



## PRESS RELEASE

### HEROES AT HIGHCLERE CELEBRATES THE CENTENARY OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR WITH ALEXANDRA BURKE, ELIZABETH MCGOVERN, CELEBRITY FOOTBALL MATCH & SPITFIRE.

To commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the First World War, the Earl and Countess of Carnarvon are marking the occasion on **Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2014**, at Highclere Castle (*home to the hit international ITV show Downton Abbey*) with a special one day event.

Heroes at Highclere will be supporting and raising money for **The Royal British Legion, ABF The Soldiers Charity, Combat Stress, Oxfam** as well as other smaller charities. Lady Carnarvon felt it was important for a variety of charities as well as countries to have a presence on the day – *“We hope as a result of this day at Highclere, to make a positive contribution to the lives of those in the war zones today, to help them in their struggles to cope with what they have suffered and to demonstrate our support for them.”*

Heroes at Highclere will start at 11am with a special church service led by Archbishop **Lord Carey** accompanied by the **Military Wives Choir** on the main ‘Viking River Cruises’ sponsored stage. The main stage will have a variety of musical acts throughout the day with Downton Abbey fans seeing one of the stars of the show **Elizabeth McGovern** (*also known as Lady Cora the head of the Crawley family*) rock away with her band ‘**Sadie and the Hot Heads**’, Elizabeth said “I am thrilled to have been invited to participate in Heroes at Highclere. Not only will we honour the men who have fought for our country, but men who have served other countries as well. In addition, it will be a rare merging of Cora, Countess of Grantham, with Sadie and her Hotheads.” Headlining the stage will be superstar and X Factor winner **Alexandra Burke**, Alexandra said *“I am honoured to be able to support our armed forces at Heroes at Highclere. I commend Lord and Lady Carnarvon on the great things that they are doing and I cannot wait to be a part of this important day.”*

Thrilling aerial displays begin with the **Red Devils**. A fly-pass by the **DeHavilland Tiger 9**, followed by **The Great War Team** re-enacting dog fights, the iconic **Spitfire** will grace the skies with a **Mustang** and **B17** following close behind.



The '**Bayer**' sponsored arena will have a **celebrity football** match made up of 'veterans' or retired footballers, with some players from the Bayer Leverkusen team, currently playing in the Bundesliga, the top tier of the German football league system, **Bayer Leverkusen are the former UEFA Cup winners** as well as regulars in the **Champions League**. **Their opponents** will be an **England All Stars Team**. Lord and Lady Carnarvon wanted to recreate the famous "Christmas truce" of 1914, where German and English troops played a friendly game in the 'no-mans land' of the battlefields, Lady Carnarvon said "*Heroes at Highclere is about 'unity' and there is no better way to show this than by the power of football bringing everyone together*".

Visitors will be able to step back in time with over 200 re-enactors in period costumes creating a '**living history village**', the Castle Ha-Ha will be turned into a trench, there will be field kitchens, and Second World War military police will be patrolling the grounds. In the music tent **West Berkshire Brewery** will be serving traditional ales using war time recipes, and an additional music and dance area will host performances from the **Spitfire Sisters, Newbury Rock Choir** and **20's music and dance lessons** taking place all day.

A wide range of speakers have been booked for the 'Speakers Tent' –**Kate Adie the renowned BBC war correspondent** will be talking about her book '**Fighting On The Home Front: The Legacy of Women In World War One**'. Lady Carnarvon will tell the history of the 5<sup>th</sup> Countess, the subject of her first book '**Lady Almina and the Real Downton Abbey**' and how she transformed Highclere Castle into a hospital during the First World War. There will be speakers throughout the day covering a variety of topics a full list will be available on the Highclere Castle website.

Heroes at Highclere will be a fantastic family day, with **vintage fairground rides, themed catering** and a **shopping village**. **Hot Air Balloons** will be giving tethered flights. And to help raise more money for the charities a **live online auction** which will open 2 weeks before the event will have an array of out of this world prizes. Visitors will have the opportunity to meet current serving RAF pilots and see static displays from a **Chinook, Lynx and Apache**. Over **40 vintage and military vehicles** and **100 motorbikes** from the **Royal British Legion Riders Branch** will frame the event area. Children will be able to pedal in **miniature Spitfires** and **Lancaster planes, ride simulators**, battle through an **assault course**, brave the **mini parachute jump** and fly on **zip lines**.



