians, and they will experience no financial hardship as a result.

"We are absolutely insistent that high quality care continues for them, and Blesma Support Officers and the Association will still be there for them. They remain Blesma Members and our support for them, as for every Member, is for life," added Blesma Chief Executive Barry Le Grys, who paid tribute to the Home's loyal and committed staff, who have been given professional coaching and



individual assistance to help them transition into new employment.

“The staff have all been tremendous and many have given years of loyal service. Both the Association and the Members are extremely grateful for everything the staff have done.”

Some of Blesma’s most infirm Members are still very young and the Association is keen that there are sufficient funds for their care in decades to come. But this pledge, said Barry, would certainly not be at the expense of elderly Members and Widows who need care now.

“We are all extremely sad to see the Home released but, ultimately, we believe that what we will offer in the future will be more relevant, fairer, more efficient, and sustainable for all our Members,” said Barry.

#### **Why does the Association not find another operator for the Home?**

To hope that a suitable private operator would take on the Home and run it to our high standards is too big a risk, and the uncertainty would cause personal distress.

#### **Couldn't you run a scaled down Home and increase its capacity with demand?**

We looked at every possible configuration in detail but it wasn't viable to run a smaller Home. We need to provide the best possible care now rather than speculate what might happen in 10, 20 or 30 years' time.

#### **Can't you open the Home to all veterans?**

Our charitable status restricts Blesma to caring for limless veterans, and generations of the public and Members have supported

## “Our aim of supporting Members in the most constructive manner remains unchanged”

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us on that basis. To open the Home to a wider veteran community would involve Blesma subsidising the scheme by more than £190,000 a year. This would divert funds away from Members and Widows.

### **How is what you are proposing better?**

We will be able to meet the needs of a greater number of Members and be even more responsive to individual need. More of the Association’s resources will be designated for the elderly and infirm, but in a different form from the past, mostly through individual grants. We will be able to make more grants relevant to the care needs of Members and Widows in their own homes and elsewhere.

### **Why does Blesma have monetary reserves yet is releasing the Home?**

Releasing the Home is based on a lack of demand, and to continue running it would drain resources. Our Members live with limb loss for decades and we intend to be there for them if they need us. Blesma must have the resources to keep pace with change, and manage change efficiently by keeping overheads to a minimum, spending reserves

wisely and to the best effect for beneficiaries in a long-term, sustainable fashion.

### **What about the excellent respite care provided, will that be scrapped?**

Absolutely not. We will continue to assist Members to take respite care at other locations. We anticipate supporting more respite care and the prospect of short distance travel to local facilities will be more attractive to families and carers.

### **What will happen to the popular activities held at the Blackpool Home?**

Many of the activities take place elsewhere and we will continue to develop this. The Widows Weeks and the full range of activities will still take place and, in the future, we will be able to build up closer partnerships and collaborate across the charity sector.

This gives us an opportunity to organise activities across the country to meet regional needs, so that events are not concentrated in the North West or within the M25.

Our aim of supporting Members for life in the most constructive and efficient manner remains unchanged. The passing of the Blackpool Home will inevitably cause some sadness within the Association, but Blesma has remained strong for almost a century because it puts the welfare of all Members at the forefront of everything that we do.

# Come and volunteer for Team Blesma

**T**his Summer, an army of Blesma Members gave up their time to assist the Fundraising Team, and raised more than £60,000 for the charity in the process.

Members came from all over the country to shake their buckets in London at our TFL station collections. They also flocked to the Brentwood Festival in Essex, where more than 10,000 people heard Members tell their stories and were inspired to donate.

But it wasn't all hard work for volunteers. They got the chance to visit London, listen to some of their favourite bands and see a cricket match – all for free!

Blesma Member Martin Berry volunteered with his partner Rick, in London, and they are both now planning their own collections.

“We both really enjoyed volunteering,” said Martin. “Not only could we help out, but we got to spend a day in London whilst volunteering for a late shift. Off the back of the TFL collections, we got to help out at a Somerset cricket match, which was fantastic, as it was the first time I'd had the chance to watch a cricket match live.”

Five Members took to the stage at the Brentwood Festival to tell the crowd about their experiences, while three other Members scouted the field to spread the word. Blesma Member Andrew Bracey saw the fundraiser as an opportunity to meet fellow veterans.

“It was definitely nerve-racking getting up on the stage, but I enjoyed it,” said Andrew. “As well as talking on stage, I got to see all the bands perform as I talked to festival goers. Blesma's Fundraising Team made



sure that everyone was OK, that they had everything they needed, and really made sure we were cared for.

“If I could be treated like that every time I volunteered for Blesma, I would definitely do it again and again. It was a great day and a great laugh, with a friendly atmosphere.”

Due to the success of the collections in TFL stations across the capital, we are bringing out our buckets once again this year!

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***We will be collecting from 0700 until 1900 at Kings Cross station on Monday 19 December. To volunteer for a fundraising shift (which can be as long or as short as you like) please get in touch with the Fundraising Team on 020 8548 7087 or at fundraising@blesma.org***

# Prosthetics Update

One of the responsibilities of Brian Chenier, Blesma's Prosthetics Support Officer, is to advise Members on what prosthetic support is available to them. By working closely with Members, clinical teams from the NHS and private sectors, and industry contacts, the best available prescription is often reached.

Brian or your BSO can accompany you to your limb fitting appointment to act as an advocate. Blesma can often help to deal with issues or concerns via telephone or email, directing questions to the appropriate person at a Limb Centre. Where attendance is requested or required, we will do everything we can to facilitate that. Some Members report that just having Blesma in the room makes a huge difference as they feel that they have been listened to.

There is a constant need to research new products, systems and policies, so we are in a position to support Members as appropriately as possible. Chartered physiotherapist and lecturer Teri Taylor tells us about her research to date and a future focus which ties in very well with the work Blesma has been doing for many years. Blesma welcomes this research idea and will help and support where we can. We'll let you know when the research project commences and hope that some of you feel able to get involved.



