



# COMBAT STRESS **new**

90<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary  
1919-2009

They fight our wars. We fight their battles. **Hollybush House** Autumn 2009

## Scotland Success

It's been quite a year for Combat Stress, not just in Scotland where Hollybush House goes from strength to strength but across the UK as the Charity celebrated its 90th anniversary.

In May there were two services of commemoration, celebration and thanksgiving and both were attended by large numbers of our Veterans, friends and supporters. The first took place in Westminster Abbey on 12 May and we were delighted that our Patron His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales attended with his wife Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Cornwall who met Veterans afterwards in the Great Hall.

Two days later it was Scotland's turn with a similar service in St Giles' Cathedral where a superb sermon was given by the Very Reverend Dr James Harkness, a good friend of our activities in Scotland. The Combat Stress Standard was carried by Welfare Officer Jim Lawrence accompanied by Veterans Jason Wallace and Jock Hingston and readings were given by Commodore Toby Elliott and Roseanna Finlay from the Welfare Service at Hollybush. Afterwards there was a reception at The Signet Library. We were delighted to see so many of our friends and supporters attending both events. Hollybush House closed up for the day to board a bus (funded by the Scottish Veterans Fund) to travel from Hollybush to Edinburgh and even with the refreshments at the reception, they still found room to stop at Harry Ramsden's on the way home for fish suppers all round.

It was entirely appropriate that the service in St Giles should have coincided with the welcome news that the Scottish Government has agreed to fund our activities in Scotland to the tune of £2.8 million over a two year period. This will help improve access to our services at Hollybush but while it is a generous



and timely gesture, we can't relax as the funding still leaves us with a shortfall in meeting all the costs associated with this work.

As ever, we could have done very little without the efforts of the members of the Hollybush House Committee. They put in a huge amount of unsung work behind the scenes and the result has been a busy programme of events which not only raises money for Combat Stress but helps to keep us in the public eye. Amongst the highlights this year was an engrossing performance of *Voices of War* in the Mitchell Library in Glasgow on Friday 27 March when an enthusiastic audience was entertained to an evening of poetry and music presented by a group of first-class performers under the direction of committee member Anne Brown. The themes reflected our work and reinforced what we are trying to achieve.

August came round and with it another prestigious Hollybush House Lecture in the College of Surgeons in Edinburgh. Over the past few years we have set a very high standard and this year's guest lecturer, the distinguished military historian Max Arthur, did not disappoint. As the author of the bestselling *Forgotten Voices of War* series of books, he needed little introduction and his audience

in Edinburgh on 25 August was treated to a thought-provoking talk based on a lifetime spent interviewing Veterans of the two world wars, including Harry Patch, the last surviving veteran of the First World War who died during the summer.

Hollybush House continued to attract a number of visitors including Annabel Goldie, leader of the Scottish Conservative Party, Liam Fox, Shadow Defence Secretary, and Alec Fergusson, the Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament. It was good to see them and many others because our hardworking and loyal staff at Hollybush remain our best advertisement. Despite all the publicity we have had this year we still have to push home the message that, at a time when our forces are stretched in Afghanistan, Combat Stress still has its work cut out and will continue to do so for many years to come.

Finally, we said farewell to Commodore Toby Elliott our CEO for the past eleven years and it was entirely apposite that this erstwhile submariner should have bowed out at Hollybush House where the staff presented him with a suitably engraved Quaich.

**Trevor Royle**  
Chairman Hollybush House  
Committee

Lockerbie revisited  
pg 2

A labour of love  
pg 3

Fundraising news  
pg 4

# Lockerbie Revisited

Knowing that personnel can rely on their fellow Service men and women in times of crisis is central to life in the Armed Forces. For those who battle with trauma long after discharge, such support can be equally important in the process of recovery.

One of the main benefits reported by our Veterans is the peer support they gain from fellow Veterans who have been through similar experiences. This is what sets treatment offered by Combat Stress apart from that provided by the NHS.

With this in mind, staff at Hollybush House undertook a unique group programme based on exposure work for Veterans who had been involved in the aftermath of the Lockerbie bombing of 1988. Exposure work involves returning to the site of the trauma, and with clinical support, in a controlled environment, facing one's fears and experiencing what it is like to cope.

