

# exposure

Autumn 2024

The combined magazine for the nuclear community

## Wessex Whirlwind (XG588)

Christmas Island History  
on my doorstep

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S. Dexon / BH Associates

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We report on the May  
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**Next issue copy  
deadline for all  
editorial sections:  
15th November 2024**

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# Foreword

Hello and welcome to the Autumn edition of exposure magazine.

In this edition we report on the events of the nuclear convention in May of this year. Based on the success of the convention we can also inform you that next years convention will be held at the same venue from 16th of May to the 18th. The event will again be funded by the NCCF. We will be publishing more information in the next edition of the magazine due to be published in December.

If you are eager and wish to register early you can do so, just read the information on p13 and get in touch with us.

If you would like to be a part of the magazine and get your story told and pictures shown, please check page 14. This gives you the information you need to contact me and get your experiences into print. We are always looking for interesting stories and recollections. The 15th of November is the next issues copy deadline.

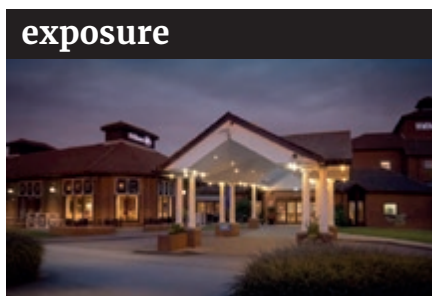
We hope you enjoy this edition of the magazine.

**Editor - exposure**

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## The NCCF

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## BNTVA

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BNTVA  
the Charity for Atomic Veterans  
Registered Charity 1173375



## CHRC

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## exposure Online

See the magazine website at: [www.exposure.press](http://www.exposure.press)

# Convention Report

## Building Bridges: The Inaugural Nuclear Community Convention

The Nuclear Communities Charity Foundation (NCCF) is proud to have hosted the first-ever Nuclear Community Convention held between the 10th and 12th of May at the Hilton Hotel East Midlands Airport. This event brought together various organisations working within the nuclear community for shared experiences and collaboration.

### A Centralised Gathering

Selecting a central location was essential to maximise attendance. The Hilton at East Midlands Airport offered excellent accessibility by road, rail, and air. Its proximity to the airport makes it convenient for attendees from all directions with well-supported bus and taxi services filling any gaps. This central location also aligns perfectly with the catchment area for the Community Care Check Pilot, allowing for targeted outreach to this important group.

### A Commitment to Inclusion

Despite time constraints, the NCCF has made it a priority to reach out to past BNTVA conference supporters and beneficiaries from the Community Care Check Pilot. We understand that a longer lead time would have been ideal, and in the future, we are committed to engaging the entire beneficiary community with ample notice.

### Affordability and Remembrance

The NCCF is dedicated to making this event accessible. Thanks to a £20,000 budget allocation, attendees enjoyed complimentary accommodation and meals, with only their travel costs to cover. Additionally, the NCCF funded transportation to and from a poignant Service of Remembrance at the National Memorial Arboretum.



Hilton photographs used by permission Hilton Hotels and Resorts

### Community Engagement

This exciting event marks a new chapter, bringing together various organisations not just within the nuclear community and academia but from the wider environment of Cold War organisations, creating shared experiences and collaboration.

### Attendance

The community response in attending the event was amazing, over one hundred people in total, with 80 Veterans, Spouses and offspring. Alongside the regular conference visitors were both Veterans and offspring who had never attended an event before.

Our common interest organisations included the new BNTVA Museum CIC, Nuclear Voices Project, The CHRC, The Office for Veterans Affairs,

Big Ideas, The Military Vehicles Trust, The Cold War Network, EA Mobility and Revitalise Respite.

### Presentations

#### Jeffrey Liddiatt MBE - NCCF Hon Life President

Unfortunately, due to health issues, Jeff was not able to attend in person however he sent a video message welcoming all and wishing the best for an enjoyable event.

#### Ian Hall - NCCF Chairman

Ian chaired the Convention and made a short speech of welcome, recognising many faces and noting that it had been a number of years since the NCCF had formally attended any community events.



Jeffrey Liddiatt MBE – NCCF Hon Life President



Ian Hall – NCCF Chairman



Nigel Heaps MBE – BNTVA CIC Advisor



The Very Reverend Nicholas Frayling

### **Nigel Heaps MBE – BNTVA CIC Advisor**

#### ***BNTVA Governance Issues and Restructuring***

Nigel Heaps MBE, a former Chairman of the BNTVA and architect of the BNTVA Constitution, was invited in early 2023 to address governance concerns within the BNTVA CIC. His comprehensive review revealed significant lapses in trustee leadership, which had led to actions being taken in the name of the charity that severely damaged the BNTVA's reputation and finances.

#### ***Taking Responsibility and Rebuilding***

The BNTVA trustees accepted full accountability for these issues. Serious incident reports were filed, and the Charity Commission conducted a review, issuing recommendations that were implemented. Unfortunately, the fallout further strained the BNTVA's resources, pushing it close to insolvency.

Despite extensive efforts, including a costly legal battle, the organisation lacked the experience and resources to continue as a CIC.

#### ***Financial Rescue and Asset Preservation***

A critical element of the rescue package involved a financial bailout of over £20k from BH Associates, a generous gesture that significantly alleviated the BNTVA's financial burden. Additionally, BNTVA members rallied and raised almost £16k from Gift Aid authorisations. This combined effort and BH Associates' willingness to forego further claims in exchange for BNTVA's property enabled the organisation to settle its debts and avoid insolvency.

As part of the BH Associates write-off deal, an agreement was made to transfer all BNTVA property to the newly established BNTVA Museum CIC.

This Community Interest Company structure ensures non-profit operation and an asset lock to the NCCF, safeguarding the BNTVA's valuable artefacts and archives from the uncertainties of a 'liquidation fire sale' and preserving them for future generations.

#### ***Securing the Future – A New Chapter***

Recognising the importance of the BNTVA's mission, the NCCF stepped in to provide support. They agreed to assume responsibility for critical functions, including:

- Maintaining free magazine space for BNTVA communications
- Organising reunion and remembrance events
- Become the custodian of BNTVA Memorials
- Providing the funeral drape service.

They are also expanding the BNTVA Connect initiative (introduced through the Community Care Check pilot) to encompass these activities and new initiatives going into the future.

#### **The Very Reverend Nicholas Frayling – Chaplain to the Nuclear Community**

Nicholas gave a welcome speech recognising the power of evolution, union and community with the power of remembrance and cooperation.



Wesley Perriman – Curator The BNTVA Museum



Shelly Grigg – Fallout Group

### **Ian Hall – NCCF Takes on BNTVA Legacy: Preserving Remembrance and Community**

Ian Hall outlined the exciting new chapter for the BNTVA community, with the NCCF stepping forward with a steadfast commitment to ensure the continuation of cherished traditions and heritage preservation.

#### *Securing the Future of Remembrance Events:*

- **NAVAD:** Events will be held at the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) or other significant locations
- **Memorials:** The NCCF, in collaboration with the BNTVA Museum, will assume guardianship of BNTVA memorials and secure their upkeep through fundraising initiatives
- **Remembrance Sunday:** The NCCF will organise veteran participation at the Cenotaph. Details and name submissions will be available in this magazine edition.

#### *Preserving Traditions and Building Community:*

- **Funeral Drape Service:** The NCCF thanks Shelly Grigg and her team for crafting new funeral drapes. They will ensure this vital service continues by managing drape distribution to funeral directors

- **The Magazine:** The NCCF deeply values the magazine and maintains its editorial format, encouraging veterans to share stories and memories, recognising their integral role in the community
- **Reunions and Regional Events:** The NCCF is committed to delivering community events like conventions. Recognising travel limitations, they plan to expand regional events through the BNTVA Connect initiative.

#### *Open Invitation for Collaboration:*

The NCCF warmly welcomes suggestions from the community to further enrich veterans' experiences. Your ideas are valuable to us, so please don't hesitate to contact us!

### **The BNTVA Museum – Wesley Perriman Curator**

#### *BNTVA Museum: Sharing Stories, Preserving History*

Wesley provided an update on the exciting BNTVA Museum, established to safeguard the BNTVA movement's unique artefacts and archives as a Community Interest Company (CIC).

#### *Building on Success, Expanding Reach:*

Wesley, a seasoned curator, will meticulously examine the collection to create compelling touring exhibitions for museums and galleries nationwide. This ambitious project will showcase the BNTVA's legacy and share the stories of veterans with a wider audience.

#### *Seeking Expert Guidance and Community Input:*

Later this year, the BNTVA Museum will establish its first Advisory Board. This board will be diverse community representatives, charity experts, and specialists from museums and Cold War organizations. Their valuable insights will guide the CIC's direction.