**TERI TAYLOR**  
MA, Chartered  
Physiotherapist and  
Senior Lecturer at  
Northumbria University  
and researcher within  
the Northern Hub for  
Veteran and Military  
Families Research

“As a physiotherapist with a background in rehabilitation, I have worked with forward-thinking and dynamic individuals. This has allowed me to develop an approach to therapy in which I think outside the box to meet the needs of the individual I’m working with. A lot of the rehabilitation that I’ve carried out has been in unusual environments – from a forest to a tenpin bowling alley – and it’s been fantastic to see the level of achievement that can be reached with the right motivation.

“I have developed research that focuses on the needs and ambitions of the individual. My current area of study explores prosthetic prescription for veteran amputees using prosthetic knee units. To date, I have had the support of an excellent rehabilitation centre and have been able to evaluate its clinical findings from a relatively small group of patients who have been applying for new prosthetic limbs.

“Objective measures demonstrate what is widely shown within other research; that on paper, microprocessor knee joints out-perform mechanical ones in assessments such as the Timed Up and Go, or the six-minute walk test. However, this data presents





a picture that is practical in nature and limited to performance in a clinical environment. It is the individual stories behind applications for new prosthetics that tell the most interesting tales and are, I feel, the most important part of the prescriptive process. From being able to stand for longer in meetings to treks into the hills with the family, what's important for an individual in making the choice over a limb varies hugely. Consequently, microprocessor knees are not always the answer. Recognising individual differences is, I feel, central to improving services and directing appropriate funding.

Understanding how individuals' lives impact upon their prosthetic wear and prosthetic needs takes more than just measurement; it takes the time to listen to life stories and understand the minute details, and the ability to communicate this clearly in a way that business understands. Having started my research journey looking at the

clinical data from a rehabilitation centre, I am very keen to look in more depth at what matters to the individual. In the near future, I intend to work with individual veterans who are interested in telling me their stories, in order to understand more about their wants, needs and ambitions, and how they impact on their experiences of prosthetic limb wear. This is a completely new field of research that has not been addressed before and, as such, is unique. I look forward to working with individuals who are as keen to make a difference as I am."

***If you would like to hear more about Teri's project, or need any advice or support in your dealings with your Limb Centre, or if you have any questions relating to issues raised here, please get in touch with Brian Chenier at Chadwell Heath on 0208 548 7080 or email him on [bsoprosthetics@blesma.org](mailto:bsoprosthetics@blesma.org)***

# Get up, get out and get active in 2017!

**T**he Activities Calendar in 2017 is looking exciting! We'll be sending everyone a brochure in the December issue of Blesma Magazine, which will contain all the information you need to help you choose the activities that are right for you.

Whether you've participated in activities before or if you're keen to get involved for the very first time, we hope that there's something that will appeal to you. We've taken note of the feedback you provided in the recent survey, and as well as including the perennial favourites such as Winter sports in Colorado, scuba diving, golf, fishing, photography, cycling and multi-activity weeks, we'll add some new events next year. These will include a Winter sports event in France as well as a number of family activity weekends and couples' city breaks.

Remember that the costs of all activities in the calendar are met by the Association, so why not try something new and meet other Blesma Members at the same time?

## MEMBER ACTIVITIES IN EARLY 2017

For all those Members who want to get their adventure fix in early, we'd like to remind everyone of the activities taking place in early 2017. The deadlines for applications for the following activities have been extended, so get your bids in now!



## WINTER SPORTS IN EUROPE

21-29 January

**Application deadline: 09 November**

We've changed our ski-biking event and made it more accessible. So if you would like to spend a week in the French Alps learning how to fly down the slopes, no matter what your level of mobility or expertise on skis or ski bike, get in touch with Emily.

## INTRO TO DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY

03-07 March

**Application deadline: 02 December**

Photography is becoming even more popular among the membership. If you want to give it a go but don't really know where to start, then this is the activity for you – and it's suitable for any Member, regardless of injury



or age. Based at Rutland Water in the beautiful county of Rutland, the course will introduce the basics of composition using light and photo-editing software.

### FAMILIES ACTIVITIES BREAK

07-10 April

**Application deadline: 20 January 2017**

This activity is new for 2017 and will take place at the Calvert Trust centre on Exmoor. You and your family will be able to participate in lots of different activities, including horse riding, canoeing and rock climbing, no matter what your mobility needs.

We will try to hold a few places free until the New Year, but you'll be in with a better chance of securing a spot if you apply now.

### STOP PRESS!

Any Member who has not registered their email address with Blesma, and who would like to receive the monthly Activities Update email, please notify Emily Mizon by emailing her on [mea@blesma.org](mailto:mea@blesma.org)

*Don't forget, if you have any questions about any of the activities on offer here, please speak to Emily Mizon on 020 8548 7094 or email her at [mea@blesma.org](mailto:mea@blesma.org)*

*Please note that Blesma activities are only open to Ordinary and Associate Members and Widow(er)s. However, Honorary Members may attend an event if they are supporting the running of the activity*

# Activities Week really does put Members through their paces

**D**uring July's Activities Week, Members were put through their paces with challenging and competitive activities.

The fun-filled week included fly fishing at Mere Beck, a session on an indoor climbing wall, a visit to a comedy club, and gliding at the Burn Gliding Club.

Rob McCartney attended the week and thought the activities gave Members a real chance to challenge themselves, push their boundaries, and explore their limits.

"It was one of the most exciting and challenging weeks I have ever known," he said. "Each activity pushed my limits which is something I haven't been able to say for years. There has been something for everyone. No-one let themselves down and everyone needed a good pat on the back for exceeding their own abilities."

BSO Eastern Tom Ormiston hosted the week and Members were full of praise for the help and support they received. One main highlight for Rob was the fly fishing activity.

"It was a beautiful sunny day and we were all relaxing until we learnt there was a competition to catch the most fish. We all went into serious mode and when Jesse James caught his second fish it was as though he had won the World Cup!"

Rob commented on the fact that, during the week, many Members made new friends and a number of those have managed to keep in contact, despite coming from all over the country.

