

exposure

Autumn 2025

In Memory of
Don James

June 1938 – September 2025



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Foreword

Hello and welcome to a new edition of exposure magazine.

At the start of October we visited the National Memorial Arboretum for the annual National Atomic Veterans Awareness Day. It was great to see the many of you who attended this year. Please read our coverage of the event on page 06.

In this edition we also announce the the date of next years conference for the Nuclear Community, which will be held again at the Hilton Hotel, East Midlands Airport just off Junction 24 of the M1. You can read about this on p04, registration for the event is actually open now and details on registering on the page 05.

The next magazine is due to be published in December, we hope you enjoy this edition.

Editor - Exposure

exposure

Autumn 2025

The combined magazine for the nuclear community

exposure



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Exposure Online

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A Warm Invitation to Our Annual Get-Together

For the British Nuclear Survivor Community

It's that time of year again when we have the opportunity to gather as a community. We would be truly delighted for you to join us at our Annual Convention from Friday, 8th to Sunday, 10th May 2026.

This year, we'll be staying at the Hilton Hotel, East Midlands Airport. To make your stay as relaxing as possible, your accommodation will be all-inclusive.

This weekend is a chance to catch up with old friends, share stories, and make new memories. We'll have a day of interesting talks and friendly discussions, offering a great opportunity to learn something new and connect with fellow members. More than anything, it's a reunion for old comrades and a warm welcome for every family member.

We sincerely hope you can join us for this special weekend of friendship, support, and remembrance. We look forward to seeing you there.

Bringing together academics, heritage professionals, site managers, museums, researchers, and enthusiasts, the Network supports knowledge sharing, community engagement, and public education around one of the most significant periods of the 20th century.

Event Details

Friday 8th May 2026

If you wish to travel early you can arrive Friday afternoon/evening. Your evening meal will be provided and you'll be able to catch up with old friends in the bar.

Saturday 9th May 2026 – Conference

10:00 – 17:30 Conference presentations with refreshment breaks and lunch

19:00 – 12.00 Dinner

Sunday 10th May 2026 – Checkout



Hilton Hotels and Resorts



How to Register

Call: **07884 187 800**
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.

National Atomic Veterans Awareness Day 2025



This Years NAVAD took place on Wednesday the 1st of October at the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas.

The previous 2 years National Atomic Veterans Awareness Day has taken place in the Millennium Chapel, but this year we took a risk with the weather and decided to hold the full service at the memorial itself. It was the right decision as this year we were blessed with warm temperatures and sunshine, a complete contrast to the previous years of rain.

The service was conducted by The Very Revd Dr Nicholas Frayling KStJ, Chaplain to British Nuclear Authority Community.

We gathered together at the memorial for 11.30, there was a slight technical hitch as we lost power to the PA system, but in the short period of time to fix it, we were entertained by the Bugler Antonio Socci, with a small repertoire of tunes from the 40s.

Nicholas began the service with a prayer which was followed by Alan Owen reading a passage from St John's Gospel. This was followed by the Prayers and then the Act of Remembrance itself.

The Act of Remembrance

The Chaplain:
We solemnly remember before God all those, both military and civilian, who have died as a consequence of British nuclear tests in Australia and the Pacific.



The Very Revd Dr Nicholas Frayling KStJ

*They shall grow not old as we that are left grow old,
Age shall not weary them nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in morning,
We will remember them.*

All: We will remember them

The Bugler followed this by playing the Last Post, followed by the Silence and the Reveille.



Alan Owen - Labrats

In the last part of the service, wreaths were laid by one of the veterans on behalf of Labrats International and another by Ian Hall, Chairman of the NCCF. This was followed with a concluding prayer and the Blessing.







Top: Bugler Antonio Socci, Alan Owen – Founder of Labrats, Nicholas Frayling and Ian Hall Chairman of thr NCCF

Mid Left: Alan Owen and Ian Hall

Mid Right: Veterans pose with the Bugler in front of the BNTVA memorial

Bottom: The Wreaths laid on behalf of the BNTVA Museum / NCCF and Labrats International

Right Page: Veterans reunited



Remembering the Fallen: A Personal Road to Remembrance



A group of motorcyclists set out on a meaningful journey through the battlefields of World War I. This pilgrimage of remembrance became a deeply personal experience for two of the riders, as it connected them with the history of ancestors they had never known.

On the crisp morning of June 7, 2025, the rumble of six motorbikes shattered the tranquillity of the Midlands as a group of riders embarked on a seven-day journey into the heart of history. Their destination was the battlefields, cemeteries, and museums of Flanders and the Somme. This was no ordinary road trip; it was a carefully planned exploration of the profound significance of the First World War, organised by Nigel Heaps MBE, whose passion for history was only matched by his commitment to ensuring that his fellow riders fully grasped its emotional weight. Among the group was Roger Frost, a Trustee of the Nuclear Community Charity Fund (NCCF), an organisation that would play a significant role in the emotional climax of their tour.

For seven days, the riders travelled over 860 miles along winding roads, making stops at 40 different locations. Their itinerary was thoughtfully designed to blend historical exploration with moments of quiet reflection. Days were spent discovering the poignant landscapes of Ypres and Arras, while evenings were filled with camaraderie, good food, and opportunities to discuss the sobering experiences of the day over a few continental beers.

Nigel's meticulous planning extended beyond merely visiting the major memorials.



The bikes before setting off

He sought to include sites that held personal significance for the tour members. This personal approach led to unexpected and emotional moments at the imposing Thiepval Memorial and the serene Ploegsteert Memorial for the Missing. As the riders examined the seemingly endless lists of names, the sheer scale of the loss became tangible. For many, the “surprising discoveries” were not physical but rather profound personal connections to the past—a sudden realisation of the individual stories behind each engraved name.

At Thiepval, where the names of over 72,000 missing British and South African soldiers are carved into the stone, the group learned that names are sometimes removed when remains are discovered and identified. This practice serves as a testament to the ongoing effort of remembrance and the enduring hope of giving a name to the unknown.

The final and most significant destination of the tour was the Pozières Cemetery, located along the remarkably straight D929 road that connects Albert and Bapaume.



The Pozières Cemetery commemorates over 14,000 casualties of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth



Nigel lays a cross for Sapper Crispin Hampson

This route is clearly marked by signs indicating the German lines at various stages of the war. The cemetery is surrounded by the Pozières Memorial, which serves as a powerful tribute to over 14,000 soldiers who, like their brothers at Thiepval, have no known grave.

