

## "Welcome back lads"

For a group of Falklands War Veterans, many whom Combat Stress has supported for many years, the opportunity to return to the Falkland Islands on a 25th Anniversary Pilgrimage this last November has proved to be an outstanding success.

he Pilgrimage was organised jointly by Combat Stress and the South Atlantic Medal Association, aided by a large grant from the Big Lottery Fund, and with funding topped up by the Service Benevolent Funds. In all 250 people took part in this event, most of whom were Veterans nearly all on their first visit back to the islands since the war, and included a number of dependents of those service men killed during the war, and ten staff from Combat Stress, mainly clinicians lead by Dr Walter Busuttil, our new Director of Medical Services. This was a trip to remember.

Much of the success can be attributed to the generosity of our hosts, the Falkland Islanders, who took the Veterans into their own homes and made absolutely certain that everyone realised how much they appreciated the sacrifices that had been made by members of the Task Force of all three services. The organisation worked like clockwork, and in the six days from arrival to departure our hosts made sure that we were well looked after. A whole range of activities were laid on from receptions given by the Falkland Islanders and by the Governor through memorial services held at the War Cemeteries to many of the many memorial cairns dotted around the Islands marking the sites of the battles and where people had fallen. Survivors from the ships that were sunk during the war were able to lay wreaths over the wrecks, and to visit memorials set up on the coast closest to where their ships had gone down. In Port Stanley services and parades took place over the Remembrance Sunday weekend.

But for most it was the opportunity to return to the battlefields, as individuals and in unit groups that was to prove the strongest attraction and the greatest help to them all. Walking the battlefields of Goose Green and Wireless Ridge with 2 Para Veterans, Mount Longdon with 3 Para, Tumbledown with the Scots Guards, with the Welsh Guards when they gathered at Fitzroy to remember the 32 Welsh Guardsmen killed when RFA Sir Galahad was bombed, visiting the site of the field hospital at Ajax Bay, and with the Royal Marines at Two Sisters and Mount Harriet, Mount Kent and finally to look back over the vast sweeps of the roughest terrain over which units had "yomped" and "tabbed" on their long marches into battle these were all profoundly moving moments for the Veterans, the dependents and those who went with them. The Falkland Islanders, many of whom who have suffered psychological problems since the war, also gained great comfort from this Pilgrimage, of that there can be no doubt.

Did we take a risk by taking these Veterans back to face up to what for many of them remained a bad memory which still caused them considerable pain and grief? Yes, for some this was undoubtedly the case, but it was carefully thought through, and a strong supporting team was sent down to look after them. Did it work? Yes, we are certain that most of the Pilgrims who went came back much better for the experience – "I feel like a new man" said one, another who defined his visit to the



Prince Charles took over as Patron of Combat Stress in 2003 on the death of his grandmother. He takes a very keen interest in the work of the charity sending the following message to Toby Elliott on the eve of departure of the Pilgrimage:

"As Patron of both SAMA '82 and of Combat Stress I take great pride in all of you. I have the greatest sympathy and concern for those of you who have found the going hard since you came home and my heart goes out to all the family members who are joining you on this momentous occasion. I offer you all my warmest good wishes and blessings as you start out on your long journey and I look forward to hearing of your tales and experiences on your return".

We were delighted that Prince Charles was able to find time in his very busy diary to visit us at Combat Stress in December, spending time with nurses, therapists, staff and of course Veterans even joining them making poppies for use on Remembrance Sunday next year.

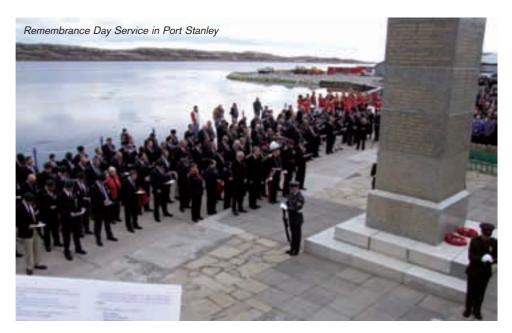
site where his best friend was killed defined it as "a turning point in my life." So was it a success? Yes, we think and pray so. And of course, for all those who went, and those who were deemed not well enough to go, Combat Stress is still there, standing ready to provide comfort and support to those who continue to need it.