## GLAMPING, BLESMA-STYLE!

This Summer, Blesma hosted a fantastic weekend of glamping in the Forest of Dean for Members and their families. Colin and Karie Branch attended the activity with two of their children.

"It was absolutely fantastic. It was a real challenge but certainly not a negative one. Being around other amputees gave me a different attitude. I began to think; "If you can do it, then so can I," said Colin.

"Our little boy is just five years old and had never seen another amputee before. He was amazed that other people are like his dad and one of the first things he said was; 'Look, that man has a robot leg, too.' It was the best thing for him to see."

The glamping event was full of activities such as face painting for the children, walks through the forests, and bike rides.

Wives and partners have, in the past, expressed how they would like to see more family-orientated events as it can be difficult when their partner goes away throughout the year taking part in activities on their own.

Laura Dunning, wife of Member Peter Dunning, attended the glamping event with her husband and their two children.

"It was great to get the chance to speak to other wives in the same situation, as I've never had that opportunity before. I didn't feel so alone in what we experience as a family! It's great that Blesma and other charities look after our husbands, but it's



the wives who are often left to care for the kids at home still and then care for their husbands when they come back from an activity in pain. It was nice to be given a break with families in the same situation as us and for us to do something as a family.”

Brian Chenier, BSO (Prosthetics) led the event, ably assisted by his wife, Sonja.

“It’s always humbling to see what Members achieve on Blesma activities, but it’s the lasting impact that means the most,” said Brian. “On this event, one of the Members who hadn’t worn a prosthesis for some time resolved to return to his Limb Centre and persevere with limb use after seeing what was possible and how he’d been missing out.

“This is just one of the examples of how the glamping weekend has helped Members and their families, and it was such a privilege to be part of it.”



# R2R 4x4 Expedition to the Pyrenees

**Race2Recovery invites Blesma Members on the trip of a lifetime next September.**

## **What's it all about?**

Race2Recovery have called on their years of experience of getting members of the wounded, sick and injured community into off-road rallying to come up with a unique challenge. They have designed an off-road expedition that will cater for most disabilities, capabilities and ambitions.

## **What's the plan?**

R2R will hold an open weekend so you can meet the team and learn more about 4x4 driving. For those interested in taking it further, R2R will provide all the necessary training, vehicles and support to navigate across the Pyrenees on a trip of a lifetime.

## **What will I get out of this?**

Attendees will receive a LANTRA certification in 4x4 driving, which will give them the option to gain instructor level qualifications in the future. In addition to this, they will learn basic vehicle field maintenance and be in charge of the setup of their vehicles during workshop training weekends.

This is an opportunity for people to bolster their CVs, learn new skills, gain qualifications and, most importantly, share an amazing experience with like-minded people and have a good crack into the bargain.

## **I am interested. What do I need to do?**

If you are interested in coming along to the open weekend, please send an email to [grant@race2recovery.com](mailto:grant@race2recovery.com) and R2R will be in touch.



# Winter Fuel Payments

If you were born on or before 05 May 1953 you could receive either £100 or £200 to help pay your heating bills this Winter. This is known as a “Winter Fuel Payment” and the amount you receive will depend on your circumstances in the qualifying week (19-25 September 2016).

If you are aged 80 or over and you are entitled to receive a Winter Fuel Payment, this year you will receive £150, £200 or £300 depending on your circumstances in the qualifying week. You do not pay tax on Winter Fuel Payments, and if you have previously received a payment and your circumstances have not changed, you should receive an automatic payment between early November and Christmas 2016.

If you have not received your automatic payment by the beginning of January 2017 you should call the Winter Fuel Payment Centre on 0345 915 1515 (0345 606 0285 for textphone users). Lines are open between 8am and 6pm Monday to Friday.

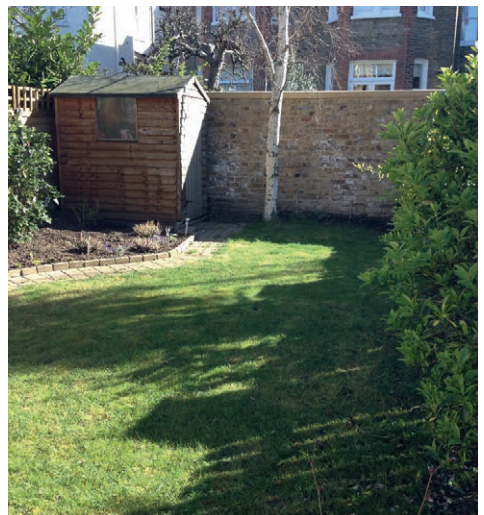
If you have previously received a Winter Fuel Payment but your circumstances have changed, you will need to contact the office that usually makes your payments – the contact details will be on your paperwork. If you cannot find the contact details then you should contact the Payment Centre number detailed above.

If you have not previously received the Winter Fuel Payment you will need to make a claim for a payment for Winter 2016/17. You must return your claim form before 31 March 2017.

# Gardening Grants

We understand that it may be difficult for Members to maintain their gardens, whether it's mowing the lawn or weeding the flowerbeds. We award an annual grant of up to £200 which can be applied for by using the form that has been inserted into this Bulletin. The application must be accompanied by receipts or a signed statement from the gardener. However, we are unable to award grants where Members have paid a relation to maintain their garden as this is not within the spirit of benevolent support.

*If there isn't a form in your copy of the Bulletin, please contact Liz at Blesma Chadwell Heath at [membersupport@blesma.org](mailto:membersupport@blesma.org) or on 020 8548 3516*



# Branch News

## WALSALL AND DISTRICT BRANCH

The Branch continues to move along. Our new committee members have settled in and are working hard on behalf of all of our Branch Members. A recent event in our calendar was the Midlands Area visit to the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) on 14 September (far right).

Blesma's Chief Executive, Barry Le Grys, attended and everyone had a great time. We haven't been to the NMA as a group since 2014, so it was interesting to see the changes. The renovated Armed Forces Memorial is not planned to open until Armistice Day, but some of the new building was accessible (see opposite story for more).