The main purpose of their visit to this hallowed ground was to honour the grandfather of Jeff Liddiatt, MBE HonFBUL, the Honorary Life President of the NCCF. Crispin Hampson, a Sapper with the Royal Engineers 1st Field Company, was killed in action on August 20, 1916. He was one of the countless casualties of the ferocious fighting that continued unabated since the beginning of the Battle of the Somme. He left behind his wife, Helen Elizabeth Hampson of Bristol, and a future generation who would only come to know him through stories, a few photographs and memorials.

In a deeply moving act of remembrance, Roger Frost and Nigel Heaps laid a tribute cross at Crispin's grave. Attached to it was a message from Jeff, a simple yet powerful tribute that bridged the gap of over a century: "In loving memory of our grandfather Crispin. Many years have passed, but he is still remembered with love and gratitude by all his family."

Although the sound of their motorbikes has faded from the fields of France and Belgium, the echoes of their journey will resonate for a lifetime for the six riders. This pilgrimage transcended historical facts and figures; it became a personal journey of remembrance, a poignant reminder that behind every name on every memorial lies a story of love, loss, and sacrifice that should never be forgotten.



The Grave of Crispin Hampson, Royal Engineers 1st Field Company, 20th August 1916





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

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

07884 187 800

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

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Making that difference

A Legacy of Service: Celebrating Don James, Trustee of the Nuclear Community Charity Fund

It is with heavy hearts that we remember Donald Terrence James (Don), a devoted husband, father, grandfather and tireless champion of the British Nuclear Community, who peacefully passed away on Sunday, 24 August 2015. His departure marks the end of an extraordinary life dedicated to service, remembrance, and unwavering support for his fellow veterans.

Don James began his extensive service to the community by meticulously organising the annual Remembrance events, which included planning and setting out the Westminster Abbey Field of Remembrance and participating in the Thursday reception, representing the British Nuclear Test Veterans Association (BNTVA). He also took on the crucial task of organising lunches for the Remembrance Sunday parade, as well as managing and distributing tickets for the event, arranging meeting points for attendees, all without initial financial assistance. Despite the challenges of limited resources and the need for extensive coordination, Don's dedication and resilience shone through, ensuring the success of these events.

His commitment deepened as he served on the executive committee of the BNTVA. When the BNTVA transitioned into a registered charity, Don became one of its founding trustees. He also became a founding trustee of the Nuclear Community Charity Fund, and his steadfast commitment and tireless dedication were formally recognised on January 25th, 2023, when he was presented with a prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award.

This significant honour, bestowed by the NCCF, was personally presented by Veterans Minister Johnny Mercer, marking a pivotal moment in Don's long career of service and celebrating his outstanding commitment to the British Nuclear Community.

For many years, Don attended the AVEN general meeting in France. In this capacity, he proudly served as a Standard Bearer, carrying the BNTVA standard alongside the standard bearers from various French Departments. His willingness to travel for these important international gatherings underscored his dedication to representing the veterans and their interests on a broader stage.

Don's unwavering dedication has been instrumental in the progress made in veteran welfare and recognition, contributing significantly to the very existence and effectiveness of organisations like the NCCF. His commitment has helped ensure that the invaluable stories of nuclear test veterans are not only heard but that their enduring legacy is meticulously preserved. As Jeffrey Lydiatt MBE, the NCCF honorary life president, aptly conveyed,

“

I am deeply grateful for the impact of Don's work on our community, but more so, I have lost a very dear friend

**Jeffrey Lydiatt MBE,
NCCF honorary life president**

Don is survived by his beloved wife Christine and their loving family, who shared in his passion for service and supported his tireless dedication to the community. Their strength and encouragement enabled Don to make the meaningful changes that brought solace and support to countless individuals.

While we mourn the loss of Don, our friend, we celebrate a life well-lived and a legacy that will endure. Don James exemplified the very best of service, friendship, and commitment. His memory will forever be cherished by the British Nuclear Community and all who had the privilege of knowing him.

In remembrance of a life dedicated to others, and in gratitude for the lasting impact of his service.



Top: Don James Standard Bearer for the BNTVA at the Arc de Triomphe 2017
Mid Left: Standard Bearer at Leeds Minster 2018
Mid Right: Don and Nigel Heaps MBE at Montauban 2018
Bottom: Don is presented with his Lifetime achievement award by Veterans minister Johnny Mercer 2023



Transitioning Leadership: From Al Carns to Louise Sandher-Jones in Veterans Affairs

As ministerial responsibilities shift within the Ministry of Defence, a new chapter begins for veteran support, underlining the government's unwavering commitment to veterans' welfare.

The British veterans' community has witnessed significant changes in ministerial leadership over the past year, with two notable appointments highlighting the government's commitment to military personnel and their families. The transition from Al Carns to Louise Sandher-Jones as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Veterans represents both continuity and a fresh perspective in this crucial portfolio.

Al Carns: A Brief but Impactful Tenure

Al Carns made history when he was appointed Minister for Veterans and People at the Ministry of Defence on 9 July 2024, just five days after being elected as the Labour MP for Birmingham Selly Oak. His appointment was particularly significant given his distinguished military background as a former Royal Marines Colonel who earned the Military Cross for his service in Afghanistan.

During his tenure, Carns brought a unique perspective to the role, drawing on his recent military experience and personal understanding of the challenges faced by service personnel transitioning to civilian life. The Nuclear Community Charity Fund (NCCF) has praised his engagement, describing their interactions with the minister and the Office for Veterans' Affairs (OVA) as "very positive."

The NCCF's assessment of Carns's impact is particularly telling: "his legacy, even though only achieved through a short time, has been profound across our community of veterans." This speaks to his ability to quickly establish meaningful connections with veteran organisations and implement initiatives that resonated throughout the community.

One of the successful programs during his tenure was the Community Care Check project, a shining example of the collaborative approach between the government and charitable organisations that Carns championed. This successful partnership gives hope for the future of veterans' support.

Promotion to Armed Forces Minister

In September 2025, Carns was promoted to become Minister for the Armed Forces, a move that the NCCF described as well-deserved recognition of his contributions. This progression reflects the government's confidence in his abilities and suggests a natural career path for someone with his military background and proven ministerial effectiveness.

The promotion also indicates the government's strategy of utilising individuals with direct military experience in key defence positions, potentially improving communication between political leadership and serving personnel.

Louise Sandher-Jones: The New Voice for Veterans

Stepping into the veterans' portfolio is Louise Sandher-Jones, a Member of Parliament for North East Derbyshire since July 2024. Sandher-Jones, like her predecessor, brings a wealth of relevant military experience to the role, having served as an Army intelligence officer and a veteran of the War in Afghanistan.