TOBY ELLIOTT Chief Executive

# Return to the Fa

Tony Chesterson recently returned to the Falklands as part of a trip organised for Veterans by Combat Stress to mark the 25 anniversary of the conflict. Here, he tells his story to Combat Stress News and explains how the trip has changed his life.





joined the navy at 16 as a marine engineer. I was 18 in 1982 when the Task Force set sail for the South Atlantic. HMS Ardent, a type 21 frigate, was my first ship and my main duties were machine maintenance. On D-Day, 21 May, our job was to protect the thousands of marines taking part in the land invasion by drawing fire from the Argentinean Air Force. HMS Antrim, a destroyer, had the same role alongside us. With the usual forces black humour, we referred to ourselves as 'canon fodder'.

Just after midnight we headed into Falkland Sound at a flat-out speed of 32 knots, hoping and praying that the Argentineans had not laid mines. It was 10am when we started coming under attack. The jets came in every 30 minutes and there must have been 15 or 16 attacks on us without any hits. Meanwhile, we were using our big guns to target the Argentine forces on land. For me, and most of the men on board, it was our first experience of real battle conditions. After each attack I was checking for damage under the flight deck, looking for any oil and fuel leaks.

#### I COULD HEAR SCREAMING

At 5.30pm I was ordered to move down to the engine room to relieve colleagues there. By then it was starting to get dark and we expected the air attacks to stop. That's when we were finally hit. I must have been lifted 3ft off the ground by the explosion. The noise was horrendous. I could hear screaming and the sound of metal tearing open.

Once the Argentineans saw the smoke coming from us they kept coming back, determined to finish

us off. The second wave of bombs (each one with at least 500lbs of explosives) hit us in five or six places. By then we had lost communication with the rest of the ship and I was tying to get to the higher decks. The hangar roof had gone below the flight deck and was just a tangled mess of metal. There was so much smoke it was difficult to see how many of us had been wounded or killed. HMS Yarmouth came alongside us and we started to evacuate the ship. Later I learnt that under the flight deck, where I had spent most of the day, several of my shipmates had lost their lives.

That whole day I had only glimpsed the land for a minute. I had been so close to death and never saw what we were even fighting for.

Eventually, the survivors were transferred to the QE2, being used as a troop carrier, and I began my journey home. It took two days to verify who had been killed or wounded. In all we had lost 22 men.

#### IN CIVILIAN LIFE IT FELT QUITE DIFFERENT

I stayed in the Navy until 1987 and toured the world. It wasn't until I left and went into civilian life that my problems began.

I was working at a Hotpoint factory in North Wales when I began drinking heavily. While I remained in the Navy, surrounded by other sailors, my memories of the Falklands had not troubled me. But in civilian life it felt quite different. Although people had rightly heard of HMS Coventry, Sheffield and Antelope, hardly anyone seemed to recall the fate of HMS Ardent. Sometimes it made me just want to punch people on the nose!

Fortunately, I was sent to the Royal Navy Hospital in Portsmouth where I was diagnosed with Post

# **Iklands**

Traumatic Stress Disorder. I had treatment there and was okay for the next 17 years during which I married, had two children and started my own business as a refrigeration engineer.

#### PEACE, QUIET AND SPACE

It was in 2003, after I'd been working for Honda that the problems returned. I'd developed repetitive strain injury and arthritis in my elbows but my bosses were not sympathetic. The stress and stain of the situation led to a recurrence of the PTS and I started taking antidepressants. I had a SSAFA caseworker who put me in touch with Combat Stress for the first time. I went to Tyrwhitt House where I had therapy sessions to help me cope with the depression. Being able to talk to others in the same situation was a help too but most of all it gave me peace, quiet and some space away from everyday life to reflect on what I needed to do to regain my mental balance. Since that first visit I've been back several times to recharge myself when stress has brought back the PTS symptoms of depression.