Our thoughts now turn to the Branch Christmas Lunch, which will take place on Wednesday 07 December at the Shropshire Golf Centre. An added attraction to this year's event will be a talk after lunch by a former member of the Royal Household, who is now involved with the golf centre. I have had a preview, and it is certain to be a very interesting insight!

We were extremely saddened by the passing of one of our long-standing Members, Sheila McGill, in August. Sheila battled courageously for many months and was determined and positive to the very end. She was a staunch supporter of the Branch and many Members attended her funeral in her village church near Bridgnorth. Our thoughts go to Doug and his family at this very sad time.

**Mike Gallagher, Secretary**

## SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH

At our recent Branch meeting we had a really interesting talk from Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service. The speaker, Andy Earl came along with Millie the rescue dog, told us about his work, and gave us some tips about fire safety in the home.

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service is not the only service in the country that offers tips about safety in the home. Most will offer tips on fitting and testing smoke alarms, planning in case of a fire, what to do after a fire, and will give advice on fire safety if you have an impairment. Why not check with your local service? You can find details on line or by contacting Citizens Advice.

**Stephen Coltman, Honorary Secretary**



Members of the Southampton Branch get tips on fire safety





Members from the Midlands Area visit the National Memorial Arboretum

## MIDLANDS VISIT TO THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM

On one of the hottest days of the year, a group of 38 Members from the Midlands Area enjoyed a visit to the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) at Alrewas. We were delighted to welcome our Chief Executive, Barry Le Grys, and the manager of the local firm of stonemasons who are renovating the plinths at the entrance to our garden. The Nottingham and Walsall & District Branches were represented, as well as individual Members, some living as far away as Malvern.

The visit commenced in the Chapel where a Service of Remembrance was followed by a short history of the development of the NMA. There was then an hour or so to catch up with old friends, or take a stroll around some of the 320 memorials, before enjoying an excellent lunch. The afternoon saw Members taking train rides or a guided walk around the site.

There was then time to pick some of the abundant crop of apples on the trees in our orchard, before the day came to a close in our Blesma Garden, where a group photograph was taken (unfortunately, a number of

Members had to leave prior to this due to travel plans heading home).

It had been hoped to view the new Visitor Centre – erected over the past year or so, as the original just could not cope with the enormous increase in visitors over recent years. However, it was not open to the public when we visited. The new centre will cater for some 500,000 visitors a year, including 25,000 school children. There have also been improvements to the reception area, restaurant, café and shop.

**Mike Gallagher**

## NORTH WEST AREA MEMBERS' CHRISTMAS LUNCH

**Sunday 04 December**

This year's lunch will be held on Sunday 04 December at the Barcelo Blackpool Imperial Hotel, at 1pm. Ordinary and Associate Members and Widows, and carers where appropriate, will have the cost of their lunch subsidised by Blesma Chadwell Heath.

Members who wish to attend are requested to complete the form that is inserted into this issue of the Bulletin and return to Mike Downes, BSO (North West) by 18 November.

# Trooper David Hogan 13th/18th Royal Hussars 1925 - 2016

**O**n 06 June 1944, Force S approached Normandy at 0600. A and B Squadrons of the 13th/18th Royal Hussars dropped from their transports and ‘swam’ their Sherman tanks 7,000 yards to the beach under constant fire.

David came in by LCT close behind with C Squadron and RHQ. He remembered little, apart from the noise, which was “dreadful”. With David, aged 19, at the helm, they exited Q Sector Sword Beach to support the Suffolk’s and set off for “Morris” which was quickly overrun, after sorting out “Hillman” they “harboured” for the night at Hermanville.

The next day they moved forward to support the Paras at Pegasus Bridge. Sometime later they took part in the battle for Mont Picon before crossing the Seine and moving into Belgium to take part in what is known in the Regiment as the “Battle of the Flowers” on 07 September.

On 17 September the Battle for Arnhem began and the Regiment was moved forward to support. C Squadron, with David still at the helm, crossed the bridge at Nijmegen, but by 20 September, Arnhem was lost and they withdrew. Between November and January the weather was foul and little progress was made.

C Troop returned to action on 12 January 1945. Operation Blackcock, described as a ‘nasty little operation’ saw A, B, and C Squadrons leap frogging each other through small towns and villages up to, and beyond, Goch. It was on the return to Goch, at a place called Wesel, that on 12 March 1945



a German jet fighter dropped a canister of armour piercing bombs onto a group of men. Seven were killed, 28 were wounded. David was among them.

He was transferred back to Wroughton, where he had both legs amputated. He joined Blesma in 1948, firstly in London, where he worked for Post Office Telephones (BT ) in the Finance Department.

He married Pat and had two children, and used his mobility scooter to collect the football pools for the Spastics Society. He played classical guitar and was an avid radio ham, call sign G3puz. On retirement, David moved to Ferndown, and then to a flat in

# Activity and Respite Breaks

Bournemouth, where he served in the Bournemouth Branch firstly as Treasurer, and then as Secretary until he retired. In all, he served Blesma for more than 40 years. He was a good man, a stalwart Blesma supporter, one of the old kind, he took adversity head on and usually won.

With David well into his 80s his wife, Pat, was diagnosed with dementia. He did his best to care for her, but with his failing eyesight and his own increasing fragility, Pat went into care, although he visited her every day. Last year, the French government awarded all D-Day veterans the Legion D'Honneur. David was immensely proud of that.

In May, David went into hospital with a “belly ache” and came out with cancer. He was not afraid of cancer – falling over was his greatest concern – and his thoughts were always for Pat.

We are lucky within the Bournemouth Branch to have a friend in Bill McQuaid. Bill is a battlefield tour guide and, without hesitation, agreed to take some of David’s ashes to Normandy to be with his comrades.

Behind Sword Beach lies the small town of La Brèche d’Hermanville, where David and his troop “harboured” for the night after taking part in the Landings on the 06 June 1944. It is now the site of the 3rd Division Cemetery and many of David’s Regiment are buried there. Now, many years later, part of David is at rest there with his comrades, who gave their all for their country.

**Peter Sherston-Baker**

## NEW OPPORTUNITIES

We are aware that some of you are concerned about how the closure of the Blackpool Home will impact on activities and respite breaks.