Her appointment on 6 September 2025 as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Veterans and People represents a continuation of the practice of appointing ministers with a personal understanding of military service. This approach yields positive results, as evidenced by the veteran community's response to both appointments.

Sandher-Jones studied Chinese at the University of Edinburgh before her military career, suggesting linguistic skills that could prove valuable in an increasingly complex global security environment. Her intelligence background may also provide unique insights into the needs of veterans from specialised military roles.

Community Response and Future Outlook

The NCCF's response to these ministerial changes has been notably positive, expressing enthusiasm for continued collaboration with the new minister and the OVA. This optimism suggests that the foundations laid during Carns' tenure have created a strong platform for ongoing partnership between the government and veteran support organisations.

The charity's statement that they "look forward to our continued positive relations with the new Minister and the OVA" indicates confidence that the momentum generated by successful initiatives like the Community Care Check project will be maintained under the new leadership.

Significance for the Veterans Community

The smooth transition between these two ministers, both with military backgrounds, suggests a maturing approach to veterans' affairs within government. Rather than viewing ministerial changes as potential disruptions, organisations like the NCCF see them as opportunities for continued collaboration and growth.

The fact that both ministers entered Parliament in July 2024 and quickly took on significant responsibilities in veterans' affairs also highlights the government's commitment to bringing fresh perspectives to this portfolio while maintaining continuity through shared values and experiences.

Looking Forward

As Louise Sandher-Jones settles into her new role, the veteran community will be watching to see how she builds upon the foundation established by her predecessor. The positive relationship established between the NCCF and the OVA provides a template for how effective collaboration can benefit the broader veteran community.



Louise Sandher-Jones ©House of Commons/Laurie Noble - <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>

The success of initiatives like the Community Care Check project demonstrates the potential for meaningful impact when government and charitable organisations work together effectively. Building on this collaborative approach, the NCCF is particularly keen to actively engage with the flagship OVA Valour project, which was commenced during Al Carns' tenure. This initiative represents another opportunity for the charity to work alongside government partners in delivering meaningful support to the veteran community.

With both ministers sharing military backgrounds and a commitment to veteran welfare, there is reason for optimism about continued progress in supporting those who have served their country.

The NCCF's enthusiasm for participating in established programs, such as Valour, suggests that the transition period will see continuity in strategic initiatives while potentially opening new avenues for collaboration.

The ministerial changes in veterans' affairs reflect a broader commitment to ensuring that those who have served in the armed forces receive the support they deserve. As Al Carns moves on to his new role overseeing the Armed Forces and Louise Sandher-Jones takes up the veterans' brief, the continuity of experience and dedication assures that the welfare of Britain's veteran community remains in capable hands.

From Transactional Aid to Relational Care: NCCF Celebrates Landmark Success of Community Care Pilot

A groundbreaking initiative by the Nuclear Community Charity Fund (NCCF) has proven to be a resounding success, marking a pivotal shift in how the UK's nuclear survivor community is supported.

The Community Care Check (CCC) pilot, a proactive outreach program, has not only connected with some of the most isolated members of the community but has forged a new, more compassionate path forward.

For decades, the men who served our nation during the nuclear testing era, and their families, have navigated a complex legacy of health concerns, psychological burdens like 'exposure worry', and a sense of isolation. Traditional support systems, which often require individuals to apply for help, risk missing those who are most in need.

Recognising this, the NCCF, with crucial funding from the Office for Veterans' Affairs (OVA), launched the ambitious CCC pilot in January 2024. The mission was simple but profound: to move beyond simply reacting to requests for aid and to proactively reach out, build trust, and offer support.

The results have been nothing short of transformative.

A Triumph of Proactive Support

Over the last eighteen months, the pilot has demonstrated unequivocally that a personal, relational approach works. By getting "boots on the ground," the dedicated CCC Outreach Facilitator,

Ian Higginbottom, has been able to connect with individuals who were previously unknown or had fallen out of contact.

The numbers speak for themselves. The pilot generated a **26% increase in support applications** and, crucially, the **average grant value was 86% higher** than through the standard application fund running alongside the pilot. This demonstrates that the project has successfully identified and assisted those with the most profound needs.

One of the most significant achievements has been a strategic pivot from "transactional aid" to "relational care." As the team learned, a one-off grant, while helpful, could leave a vulnerable person feeling abandoned once the transaction was over. The new model, now adopted by the NCCF, prioritises building a lasting, trusting relationship first and foremost. Financial and practical support then becomes a tool within that supportive, ongoing connection.

As Ian Higginbottom, the pilot's Outreach Facilitator, noted, this is about treating people as people, not cases. The story of Freddy Shaw, a Royal Navy veteran from the Christmas Island tests, brings this to life. After a fall, the CCC program stepped in to install a walk-in

shower, significantly improving his safety and quality of life. Freddy's heartfelt thanks are a testament to the program's real-world impact.

Rebuilding a Community, Together

The pilot's success wasn't limited to individual support. Recognising that social isolation is one of the biggest challenges facing the community, the NCCF seized the opportunity to revive the beloved annual BNTVA convention under the new "BNTVA Connect" banner.

The event, held in May 2024, was a resounding success, bringing together nearly 100 community members. For many, it was their first time attending such a gathering. It was a powerful reminder that peer support and shared camaraderie are just as crucial as any grant. The synergy between individual care and collective fellowship is now a cornerstone of the NCCF's approach, and the charity delivered a further successful convention in 2025.

A Blueprint for a Brighter Future

The success of the CCC pilot has provided a clear and inspiring blueprint for the future. The NCCF is now actively considering a series of strategic recommendations to build on this momentum:

- 1 Going National:** The first step is to formalise and scale the relational care model, rolling out the Community Care Check program across the country in phases.
- 2 Connecting the Community:** The "BNTVA Connect" outreach and events will become a permanent, funded part of the NCCF's work, ensuring the spirit of community and remembrance continues to thrive.
- 3 The Power of Friendship:** A new, tiered befriending service is being investigated. This initiative will engage third-party providers such as the OVA Valour initiative to enhance and address the support and integration of our beneficiaries. This will directly complement the work of professional outreach staff and address loneliness effectively.
- 4 Enhancing Communications:** An investment will be made to improve digital and print communications, utilising platforms like Exposure Magazine to keep the community connected, informed, and supported.