#### *Reaching Out to the Community: A Call for Donations*

The museum's inaugural project focuses on acquiring personal memorabilia from veterans. A dedicated outreach campaign will connect with potential donors. Informational materials will outline two paths for contribution: immediate donation or bequest through one's will.

#### *The Power of Personal Stories:*

The museum seeks items that capture the human experience, such as letters home, diaries, and souvenirs. These objects offer a glimpse into the lives of those who served, enriching the historical narrative. When donating, consider including personal anecdotes – these details significantly enhance the value of each piece.

### **Shelly Grigg – Fallout Group Shines On: Supporting Veterans and Connecting Generations**

Shelly delivered positive news for the Fallout Group, a Facebook community dedicated to connecting the children of British Nuclear Test Veterans (BNTVA).

Despite the BNTVA CIO's deregistration, the Fallout Group will continue to thrive.

#### **Reaching Almost 1,000 Members:**

With nearly 1,000 members, the Fallout Group has blossomed into a vibrant online hub for the BNTVA offspring community. This growth is a testament to our shared dedication and the strength of our community.

#### **Exciting Collaboration with BNTVA Museum:**

The future of the Fallout Group is filled with promise. Shelly announced a thrilling collaboration with the newly established BNTVA Museum. This joint effort will pave the way for a comprehensive online resource dedicated to the BNTVA veterans, sparking excitement for what's to come.

#### **A Community-Driven Initiative:**

The online resource aims to be a community project similar to the successful initiative at the Thiepval Memorial in France. Exposure magazine will share details regarding contribution opportunities and project progress.

#### **Nigel Heaps MBE – NCCF's Community Care Check Pilot: Reaching Out and Making a Difference**

Nigel Heaps MBE, member of the Community Care Check Outreach Team presented the CCC report, recognising that this was a significant shift in the NCCF grant making activities.

#### **From Reactive to Proactive:**

The NCCF is moving away from a passive application system. The CCC proactively reaches beneficiaries with dedicated outreach efforts, encouraging them to seek support. This innovative approach flips the script, ensuring those needing to learn about available assistance are connected with the resources they deserve.



Ian Higginbottom – Community Care Check Outreach Co-Ordinator

#### **Office for Veteran Affairs Funding**

The Office for Veterans Affairs has made the CCC possible with a grant of £70,00 which has been match funded by the NCCF. This significant investment by the Government has allowed us to fast-track the pilot and really start making a palpable difference in our grant support for community members.

#### **Expanding Our Reach and Tailoring Support:**

Ian Higginbottom, the Outreach Coordinator, has developed a comprehensive program that includes regular phone calls, home visits, and personalised support plans to directly contact 150 beneficiaries and over 900 family members. This personalised approach allows the NCCF to understand individual needs and tailor support accordingly. The pilot also goes beyond simply connecting veterans with resources. Family members play a crucial role in wellbeing, and including them in the outreach program ensures a holistic approach to care.

#### **Making a Tangible Impact:**

The pilot's results so far are promising. Compared to the traditional system, the CCC boasts a two-thirds increase in applications and a jump in grant spending from £4,000 to £5,600. This signifies that the proactive approach reaches more beneficiaries and identifies those with more significant needs.

Additionally, the program has facilitated higher-quality grant applications, ensuring resources are directed towards areas where they can make the most significant impact.

#### **Data-Driven Approach for Continuous Improvement:**

The NCCF is committed to a data-driven approach to continuous improvement. Gathering demographic and wellbeing data through tools like the Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (SWEMWBS) helps assess the pilot's effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. This data allows the NCCF to refine its outreach strategies and tailor support to address the specific needs of its beneficiary population.

#### **Adapting to Challenges and Building Sustainability:**

Every outreach program is flawed, and the CCC is no exception. The initial one-in-four phone connection success rate is declining, highlighting the need for adaptation. The NCCF is already exploring solutions for more sustainable outreach interaction, such as incorporating alternative communication methods or exploring partnerships with local organisations to create a more robust support network.

#### **Measuring Outcomes and Sharing Knowledge:**

The SWEMWBS is more than just being used to gauge the impact of outreach efforts on beneficiaries. We also analyse and include the demographics return data in our policy-making and planning. Forms were also distributed at this convention to assess its impact on attendees' wellbeing. Look for the results in this magazine, alongside the final report on the CCC pilot program. By sharing their findings, the NCCF aims to contribute valuable insights to the field of veteran support and inspire other organisations to adopt similar proactive approaches.

**Continuing the Pilot**

The CCC Pilot demonstrates the NCCF's commitment to proactive engagement and impactful support for its beneficiaries. This innovative program increases access to resources and serves as a model for other organisations seeking to improve veteran care.

**Steve Bexon - Editor exposure magazine*****Veteran Stories Take Centre Stage***

Stephen's presentation at the conference offered a glimpse into Exposure magazine's exciting future. Incorporating BNTVA news and content from the newly established BNTVA Museum marks a significant shift towards a more "veteran-centric" approach. This focus on veterans' stories and experiences promises to make the magazine even more engaging and relevant to its readership.

***A Collaborative Spirit Fosters Rich Content***

Exposure thrives on collaboration. All constituent organizations contribute their voices and perspectives, enriching the magazine's content. The dedicated editorial team, as the driving force, is constantly seeking out fresh, captivating, and meaningful content that resonates with veterans and their families. This dedication is further amplified by the invaluable contributions from the BNTVA and the Cold War Network. Their involvement ensures a steady flow of high-quality, veteran-focused content for future issues, guaranteeing a diverse and informative reading experience.

***Beyond Veteran Stories: A Platform for Connection***

Exposure isn't just about sharing veterans' stories – it's about fostering community and connection. The magazine recognizes the importance of helping veterans reconnect with old comrades and share their experiences. This is why they actively encourage reader participation. Exposure wants to hear from you if you're a veteran with a story or simply looking to reconnect with fellow veterans.



Steve Bexon - Editor Exposure Magazine

Email Steve in writing or by email at [editor@exposure.press](mailto:editor@exposure.press). Your stories have the power to inspire, educate, and connect not only with fellow veterans but with a broader audience interested in the unique experiences and sacrifices of those who served.

***A Look Ahead: A Magazine That Evolves with its Community***

Exposure magazine isn't afraid to evolve. By embracing veteran-centric content and actively seeking reader contributions, the magazine demonstrates its commitment to serving the veteran community. This commitment ensures that Exposure remains a valuable resource, a platform for sharing stories, and a bridge that connects veterans, their families, and the broader community. As the veteran community and its needs evolve, so too will Exposure, adapting its content and approach to continue serving its readers in the most meaningful way possible.

**Anisha Worbs - Director OVA**

Anisha is the newly appointed director of the Office for Veterans Affairs. Unfortunately, she was not able to attend the event in person, but she recorded an exceptional, warm, welcoming, and very well-received video address. In her address, she shared her vision for the future of our organisations and expressed her excitement at being able to work with us.

As we have stated, the OVA made a significant funding grant to our Community Care Check programme, and we are committed to maintaining and strengthening our collaborative relationship with them for the benefit of our people.

**Dr Chris Hill & Dr John Hogg - Nuclear Voices Project**

Chris and John gave a lively entertaining presentation on the progress of their far reaching project to capture the voices of our nuclear veterans describing their experiences of the tests. The project funded by the OVA is well on its way and many veterans have been interviewed by the team.

If you are approached by them please agree to have an interview this will form the core of a fantastic historical resource for our descendants.

More details on the progress of the project can be found [www.ntvhistory.uk](http://www.ntvhistory.uk)

**Prof. Rhona Anderson - Centre for the Health Effects of Radiological and Chemical Agents**

Rhona gave an update of the research conducted by the centre, discussing methodologies and findings. A full report on the presentation is in the CHRC Editorial section of this issue.

**Nigel Heaps MBE - Big Ideas Remember Together Project**

Due to a last minute situation our colleagues from Big Ideas were unable to attend the Convention. They asked Nigel if he could deliver the presentation on their behalf.

Four films from the OVA Funded Big Ideas "Remember Together: Nuclear Test Veterans project." Big Ideas wanted to put Nuclear Test Veterans' stories at the heart of this work. They ran an education campaign to teach young people about this little known part of our history and alongside that an outreach programme giving community groups the opportunity to hear their stories.



Anisha Worbs - Director OVA



Dr Chris Hill - Nuclear Voices Project



Dr John Hogg - Nuclear Voices Project



Prof. Rhona Anderson - CHRC



Big Ideas Remember Together Project



Four short films featuring veterans being interviewed by young adults were then shown to the convention.

The films were very emotive and more than one member of the audience was moved to tears. The Big Ideas team hoped that guests enjoyed the Remember Together films and want to thank everyone in the veteran community for their support in sharing these stories.

Thousands of people have watched these films in every part of the British Isles.