#### **NO LONGER BITTER**

I had thought about returning to the Falklands for years but it was only when I heard about the Combat Stress trip that the opportunity became real. I'd always felt bitter that I hadn't seen what we had

been sent to fight for and that the sacrifice of my shipmates was hardly recognised by most people. There were 64 Veterans on the journey along with relatives and staff from Combat Stress. When we got to Port Stanley what made the biggest impression on me was the enormous gratitude shown by the islanders. It was the same in every community we visited. They would just come up to me and give me a hug. They really understood what we had done for them and wanted to show their appreciation.

The landscape itself was also stunning. I'd finally seen the land we had lost our friends and comrades for a quarter of a century earlier.

We held a memorial service in Falkland Sound and I held a Standard for HMS Ardent. It was a very emotional moment for all of us there but afterwards the overwhelming feeling was one of relief rather than sadness. I began to feel different about what had happened to me. I was no longer bitter. I understood why we had come here and why my friends had been killed. We may have lost 22 lives but our efforts had allowed 3.500 marines to reach the beaches safely and begin the recapture of the island. Since I returned home I've been reading everything I can lay my hands on about the conflict. It doesn't upset me, it helps me to make more sense of what happened to me.

I can't thank Combat Stress enough for giving the chance to return to the Falkland Islands.



### **Financial Facts and** Figures for the year ended 31 March 2007

A net increase in funds of £2,732,000 was an exceptionally good position on which to end the financial year under review. However, £1,103,000 related to the Hollybush House capital project, and £727,000 resulted from the sale of the Hollybush House Walled Garden, both of which will be used to finance the Hollybush House project in the next financial year.

#### **INCOMING RESOURCES**

The Society raised funds in six major areas.

Fundraising (including special appeals)	£2,538
Legacies	£791
Service Charity Income	£990
Investments	£318
Charitable activities	£3,352
Net disposal of fixed assets	£727

Income from the Veterans Agency to fund the cost of treatment and travel for qualifying war pensioners was £3.1 million.

#### **RESOURCES EXPENDED**

No of active Veterans registered	3,422
No of new referrals in 2007	996
Net increase in active Veterans registered	55

#### **Residential Treatment**

No of treatment centres	3
No of admissions for treatment	2,522
Days of treatment delivered	25,573
Percentage occupancy	85.4%
Cost of Treatment	£4,587,000

#### Welfare Services

No of Regional Welfare Officers	13
No of visits made to all Veterans	5,194
Cost of Welfare Service	£1,212,000

#### Incoming Resources £8,721,000

Clinical & welfare services	38.4%
Donations and events	29.1%
Legacies	9.1%
Service Charities	11.4%
Investment income	3.6%
Disposal of fixed assets	8.3%
Other	0.1%

#### Resources Expended £6,556,000

70.0%
18.5%
8.4%
3.0%

## **Society News**

At the Annual General Meeting in September, **AIR VICE MARSHAL NIGEL BALDWIN** stood down as Chairman of the trustees after ten years. We also said farewell to **DENNIS BAILEY** who became a member in 1991 and served out his last years as Vice Chairman. In their places we welcome **MAJOR GENERAL PETER CURRIE** and **MR ROBERT BIEBER**.



We also bade farewell to trustee JANE DE HALPERT and welcomed CHRISTINE STERBA and AIR COMMODORE OLIVER DELANY to the management board.

#### fundraising news

## **Fundraising News**



2007 was a very busy year for the Fundraising Department, and a number of staff changes took place there. In August **ROSIE GIBBONS** our Volunteer Co-ordinator moved on to other pastures, and in her place we welcomed **KELITA GROOM**. Kelita was no stranger to the Fundraising Department as she had been working in the Donor Development Team since 2004. As Combat Stress' profile rises, more and more individuals are offering to fundraise

for Combat Stress and in October **ANGHARAD HUGHES** (known as Harry) joined Kelita as her assistant. So if any of you are thinking of undertaking some fundraising for Combat Stress, now you will know who you are talking to!