The Community Care Check pilot has been more than just a successful project; it has been a journey of discovery. It has revealed a more effective, more compassionate, and more human way to honour the service of our nuclear veterans and care for their families. With this proven model and a clear vision for the future, the NCCF is embarking on an exciting new chapter, ensuring that no member of our nuclear community is left behind.



A Hand Up When You Need It Most

A message to Britain's nuclear test veterans and their families

You served your country when it called. You did your duty without question, often in circumstances you weren't fully told about at the time. Now, decades on, you and your families deserve support when you need it.

The Nuclear Community Charity Fund (NCCF) exists for one reason, to help you.

You've Earned This Support

The Care Wellbeing and Inclusion Fund isn't a charity in the traditional sense, it's recognition of what you've given. Whether you're a veteran of the nuclear testing programme, a spouse who's stood by your partner through thick and thin, or a son, daughter, or grandchild affected by your family's service, this fund is for you.

The definition is clear and comprehensive: veterans of the British Nuclear Testing Programme, their families and descendants, and anyone who may have encountered radiological exposure in service to the nation, and their families too.



Lighthunter / Shutterstock

What Can the Fund Help With?

Life throws challenges at us all, particularly as we get older. The fund can help with practical things that make a real difference:

- A stairlift or mobility scooter to keep you independent
- Home adaptations so you can stay in your own place
- Respite care to give you or your family a proper break
- Educational support for grandchildren
- Other specific needs that would improve your daily life

How It Works - Simply

No complicated forms or bureaucracy. Here's what happens:

- **You tell them what you need**
Pick up the phone or drop them a line explaining your situation
- **They work with you**
Complete the simple application form, and the NCCF team will work its best to understand what would help most.
- **They sort it out directly**
Once approved, they pay the supplier themselves, you won't need to find the money upfront or handle any paperwork.

The fund operates with fairness and respect. You'll be treated with the dignity you deserve, and everything is handled confidentially. Your needs and concerns are our top priority.

One More Thing

Normally, there's an 18-month gap between grants. But the NCCF understands that life doesn't always follow a schedule. If your circumstances change suddenly, a fall, an illness, an unexpected crisis, they can waive this rule. They're practical people who understand real life and are here to help when you need it most.

Don't Hesitate

Many of your generation were taught not to ask for help. But this isn't asking, it's accepting what you've earned through service. Whether it's something that's been worrying you for months or a sudden need that's just come up, the NCCF wants to hear from you.

For a confidential chat about how they might help, visit www.thenccf.org or telephone them directly. You looked after the nation, let them look after you.

The Nuclear Community Charity Fund is an independent charity established specifically to support the British nuclear survivor community.



CAMPAÑA
 Atlantic 1944
 Norway 1944 - 45
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 Festival of Britain 1951
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 Operation Hurricane 1952



BNTVA

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An unfortunate flight for an RAF Hastings

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The HMS Campania Model

A Hybrid Blueprint for Low-Cost, High-Impact Touring Exhibitions



In an era of tightening budgets and increasing pressure to broaden public engagement, the museum sector is at a critical juncture. Traditional touring exhibitions, long a staple for sharing collections and stories, remain effective but are exceptionally resource-intensive undertakings.

The HMS Campania exhibition presents a powerful and timely alternative: a sophisticated hybrid model that strategically blends lightweight, physical display panels with a rich, expansive online multimedia facility.

This approach, showcased in the HMS Campania exhibition, is not only a pioneering case study for creating low-cost, high-impact touring exhibitions but also a versatile blueprint that can be adapted by cultural institutions across the United Kingdom and beyond. It fundamentally redefines the balance between physical presence and digital depth, delivering a more accessible and sustainable form of public history.

How the Hybrid Model Exemplifies 'Low Cost'

The most significant barrier to traditional touring exhibitions is often the high cost of travel. The HMS Campania exhibition addresses this challenge with its innovative hybrid structure, which systematically reduces these financial obstacles. Although it is not entirely cost-free to tour, this model significantly lowers and controls expenses compared to traditional object-based exhibitions.

As a result, it becomes a viable option for a much broader range of institutions, including those with limited resources.

The physical tour primarily consists of durable, printed foam boards that can be easily and affordably shipped to the host venue. This approach effectively eliminates the most substantial costs associated with traditional tours:

- **Transport and Insurance**

Shipping priceless historical artefacts involves significant logistical complexity and cost. These items require climate-controlled transport, specialised art-handling crews, and multi-million-pound insurance policies to protect against potential risks such as damage during transit or theft. In contrast, shipping lightweight foam boards are far more affordable and straightforward. It typically only requires a standard courier service and minimal insurance since these graphic panels are easily replaceable. This substantially reduces financial risk and administrative burden.

- **Exhibition Production**

In a traditional tour, each host venue must invest heavily in exhibition production. This involves designing and building custom display cases, fabricating specialised mounts for fragile objects, engineering complex lighting setups, and printing large-scale, site-specific graphics. The Campania model streamlines this process by consolidating it into a single, upfront design phase. The display panels are designed and produced once, creating a standardised "plug-and-play" system that eliminates redundant and costly efforts for each venue on the tour.

- **Cost Forecasting**

Financial planning for a major object-based tour is notoriously challenging due to unpredictable factors, including fluctuating fuel prices, varying shipping tariffs, and venue-specific installation labour costs. These variables make accurate forecasting a constant struggle. However, the Campania model offers predictable logistics with a fixed number of panels, each with known weight and size. This clarity makes budgeting more transparent and straightforward, reducing financial risks for institutions that cannot afford uncertainty.

The exhibit extends beyond physical components, encompassing a rich narrative, high-resolution images, oral histories, archival sounds, and interactive elements, all of which form a scalable digital asset. Updates to this core content—whether correcting facts or adding newly discovered material—can be implemented centrally in the online facility at minimal cost and with immediate effect. This approach eliminates the need for costly, wasteful, and time-consuming processes, such as reprinting and reshipping physical boards. By adopting this hybrid model, we fundamentally change the financial landscape, replacing the high, variable, and risky costs associated with transporting artefacts with the low, predictable costs of shipping durable graphics. This method leverages a single, sustainable investment in digital development.

Achieving High Impact Through Physical-Digital Synergy

The brilliance of the Campania model lies in the seamless integration of its physical and digital components. It acknowledges that a purely online exhibition may struggle to capture attention in a crowded digital landscape, while a strictly physical, graphics-based exhibition can often feel one-dimensional. The printed foam boards provide a tangible anchor for the experience, harnessing the museum's potential as a physical destination to create a focused event that encourages visitor engagement. However, the true depth and immersive experience are realised through the QR codes on these boards, which serve as direct, intentional gateways to the comprehensive online resources.

