

World War tales are told

A volunteer champion's six-year quest to reveal local stories of World War II has finally come to fruition

CHESTERFIELD author and Volunteer Centre manager David Radford's new book, 'Through Their Eyes', brings together moving and vivid personal accounts from contributors on how the conflict affected their lives. Its publication this month coincides with Remembrance events.

All proceeds from the book, which is available in digital and paperback print formats, go straight into the Volunteer Centre's Befriending Programme, which offers companionship and support to socially isolated people aged over 50.

David joined Chesterfield Volunteer Centre in 1996, taking over its management 14 years ago having saved it from closure and secured enough funds to enable its survival.

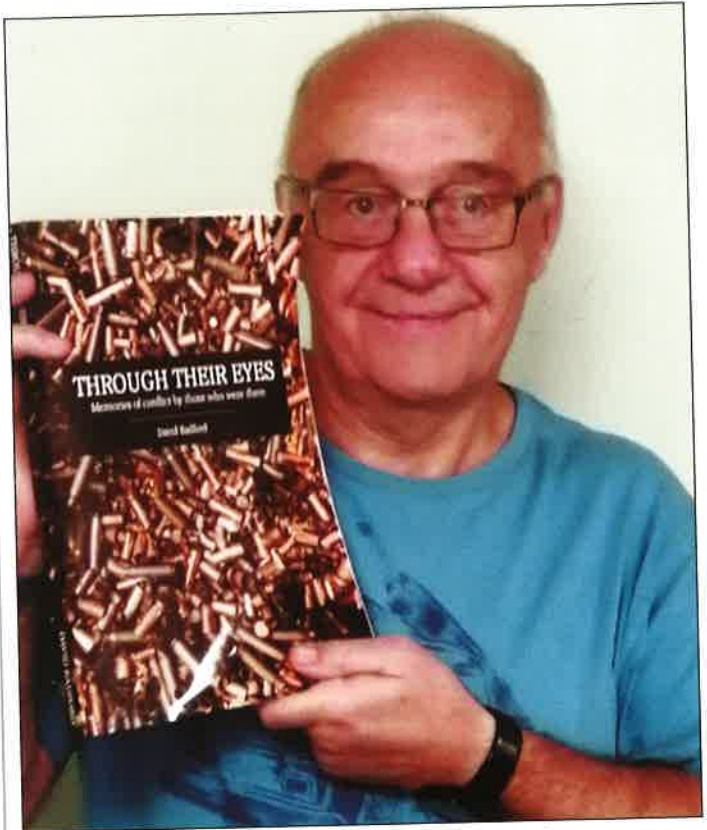
He has since raised more than £2m worth of funding for NE Derbyshire's volunteer sector and instigated the annual Volunteer Sector Awards. Services provided by volunteers are deemed more important than ever due to the pandemic.

Once the book project had been commissioned and funded by the Ministry of Defence, David – who undertook all the research and conducted dozens of interviews – had to overcome a series of problems to complete it. These included two spells in hospital requiring long convalescence periods.

David said: "I was starting to think the whole thing was jinxed but it's done now and I feel it's important because it represents more than just memories.

"When I started this, I had no idea quite what a humbling experience it would be. Everyone I spoke to thought they had no right to be in the book because they didn't think they'd contributed anything to the nation's war effort. But that's about as far from the truth as it is possible to get. War affects us all.

"These are the hidden war stories that marked the world and defined an entire generation. They are just as real as official accounts or personal diaries from the front line, but they are not always heard. It's so important to capture them before they disappear forever".



David Radford with his new publication

The book includes archive pictures from contributors and library sources with cover design by Magnus Shaw of MKS Creative, a Chesterfield-based web design company and a long-term supporter of the Volunteer Centre.

Prices vary according to format with the A4 size 365-page glossy paperback retailing at £20. The book is available direct from Chesterfield Volunteer Centre at 38 Knifesmithgate, Chesterfield, or online at: throughtheireyes.website

Could you care for trees in Chesterfield?

GREEN-minded residents are being invited to get involved in a new volunteer scheme to help care for the borough's trees.

From suggesting new areas for planting to caring for young trees, Chesterfield Borough Council's new Tree Wardens will play a valuable role in their communities.

There is no weekly time commitment for volunteers to take part in the scheme. Tree Wardens will be able to access seven modules of training and there will be opportunities to learn more by working with other tree warden groups.

Coun Jill Mannion-Brunt, cabinet member for health and wellbeing, said: "Trees are a crucial part of our environment for so many different reasons, and we're lucky in Chesterfield that we already have a substantial number of well-established trees and wooded areas. We know our green spaces are valued by people from across our borough and we'd like to work more closely with residents to help protect and improve these areas.

"Our wardens will act as the eyes and ears on the ground that help us prioritise where our services are needed.

"I know lots of people locally care deeply about the environment and this is a great chance to take an active role in improving our communities. Even if you can only spare a little bit of time each



year please get in touch and find out more about this worthwhile volunteer opportunity."

The work supports the council's Climate Change Action Plan and the target for Chesterfield Borough Council to plant at least 1,000 trees each year. Last year this target was exceeded, with 3,000 new trees being planted in the borough, with more planned for the current planting season.

You can find out how to become a tree warden by emailing greenspaces@chesterfield.gov.uk.