Events have taken place in schools, older people's groups, online and in person, the Air Cadets, the Imperial War Museum, the National Army Museum, Bodmin Keep Museum and Leeds Armed Forces Festival

**Ian Hall - Revitalise Respite Breaks - Prize Draw**

Revitalise, an organisation providing respite breaks at centred in the UK kindly donated a short break. A free prize draw was held and one lucky couple are now heading for a short break at the Sandpipers location in Southport. We have more information on Revitalise in this edition p36.



Dr Peter Robinson – Cold War Network



### **Dr Peter Robinson – Cold War Network**

#### *Bridging the Cold War Divide:*

The Cold War Network Expands, Offering New Opportunities for Collaboration and Participation Peter's captivating presentation at the convention delved into the fascinating origins of the Cold War Network. Rooted in academic research on Cold War nostalgia and tourism experiences in both Eastern and Western Europe, the network has blossomed into a vibrant community over the past 18 months.

#### *From Academic Inquiry to Inclusive Network:*

The Cold War Network's story began with a compelling research project: "Remembering the Cold War: Nostalgia and Experiences of Cold War Tourism." This exploration laid the groundwork for a more ambitious endeavour – a network transcending academic boundaries.

#### *Uniting a Diverse Community of Stakeholders:*

Over the past year and a half, the Cold War Network has fostered an inclusive environment for many stakeholders. Major institutions like the Imperial War Museum and English Heritage share the platform with smaller museums, private collections, and even individuals passionate about the Cold War era. This diversity allows for a rich exchange of perspectives and expertise.

#### *Beyond the Walls: Podcasts, Vehicles, and More:*

The network extends its reach beyond traditional museums and historical societies. Cold War enthusiasts who produce podcasts and maintain military vehicle collections find a home within the network, further enriching the overall experience for all members.

#### *Looking Ahead: A Collaborative Future for Cold War Exploration*

The Cold War Network's commitment to inclusivity and multi-faceted exploration promises a dynamic future. This collaborative platform empowers diverse stakeholders to share knowledge, resources, and perspectives, ensuring a deeper understanding of the Cold War era for a wider audience.

#### *The challenges facing the CWN in the next 12 months are:*

- Development of legal and operating structure
- Decisions about regional structures and funding
- Exploration of member benefits
- Future Cold War Network Events – Regional and National
- Evolution of the Steering Group to be a Management Board
- Submission of a major AHRC grant
- Smaller collaborative projects between members
- A shared exhibition
- Development of public engagement strategies



### **Cold War Comes Alive at the Convention: Vehicle Display**

The 2024 Nuclear Community Convention witnessed a successful debut collaboration between the NCCF and other members of the Cold War Network. A captivating display of restored Cold War-era military vehicles were at the venue during the Saturday, offering a unique and engaging experience for our guests.

#### *Veterans Reconnect Through History:*

The exhibition resonated deeply with veterans present at the convention. Alan Rawsterne's meticulously restored Austin Champ triggered a wave of poignant memories. Veterans shared stories of operating and maintaining these vehicles during their service, creating a powerful sense of connection to the past.

#### *Positive Feedback Fuels Future Expansion:*

The positive experiences reported by both convention guests and vehicle owners bode well for future collaborations. The NCCF, recognising the immense interest, plans to expand this aspect of the event in 2025.



Austin Champ with owner Alan Rasterne



The service of Remembrance at the NMA

### *A Glimpse into the Future: Public Event at the NMA*

Building on this success, the 2025 plans include a more extensive public event at the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) on the following Sunday. This expanded event promises to attract a wider audience, fostering a deeper appreciation for the Cold War era and its significance.

Overall, the vehicle display at the convention marked a significant step forward for the BNTVA Museum and the NCCF's collaboration with the Cold War Network. The positive reception paves the way for future events that bridge the gap between history and the public, offering a unique and engaging way to explore the Cold War period.

### **Presidents Dinner**

On Saturday evening, convention guests enjoyed a special dinner hosted by the president. To foster local connections, attendees were strategically seated with others from their geographic region.

### **Coach Trip to the NMA and Remembrance Service**

On the Sunday morning a complementary coach trip was provided to visit the British Nuclear Test Veterans Association memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas. The Very Reverend Nicholas Frayling conducted a simple act of remembrance at the memorial.

Following their return to the hotel guest made their farewells and departed for home.

### **Success, Impact, Repetition**

We have received amazing feedback on the event covering everything from Speakers, Subjects and Meals to Accommodation. Many asked if we could repeat the event next year! Since the end of the convention the NCCF has reviewed all feedback and results from the event and is pleased to announce that it will be funding it again for 2025. As per many requests we will use the same hotel and run the event around a similar date.



# Convention Wellbeing Impact Assessment

All 2024 Convention attendees were presented with two forms in their convention packs: a pre-event and Post-Event version of the Simplified Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale incorporating basic Demographic indicators.

At the beginning of the event, everyone was asked to complete their Pre-Event form, thinking about their experiences over the last few months. At the end of the event, they were asked to think about how they now felt. The forms have been processed, and the results correlated as follows:

Total Cohort Scores: Pre-Event 26.88 Post-Event 30.13 Points change average 3.25, which is a well-being boost of about 12% over the event.

|           | Pre-Event Average | Post-Event Average | Impact Change | Impact % |
|-----------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------|----------|
| Male      | 28.95             | 29.94              | 0.99          | 3.42     |
| Female    | 25.18             | 29.50              | 4.32          | 17.16    |
| Veteran   | 29.07             | 29.58              | 0.51          | 1.75     |
| Spouse    | 26.33             | 32.33              | 6.00          | 22.79    |
| Offspring | 24.71             | 28.25              | 3.54          | 14.33    |
| Visitors  | 27.38             | 30.34              | 2.95          | 6.75     |

| SWEMBWS Statement                              | Score Uplift % |
|--|----------------|
| I've been feeling optimistic about the future  | 6.9            |
| I've been feeling useful                       | 25.18          |
| I've been feeling relaxed                      | 29.07          |
| I've been dealing with problems well           | 26.33          |
| I've been thinking clearly                     | 6.3            |
| I've been feeling close to other people        | 4.4            |
| I've been able to make up my mind about things | 1.6            |

UK average SWEMBWS score is 23.5, so the event has left guests and visitors with a positive well-being score in excess of 28% higher than the UK average.

# Calling All Nuclear Veterans & Families

The 2nd **Nuclear Veterans Community Convention** will take place between **May 16th and 18th, 2025**, at the **Hilton Hotel East Midlands Airport**



Hilton photographs used by permission Hilton Hotels and Resorts

Your Presence is Vital at the 2nd Nuclear Veterans Community Convention! Let's Reunite and Remember Together!

It will offer a weekend of camaraderie, insightful discussions, and a chance to celebrate your legacy.

## Why You Should Attend:

- Reconnect with fellow veterans who served on the Cold War's all-too-often forgotten frontline. Share stories, reminisce about your experiences, and forge new bonds within the unique British Nuclear Test Veterans community
- Your Contributions Matter. Pay your Respects at the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas, a Poignant Tribute to Those who Served our Country. Reflect on Your Contributions to National Security and World Peace
- Embark on a Journey of Knowledge with Presentations from Esteemed Organisations like the NCCF, CHRC, The Airfield Research Group, and the Cold War Network. Gain Insights into the Latest Activities that Provide Help, Support, and the Opportunity to Share Your Unique Legacy with Tomorrow's Generations
- A Weekend of Camaraderie! Enjoy a vibrant program of events, from thought-provoking discussions to a celebratory Gala Dinner on Saturday evening. Network with fellow veterans, share experiences, and celebrate your enduring legacy
- This convention isn't just about the past. It's about the future of our community and your role in shaping it.

Following the success of the first convention, and thanks to your overwhelming support and feedback, you asked us to do it again, and we have delivered!

The NCCF has allocated a budget of £20k to support the event, which means we can offer free food and accommodation to many community members.

Spaces are limited, so please book early to avoid disappointment.

Register today and secure your place at this premier event designed to honour and celebrate the invaluable contributions of nuclear veterans.

## Register Now

Call **0115 8883442**  
or email  
**office@thencf.org**

If you call leave a message on the answer machine telling us you would like to register for the conference and clearly leave your name and telephone number for us to get back to you.

**Further details regarding the event and directions will be published in the Winter Edition of Exposure Magazine in December.**



ArthurStock / Shutterstock

# Send us your Story

If you have a story that you would like to share and be published in exposure magazine then get in touch with us.

If you have something to say that would be of interest to our reader then why not write about it and send it to us. It doesn't necessarily have to be about your service or the tests, any experience or information you think would be interesting to the community would be welcome.

You may run Marathons, help with a local charity, or walk the Pennines or grow prize winning vegetables, whatever you do we would like to hear about it.

Don't worry if you don't have a computer we will accept hand written stories and type it for you. Don't worry about spelling or grammar we can check that and amend it too. If you have photographs that accompany your story you can send those and we will scan them and send back the originals to you.