This blended approach leverages the best of both worlds:

- **Physical Presence**
The boards create a traditional exhibition atmosphere, effectively guiding visitors through the key themes of the ship's remarkable story. This physical aspect enhances the experience and fosters a communal setting for learning.
- **Digital Depth**
The online portal offers a rich, multi-layered narrative that a static display could never provide. Visitors can easily navigate from a summary panel about the vessel's conversion to a detailed schematic, or from a photo of the flight deck to an archival video of the atomic detonation. They can explore the ship's role in the Arctic Convoys, its crucial involvement in the sinking of U-365, and its final historic mission as the flagship for Operation HURRICANE, Britain's first atomic bomb test. An archival video of the nuclear detonation. They can explore the ship's role in the Arctic Convoys, its pivotal involvement in the sinking of U-365, and its final, historic mission as the flagship for Operation HURRICANE, Britain's first atomic bomb test.

A vast collection of supplementary content dynamically enhances the online experience. This includes not only image galleries but also high-resolution archival photos that users can zoom in on to examine intricate details. It features curated audio clips of oral histories from veterans, the crackle of period radio transmissions, and the roar of the engine room, going beyond simple "sounds." The inclusion of professionally produced podcasts enables a deeper exploration of specific topics, catering to both casual visitors and dedicated maritime historians.

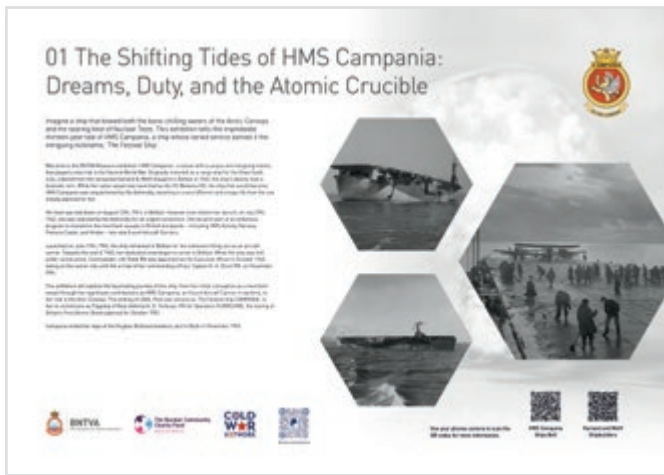
This transforms the exhibition from a linear walk-through into an interactive, multi-threaded experience. It perfectly embodies the modern museum's goal of transcending the limitations of time and space, using its physical presence to invite audiences into a boundless and endlessly fascinating digital world.

The QR Code: A Bridge Between Worlds

In this hybrid model, the QR code serves as more than just a gimmick; it is the essential link between the physical and digital worlds. It is the cornerstone of the entire experience, turning the visitor's mobile device from a potential distraction into a vital tool for exploration and understanding. The foamboards provide context and visual cues, while the QR codes offer a clear call to action, enabling visitors to personalise their own journeys. Their unmatched cost-effectiveness and sustainability are significant advantages, allowing for a rich, multi-layered experience without a hefty price tag.

This strategic integration allows for a host of dynamic possibilities:

- **Instant Information & Personalised Guides**
A QR code placed next to a photo of the captain can link directly to his detailed biography and service record. This same code can offer users a choice of content, such as an expert audio guide for adults or an animated, simplified explanation for younger visitors, thereby personalising the experience for different audiences with just a single touchpoint.



- Immersive Multimedia**
 A panel that describes a naval engagement can include a QR code that launches archival combat footage or a captivating animated reconstruction of the event, complete with maps and timelines. This approach brings history to life in a way that text alone cannot.
- Interactive Engagement**
 QR codes can introduce gamified elements into the experience. For instance, a quiz on ship specifications could provide a digital certificate upon completion. A scavenger hunt, where visitors must locate codes on different panels to unlock a "secret" folder of behind-the-scenes curatorial interviews, adds an element of fun and rewards to the learning process.
- Virtual Extensions**
 A code on the final panel could link to the websites of partner institutions, such as the National Archives or the Imperial War Museum. It could also direct visitors to a community forum where descendants of the crew can share their family stories and photographs. This extension enhances the exhibition's reach and transforms it into a living, evolving project.

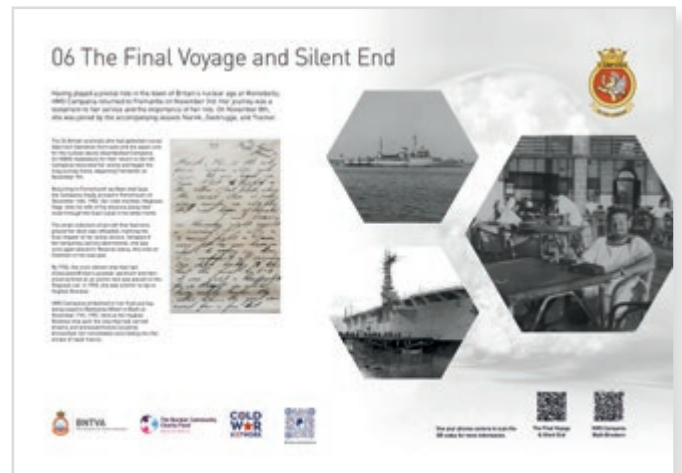
Digital Storytelling: From Passive Observers to Active Participants

The narrative of HMS Campania, enhanced by this powerful hybrid model, serves as an excellent vehicle for digital storytelling techniques. This approach is crucial for modernising museum engagement, aiming to transform visitors from passive readers of display panels into active participants in the unfolding story. The physical boards can pose questions, introduce key characters, and set the scene. At the same time, the digital platform delivers a compelling narrative through interactive maps that trace the perilous Arctic convoy routes, personal accounts read by actors, and decision-based scenarios that place users in the crew's shoes. This method fosters creativity, critical thinking, and communication skills, promoting a deeper, more self-directed form of learning. For instance, by inviting users to "explore the flight deck" through a 360-degree interactive photograph or to "listen to a veteran's account" of a nuclear explosion, the exhibition creates a powerful emotional connection. It shifts the focus from merely transmitting information to fostering experience and discovery, ensuring that history is not just read but also felt and remembered.