We are working with colleagues in other charities and organisations, and have identified new locations where Members and their families and Widows can participate in activities, and where those needing some respite can take a break. We understand that some Members may have concerns about visiting these new places, but the whole of the Membership Services team is working hard to ensure that these new opportunities are perfectly suited to your needs.

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***If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your local BSO, or Liz at Chadwell Heath on 020 8548 3516 or at [membersupport@blesma.org](mailto:membersupport@blesma.org)***



# Families Project

**B**lesma focuses on meeting the needs of its Members, but we know from our work that living with limb loss affects Members' families, too.

You may be surprised to hear that in the UK there is no research into the impact on the families of veterans living with limb loss, but we do know from international research that the active participation of families in the recovery process of people with a range of injuries or health conditions leads to very real improvements in the lives of the veterans and their families.

Blesma is therefore working with the Veterans & Families Institute (VFI) at Anglia Ruskin University on a research project to gather evidence from Members and their families about their experiences of living with limb loss. This evidence will not only improve our understanding of the challenges you face and help us to provide the support you need, but it will also help us influence other charities and statutory bodies that provide health and social care services.

We are now recruiting, and are looking for 15 families to participate in the project.





We would love to hear from you if your...

- Limb loss is attributable to your military service but NOT associated with Operations Telic or Herrick; OR
- Limb loss occurred during service but NOT as a result of a combat injury; OR
- Limb loss occurred after transition out of the military

If you are interested in being part of this project, we will invite you to identify four members of your family who would be

willing to be interviewed for approximately 60 minutes each. Interviews will be held between November 2016 and March 2017 either at your home or a venue of your choosing. Blesma will meet all travel and overnight accommodation costs.

***If you are interested in being part of this project, please contact the senior researcher in charge of the study, Dr Hilary Engward, on 07787 226525 (please leave a message) or send an email to [hilary.engward@anglia.ac.uk](mailto:hilary.engward@anglia.ac.uk)***

# Maintaining Independence

## A pilot study into the health and social wellbeing of older limbless veterans

**B**lesma is working with Northumbria University on a research project to look at the life-long impact on health and wellbeing of living with limb loss. The study is being funded by the Aged Veterans Fund and looks at veterans aged 40 and over.

By considering the life course of older veterans, the project should provide evidence

of the concerns and the need for services at various stages in life. It will also present an opportunity to shape future health and social care policy and provision across the public and third sectors. We are looking for 32 Members to participate in the project and are interested in hearing from you if you are:

**Aged 40-49**

**Aged 50-59**

**Aged 60-69**

**Aged 70+**

You will have a maximum of three face-to-face interviews, each lasting approximately 90 minutes. The researchers want to explore your life experiences and let you tell your stories in conversation.

Interviews will take place either at your home or at a venue of your choosing between December 2016 and November 2017. The interviews will cover three key stages of your life; looking at experiences pre-Service, during Service, and after Service. The research will be anonymous at the point of publication to prevent you being identified.

There has been a positive response so far and 11 Members have already signed up to take part. The researchers are keen to talk to Members who served in commissioned and non-commissioned ranks.

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*If you are interested in being part of this project or would like more information, please contact Helen Cullen on 07766 982904. Helen is a Blesma Welfare Rep and is supporting this project by assisting with the recruitment and consent process.*



# Mefloquine Single Point of Contact

**O**n 05 September the MOD launched the Mefloquine Single Point of Contact for current and former Service personnel who have concerns about their experience of Mefloquine (commercially known as Lariam). This service provides information and signposting to a range of services. Calls to the line are confidential and no personal details are retained. Lines are open between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday (except Bank Holidays).  
**Tel: 0306 7705059**  
**Email: SGDPHC-MEFLOQUINESPOC@mod.uk**

If you are a **servicing member of the Armed Forces** and have not already sought treatment, you are advised to contact your Senior Medical Officer for health advice.

If you are a **veteran or Reservist**, and have not already sought treatment, you are advised to contact your local NHS GP for health advice. If you have not registered with an NHS GP already you are advised to do so as soon as possible.

In addition, the Veterans and Reservists Mental Health Programme provides assessment and treatment advice for veterans (who have deployed after 1982) and Reservists who have deployed overseas since 01 January 2003, and believe that their deployment may have affected their mental health. Information about how to access this service can be found by searching Veterans and Reserves Mental Health Programme on NHS Choices ([www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)).

## HOW DO I FIND OUT IF I HAVE TAKEN MEFLOQUINE?

If you are a **servicing member of the Armed Forces**, you are advised to contact your Senior Medical Officer who can review your medical records with you and advise if Mefloquine has been previously prescribed.

If you are a **veteran or Reservist**, you are advised to contact your local NHS GP who may have already obtained a copy of your military medical records and will advise if Mefloquine has been previously prescribed.

### Your military medical records can be obtained from:

- RAF: Medical Casework 6, Air Manning Medical Casework, Headquarters Air Command, Room 1, Building 22, Royal Air Force High Wycombe, Walters Ash, Buckinghamshire HP14 4UE
- Army: Army Personnel Centre - Disclosures 3 Mailpoint 525, Kentigern House, 65 Brown Street, Glasgow, G2 8EX (Tel: 0845 600 9663)
- Navy: The Medical Director, General Medical Records Release Section, Institute of Naval Medicine, Alverstoke, Hants, PO12 2DL (Tel: 023 9276 8063)

Alternatively, you can submit a Subject Access Request (SAR) to gain access to your personal data held by the Ministry of Defence.

*For more information and advice, go to [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) and search under the term 'Military Service Records'*

# Veterans' Health and Wellbeing Study

The Northern Ireland Veterans' Health and Wellbeing Study is a major tri-Service (Navy, Army, RAF) research project funded by the Forces in Mind Trust (FiMT) and the Big Lottery Fund.

The study is being conducted by Dr Cherie Armour and a team of researchers from Ulster University working in partnership with the Northern Ireland Veteran Support Committee (NIVSC). The study is planned to run for four years, during which time Dr Armour and her team hope that veterans who are currently living in Northern Ireland will increasingly come forward and get involved in the study.