If you do have a computer and would prefer to send us your story and pictures via email the details are below.

This is your chance to have your voice heard and share your experience with the rest of the community. Each magazine story also goes onto the exposure.press website which is then shared across social media for even more people to read it.

Once published a copy of the magazine is sent to the British Library and held in their archives, immortalising your story for future reference.

## Email

editor@exposure.press

## Or write to

The NCCF  
PO Box 8244  
Castle Donington  
DE74 2BY

If you are unsure or need help or advice please call:

**0115 888 3442**

Please clearly leave your name and telephone number and we will get back to you.



Wikimedia Commons / Royal Engineers construct the airfield runway on Christmas Island

# The Nuclear Community Charity Fund

## Jeff Liddiatt MBE

Honorary Life President receives  
Brunel University Honour

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## CWF197-24: A Story of Success

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Check Programme

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## Beating the Winter Chill

How to cope with a reduction in the  
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The Nuclear Community  
Charity Fund



Making that difference



# Honorary Life President of the NCCF recognised by Brunel University

On the 15th of July 2024, Jeff Liddiatt MBE was awarded a Honorary Fellowship of Brunel University London, in recognition of his outstanding support of the University.

Ede &amp; Ravenscroft



Vice-Chancellor and President Professor Andrew Jones and Pro-Chancellor Dr Shini Somara presented Jeff with his award



Jeffrey Liddiatt MBE HonFBUL

Ede &amp; Ravenscroft

The Award Programme stated the following on Jeff's contribution to the community and the University.

## Jeffery Ronald Liddiatt MBE - Awarded an Honorary Fellowship

Jeff is a veteran of the British nuclear testing programme that took place in the 1950s and 60s. In 1985, he joined the British Nuclear Test Veterans Association, rising to become its Chairman. He took an active lead in negotiations to achieve the recognition of Parliament of the contribution of Nuclear Test Veterans to the safety of the nation,

and for the provision of support to the community, which the prime minister gave in 2014. This led to the establishment of the Nuclear Community Charity Fund, and Jeff became its Chairman, managing £6 million in funds. Jeff has developed and advised the ongoing activities of Brunel's Centre for the Health Effects of Radiological and Chemical Agents (CHRC). He was awarded an MBE in the 2023 New Years Honours.

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Always make the most of your opportunities when they arise. Use your university education to its fullest potential.

Jeff Liddiatt MBE

The NCCF would like to congratulate Jeff on his award and his contribution to the CHRC.

# CWF197-24: A Story of Success

A £70,000 grant from the Office for Veterans Affairs empowered the NCCF to launch its groundbreaking Community Care Check (CCC) pilot program. Designed to identify and address the critical needs of veterans and their families, CCC has already made a profound impact.

One such success story is that of Jane Robinson, the daughter of a nuclear test veteran, whose life was dramatically improved through the program.

When our CCC Outreach Facilitator, Ian Higginbottom, first met Jane, he recognised her challenges. He initiated an Independent Living Assessment (ILA) to evaluate her needs and comprehensively developed a tailored support plan.

The purpose of an ILA is to review the potential beneficiary's domestic and social situation concerning adjustments, measures, and equipment that may be employed to increase wellbeing and reduce suffering, thereby promoting their independent living.

Thanks to the generous grant from the Office for Veterans Affairs, Ian was thoroughly trained in conducting ILAs as part of developing the Community Care Check pilot.

A comprehensive and tailored discussion was conducted with Jane across all areas of domestic activity and social inclusion. The issues covered were discussed within the specific environments where possible to fully explore all potential issues. Many adaptations were identified and discussed during the visit, and post-visit research also identified further measures, ensuring a thorough and effective assessment process. Ian's report presented the assessment and post-visit research results for the NCCF Grant Panel's consideration.

Jane, a remote worker for the Local Council, faces physical limitations that hinder her from independently using her mobility vehicle and moving about her home. Jane's daughters are crucial in assisting her, making them her lifeline for outdoor activities. Despite receiving benefits and struggling with disability, Jane takes pride in working, paying her mortgage, and contributing to society.

Ian observed Jane's difficulty moving around her home and identified several measures to improve her situation. While Jane agreed to some suggestions, our facilitators are trained to empathise and respect beneficiaries' wishes. Therefore, when she declined a stairlift, believing that using the stairs is crucial daily exercise and fearing dependence on a lift could worsen her health, the stairlift was tabled for future consideration, with the NCCF prepared to fund it then, respecting Jane's autonomy and decisions.

Jane's health faced a double challenge. A combination of joint pain and skin conditions not only caused physical discomfort but also impacted her mental wellbeing. Inspecting the bathroom, Ian discovered that its layout made bathing difficult and potentially dangerous for Jane. Further compounding the problems, Jane's home needed more basic functionality. A faulty hot water and heating system, a dangerous gas fire, reliance on just two oil-filled radiators for warmth and drafty windows due to their poor condition made the living environment cold and unhealthy.

This further aggravated Jane's health issues. Additionally, the unsecured windows posed a daily safety concern.

After Ian compiled the ILA report, an application was made to the NCCF CWI Fund. Jane also agreed the NCCF could send specialist contractors to survey her needs in greater depth, showing the NCCF's anticipation of Jane's needs and commitment to providing comprehensive support. Once the application and accompanying ILA were processed through the new cloud-based system developed under the OVA funding, the initial review indicated that this would be a large grant across several significant installations.

The NCCF has a list of preferred contractors for specific adaptations. Arrangements were made for EA Mobility to conduct a needs and provision survey of Jane's bathroom and for British Gas to survey and quote for installing a new central heating system and boiler. We do not have a national glazing supplier, so, working with Jane, we obtained three quotes from local FENSA contractors.

Once the surveys were completed and the quotes received, we anonymised all documentation and placed the application before a Grant Panel. The NCCF protocol on Grant Panel members and numbers is based on the likely cost of any potential application.

With the total cost of rectifying all the issues with Jane's home at £31,606.23, we had to have a grant panel comprised of the full trustee board.

Using the online system, we could quickly scrutinise and review all the aspects of the case thoroughly to arrive at a unanimous decision to make an offer. Jane was in tears when she learned the NCCF was prepared to fund all the essential measures identified during Ian's visit.

We began to plan the installations and manage the grant project. Due to the nature of the work being conducted, it became apparent that Jane's home would not be habitable for a considerable period. This was resolved by arranging accommodation in an accessible hotel suite for the duration of the work. Because the accommodation was local, Jane could continue working for the council and maintaining the same degree of interaction with her daughters. The final cost of all the measures was £32,638.23, the most extensive grant the NCCF has made through the CWI Fund. Jane's life has been significantly improved by the support from the NCCF, as she expressed in a heartfelt letter to the Trustees (see right).

The NCCF Care Wellbeing and Inclusion Fund is available to help all UK based Nuclear Test Veterans, their Spouses and Offspring. We seek to reduce suffering and increase wellbeing. The Community Care Check Pilot Programme is joint-funded by the Office for Veterans Affairs. The initiative reaches out into our community, connecting with potential beneficiaries to increase community engagement and create applications for CWI Fund support.

Jane Robinson is a pseudonym used to protect the identity of our beneficiary.

Dear NCCF,

I just wanted to write and give my sincere thanks for the support of the NCCF. All the work was completed last week and I am having a final meeting with the project manager from EA Mobility to sign off their work next week. Everything has been completed to an amazing standard:

1) Central Heating – British Gas did a fabulous job and I'm extremely grateful that I am now safe to use my heating without being scared of carbon monoxide poisoning! Not to mention the money I'll be saving due to a much improved / efficient system! Oh to be warm in the colder weather!!

2) Windows and Doors – all work completed and my security is secured now that I can close my windows! Even my doors never used to lock sometimes! The heat will be kept in the house and I'll be so much warmer in the colder months!

3) Bathroom Adaptation – wow, what can I say? Amazing work! I now have a bathroom I can manoeuvre in AND use properly! I have a walk-in bath! You have no idea how much I appreciated this Nigel – thank you! I have a working shower and everything is designed for ease of use. Grab rails etc all in place. Beautiful design and I can now have a relaxing bath every night!

During the weeks the work was being carried out, I received a terrible diagnosis from the hospital (I've been having investigations for months now) with life-changing consequences. Therefore, you have no idea how much this all means to me, even more so now! My health will deteriorate so you can imagine how much I appreciate NCCF changing my life! I never dreamed in a million years that I could get any of this work done!

Please PLEASE thank EVERYONE for me!! You, Ian, the Board etc – you have made a massive difference to my wellbeing!!

Yours truly  
**Jane Robinson**

If you think the The Care Wellbeing and Inclusion Fund can help you please contact us via: Email [office@thenccf.org](mailto:office@thenccf.org) or telephone **01158 883 442**

# Beating the Winter Chill

## Slash Your Fuel Bills

With the announcement of a reduction in the Winter Fuel Allowance we thought now would be a good time to have a look at how you can reduce your fuel requirements in the face of the upcoming months.