Challenges and Future Considerations

Although the hybrid model offers significant advantages, it also presents several challenges that require careful planning. The success of the overall experience depends on a smooth and intuitive user journey that connects the physical and digital realms. This connection assumes that reliable and free internet access is available at the venue, which is not always guaranteed. Additionally, it relies on the digital literacy of the visitors. Factors such as age, comfort with technology, ownership of a modern smartphone, and the cost of mobile data must be considered to ensure equitable access for everyone. Potential solutions, like providing a few pre-loaded tablets for loan, could help bridge this digital divide.

The design of the physical panels is crucial. They need to be visually appealing enough to attract interest on their own while also serving as elegant signposts to the richer online content. Equally important is the user experience (UX) of the digital portal; it should be fast, intuitive, and accessible. Additionally, there is an ongoing responsibility for digital maintenance, ensuring that QR codes link to active, secure, and up-to-date web pages throughout the entire exhibition duration.



By thoughtfully incorporating a physical component, this model effectively avoids the often contentious debate about whether purely digital experiences devalue physical museum spaces. It utilises the gallery to enhance the digital experience, allowing digital content to enrich the gallery.

In conclusion, the HMS Campania exhibition presents a compelling blueprint for the future of touring exhibitions. Its intelligent hybrid model significantly reduces the costs and complexities that have long challenged museum tours,

making powerful storytelling accessible to more institutions and broader audiences. This model creates a high-impact, layered, and personalised experience that values the importance of physical galleries while also harnessing the limitless possibilities of the digital realm. This approach demonstrates that by thoughtfully and creatively integrating physical and digital elements, museums can create resonant exhibitions that are more accessible, sustainable, and deeply engaging for a 21st-century audience.



HMS Campania Exhibition at the Cold War Awareness Week Launch – Leeds Beckett University May 2025

Met Office Observer Memories of Christmas Island 1958/1959

I joined the Air Ministry Meteorological Office at the age of 16 in 1956 and after doing the observing and chart plotting course in London was posted to RAF Linton on Ouse flying training station for Royal Navy air crews.

A year later I volunteered for Ocean weather ships and did the Radio Sonde course at Hemsby in Norfolk and on to Lerwick in Shetland Islands then Tayport near Dundee to get my hand in as it were then aboard OWS Weather Observer for my first and as it happens only 3 month stint in the north Atlantic. On return to base a posting to Christmas Island was waiting for me and with no further ado found myself land in a Beverly Transport plane on the one and only landing strip on the Island. But not before a long and weary journey to USAF base in eastern USA. Next day on to West Coast USAF base then on to Hawaii landing close to the US Pearl Harbour. One nights sleep before the long trip across the Pacific to Christmas Island.

After briefing on my duties and assignment to a tent as my Home for the duration and a quick tour of the essentials (mess tent, ablutions etc.) and a tour of my working area. Consisting of a plotting tent, A balloon preparation area, radio sonde setting up room, Radar unit (an old WW2 Gun Layer set with 2 dishes on top and the Sonde radio receiver tent, and a final warning not to kill and eat the giant crabs that roamed the island as they ere the main sustenance for the local population. I was then left to my own devices until the next day.

The days consisted of making hourly surface observations of cloud type and height. Temperature both Max. and min. and wet bulb readings Humidity and wind direction and speed.

Coping with the young crabs that came though the tents day and night on their way to the sea and removing the giant ones that liked to sleep on our cots (sometimes under the bedding) was a bit of a nightmare.

In addition we launched a radio sonde every 6 hours to take upper atmosphere reading of temperature, atmospheric pressure and humidity at levels determined by the balloon rate of ascent through an oscillator display which switched between the 3 readings through a 3 cone windmills on the side of the radio sonde. This spun so fast at launch time that even the best operators on the oscilloscope could only caught every other reading but slowed almost to a stop when the air became thinner with height. The balloon eventually burst as the air was so thin that the balloon expanded beyond its designed capability and dropped like stone when the signal started racing faster than at launch. Sometime we were asked to track down and keep taking readings which most of us found almost impossible to do despite a small paper parachute being sent aloft as part of the setup.

Each sonde had an official "if Found" label attached promising the finder 2/6 (old currency then but now 12.5 pence) if returned to the Met Office in Bracknell UK Non were ever returned. Simple lost in the depths of this isolated part of the Pacific.

On the days of test X and Y we had to launch the balloon some 20 sends after detonation to prevent heat from the bomb bursting the balloon and the blast making it impossible to launch safely. Learnt I believe from earlier detonations bursting balloons at the time of launch coinciding with detonation time.

All the information from radar and oscilloscope was being passed to the plotting tent as they were being made when the whole plot was passed to the other MOD scientists for some mystery interpretation.

A few days later I was flown back to UK after handing back my film badge for radio active contamination checking but never debriefed or given any medical checks. I was told later by an unknown source that many of these film badges were lost or destroyed on orders to remove any evidence of harm done by radio active exposure.

After a short spell after returning home with Met Office. I resigned and obtained other employment with Royal Marines, Police UK and finally with the Home Civil Service. After leaving the Police I married and the adopted a beautiful baby girl as it seems that I was then infertile (was this due to Radiation?) No one will ever know.

I received my Nuclear Test veterans medal after a struggle as no records seemed to exist but it was through my determination and old Meteorological records that I could prove my time on the island. Unfortunately I could not wear my medals (other from RM service) on Remembrance Sunday parade in 2024 due to strokes and heart attacks keeping me housebound.

Luckily for me I have lasted this long at 85 and not like many who succumbed to the effects of radiation often in the flower of youth. Never forgotten

Sorry no pictures as cameras were not allowed although some got them well hidden, Official Secrets Act and all that.

Doug Sewell

An Introduction to the Hastybird

During November 1961, whilst serving with the RAF, I was posted to Christmas Island in the Pacific.

During the first leg of the flight, on a British United civilian chartered aircraft, I became friends with Taff, a Welshman. He was fortunate enough to be posted at Hickam in the Hawaiian Islands. We arrived, in Singapore during the early hours of morning. It was very hot. I spent less than an hour on the beach enjoying the early morning sun and a swim, however, I became very sunburnt.

After a few days, we were introduced to a four engine RAF Hastings - commonly known by the RAF as a Hastybird. We boarded, together with 18 British Servicemen and a green uniformed Australian woman who was cadging a lift back to her homeland. The destination was Darwin in Australia.

Unfortunately, the aircraft had a few problems. The first day, the tail wheel had jammed. We all disembarked. The second day, the rear door would not lock; again we all disembarked. The third day, magneto problems, we all disembarked.