The team hope to obtain accurate information about the existing support, both statutory and voluntary, that is available to veterans living in Northern Ireland. The goal is to make practical steps towards improving service delivery and access to support.

The team will also examine what veterans' current and future needs may be; this will involve face-to-face interviews and/or the completion of a survey with/by veterans who agree to participate.

One of the key aims of the research is to estimate the size of the veteran population in Northern Ireland. Doing so will reveal whether or not the correct levels of services

and support are in place. For this part of the study, it would be very helpful if veterans living in Northern Ireland completed a two-minute survey. The survey will ask for key pieces of information to allow for counting; for example, a first name initial, gender and the first part of a postcode (i.e. BT14 5).

These methods are standard in research and the team are experts in protecting participants' identities, as well as ensuring that all the data that is gathered is held both securely and confidentially. The data of veterans will never be published as single entities; rather the team will report findings such as; "It is estimated that X number of veterans live in Northern Ireland, X are male and X are female." No individuals will be identifiable.

If you would like to take part you can log your details via a two-minute survey found at <http://tinyurl.com/gsbg82z>

You can follow the project on Twitter using the handle @NIVeteranStudy or check out the university webpage for regular updates: [www.science.ulster.ac.uk/psychology/vhws](http://www.science.ulster.ac.uk/psychology/vhws)

*If you have any questions or would like to take part in the survey, please get in touch by calling 028 7012 4872 or by emailing [niveteranstudy@gmail.com](mailto:niveteranstudy@gmail.com)*



Are you a military veteran currently living in Northern Ireland?  
Ulster University needs your help!

FiMT  
The National Lottery





## Members' Weekend 2017

10-12 June, 2017  
Chesford Grange Hotel, Kenilworth

The 2017 Members' Weekend will take place at the same venue as this year; the Chesford Grange Hotel, Kenilworth.

If you would like to come along to meet old friends and make some new ones, find out what Blesma Members are up to, and have your say on what

Blesma should be doing to support Members, please put the date in your diary and complete the application form inserted into this Bulletin. Blesma will cover the cost of Ordinary and Associate Members and their partners or carers.

The 2017 AGM will take place during the Sunday morning, but the formalities will be kept to a minimum. We very much hope to see you there!

# Join a Veterans Breakfast Club

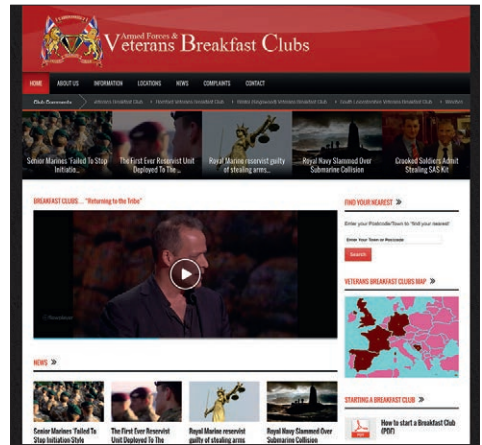
So what is it about Veterans Breakfast Clubs that matters so much to veterans? Is it the camaraderie and the banter, or is it simply “returning to the tribe”?

So often in a simple phone call, or a chance meeting, veterans spot the tell-tale signs in each other of a fellow veteran and the banter begins. That’s often followed by an invitation to visit their nearest club, a network of which has now spread across the UK and beyond.

The origins of the Breakfast Clubs can be traced back to Hull in the 1990s, where former colleagues of REME Reservist Peter Barker would occasionally drop into his garage for a chat and a brew. In 2007, Dereck Hardman brought an ex-MOD vehicle to Peter’s garage to be worked on, and the first club began in earnest, both enjoying breakfast and a banter every Saturday morning. Word spread as one veteran told another, and the Breakfast Club was born.

It expanded gradually until, in 2014, after a breakfast to celebrate Dereck’s 50th birthday, many of his former Sapper comrades from around the country went home with the intention of starting their own Breakfast Clubs. Now, with some 150 Breakfast Clubs around the world, and more than 25,000 members on Facebook alone, the Clubs provide a much-needed place for veterans to enjoy the old camaraderie. Often, that’s with people they haven’t met before, but who are immediately thought of as brothers and sisters from having served in HM Forces.

It doesn’t matter which arm of Service you belonged to, or for how long, you will be



made very welcome to join in the banter over breakfast. There are no fees, and very few rules, each club making its own decisions on when and where they meet.

If you can’t find one near you, call the number on the website, and a new club can be set up very quickly, as long as there is a good venue with adequate parking, good disabled facilities, and assuming there are a number of veterans in the area, of course.

If they can ‘hack the banter’, young or old, all are welcome; families and supporters or carers are often also welcome.

Veterans Breakfast Clubs are here to allow veterans to “return to the tribe”!

***To find out more about the Armed Forces and Veterans Breakfast Club, and for details of your nearest clubs, visit [www.afvbc.co.uk](http://www.afvbc.co.uk)***

# Flying the flag (and a plane!) for Blesma

**B**lesma Member Yanto Evans and his friend Ian Underwood recently took to the skies and are the first amputees to complete the challenge of flying around the coastline of Great Britain in an aircraft with no adaptations.

They took off from their home airfield in Turweston, Northampton in their Piper Warrior 161 light aircraft on 21 September, and landed back there on 26 September, having spent 23 hours and 55 minutes in the air. Yanto, who piloted the aircraft, and his co-pilot Ian took on the unique challenge for Blesma in the hope that they could raise awareness of the Association and its work.

“It was hard work but very enjoyable,” said Yanto. “We were lucky with the weather apart from one day when we couldn’t fly at all. We had planned for this, however, and managed to stay ahead of schedule. Without Ian’s invaluable experience and knowledge, I wouldn’t have been able to fly in some of the weather conditions!”

Ian added: “It was a fantastic experience and Yanto did very well. Everything went according to plan and I am very pleased to have taken part.”