Seven Veterans, five from the Army and two from the RAF, chose to participate in the programme. All had been attending Combat Stress for an average of two years, and the age of the Veterans ranged from 39 years to 45 years.

the week-long programme. Due to the large-scale operations that immediately followed the Lockerbie bombing, the Veterans had been engaged in different geographical locations. So first, the Veterans identified the areas they wished to return to and a local guide from the Lockerbie Garden of Remembrance organisation agreed to facilitate the trip.

All seven Veterans made the return journey, despite their initial anxieties, and were taken to the places they related to most in order for emotional processing to take place. Lengthy periods of time were spent at each location to ensure they could identify it correctly, view it in the present time, and reduce anxieties. Veterans chose to lay tributes – a small cross with a poppy and a personal written message – at significant locations.

The trip allowed for reflection on the disaster of 1988 and the effect

## Supporting Each Other

Immediately following the trip, the Veterans were given time to begin to process the information they had gathered. *They chose to spend time together*, discussing their individual thoughts and feelings related to the trip. By now, they had all formed a bond and were engaging well with each other. All the Veterans reported positive aspects of participating in the week-long programme. An evaluation form was completed, which involved the Veterans rating each of the individual activities on a “not helpful” through to “very helpful” scale. Five out of the seven clients rated the return visit to Lockerbie as “very helpful” and individual comments on the forms summing up the experience included:

*“Glad I took part, could never have done it on my own, and am now looking forward to the future.”*

*“A bit hard at first to take in but as the week progressed it got better. After the visit it was a relief. It was very eye opening for me and I took advantage of the help I got as I would never have returned on my own”.*

Staff at the treatment centre followed on the work by facilitating a weekend away on the Isle of Arran during which the focus on teamwork and general socialisation continued.

At present, staff are about to facilitate a further five-day programme to establish the progress made by each Veteran. Obviously the recent coverage of Lockerbie has led to heightened emotion, but one Veteran has already commented that without doing the work he would have been overwhelmed by current media interest. Another has commented on how positive he feels, and self-reports that he now has different images of Lockerbie in his head.

We will continue to monitor progress and provide treatment and support to all those who participated.

**Fiona Manson**  
Charge Nurse, Hollybush House.

“A bit hard at first to take in but as the week progressed it got better. After the visit it was a relief. It was very eye opening for me and I took advantage of the help I got as I would never have returned on my own.”



## Preparing for the Journey

This was the first time that a group had focused on a specific area of trauma whilst at Hollybush House. Staff felt that by concentrating on Lockerbie, and by having all Veterans initially *in residence* for a one-week programme, significant work could be implemented with a view to facilitating a therapeutic shift. The residential setting helped the group to gel and support each other from the outset. To prepare psychologically, they were then able to look at past and present media footage – identifying concerns and expectations – ahead of the return to Lockerbie itself.

The trip back to the site (some 70 miles away from Hollybush House) was made half way through

it had on many walks of life – 21 years down the road. Time was spent chatting to a resident who could remember the disaster, and could talk of how life had moved on. Veterans were also able to see present-day Lockerbie as a bustling village. One individual had great difficulty identifying where he had been, and initially found the experience over-whelming. With the support of a Veteran who had been with him at the time of the disaster, he was able to begin to make sense of the environment. Peer support and humour was used throughout the day, with trained staff only intervening when necessary.

The day ended with the laying of a wreath at the Garden of Remembrance. One Veteran made an unplanned speech about moving forward.

“Glad I took part, could never have done it on my own, and am now looking forward to the future.”

# A labour of love

Combat Stress supporters, Rhona and Sandy Gibson (Care Workers at an independent care provider based at Thorntoun Estate), have for the past five years, along with many colleagues and friends, raised much needed funds for Hollybush House.

They are often asked why Hollybush is the beneficiary of their efforts; after all, there are so many worthy causes they could help, so why this one?

It really all started when Rhona noticed an advert for a Remembrance Concert to be held in Ayr Town Hall. She, and her elderly mother-in-law Tillie, found it to be a very moving yet enjoyable evening and were keen to find out more about the work of Hollybush House.

Each year the Thorntoun Estate Care Home held a Summer Fête and the decision was taken by the staff themselves that the money raised should go to Hollybush. The fête itself was a resounding success, raising £3,000 on a scorching hot day in 2005. The total had exceeded all previous efforts – an indication of the strength of goodwill locally towards Hollybush House. In addition to the fêtes, people came up with other ideas to raise money.