### Hollybush House Opening – Monday 13 October 2007

As the grey Ayrshire dawn lifted Veterans and staff had already breakfasted and were anxiously eyeing the heavy clouds rolling in from the Atlantic. Dressed to kill (including one splendid scarlet Chelsea hospital tunic), it was still ages until any of the official guests arrived, that old military adage being proved yet again – "Hurry To Wait!"

Meanwhile behind the scenes, more than the usual management scurry was well under way. Deep down in the kitchens a posse of white clad chefs were beavering away, anything that looked like moving was being hoovered with a vengeance. Further up the drive Wee Tommy and his merrymen were resplendent in their fluorescent vests and busy blowing up balloons to hang up on the entrance gates. (All that was needed was for Anneka Rice to arrive in her flashy helicopter!) Then enter the Royal Marines buglers and drummers complete with pith helmets, followed by a braw big piper, son of one of the clients, followed by the cameras of the BBC and microphones of the local radio station. Not a moment too soon, before the first official guest arrived and was eased into one of the car parks; soon this became a steady stream, with those last to arrive somehow being shoe horned in; by mid day the House was full to the brim with many dignitaries from Ayrshire and across Scotland, including the Lord Lieutenant, Flag Officer Scotland and Northern



Ireland, General Officer Commanding 2 Division and many others, including donors and architects/ contractors, just too many to mention here. Present too was the rain, however, and by the skin of our plastic rain hats and after more than four years preparation for this moment, precisely at 12.15, the official opening ceremony finally took place with MAJOR **GENERAL DAVID MCDOWALL MBE** unveiling the commemorative plaque (the Adjutant General having been weathered off). The new Annex looked absolutely spiffing, so too did the new Activity Centre, courtesy of the generosity of the Linburn Trust. A new era has dawned for Hollybush thanks to the efforts of literally thousands and thousands of well-wishers and helpers. Very humbling too - the cheques continued to flow on the day and subsequently, all of which will allow Garry Walker and his clinical team to go on extending the range of new initiatives aimed at bettering the lives of some very needy ex Service men and women.

#### **CLIVE FAIRWEATHER**

Appeal Director, Scotland

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## 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 Veterans 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	

 $\hfill\square$  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-Service men 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	



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  $\pounds1.00$  you donate we are able to claim an additional 28 pence from the Inland Revenue. This could mean an extra  $\pounds50,000$  a year to help our clients.

#### 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 06/04/01 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.

#### 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.

#### 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.

## 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.

#### **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.
- 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, Combat Stress, Tyrwhitt House, Oaklawn Road, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 0BX

#### London's Affordable Art Fair Wednesday 12th – Sunday 16th March

Battersea Park's Affordable Art Fair is an art-buying opportunity not to be



missed. Everything is under £3,000 and the fair's friendly environment invites first time buyers to browse amongst the thousands of paintings, original prints, photography and sculpture, whilst seasoned collectors can seek out exciting new artists.

We will receive ALL the profits from tickets sold by Combat Stress for the private viewing on Wednesday 12th March 5.30-9.30pm. Tickets are priced at £20 each. Please complete the form and send with payment to Angharad Hughes at Combat Stress.

I would like to purchase Tickets for the Affordable Art Fair

I enclose my cheque for £ made payable to Combat Stress

Fmail

Please debit my credit/debit card for

£		
Card No		
Expiry Date	Security Code	
Start Date	Issue No	
Name		
Address		
	Postcode	
Telephone		

#### fundraising **news**

## **Diary dates**

For more details of all the events listed please ring 01372 841621 or see our website www.combatstress.org.uk

#### Saturday, 23 February 2008

Grand Military Ball at the Imperial War Museum in aid of Help for Heroes and Combat Stress. Tickets at £180 are available from Captain JM Salt on 07817 524851 or email him at gmb@helpforheroes.ord.uk

#### Wednesday, 12 March 2008

The Affordable Art Fair at Battersea Park Events Arena 12-16 March. There will be a private view on the first day with proceeds going to Combat Stress – to book tickets please see coupon on this page.