### Get Ready Now

Preparing for winter can feel like a daunting task as energy costs continue to fluctuate. But fret not! Implementing constructive changes can reduce fuel bills and create a cosy environment throughout the colder months.

### Focus on Insulation

Building effective insulation is essential for minimising heat loss. Begin by carefully inspecting your loft to ensure it's adequately insulated to prevent warm air from escaping. Consider wall insulation if feasible, as it can significantly boost energy efficiency. Don't overlook sealing gaps around doors, windows, and skirting boards to prevent cold air from entering your home.

### Efficient Heating and Boiler Systems

Old boiler systems with hot water cylinders, immersion heaters and header tanks in the loft are very inefficient compared to modern Combi-Boilers. In England you may qualify for the Government Boiler Upgrade Scheme. Please check <https://www.gov.uk/apply-boiler-upgrade-scheme> for more information.

### Efficient Heating Strategies

Optimising your heating system is vital for cutting down on energy consumption. Even lowering your thermostat by just one degree can bring noticeable savings on your bills.

Smart thermostats are a constructive option as they can learn your heating patterns and adjust accordingly to maximise efficiency. Regularly bleeding radiators help ensure optimal heat distribution and prevent energy wastage. Another constructive tip is to retain heat in your living rooms by closing doors to unused rooms, also turn the radiators down in these rooms as low as possible, without turning them off or they could freeze.

### Strategic Hot Water Use

Reducing hot water consumption and energy use go hand in hand. Lowering your water heater temperature can save energy without sacrificing comfort, this can generally be found on your heating boiler control panel. Taking shorter showers is a constructive approach, significantly reducing water heating costs. Insulating your hot water pipes also plays a constructive role in maintaining heat and preventing energy loss. You can also buy a restrictor device which is easily fitted to your shower. This reduces water flow, thus less hot water is used whilst still providing a decent flow to shower in.

### Lifestyle Adjustments

Simple lifestyle changes can bring about a constructive impact on your energy bills. Layering up indoors reduces the reliance on heating.

Using lids on pans and ovens effectively retains heat during cooking. Opening curtains during daylight maximises natural light, introducing free warmth into your home. Additionally, regular boiler servicing is a constructive measure to ensure optimal efficiency.

### Financial Support

Various financial support options are available to help you reduce your energy costs. Explore government-backed schemes to assist with energy efficiency improvements and energy grants to fund insulation or boiler upgrades. Regularly comparing energy tariffs using comparison websites is a constructive way to find the best deal for your needs.

Adopting these constructive energy-saving measures can significantly reduce winter fuel bills while maintaining a comfortable home. Remember, every constructive change adds up to substantial savings. It's time to take charge of your energy consumption and appreciate the winter without financial stress.

If you are genuinely struggling to heat your home this winter please reach out to our Care Wellbeing and Inclusion Fund. If we are able to help you we will.

Remember - Cold Kills



### **My Nuclear Story**

Colin King's Nuclear Story  
Christmas Island 1958

**P22**

### **Joint the BNTVA Museum Advisory Board**

How to become an active participant  
in the BNTVA Museum

**P26**

### **Christmas Island**

George McDonalds time on  
Christmas Island

**P28**

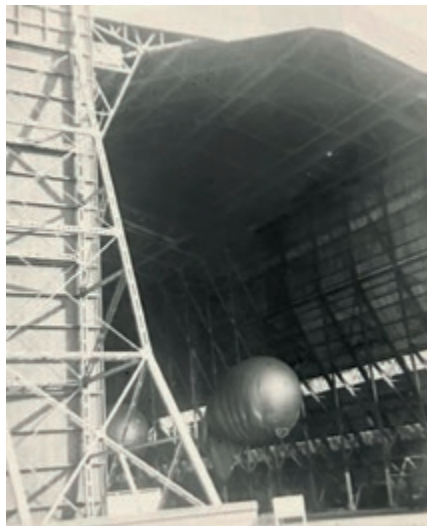
# My Nuclear Story on Christmas Island 1958

After about 2 years of working for my father, Her Majesty called me up for National Service. I was called to an interview in Norwich after which, I was given my orders to join the RAF. I reported to Cardington, Bedfordshire, and after spending a few days being kitted out and feeling that this seemed like "a piece of cake" I did not realise what was in store for me!

The day came when all of us new recruits were herded like cattle onto a train, then off to Bridgenorth for square bashing for the next 8 weeks. I could have sat down on my bed and cried - so much for the piece of cake - and the rest of that experience is history. Those of you who went through that will relate to what I mean when I say its aim was to break you so you would respond to instructions without questioning.

Part of this process was to establish what trade we would like to be attached to - and then I was assigned to return to Cardington to join the Balloon unit. Our base housed vacuously large airship hangers and my trade was called MTD Balloon Op - I, of course, did not have a clue what that was.

Let me explain. I was trained in the operation and maintenance of barrage balloons and driving military equipment. The main task was to drop paratroopers from a basket fixed under a barrage balloon, and my job was to operate a winch (which was on the back of a lorry). This was attached to the balloon via a wire rope, so when the winch let the wire out the hydrogen-filled balloon would rise to a height of approximately 1000 ft, from which the paratroopers would jump.



Ultimately, the MOT decided that the balloons would be an ideal means to lift an atom bomb to a desirable height for a controlled detonation, so testing took place, and it was first used in Australia (Maralinga) and then on Christmas Island.

The concept was to mount four hydrogen balloons on a wire rope, thereby giving about a 6-tonne lift, and this was enough lift to elevate the atom bomb up to about 1200 ft, thereby giving what was called a controlled clean detonation.

The call went out for "volunteers", which loosely implied if you were picked you were going and so I found my name on the list to go to Christmas Island.

I had no idea what was involved, and we were not told anything. The airmen who had been on the Australian tests did not say anything. I speculate that they were told to keep quiet, being threatened under the Secrets Act.

After training and being kitted out with Khaki Drill (KD) tropical clothing, the day came for us to embark on this little-known place called Christmas Island. We were bused to Stansted airfield and boarded a BOAC Douglas DC 7 propeller aircraft and our first stop was New York. What an eye-opener, everything looked so new!

On the way to our hotel, I was amazed at the abundance of second-hand cars for sale, (it seemed that there were endless acres). Another observation was a large amount of concrete used in the structures. Our hotel was called "Governor Clinton" on 5th Ave. standing 34 stories high.

After an enormous meal which consisted of half a chicken, I was billeted with another airman in the Bridal Suite complete with colour TV!! (in truth shades of green).

The following day we departed for the next part of our journey in an America Airlines Douglas DC, landing at Tulsa airfield.

All pictures - Colin King

In 1958 the airport was just an airstrip with a minimum of buildings. What a change now as it is an international airport hub (I have flown into Tulsa since on a few occasions).

When we arrived, and the door of the plane was opened it was like walking into the mouth of an oven - so stiflingly hot! We were allowed to get off the plane and wander around. I do recall just outside the gate to the airfield was a stretch limousine with 4 doors on each side - I was very intrigued having not seen anything like it.

The next leg of our journey, as we travelled over that vast country on the way to San Francisco, the pilot flew us over part of the Grand Canyon, and Hoover Dam. I vowed then that I would come back and see this wonder, which I was able to do a few years ago, Thank God!

After spending a few hours in San Francisco, we boarded a Super Constellation aircraft owned by Pan American Airlines and headed to Hawaii, landing in Honolulu airport. When we disembarked from the plane, we were greeted by the Hawaii Chief holding a big pole, and about 10 hula girls in their grass shirts greeting us, then putting garlands of flowers around our necks, oh my!

The RAF generously gave us \$7 so, four of us clubbed together and got a taxi to Waikiki Beach, just to say that we had been there. On the way, I was mystified about what was growing in the fields. This crop was in rows the same way that we grow sugar beet, yet I could see that it was not a crop I recognised. I later found out that the crop was pineapple and I had thought that they grew on trees, so there! You live and learn. Next stop - Christmas Island.

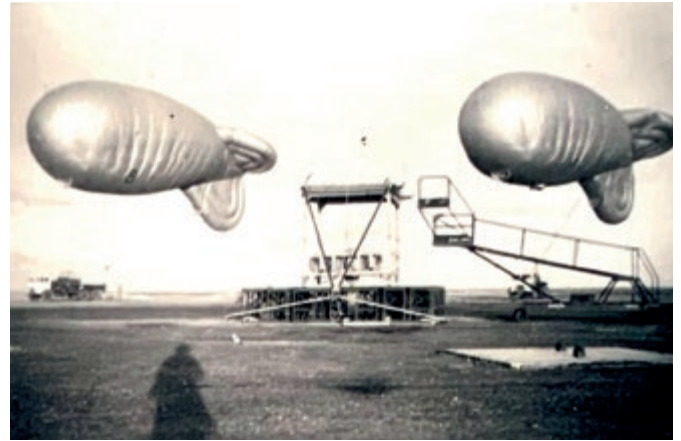
We Had Arrived!