Over the past five years, Rhona took every opportunity available to her to spread the word about the sterling work carried out at Hollybush. People were encouraged to speak up at the various organisations and clubs that they belonged to and seek support of any kind for Combat Stress. The effects of this were like a pebble cast into a pond, waves rippled outwards, spreading the news and bringing more and more people on board. Who says that patriotism is dead? People just need to know what can be done to help those men and women who have served our country to the best of their ability and very often, above and beyond the call of duty.

In 2007, the Thorntoun supporters wanted to make it three in a row. The efforts started with the Prize Bingo, the fête was five days



later and two weeks later a dance. The grand total in 2007 was £5,200.

The day did have a sad note to it as it was the first time Tillie was not there to cajole everyone into parting with their money. Sadly she passed away, aged 80, in May 2007. At her funeral an amazing £850 was raised for Combat Stress.

Fêtes continued to be organised in 2008, opened by the Provost of East Ayrshire, Councillor Stephanie Young, who spoke of the marvellous work done at Hollybush. A supper dance held a week later brought the total up to £3,750, and the fête held in 2009 raised £3,100 – which brings the total raised to over **£17,000** in five years.

Supporting Hollybush House is no longer a gesture, it is a commitment. Every penny counts.

Rhona and Sandy are so very proud of the generous, unselfish and hard-working friends they have at Thorntoun who have put so much effort into raising much needed cash to support the work of Hollybush House. We in return are very proud and grateful for the amazing support we have had from Rhona, Sandy and their friends and colleagues!

**Thankyou!**

## Gardening Leave

Gardening Leave marked yet another milestone last month when 'A Company' The Royal Highland Fusiliers came to Auchincruive to help clear the border in front of the Stovehouse. This work will prepare the site for the arrival of the glaziers who will shortly be removing all the glass to begin the Stovehouse Repair Project.

This was the first visit by serving personnel to Gardening Leave and Anna Baker Cresswell, Gardening Leave's founder, said "It was a very proud day for me to welcome tomorrow's Veterans to Gardening Leave where they can meet and engage with today's Veterans in the safe and peaceful surroundings which Gardening Leave provides. I hope it is the



first of many visits by the RHF and others."

August was a busy month for Gardening Leave as the show garden designed and built from scratch by Veterans from Hollybush House won a Silver Medal and the Provost's Cup at Ayr Flower Show. A great achievement, and testament to the skill and resourcefulness of Veterans as they were competing against professional landscape gardeners.

## More ways you can help

It's a lot easier than you may think and could enable you to make a significant difference to many Veterans' lives.

### Giving a regular donation

If you would like to donate a regular amount, please tick this box and we will send you a Direct Debit form.

### Do you want to remember Combat Stress in your Will?

If you would like to receive a legacy pack, please tick this box and we will send you our new pack.

### Do you know someone who could benefit from our help?

Please tick this box if you would like us to send you our welfare information pack.

### Can you organise an event?

Would you like to help us through organising a fundraising event? Please tick the box and we'll send you our fundraising pack.

Please tick this box if you give your donation in memory of someone.

Please tick this box if you would prefer not to receive information from other charities with whom we work.

### Don't forget to fill in your name and address overleaf.

Please return this completed coupon to:

**The Director of Fundraising & Communications  
Hollybush House  
Hollybush by Ayr  
Ayrshire  
KA6 7EA**

“Thank you for being here for us, it is so nice to know that someone cares about us.”

Hollybush Veteran

# Your gift to a Veteran

Combat Stress is dedicated to helping those men and women who have suffered injury to the mind as a result of their military service. Through our network of welfare officers, we visit clients at home to see how best we can help. Through our three centres, we provide rehabilitative treatment to help them cope with their disabilities and to enjoy a better quality of life.

Name

Address

Postcode

Telephone

Email

I am happy to receive emails from Combat Stress.

To make a donation over the phone please call

**01372 841619**

**I wish to help ex-Servicemen and women suffering from combat stress. Please find enclosed my donation of £\_\_\_\_\_**  
**I enclose a cheque/postal order/CAF voucher made payable to Combat Stress.**

**OR please debit my:**  
**Credit/Debit/CAF Card** (delete as appropriate)

Card No \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

Expiry Date \_\_\_\_\_

Security Code \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
 (last 3 digits of the number on the signature strip)

(for Maestro only)

Start Date \_\_\_\_\_ Issue No \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Cardholder's name (if different from above)

To save money, please tick here if you don't want to receive a thank-you acknowledgement.