The two men met through their flying club, and when Yanto invited Ian to join him on the trip, Ian jumped at the chance! Yanto served in the Parachute Regiment and lost a leg after being injured whilst working in Iraq. Ian, meanwhile, is a retired airline pilot and lost a leg in a plane crash in 1987. He is now a flying instructor. The pair flew around Britain in an anticlockwise direction – from

Turweston they headed east to Beccles in Norfolk, then turned north and followed the east coast through Peterlee, ending the first day in Dundee.

Day two took the pair north towards the Orkneys and along the north coast of Scotland to Stornoway on the Isle of Lewis, before heading south over the Outer Hebrides to Islay. Due to bad weather forecasts for Saturday, Yanto and Ian decided to continue their journey through the Isle of Man and land at Haverfordwest airfield in South Wales. Despite the bad weather bringing the challenge to a halt on the Saturday, the extended journey on Friday night meant they were still on schedule.

On Sunday morning, they were able to set off again in clear skies, navigating south to Land’s End and then east along the south coast towards Dunkeswell. The next stop was Sandown on the Isle of Wight and, for the last leg of the journey, Yanto and Ian flew east along the White Cliffs of Dover and north over the Thames Estuary, before finally landing back at Beccles.

“We would like to thank everyone we came into contact with us along our journey who assisted and supported us where they could,” said Yanto.

# Spotlight on Benefits

**W**elcome to the Bulletin's regular section on the benefits system. As well as highlighting some useful information regarding benefits we will also be raising awareness of some health and social care matters. If you would like to discuss your benefit entitlement, please contact your Blesma Support Officer.

Alternatively, you can contact Liz Watling in the Membership Services Team by email at [membersupport@blesma.org](mailto:membersupport@blesma.org) or on 020 8548 3516.

## ATTENDANCE ALLOWANCE SURVEY – A THANK YOU

In the Spring issue we informed you of the potential changes the government was considering making to Attendance Allowance. This would not affect current claimants to the benefit, which is for those whose disability or ill health started after they turned 65.

In order for Blesma to respond to the government's consultation on the potential changes, we sent a survey to many of our Members already receiving Attendance Allowance to identify how the benefit makes a difference to their lives.

The survey has now closed and we are collating responses. We had a 37% response rate and we would like to thank those who took part. The responses we've studied make it clear that Attendance Allowance can make a difference in a number of ways, with many of you feeling it plays a large part in helping you maintain your health and wellbeing, for example because it can help you meet the

costs of paying for support in your home or purchasing additional mobility aids.

We submitted our response to the consultation and have had confirmation that it was received. When we have any news on the outcome of the consultation we'll update you in future Bulletins.

## EMPLOYMENT AND SUPPORT ALLOWANCE STOP PRESS!

### Government Announcement

**You may have heard that the government has announced that it will abolish reassessments for those claimants with life-long, severe health conditions with no prospect of improvement. No further detail has been announced but when it is we will update you in a future Bulletin.**

Employment and Support Allowance is a benefit for working age people who have limited capability for work. An entitlement to the benefit is decided by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) based on a medical assessment.

If you do any work, whether or not you expect to be paid, and are entitled to Employment and Support Allowance, the DWP will treat you as capable for work and your entitlement to the benefit will end.

## PERMITTED WORK

Permitted Work allows you to try work within certain limits. Provided you work within these stated limits you can remain entitled

to Employment and Support Allowance. You may be referred to a DWP healthcare professional for an opinion if you carry out activities in your Permitted Work which suggest your limited capability for work status may have changed. If you have an assessment due during any period you carry out Permitted Work this will still go ahead.

**There are three types of Permitted Work:  
Permitted Work – lower limit**

You can earn no more than £20 per week. There is no time limit for how long you can do this work provided your earnings stay below the limit.

**Permitted Work – higher limit**

This is designed to test your ability to work before you move permanently into employment. You can earn up to £115.50 per week and must work less than 16 hours per week. Currently, if you are in the Work Related Activity Group of Employment and Support Allowance you can carry out work for 52 weeks. However, the government has announced that claimants can do this work indefinitely from April 2017. If you are in the Support Group of Employment and Support Allowance you can do this work indefinitely.

**Supported Permitted Work**

This is work that is:

- carried out as part of your treatment programme under medical supervision while you are an inpatient or a regular outpatient of a hospital or similar institution OR
- done under the supervision of a person employed by a public or local authority or voluntary or community interest organisation that provides or arranges work opportunities for disabled people.

In the latter case, you do not need the person supporting you to be working alongside you.

The support must be ongoing and regular, but the frequency of contact can vary depending on the needs. You can earn up to £115.50 per week and you can do this work indefinitely.

When starting any work you should inform the DWP for a decision on whether or not it comes under the Permitted Work rules. Failure to do so may result in an overpayment of benefit.

**UNIVERSAL CREDIT**

The government has made a number of announcements regarding changes to the benefits system since the introduction of the Welfare Reform Act 2012. As many of these changes are yet to come into effect, this is causing confusion for many who are new claimants to benefits as well as those who have received benefits for some time.

Universal Credit is a relatively new means-tested benefit the government has developed. It is the largest change within the Act and, as a result, is being phased in across the country at different stages to allow the Department for Work and Pensions to cope with the changes, including the development of a new computer system to manage claims.

**Universal Credit is replacing a number of benefits. These are means-tested benefits for claimants who:**

- are not in work (income related Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support and Income based Jobseeker's Allowance)
- are in work (Working Tax Credit)
- have children (Child Tax Credit)
- pay rent (Housing Benefit)

As well as having entitlement to the benefit, receiving a payment will depend on your income and capital, including that of your partner, if you have one.

If you are already on one of the benefits (also known as legacy benefits) that Universal

## BENEFITS

Credit is replacing, you will remain on them until you have a change of circumstance (e.g. you were claiming as a single person and then begin life as part of a couple), or the DWP contacts you to transfer you over to Universal Credit.

Some claimants will be worse off under Universal Credit. However, if you are worse off on transfer to Universal Credit when the government contacts you (rather than as a change of circumstances), the government will protect your benefits at the rate you were receiving as long as your circumstances don't change again.