My first view was a strip of land with lakes (lagoons) and the main camp which consisted of many tents and coconut trees, later to find that it was coral atoll, the soil being coral sand - white in appearance. This island was about 2 degrees north of the equator in the middle of the Pacific Ocean (now called Kiritimati). The Coral Atoll was built by coral on top of a volcano.

For visual reference, this map shows where Port London would have been at the top and, we were right at the other end of the island about 55 miles from the main camp.

We were billeted in square white canvas tents, which were rotten, evidently used in the Suez campaign (Egypt) 1956! When it rained, they leaked like a sieve.



We soon got to work at Port London unloading our equipment and breaking open the wooden equipment cases. I became ill with sunstroke because I had not allowed my body to acclimatise, not being used to the heat!

The mosquito's were a problem even though the main camp was sprayed twice a day from the air with DDT, (now banned as a dangerous substance.) The MOD insisted that we were not exposed to any danger!

After setting up tents and getting our equipment ready, the balloon unit was ready to go.

The operation was to get four barrage balloons filled with hydrogen and then stack them one on top of the other. This was achieved by threading a wire rope to each of three of the balloons thereby anchoring each balloon to the wire, and initiating approximately a 6-tonne lift. The end of the wire rope was attached to the metal cradle in which the bomb was housed and this was then attached to another wire rope by which the cradle/bomb was taken up to a height of about 1500 ft.

I was driving one of the three winches which enabled the bomb to be put in place. We had 1 ½ hours to get to the forward base which was 9 miles from ground zero.

When the countdown began, it was quite frightening, not knowing what to expect. We had not been educated about the atom bomb, nothing! We had no protective clothing - in fact, all we wore was our standard Khaki Drill (KD) shirt, shorts, and a hat. We were in groups of about 30 men (balloon unit) and told to sit down with our backs towards Ground Zero with our hands over our eyes.

Then the countdown boomed out over loudspeakers ... 10-9-88-7-6-5-4-3-2-1 and ...DETONATE! My heart was pounding in anticipation of not knowing what was about to take place. First, the light was so bright when it went through your hands and hit our eyes. It was more than bright sun light! Then the heat! It was like being thrown into an oven, and it seemed as if the heat went right through you. Finally, the blast which was so powerful that it could have easily blown you over.

The instructions over the loudspeakers then told us that we could turn around and view the fireball. The only way I can vocalize this is that it was like looking at hell - a mass of heat and flames whirling around and around. The implosion was sucking the soil and debris up through this inferno of the bomb, thereby forming a cloud (not a mushroom cloud in our case) and this cloud seemed to hang over us for quite a time.

We were all very anxious, knowing that the cloud contained atomic radioactive material which could kill you if you were contaminated by it!!

After about five hours we went back to our tents, about 4-5 miles from ground zero, to find that they were blown down. Our first job was to put them back up.

All this happened on August 22, 1958 - the date I believe I was contaminated by atomic radioactive material in struggling to re-erect our tent, by breathing in what I am sure has damaged my lungs. I have been diagnosed with a lung condition called Bronchiectasis, this problem with my lungs started soon after I got back from the tests in the early 1960's.

The next test was out in the ocean on September 3, 1958, yielding about 2.5 – 3 megatons. These weapons were dropped by a Valiant bomber. I was about 20-24 miles from the detonation. Still no protection

The fireball that ensued was awesome and oddly beautiful, yet so evil as it formed the mushroom cloud. Even at that distance, the power was tremendous - bending the trees and parts of the shrubs were set on fire, thousands of bird life were killed, and some were burnt to death.

Death, it was awful to behold.



The other test by the Valiant bomber took place on Sept 11, 1958, giving about the same yield as the previous bomb.

The balloon unit's second bomb was set up on the same site as the first balloon test, and we speculated that surely the site must have been contaminated. Still, the MOD said we were in no danger!!

All the time I was on-site, I observed no instrument to measure radiation, and we were never tested!! HOW CAN THE MOD SAY THAT WE WERE NOT EXPOSED TO DANGER!!!!

The truth is in the eating!! A lot of those that took part in these tests have died of cancers and others of rare diseases, and the continuing tragedy is that because of exposure to radiation affects genetics and is potentially passed on to the offspring /children.

I feel that the Government cannot wash its hands of this! They need to come clean and admit responsibility instead of spending over £12 million pressing legal charges in court to defend a case against the veterans.



My last months in the RAF, I was assigned as a driver for the meteorological research unit that collected weather information. Some of this information was obtained from a barrage balloon that was flown to about 1200 ft. and my job was to drive around the Bedford countryside gathering readings from many weather stations.

This information was phoned through to the weather information centre at Bracknell. For my last month or so I was sent to Morton in the Marsh to be trained in fire-fighting to be called upon in case of a nuclear attack. Thank God I was not called upon as a reservist!

THEN TO CIVIL STREET.

**Colin King**



**BNTVA**  
the Museum for Atomic Veterans

# Join the British Nuclear Test Veteran Museum Advisory Board

## Help Preserve Our History

The British Nuclear Test Veteran Museum seeks dedicated individuals to join our Advisory Board. This is a unique opportunity to contribute to preserving and interpreting a vital chapter in British history. The role requires a commitment of a minimum of four meetings a year which will most probably be held online.

As a member of the Advisory Board, you will be at the forefront of shaping the future of the museum. Your role will be crucial in ensuring that the stories and experiences of British nuclear test veterans are accurately represented and honoured.

### Your contributions will include:

- Providing strategic guidance on museum operations and development
- Assisting in the curation of exhibitions and displays
- Supporting fundraising and outreach initiatives
- Strengthening relationships with the veteran community
- We are seeking individuals with a passion for history, a commitment to preserving heritage, and a strong interest in the welfare of veterans. While experience in museum governance, fundraising, or military history is desirable, it is not essential. What we value most is your dedication and commitment to our cause.
- The post is voluntary however expenses will be provided.

To apply, please submit a letter of interest outlining your qualifications and reasons for wanting to join the Advisory Board, along with your CV. You can send your application to: **office@bntva.museum** or write to:

**BNTVA Museum CIC**  
**PO Box 8244**  
**Derby**  
**DE74 2BY**

We look forward to hearing from you.



# Christmas Island

My name is George McDonald and I did my National Service in the Royal Engineers which began in March 1956.

After six weeks basic training in Worcester and a spell of leave we headed to Southampton docks to sail to Christmas Island. As part of the boarding party which consisted of an officer, 2 corporals and 2 sappers we were initially housed in an army prison camp but we eventually received permission to sleep on board the ship which was the SS Charlton Star. The rest of the regiment came down the following week. On the first night the regiment came, we were woken up and told to throw our bedding overboard... it was riddled with bedbugs.

It took 6 weeks to get to Christmas Island but we had to call in to the Azores for repairs to the ship. We travelled through the Panama Canal, a sight I will never forget. There were crocs on lawns and shanty towns etc.

When we arrived at Christmas Island we had to climb down the side of the ship on rope nets into a landing craft as there was no port. Tents had to be erected, parties of 6 soldiers putting up 4 tents each. While collecting wood and palm leaves for the kitchen fire, I came across a baseball

bat, ball and glove presumably left by the Americans who had been there before us. My first try at the game left me with a black eye when the ball came off the bat rather badly.

My first job was as a postman for which they gave me a bike! Not much good on sand.

In May 1957 we were ordered to assemble together to witness the first Hydrogen bomb. We had to turn our backs while it was detonated and then turn around, close our eyes and put our hands over our eyes.

I could see all the bones in my hands - just like an X-ray - and then there was an intense heat. We witnessed another bomb in June. After our duties we enjoyed swimming and fishing. Eighteen months after, I met lads who had been out to Christmas Island after me and they had been told they were not allowed to swim in the sea or lagoons..

I went through my National Service with some good lads...John Weatherburn from Gateshead, Charlie Hall from Newcastle, Vince who was Maltese and a lad called Edwards from Leeds.





## Exposure Autumn 2024 Editorial

A round up of what's been happening at the CHRC

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## Human evidence for intergenerational effects of ionising radiation

An overview of the study from the CHRC

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# Exposure Editorial Autumn 2024



Since our last update, I have the good news that another of our CHRC PhD students has submitted their thesis in preparation for examination later this year. Justin Dankwa's PhD titled 'Genomic assessment of the impact of ionising radiation on the human brain' was supervised by myself and Dr Cristina Sisu and examined genetic variations in normal and diseased brains and, how exposure to ionising radiation might impact cellular processes.