#### Sunday, 13 April 2008

The Annual Flora London Marathon will take place in Central London. If you have been fortunate enough to be offered a place in the ballot, why not join the Combat Stress running team or come along and support our runners along the course. A post race party for runners and their supporters will be held (details to be confirmed). For more information please contact Kelita Groom.

#### Friday, 2 May 2008

Voices of War; Readings of War Poetry, together with a reception and buffet supper will take place at the Town and County Hall in Aberdeen. This is a repeat of the very successful evening held at Bowhill Theatre in 2007. For more information, please contact Charlotte French on 01372 841621.

#### Wednesday, 4 June 2008

Dinner in the Elizabethan Mood, at Drapers Hall. A gala dinner to celebrate the 450 anniversary of Elizabeth I ascending the throne. The evening will be an all round Elizabethan experience in one of the most impressive Livery Halls in London. Guests will be entertained throughout the evening by minstrels, jugglers and jesters. There will also be the opportunity to bid for a number of fabulous lots in the Auction. Combat Stress is most grateful to the Master of the Drapers Company for this wonderful opportunity to dine in Elizabethan splendour. For more information, contact the Fundraising Office on 01372 841615.

#### Sunday, 6 July 2008

British 10K London Run. The route begins on Piccadilly at Hyde Park Corner and ends near the Cenotaph on Whitehall. Join the Combat Stress running team, or support our runners along the route. For more details, please contact Kelita Groom, alternatively, visit www.thebritish10klondon.co.uk.

#### **Battle Proms Concerts**

A celebration of classical music with cannons, cavalry and fireworks will take place in the summer. For more details or to book tickets call 01432 355416 or visit www.battleproms.com and mention Combat Stress for a discount on the ticket price.

- Saturday 12 July 2008 Burghley House
- Saturday 19 July 2008 Blenheim Palace
- Saturday 26 July
  Hatfield House
- Saturday 2 August
  Highclere Castle
- Saturday 9 August Borde Hill Garden
- Saturday 23 August Althorp Park

Bring a picnic, sit back and enjoy the unforgettable sound and spectacle of 193 live cannons with a firework finale. Combat Stress will have a stand and will be collecting at each event. If you would like to volunteer your help with one or more collections, please contact Kelita Groom on 01372 841616.

#### Tuesday, 19 August 2008

The Edinburgh Lecture will take place at The Royal College of Surgeons, in Edinburgh. Speaker still to be confirmed. For more information contact Charlotte French on 01372 841621

#### Friday, 5 September 2008

Clay Pigeon Shoot at Royal Berkshire Shooting Ground, Pangbourne, Berkshire. Teams of 4 are invited to come along. It is hoped that there will be teams from the Army, RAF, Navy and Merchant Navy participating. For more information contact Robert Marsh on 01372 841615.

#### Wednesday, 5 November 2008

Annual Armistice Lecture at RUSI, with guest speaker Professor Richard Holmes. Tickets at £25 are available from Charlotte French on 01372 841621.

#### Wednesday, 10 December 2008

Festival of Lessons and Carols at The Royal Hospital, Chelsea. Further details to be confirmed in due course, please contact Charlotte French on 01372 841621.

## **Fundraising news**



#### LOSING WEIGHT FOR COMBAT STRESS

When MAJOR CHRIS MILLETT. 2nd in Command 4 General Support Medical Regiment, Aldershot returned to the UK from a tour of duty in Afghanistan, he was two stone lighter. Speaking to Combat Stress News he said 'Although the chefs produced some excellent food, I was out of condition at the start of the tour, so I decided to hit the gym instead of the hot-plate and see how much weight I could loose'. Chris decided to use the high summer temperatures of 44 degrees to help his endeavour and raise some money for Combat Stress'. During the sixth month tour, he pushed weights and jogged around the camp nearly every day and managed to shed 14 kg (or a shade over two stone in old weight!) raising £200 from donations from friends and family.