## giftaid your donation

If you are a UK tax payer (and remember pensions are taxed too) we can reclaim the tax you have already paid on the money you give to help our work. For every £1.00 you donate we are able to claim an additional 28 pence from the Inland Revenue. This could mean an extra £50,000 a year to help our Veterans.

**Simply tick the box below.**

Yes, I am a UK tax payer and wish Combat Stress to reclaim the tax on all donations I have made since 06/04/03 until I notify them otherwise.

The Inland Revenue have asked us to remind you that you must pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax we reclaim on your donations in the tax year.

You must complete the name and address box above for us to reclaim your tax.

Please return this completed coupon to:

**The Director of Fundraising & Communications**  
**Hollybush House, Hollybush by Ayr,**  
**Ayrshire KA6 7EA**

# Fundraising news



**East Ayrshire**  
COUNCIL

**Friday, 6 November 2009, 7.15pm**

The Scottish (90th) Remembrance Concert takes place at The

Grand Hall, Kilmarnock, by kind permission of The Provost of East Ayrshire Council and will follow the style of the Royal Albert Hall Festival. Music will be provided by a variety of performers including Dunaskin Doon Band, Ayrshire Youth Voices and Ayr Pipe Band. Excerpts from our highly successful production, "Voices of War" will also be included, starring Una Ailsa McNab and Rob Matheson. Tickets cost £5.00 (discounts for groups of 5 or more; schoolchildren free) and are available from Christine Steel at Hollybush House on 01292 561313 or from the Box Office at the Grand Hall on 01563 554900.



## HILLBILLY BIKERS

A young Army Veteran, Rab Hall, heard about Combat Stress and suggested to the Mauchline based "Hillbillies" Bikers Club that they may like to undertake some fundraising for Combat Stress – in his words: "You wouldn't leave your Oppo behind in the field, so don't leave him behind in Civvy Street". He then encouraged the members to turn up en masse at Hollybush House to see first hand the work that went on and to hand over a cheque – more than £1,000 was raised and we would like to thank everyone involved in this fundraising activity.



## CHEQUE HANDOVER AT CASTLE

In groundbreaking tradition, the RHF (2nd Battalion Royal Regiment of Scotland) decided to adopt Hollybush House as its main Service Charity, for support by all ranks. This has led to increased contact between the two organisations; for example, a team travelled over to Hollybush and briefed staff on operations in Afghanistan. The Medical Officer also established contact and ran a Health Day including the highlighting of mental health issues – both during and after Army Service. More recently, troops from A Company helped at Gardening Leave and in early September marched 77 miles across Scotland along the Forth and Clyde and Union canals, winding up at Edinburgh Castle where a cheque for £2,500 was presented to Clive Fairweather.



## HOLLYBUSH FÊTE

Highland Dancing, tombola stalls, "Beat The Goalie" and Coconut Shy were just some of the stalls and activities at the Annual Hollybush Fête. The sun shone, the crowds came and a fantastic £3,776.75 was raised. A Big Thank You to everyone involved.



## PAPER MONEY

Employees at the UPM Caledonian Paper Mill are encouraged to nominate the charities they raise funds for. One of the employees is a good friend of the Hollybush Minibus Driver and encouraged his fellow workers to nominate Combat Stress when they charity ballot came round again. Since June 1994, the employees have been encouraged to donate £1.00 (or more) from their monthly salaries with the company matching the money raised. So far, over 150 charities have benefitted from the scheme. Garry Walker was delighted to go down to the Mill where he was presented with a cheque for £3,000.

**COMBAT STRESS** *news* 90th Anniversary 1919-2009

They fight our wars. We fight their battles.

Editor **Charlotte French** 01372 841621  
 Director of Fundraising & Communications  
**Robert Marsh** 01372 841615  
 Email [fundraising@combatstress.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@combatstress.org.uk)  
 Website [www.combatstress.org.uk](http://www.combatstress.org.uk)

Published by  
**Combat Stress**  
 Tyrwhitt House, Oaklawn Road,  
 Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 0BX  
 Tel 01372 841600 Fax 01372 841693

Registered Charity  
 England and Wales No 206002  
 Scotland No SC 038828