The fourth day it took off, but near the point of no return - almost at the halfway position of its destination - one of its engines packed up, and the Hastybird had to jettison fuel to lighten its load. We landed back at Singapore with three engines working. It was too much for the Australian woman, in her green scout uniform. She couldn't put up with it anymore. She hadn't been brainwashed about the excellent safety record of the aircraft as we had. With no sign of being genteel, she parted company with, 'Bugger this for a lark! I'm going with Qantas!' She had seemed made of sterner stuff. Amongst the group of passengers, there is always someone of a superstitious nature, with comments like; 'Maybe we're better off without a green Jonah!'

It was to become the fifth departure before we finally reached our destination at Darwin Australia. From there, we journeyed to Amberly, near Brisbane and on to Nadi in the Fijian Islands.

However, it was on the final leg of the journey that the Hastybird had one more game to play.

Turbulence is caused when warm air rises and cold air descends rapidly, to take its place. It sometimes makes aircraft shudder and drop suddenly and the effect on passengers can be discomfoting and unpleasant.

The toilet compartment on the Hastings was situated right at the tail end of the plane. It was small but adequate. On this long flight, the only exercise that could be had, was the short walk from seat to toilet, and back again. This gave some relief to stiff muscles and joints unused to being kept immobile for so long.

When the turbulence hit, I had spent about five or ten minutes in this small cubicle and thus missed the hand-written warning note that had been passing around; causing everyone to refit their seat belts.



The four engine RAF Hsstings, AKA the Hastybird

It was pure luck that upon leaving the compartment, my hand was gripped very firmly on the handle of the door. The sudden drop of the aircraft took me by surprise.

I managed to maintain a hold on the door but my legs shot upwards. It was like a fast descending lift. Every time it was possible to try to stand up, the same thing happened again, and my legs shot up from beneath me. This happened time and time again, until I became resigned to the situation. I slowly lowered myself to the floor, hand over hand, whilst gripping the edge of the toilet door for dear life. Four of the relief air crew were about 8 feet away. They lay on inflatable air beds, which were affixed to the deck of the cabin, and they viewed events with amused indifference.

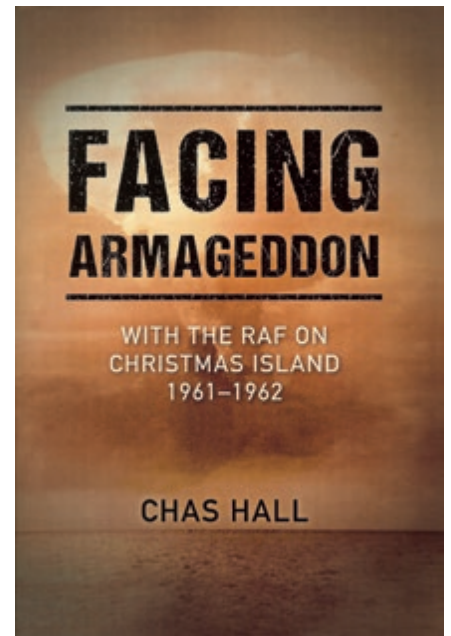
The turbulence did not bother them in the slightest. In fact, they seemed to enjoy it. As the aircraft dropped, they remained suspended two or three feet above their air beds for a brief second, as if by some magical power, and then they dropped down again onto their beds.

It seemed to be a long time that I was trapped in that ridiculous position - looking at the smiling relief crew.

Beyond them, my eyes wandered towards the concerned, but fascinated gaze of the passengers, who all sat facing the tail end of the plane, watching the whole performance. It probably lasted no longer than fifteen minutes, but when I eventually arrived back at my seat, still feeling a bit conspicuous, Taff questioned in a manner, as though he considered me to be the main attraction on this long boring journey; 'Taken to hanging onto the shit-house door for a bit of fun now - have we?' I wondered if anything ever went wrong for him.

As Taff and I parted company, we didn't know it then, but we would be reunited in the shadow of the hydrogen bomb.

My book, 'Facing Armageddon' complete with many unpublished photos, covers my years posting away from home in the UK, and is available both in print and audio format.



Pictures Chas Hall

Facing Armageddon by Chas Hall can be bought from:
<https://grubstreet.co.uk/product/facing-armageddon/>

It can also be bought from all the major high street book sellers as well as online.

Search for:
Facing Armageddon by Chas Hall
 or ISBN: **9781911667889**

BNTVA Museum Shop

The BNTVA shop is about to be restocked. New the new stock will be photographed and included on the shop website page which can be found at: <https://www.bntva.com/shop>



Proud Descendant of a Nuclear Test Veteran - Pin badge £5.00



Proud to be a Nuclear Veteran - Pin badge £5.00



Proud to be a Wife of a Nuclear Test Veteran - Pin badge £5.00



BNTVA Lapel Pin £5.50



Guinea Pig Ship, HMS Diana 1956-57 by Brian Marshall £17.50



BNTVA Blazer Badge £12.00



Christmas Island Challenge coin £10.00



Montebello Islands & Maralinga Challenge coin £10.00



Operation Grapple Challenge coin £10.00

The stock to be added will include: Guinea pig books, BNTVA ties, BNTVA caps, Snowstar thermal hats, Beanie hat (bobble), Beanie hat (no bobble), Gilet S L XL XXL, Fleece S M L, Red Polo M L XL 2XL, Navy Polo M L XL, White Polo L XL

Tune In: Exposure Magazine Launches New Podcast for Enhanced Community Connection and Accessibility

We are incredibly excited to announce a significant new development at Exposure Magazine: the debut of the Exposure Magazine podcast!

This innovative platform emerges from the heart of the British nuclear test survivor community, designed to welcome and support not only British nuclear test veterans but also members of the broader Cold War community who share a common bond.

A New Era of Accessibility

In a ground breaking move, every future edition of Exposure Magazine will now be accompanied by a dedicated podcast. This initiative transforms the magazine's rich content into engaging audio and visual formats, marking a pivotal step forward. The primary purpose of this dual approach is to enhance our outreach into the community and make our valuable content more accessible to everyone. This is particularly beneficial for those who prefer to engage with articles by listening or watching. We recognise that this dual approach is essential for an ageing cohort within our community, helping to ensure they remain connected and supported, especially those with potential mobility issues.

By embracing this new medium, we aim to foster deeper connections, facilitate the sharing of experiences, and celebrate the incredible resilience and camaraderie of the British nuclear community. The podcast enables us to explore compelling narratives, vital updates, and insightful discussions, making history more tangible and accessible to everyone.

What You Can Expect to Hear

Our podcasts will bring to life the compelling articles and updates found within the pages of Exposure Magazine.