One aspect of his work used the previously generated DNA sequence data (published in Moorhouse et al 2022), highlighting how we can use the outcomes of all our research to address a range of different research questions. A manuscript of this part of his work is being prepared for submission for peer-reviewed publication later this year. In the meantime, if you would like a general overview of Justin's project, then please see the article which was previously published in the Spring 2023 Edition of Exposure.



PHD Student - Justin Dankwa

Other notable achievements include both Jeff Liddiatt, MBE and Dr Jade Stephens receiving their respective honours at Brunel University London's recent Graduation ceremony. Jeff was the recipient of an Honorary Fellowship and Jade received her PhD Doctorate on the 15th July 2024. The ceremony also marked the retirement of Jeff as Chair of CHRCs Advisory Board after 7 years of commitment to the development and direction of CHRC. Personally, I would like to thank Jeff for his continued support and integrity in maintaining the independence of CHRC and its work. His seat on the Board has been passed to Ian Hall, NCCF Chair while Nigel Heaps MBE moves from Advisory Board member to Chairperson. I look forward to working with them and all members of the Advisory Board moving forward.

In this Edition of Exposure we share an article titled 'Human evidence for intergenerational effects of ionising radiation' which provides an overview of a large review we undertook and an associated follow-up review on this important topic, both of which have recently been published. Essentially, we reviewed all the published literature since 1988 on the question of whether exposure of a parent before conception can lead to adverse health effects in the unexposed child. The reviews follow defined methods for systematically gathering the information and rating the quality of the published research, before assessing the strength of the evidence based upon all published studies in particular health outcome groups, such as congenital abnormalities or cancers in children.

Stephens et al titled 'A systematic review of human evidence for the intergenerational effects of parental pre-conceptual exposure to ionising radiation' and Amrenova et al., 'Intergenerational effects of ionising radiation: review of recent studies from human data (2018-2021)' are both published in the International Journal of Radiation Biology and are publicly available to all. As outlined in all Editions of Exposure, all CHRC's peer-reviewed manuscripts are available open access and in lay summary format via the link Peer-reviewed Articles - <https://chrc4veterans.uk/articles/peer-reviewed-articles/>

I would like to finish by reminding you of our 'Basic Information' series which is available as either flip-books or interactive versions, through our Knowledge Hub page <https://chrc4veterans.uk/knowledge-hub/> on our website [www.chrc4veterans.uk](http://www.chrc4veterans.uk). Thank you again to all our volunteers who have contributed to all of our projects and published works.

**Professor Rhona Anderson,  
Director, CHRC**

# Human evidence for intergenerational effects of ionising radiation

The question of whether exposure of a parent to ionising radiation can lead to adverse effects in their unexposed children still remains poorly understood and controversial. It was the major concern after the Japanese atomic bombings and, after reports of increases in leukaemia and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma among children living near the Sellafield nuclear facility in the UK. The current scientific consensus based upon health (epidemiological) studies suggests human health not to be significantly affected.

A 'systematic review' is a method whereby much of the relevant peer-reviewed published research is pooled together for the purpose of assessing the 'body of evidence' surrounding a particular question. The process includes pre-defined inclusion and exclusion criteria as set out in a protocol, meaning the potential for any selection bias, i.e. cherry-picking of studies, is reduced. In this way, published studies are systematically gathered and assessed in order to evaluate the body of the collected evidence.

## What was the aim of this research?

The aim was to conduct a systematic review to examine the published evidence for the occurrence of human health effects in children of parents who were exposed to ionizing radiation before conception.

## What did the research involve?

The body of peer-reviewed published evidence was examined between 1988-2018 (Stephens et al (2024) and between 2018-2022 (Amrenova et al., 2024). For Stephens et al., relevant data from 127 eligible publications was assessed for potential sources of bias including on the 'timing of parental exposure'.

For instance, where exposure after conception e.g. in utero or after birth is suspected or possible within the design of the study. The information from each study was then grouped into health outcomes consisting of (i) pregnancy outcomes, (ii) genomic anomalies, (iii) solid and non-solid cancer, and (iv) other non-cancer diseases and mortality.

For each health outcome, studies were further grouped by exposure situations; occupational exposure, non-cancer associated medical exposure, exposure to radiation from atomic bombs and, environmental exposure.

Conclusions were then made based upon the authors conclusions of the individual studies comprising that body of evidence and, the direction of any statistical effect reported in the majority of the studies within each grouping.

## What did we find?

For the majority of the adverse health groups, there was inadequate evidence from which to determine whether the health effect was, or was not, associated with parental pre-conceptual radiation

exposure. This was largely due to differences between individual study's findings and conclusions within each group and, the limited number of studies within each group. One health grouping (congenital abnormalities) in occupationally exposed populations did appear to show an effect (i.e. a relationship with parental exposure to ionising radiation) however the small number of studies available for analysis limited the strength of this finding.

Overall, the review found there to be a lack of evidence to enable the formal assessment of radiation-related adverse effects in offspring of exposed humans. In the Review we highlight that this is not the same as there being no clear evidence that effects may occur, but does suggest that if ill health effects do arise in children of exposed parents, then these effects occur rarely and are difficult to reproducibly (scientifically) measure.

A vast amount of research has been published over many decades often with large differences in study design and, in the reporting of the results.

Accordingly, we also highlight the need for standardisation and, more sharing of primary data as part of open access initiatives, in order for future reviews and studies to make reasonable conclusions.

The follow-up study from 2018 to 2022 (Amerenova et al) identified 9 eligible studies for detailed analysis to examine for effects in children whose parents were exposed to various types and doses of radiation. Again, the review did not yield substantial evidence to support intergenerational effects of radiation exposure in humans.

Together, these two Review papers offer a comprehensive view of the available evidence regarding the intergenerational effects of parental pre-conceptional exposure to ionizing radiation. Overall, the findings do not provide strong evidence supporting a

significant association between adverse (or other) outcomes in unexposed children and parental preconception radiation exposure. The limitations of some of the published articles and future recommendations for studying intergenerational effects of radiation exposure in humans are highlighted.

**Key messages**

- there is a lack of sufficient detail in the available evidence to enable the formal assessment of radiation-related adverse effects in unexposed human offspring after parental exposure
- this is not the same as there being no clear evidence that effects may occur but does suggest that if adverse health effects do arise in children of exposed parents, then these effects are small and difficult to reproducibly measure

- of those studies which do report some effect most show no evidence of any radiation dose effect
- further understanding of the biological mechanisms which may be associated with intergenerational effects are needed
- there is a need for an element of standardisation across the field to make reasonable conclusions and to enable the pooling of statistical data for meta-analysis

**Who did this research?**

Researchers in CHRC.



# I think I need help - How do I get it?

- Are you a member of the British Nuclear Test Survivor Community based in the UK?
- Do you have issues affecting your daily life?
- Struggle getting up and down stairs?
- Can't sleep properly?
- Difficulty walking to the shops
- Difficulty Bathing?

If you feel you need help but are not sure exactly what is available we have a range of assessment options to identify goods and services that can address your suffering and enhance your wellbeing. Contact us to apply via:

Email  
[office@thencf.org](mailto:office@thencf.org)

Telephone  
01158 883 442



# Christmas Island History on my doorstep

Back in May this year I visited East Midlands Aeropark on one of their annual open days, I already know most of the exhibits as I've visited before, but this visit threw up a surprise.

They were hosting one of their special event days where they open up the cockpits for the general public to go and look and sit, if you can fit, in the pilots seat. I was particularly interested in the Vulcan (XM575) displayed there and got talking to the guide/s who was stationed next to the aircraft.

It soon came up about my job and the connection to the Nuclear community that the Vulcan has, when he pointed out that the Helicopter behind the Vulcan saw service on Christmas Island. I needed to know more so went over to the exhibit to investigate.

The helicopter is a Westland Whirlwind Srs.3 (XG588), the plaque next to the aircraft reads:

*The Aeropark Whirlwind first flew on 30th September 1955, XG588 was operated by the Royal Navy, attached to HMS Albion. During 1957 the aircraft was seconded to HMS Warrior for the Christmas Island Hydrogen Bomb tests and, during the tests codenamed 'Operation Grapple', the aircraft flew as a plane guard and in the transport role. On return the Whirlwind was overhauled at RNAS Donibristle in Fife before joining 701 Squadron at Lee On the Solent. The aircraft took part in the unusual trials with the Amphibious Warfare Unit, lifting a 2CV pickup vehicle.*

*After a long and varied military career, the helicopter was sold to the civilian operator Bristows, converted to R-R Gnome power and registered G-BAMH.*

*After aerial exploration and survey work in Nigeria and the Middle East, the aircraft operated in Bermuda under the registration VH-BEP. On its return to the UK, the helicopter was used as an instructional airframe at Warden Park College, Cuckfield, Essex, finally arriving at the Aeropark on the 13th May 1986. It underwent a complete restoration in 2022.*



The Aeropark Whirlwind XG588



HMS Warrior from HMS Narvik 1957 - Antony Lawrence (a helicopter can be seen on the deck of the Warrior)



Possibly XG588 on the deck of HMS Warrior

I contacted Wesley Perriman, curator of the BNTVA Museum who told me he possibly had pictures of the aircraft on the deck of HMS Warrior, shown here.