For new claimants to a means-tested benefit, the situation is rather complex. Universal Credit is the biggest change to the welfare benefits system for years and, as a result, the benefit is being phased in across the country. In some areas the benefit can only be claimed by a jobseeker who is available for, and actively seeking, work. In a small number of areas there is a 'full roll out' of the benefit, which means that everyone in that area who is entitled would have to apply for the benefit if they are not already on one of the means-tested benefits. This roll out will be increasing at a greater speed from January.

### BLUE BADGE

It has come to Blesma's attention that there is a Blue Badge application scam website which offers to help people to apply for a Blue Badge for a fee of £49. If you are contacted in this way, or have already been affected, please contact your local Trading Standards service. You can find your local Trading Standards at [www.gov.uk/find-local-trading-standards-office](http://www.gov.uk/find-local-trading-standards-office)

Applications for a Blue Badge should only be made through your local authority or via [www.gov.uk/apply-blue-badge](http://www.gov.uk/apply-blue-badge)

You will not be charged for making an application, but if you are approved for a Blue

Badge there is a nominal fee (which also includes renewals). In England and Northern Ireland, you may be charged a maximum fee of £10, in Scotland you could be charged up to £20, whilst in Wales it is free.

### What are the criteria for a Blue Badge?

There is automatic entitlement for people on certain benefits. If you are not on one of the following benefits you may be entitled to a discretionary Blue Badge. You may need to have a medical assessment for a decision to be made.

### Automatic entitlement

You need to meet at least one of the following:

- You receive the higher rate of the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance
- You live in England and you receive the Personal Independence Payment Mobility Component and your "moving around" score is eight or more
- You live in Scotland or Wales and you receive the Personal Independence Payment Mobility Component. Your "moving around" score is eight or more, or 12 points in the "planning and following journeys" activity
- You are registered blind
- You receive a War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement
- You have been awarded a lump sum benefit at tariffs 1 - 8 of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme and are certified as having a permanent disability which causes inability to walk, or very considerable difficulty walking

### Discretionary entitlement

Discretionary entitlement means that you may be referred for a mobility assessment before your application can be processed.

- You may be eligible for a badge if you have a permanent physical disability and this means:

- You are unable to walk
- You have very considerable difficulty in walking
- You drive a motor vehicle regularly, have a severe disability in both arms, and are unable to operate all or some types of parking meter

***For questions about the Blue Badge scheme, contact your local council or the Blue Badge initial enquiry support service on [bluebadge@northgateps.com](mailto:bluebadge@northgateps.com)***  
***Telephone (England): 0844 463 0213***  
***Telephone (Scotland): 0844 463 0214***  
***Telephone (Wales): 0844 463 0215***  
***For Northern Ireland, queries are dealt with by the Blue Badge Unit 0300 200 7818 or email [bluebadges@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk](mailto:bluebadges@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk)***

And finally, a reminder to keep your Blue Badge safe - 2,000 were stolen in 2015!

## **ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION STANDARD – NHS ENGLAND**

From 31 July 2016, all organisations in England that provide NHS care or adult social care, including NHS Trusts and GP practices, are legally required to follow the Accessible Information Standard.

The standard aims to make sure that people who have a disability, impairment or sensory loss are provided with information that they can easily read or understand with support, so they can communicate effectively with health and social care services.

### **Organisations must do five things:**

- Ask people if they have any information or communication needs, and find out how to meet their needs
- Record these needs clearly and in a set way
- Highlight or ‘flag’ the person’s file or notes so it is clear that they have information or communication needs and know how those needs should be met

- Share information about people’s information and communication needs with other providers of NHS and adult social care, when they have consent or permission to do so
- Take steps to ensure that people receive information which they can access and understand, and receive communication support if they need it

The standard was first published in July 2015, meaning that organisations then had a year to get everything in place to be able to meet the requirements of the standard by its introduction.

## **ONLINE SUPPORT**

A benefits information section will soon be included on the Blesma website ([www.blesma.org](http://www.blesma.org)). In the meantime, if you would like more information on benefits, or some hints and tips on how to fill in claim forms, please contact your BSO or Liz in the Membership Services team on 020 8548 3516 or on email at [membersupport@blesma.org](mailto:membersupport@blesma.org)

# Keeping Connected

## HELP US TO KEEP YOU CONNECTED!

If you are moving home, or have recently changed your telephone number or email address, please let us know. This will help us to keep our records as up to date as possible, ensuring your Blesma Support Officer can contact you, and that you receive not only Blesma Magazine and Members' Bulletins, but also any email updates about forthcoming activities and events.

*To update your contact details, please email Elaine in Membership Services on [memberadmin@blesma.org](mailto:memberadmin@blesma.org) or call her on 020 8548 7093*

## NOMINATE AN EMAIL BUDDY

We are conscious that in a world of emails, the internet and social media, there are still many Members who are unable to access emails easily or who do not wish to make use of these digital methods of communication.

We will always provide hard copies of our publications to Members who rely on receiving information through their letter boxes. However, if you have family members or friends who could receive emails on your behalf email the Membership Services team at [memberadmin@blesma.org](mailto:memberadmin@blesma.org) so that we can add your details to our electronic mailing lists.

## And finally...



## NORMANDY LANDINGS CHARITY KEEPS D-DAY MEMORIES ALIVE

D-Day Revisited was set up in 2008 to fund a 65th anniversary visit by British veterans to the site of the Normandy Landings. Now a registered charity, it runs similar events each year to give veterans the opportunity to make that journey and remember their fallen comrades. For more information, and to plan your visit, go to [www.d-dayrevisited.co.uk](http://www.d-dayrevisited.co.uk)

## CALLING ALL MEMBERS!

This is YOUR Bulletin and we'd like to know what you think about it so that we can constantly improve it. We'd like to include articles that you want to read about, and we'd also like to print more of your articles. Please get in touch with Jess MacKinnon at [ihj@blesma.org](mailto:ihj@blesma.org) or on 020 8548 3514 to tell us your opinion or if you would like to contribute an article, story or photograph.

We look forward to hearing from you!

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