#### HAMISH AND WENDY RENTON

celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary in December. They marked the occasion by holding a lunch for friends and families and requested no presents, but donations to Combat Stress. Money is still coming in but to date £1,630.00 has been received.



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## In the 2007 Winter Newsletter, we suggested

that our donors organise a fundraising lunch to celebrate Veterans Day on 27 June. A number of you rose to the challenge and over £1,400 was raised. Pictured is SUE LEITHEAD'S party which she held in July at which she raised £300.00 alone.

#### **PRIVATE DINNER**

Host A Roast

In November, TONY AND AMANDA **RAYBONE** friends of our recent Chairman, AIR VICE MARSHALL NIGEL BALDWIN,

most generously gave a dinner on behalf of Combat Stress at Kingscote Barn near Tetbury in Gloucestershire. **KATE ADIE** joined



some 120 guests and regaled the company in her inimitable way. Nearly £4,000 was raised for the charity.

#### JOINT HELICOPERT COMMAND

Every year the units that make up the Joint Helicopter Command (JHC) join fundraising forces for a common charity. In 2007 Combat Stress was the chosen charity. The events undertaken by the units ranged from Family Fun Days, sponsored 24 hour walks, charity collections at football matches, sponsored road tanker pulls, and a job swap day. COMMODORE TOBY ELLIOTT is pictured accepting a cheque for £11,275, from MAJOR GENERAL GARY COWARD. Commander of JHC and LT CDR TIM BOUGHTON who coordinated the JHC fundraising activities advised us in January that there is still some more money to come!



#### **PASSCHENDAELE WALK** Volunteer MIKE

**GARNETT** celebrated the 90th Anniversary of the Battle of Ypres by walking the 20 mile area dressed in an



authentic WWI uniform and raising £2,726.23 for Combat Stress. He plans to repeat this feat with more walkers in August 2008. Anyone interested in supporting Mike should contact Kelita Groom on 01372 841616.



#### **BATTLE PROMS**

In 2007 members of the fundraising department, trustees and volunteers collected at all five Battle Proms concerts and raised the fantastic sum of £15,000. A big thankyou to everyone who gave up their time (a number have already asked to do it again in 2008) or put money in the buckets. ADAM AND CAROLINE SLOUGH, the organisers of the successful Battle Proms concerts have once again invited Combat Stress to collect at SIX concerts and if you would like to volunteer to help with the collections, then please contact Kelita Groom on 01372 841616.

#### Thankyous must also go to...

NICK HARRISON who organised a party with speaker JOHN PETERS a former RAF pilot whose tornado bomber was shot down during the first Iraq War. The event was advertised on the social networking site, Facebook and raised £5,840.00 for Combat Stress.

LANCE CORPORAL DODD AND MEMBERS OF THE FIRST QUEENS DRAGOON GUARDS who completed the Cardiff Half Marathon, for Combat Stress and BLESMA and raising over £400 for us.

#### MATTHEW AND CLAIRE BURGESS

from RAF Benson who took part in a Dragon Boat Race and raised £433.00

ANNE URQUHART who held a raffle at a Hogmanay Party and raised £450.00.

KAREN CARGEN AND FAMILY who took part in a skydive in memory of Karen's son Sgt Peter Thorpe and raised an incredible £2,323.70.

ELLY HOPKINS a university student who put on a production of the play Motortown, which talks about the issues of PTSD and raised £56.00 from after performance collections.

NEIL WOODARD who took part in the BUPA Great South Run in October and raised £729.00 through sponsorship.

JOHNATHON MORGAN who organised a fundraising dinner to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the Falklands War and raised over £850.00.

#### **GENERAL DYNAMICS AND FINERTY**

BRICE who chose to donate to charity rather than send out Corporate Christmas Cards and we were delighted to receive donations of £2,500 and £300 respectively.