If anyone can shed further information on the Whirlwind xg588 please let us know, contact: [editor@exposure.press](mailto:editor@exposure.press)



Avro Vulcan B.MK2A (XM575) Served with 617 (Dambusters) Squadron in 1963



BAC Lightning F.53 (ZF588)



English Electric Canberra T.17 (WH740)



The Aeropark Cabin serves snacks and refreshments

The Aeropark is located in the north-west corner of East Midlands Airport on the outer perimeter, close to Castle Donington and the Donington Park motor racing circuit.

In the Summer season (Apr-Oct), they are open 11am to 5pm Thu, Sat & Sun. In Winter (Nov-Mar) they open 10am to 3pm Sat & Sun.

Its less than a 10 minute drive from Jnc 24 of the M1 and the M42.

For those wishing to eat nearby, I recommend the Nags Head Pub in Castle Donington which is a 2 minute drive or 5 minute walk from the Aeropark.

For more information on the park visit [www.eastmidlandsaeropark.org](http://www.eastmidlandsaeropark.org)

# Looking for lost pals

If you are looking to find and get in touch with long lost pals or anyone you may have served with, let us know who you are and where and when you served. We will publish your request here and will forward any replies onto you.

If you have any information or want to get in touch:

Call **01158 883 442**

Email **editor@exposure.press**

Or write to:

**Exposure**  
**PO Box 8244**  
**Castle Donington**  
**DE74 2BY**

We cannot publish personal information in the magazine but will pass this on to anyone wishing to make contact.



## Dr Rhona Anderson promoted by Brunel University London

CHRCs Director, Dr Rhona Anderson, has recently been promoted by Brunel University London to Professor of Radiation Biology.

This achievement is in recognition of her academic portfolio of contributions to Learning & Teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, to her leadership and management in University roles including as Department of Life Sciences Director for Postgraduate Research, her research publications and leadership as Director of CHRC and, for her external roles including her election to Vice President (2023–2027) (and President-elect 2027–2031) of the International Association for Radiation Research.



Left: Dr Jade Stephens, Right: Professor Rhona Anderson

# A Well-Deserved Break:

## Revitalise Respite Holidays and the Armed Forces Community

For many, a holiday offers relaxation, exploration, and a chance to recharge. But for those who care for disabled individuals, or who are themselves disabled, the concept of a holiday can feel like a distant dream.

This is where organisations like Revitalise Respite Holidays step in, offering a lifeline of support and a well-deserved break for both carers and the loved ones they care for.

A registered charity with over 60 years of experience, Revitalise provides specifically designed respite holidays for disabled people and their carers. Their unique proposition lies in combining the joy and freedom of a holiday with the peace of mind of expert care and nursing support, as needed. This allows both the disabled individual and their carer to truly unwind and rediscover themselves.

### Catering to Diverse Needs

Revitalise caters to over 150 disabilities including stroke, dementia, cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis and Parkinson's, as well as for those who may have acquired a spinal injury or lost limbs. Their two fully accessible holiday centres, Jubilee Lodge in Chigwell and Sandpipers in Southport, are designed with comfort and ease of access in mind.

Each week at Revitalise offers something a little different, with unique themes chock full of fun. A recent fishing week supported by the Prince's Trust saw guests catching bags of carp with adapted fishing rods and sunny skies. Upcoming themes include City and Seaside, London Landmarks, Best of TV & Film, and Wildlife and Nature.

### A Focus on Our Veterans: Supporting Former Armed Forces Members

Revitalise recognises the specific needs of former armed forces members who may be living with physical or mental health challenges. They understand the unique pressures faced by veterans, from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) to injuries sustained during service.

The charity addresses these challenges by providing:

- **Expert Staff:** Carers and support staff are specifically trained to understand the experiences and needs of all guests, ensuring a sensitive and supportive environment.
- **Accessible Activities:** Revitalise offers a variety of activities designed to be inclusive and enjoyable for all. This includes brilliant excursions, therapeutic and fun in-house activities, and gentle walks to places nearby. All activities are accompanied by care staff and volunteers who ensure every guest receives the support they need.
- **Peer Support:** Connecting with other veterans and disabled people can be incredibly beneficial. Revitalise creates opportunities for guests to share their experiences and build camaraderie during their stay.

### Keith and Amanda's story

Amanda (Mandy) joined the Army in 1979 and after initial training was chosen to be the one of the first two female soldiers to be posted to a teeth arm (front line unit) to serve with men. Mandy was posted to 8 Regt RCT in Muster West Germany in January 1980, which is where she met Keith.

Mandy was provisionally diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis in 1983 and confirmed as relapsing remitting MS in April 1985. She has now had primary progressive MS for the last 15 years and is a full-time wheelchair user, with no use of her arms, hands, or legs and relies on family/carers for everything in her daily life.

Keith describes her as truly a people person, saying that people gravitate towards her smiling face and personality. Visiting Revitalise Sandpipers enables Mandy to be around people. It is the only place where she can take a break away from home life and be well looked after.

When Mandy is at Revitalise, Keith can enjoy time off. He doesn't go on holiday himself, as he says he would not go without Mandy.

“

When I am at Sandpipers, I am with other disabled people, people like me and not surrounded by able-bodied people. I see others that are sometimes more disabled than me and I see that life is not that bad.

**Mandy**

Revitalise offers more than just a break; they provide a chance for families to reconnect, for carers to recharge, and for individuals with disabilities to experience joy and independence. For veterans, Revitalise provides a safe space for healing, camaraderie, and rediscovering a sense of well-being. By taking a break with Revitalise, you'll know that you or your loved one are in safe hands, while meeting new people and enjoying a brilliant holiday experience.

### Specific support for former members of the Armed Forces

Revitalise receives specific funding to help support former members of the Armed Forces and their families to take a respite break. With a valid service number, they can provide a discount of **30%** off on the holiday cost\* for veterans to enjoy a break.

Quote **VET30** at booking to take advantage of these special savings. To book a break with Revitalise, ring their friendly booking advisors on **0303 303 0145** or email **bookings@revitalise.org.uk**. You can also learn more or enquire online at <https://revitalise.org.uk/>

\*Discount is applied to the holiday cost only and will be applied once the break has been confirmed with a deposit. Care costs charged separately. Not to be combined with any other offer. Breaks must be taken before 31 January 2025. Full booking terms and conditions available at <https://revitalise.org.uk/respite-holidays/terms-conditions/>

**Revitalise**

# Revitalise

## Fully accessible, fully fun.

Revitalising holidays for disabled people and carers



Jubilee Lodge



Sandpipers



Exciting excursions



**30% off**

for former members  
of the **Armed Forces**  
and their families\*

QUOTE **VET30**

Friendly fun and support, live entertainment, and full-board hospitality, together with 24-hour professional care. This is the break you need and the holiday you deserve.

To learn more about Revitalise, call our friendly booking advisors on **0303 303 0145** or visit **revitalise.org.uk**

\*Discount is applied to the holiday cost only and will be applied once the break has been confirmed with a deposit and a valid Armed Forces service number. Care costs charged separately. Not to be combined with any other offer. Breaks must be taken before 31 January 2025. Full booking terms and conditions available at <https://revitalise.org.uk/respice-holidays/terms-conditions/>. Registered charity no. 295072.

# Dates for Your Diary



**2024/25**



## National Atomic Veterans Awareness Day (NAVAD) 2024

National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) Alrewas.



## National Service of Remembrance 2024

Cenotaph, Whitehall, London.



## Nuclear Veterans Convention 2025

Hilton Hotel East Midlands Airport – See page 13 for details. Further information will be published in the December Magazine.

If you have an event planned in 2024 and would like to let the readership know about it, contact us on **0115 888 3442** and leave a message or email **editor@exposure.press**

## The 2024 All-Tests Reunion

The 2024 All-Tests Reunion took place on the 16th–20th of September.

We had set a reminder for the reunion to appear in the Exposure magazine but due to a delay the magazine was still in production at the time of the reunion. Our apologies to you all, we will publish the date for next years All Tests Reunion and feature it in our Dates for your Diary.

We do hope that all who attended had a good time at the event.



Labrats International

Further information regarding the All Tests Reunion and Labrats International who host the event can be found at:

**[www.labrats.international](http://www.labrats.international)**

The event is held each year in September at Pontins, Sand Bay, Weston-Super-Mare.

If you haven't been for a while or have never attended, it is a chance to meet old friends, listen to updates on campaigns and most of all, have fun.

# exposure

The combined magazine for the nuclear community

**Next issue copy deadline for all editorial sections: 15th November 2024**

Contributions for exposure magazine should go to the relevant section editor:

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