Join Our Growing Community

The launch of the Exposure Magazine podcast signifies our continued commitment to connecting and supporting our community. We encourage you to like, subscribe, and share these podcasts. We also welcome your suggestions for topics, guests, and feedback to help us amplify the voices and preserve the invaluable legacy of our nuclear community!

You can find more information about Exposure Magazine, its articles, and now its podcasts, by visiting our website. We encourage you to explore our website, listen to our podcasts, and share your feedback with us.

Video Podcast

www.youtube.com/@exposuremag/podcasts

Spotify Audio Podcast

<https://tinyurl.com/bddpraws>





YouTube interface showing the 'exposure' channel page. The channel name is 'exposure magazine' with 23 subscribers and 19 videos. The bio reads: 'Welcome to Exposure Magazine, the official voice of the British nuclear test survivor community... more'. A 'Subscribe' button is visible.

The 'Podcasts' tab is selected, showing four podcast covers:

- Veterans Memories - Untold Stories from Britain's Nuclear...** (10 episodes)
- Exposure Magazine Spring 2025 | British Nuclear ...** (7 episodes)
- Special Editions** (1 episode)
- Exposure Magazine Winter 2023** (1 episode)



Spotify interface showing the 'Exposure Magazine' podcast page. The page title is 'Exposure Magazine' by 'Exposure Magazine Editorial Team'. A 'Follow' button is present.

The 'All Episodes' section lists two episodes:

- 06 NCCF Care Wellbeing and Inclusion Fund Guide** (Exposure Magazine) - 30 Jul • 11 min 48 sec
- 05 Cold War Network and Book Review** (Exposure Magazine) - 27 Jul • 9 min 22 sec

The 'About' section states: 'Podcasts from Exposure Magazine stories from the heart of the British Nuclear Test Survivor Community.' There is a 'No rating' button.

Fred Stallard

It is with profound sadness that we mark the passing of Fred Stallard, a steadfast champion of the nuclear test survivor community, who died on 30th September 2025 following a brief hospital admission.

Fred's dedication to veterans' welfare was unwavering. After serving as Chairman of the Maralinga Veterans Association (MVA) until its closure in 2011, he joined the British Nuclear Test Veterans Association (BNTVA) as a trustee that same year, becoming the voice for Maralinga veterans and ensuring their stories would not be forgotten.

His connection to Maralinga was not just professional, but deeply personal. Serving in the Royal Air Force, Fred was posted to Edinburgh Field in Adelaide in 1957—the staging post for personnel bound for the deployment to Maralinga for Operation Antler. He spent approximately four months living in a tent beside the airfield, experiencing things that would shape the rest of his life's work.

Throughout his tenure as a BNTVA trustee until his retirement in 2017, Fred was not only a passionate advocate but also a powerful storyteller. He remained dedicated to preserving the Maralinga heritage, becoming a familiar face in the recognition campaign, attending screenings and Q&A sessions for the documentary 'Nobody Told Us,' sharing his experiences with audiences who needed to understand this hidden chapter of history.

Beyond his service and advocacy, Fred was a man of diverse and gentle pursuits. He was a keen walker who guided tours across the UK countryside, and a devoted cricket enthusiast who found joy in the summer game.

Those who worked alongside him, particularly Jeffrey Liddiatt MBE and fellow members of both the MVA and BNTVA, remember Fred as more than a colleague—he was a trusted friend whose steady hand and quiet wisdom guided their collective efforts through challenging waters.

Fred is survived by his beloved wife, June, to whom we extend our deepest sympathies. His legacy lives on in every veteran whose story is told, every recognition won, and every truth brought to light.

A life lived in service, remembered with gratitude.



In Loving Memory of Edward “Eddie” Pithers

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Edward “Eddie” Pithers, a proud veteran and beloved family man.

Born in Alton, Hampshire, 18th September 1936 Eddie joined the Royal Air Force in his teens and dedicated 24 years of his life to military service. During his time with 76 Squadron, he witnessed several tests including Grapple Y nuclear test on Christmas Island in 1958 — an experience that deeply shaped his life. Eddie firmly believed the lasting effects of that exposure impacted not only his own health, but also that of his four children and extended family, including grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Following his RAF service, Eddie settled in Nottingham with his wife, Irene, and their children, after moving around the country during his career. He went on to work for many years at British Rail, continuing his commitment to public service.

Eddie remained deeply connected to his military roots. He initially joined the East Midlands branch of the British Nuclear Test Veterans Association (BNTVA) and later became a member of the national association following its merger. Known for his extensive knowledge of military history and his time in service, Eddie was always ready to share his experiences. He proudly joined then-chairman Nigel Heaps at a BNTVA art exhibition on the Isle of Man, continuing to raise awareness of the legacy of nuclear testing.

Eddie will be remembered for his service, his stories, and his unwavering dedication to both his country and his family.



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 **07884 187 800**

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.

Dates for Your Diary



National Service of Remembrance 2025

Cenotaph, Whitehall, London.



Nuclear Veterans Convention 2026

Hilton Hotel East Midlands Airport – See page 04 for details and how to book. More details of the event will be in the next Issue.



All Tests Reunion 2026

Pontins, Sand Bay, Weston-Super-Mare
The adult-only reunion brings together Veterans and their families for a week-long holiday.

The actual date has not been announced yet but visit **www.labrats.international** to stay updated

Important

Contacting the NCCF & BNTVA Museum has changed



The old way of contacting the NCCF and BNTVA Museum has changed. Please read on for further information on how to make contact by phone using our new number.

In May Microsoft officially retired the Skype Application to shift their users to use Microsoft Teams as the primary means of communication and collaboration.

As a result old NCCF telephone number **01158 883 442** no longer functions. If you do call this number you will be met with a message that says the number is incorrect.

We have a dedicated mobile number for the primary means of communication going forwards. This will give us the flexibility to take calls away from the office.

Please note

If you do call and we are unable to answer your call please leave your name, number and nature of your enquiry and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

We receive a high volume of scam calls

Updated Contact Information

By Telephone

If you wish to contact the NCCF or BNTVA Museum by telephone please call the new number:

07884 187 800

By Email

If you wish to contact the NCCF or BNTVA Museum by telephone please call:

NCCF: **office@thencf.org**

Exposure Magazine: **editor@exposure.press**

BNTVA Museum: **office@bntva.museum**

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exposure

The combined magazine for the nuclear community

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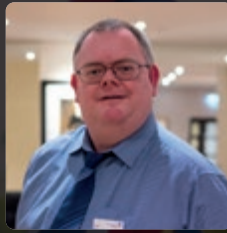
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