**NOTES TO EDITORS:**

Tickets are available to book now at [www.highclerecastle.co.uk](http://www.highclerecastle.co.uk)

<b>ADVANCE BOOKINGS</b>				
<b>Ticket Category</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>Armed Forces, Emergency Services &amp; NHS *</b>	<b>Child **</b>	<b>Family ***</b>
<b>Charity Event, NO CASTLE ACCESS</b>	£25	£20	£10	£60
<b>ON THE DAY TICKETS</b>				
<b>Ticket Category</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>Armed Forces, Emergency Services &amp; NHS *</b>	<b>Child **</b>	<b>Family ***</b>
<b>Charity Event, NO CASTLE ACCESS</b>	£30	£25	£15	£75

\*Armed Forces, Emergency Services, & NHS: To benefit from this discount you must bring ID stating your employment by one of the above with you on the day of your visit. This discount is available for this event exclusively and is not available for our normal public opening.

\*\*Child: Tickets are available for those aged 4-16 years. Children under 4years may enter free of charge and do not need to book a ticket.

\*\*\*Family: Available for families of 2 adults and 2 or 3 children\*\* (as per definition above).

Gates Open at 10am with the main event running from 11am – 7pm.

Those who are unable to attend the event, will have the opportunity to watch the event streamed online in exchange for a small donation. Details will appear soon on the Highclere Castle website.

Highclere Castle is the home of the 8<sup>th</sup> Earl and Countess of Carnarvon and has been in the family since 1679. Built on an ancient site, the original house was recorded in the Domesday Book. Highclere is also the famous setting of ITV's award winning period drama Downton Abbey, with Dame Maggie Smith and Hugh Bonneville leading the cast in the series created by Oscar winning writer Lord Julian Fellowes.



Highclere Castle is one of England's most beautiful Victorian castles, the estate has been part of the Carnarvon family since the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. While rich in treasure and steeped in history, it retains the warmth of a much-loved family home.

**FACTS:**

- Highclere Castle is open to the public for over 60 days every year.
- Over 1,200 visitors come to Highclere Castle on each open day.
- The Highclere estate is over 6000 acres in size of which there is 1000 acres of parkland.
- Lady Carnarvon is the bestselling author to 'Lady Almina and the Real Downton Abbey' as well as her latest title 'Lady Catherine and the Real Downton Abbey', published by Hodder & Stoughton and Random House USA.
- During the First World War Highclere Castle was turned into a hospital for wounded soldiers by Lady Almina the 5<sup>th</sup> Countess of Carnarvon.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Earl of Carnarvon along with Howard Carter discovered the tomb of Tutankhamun in November 1922.
- Three B17 planes crashed on the Highclere Castle estate during the Second World War and all but one of the American pilots survived.

For interviews, images and more information on Highclere Castle please contact: Candice Bauval [cbauval@highclerecastle.co.uk](mailto:cbauval@highclerecastle.co.uk) or Tel: 01635 250 449

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**CHARITY INFORMATION:**

**Combat Stress** is the UK's leading military charity they have supported almost 100,000 Veterans since being founded in 1919.

At the moment, Combat Stress is working with over 4,800 Veterans - more than at any time in their long history. This includes 589 who served in Iraq and 228 who have served in Afghanistan. The youngest Veteran is just 19 years old. Demand for their services is rising: 1,443 Veterans contacted Combat Stress for help in the financial year 2010-2011.



For more information about Combat Stress, visit [www.combatstress.org.uk](http://www.combatstress.org.uk) alternatively, please contact: Nicola Hudson on T: 01372 587 168 E: [nicola.hudson@combatstress.org.uk](mailto:nicola.hudson@combatstress.org.uk)

Combat Stress, also known as the Ex-Services Mental Welfare Society, Registered Charity 206002; Registered Charity in Scotland SC038828; Company Ltd by guarantee: 256353.

**ABF The Soldiers' Charity** - the Army's national charity since 1944 - supports thousands of soldiers, former soldiers and their families each year. The charity makes financial grants to individuals in times of need and specialist charities supporting the wider Army family. The need for support continues to grow.

The Soldiers' Charity aims to make grant payments within 48 hours of receiving an application, often making a significant difference at a critical point in people's lives. The average grant made by the Charity is around £760 and helps to provide practical assistance including home adaptations, mobility assistance, education and training, respite care, furnishings and equipment.

For more information about ABF The Soldiers Charity visit [www.soldierscharity.org](http://www.soldierscharity.org). Alternatively, please contact: Stephen Grogan Head of National Events T. 0845 5046 349 E. [sgrogan@Soldierscharity.org](mailto:sgrogan@Soldierscharity.org)

Like us on Facebook at [facebook.com/soldierscharity](https://facebook.com/soldierscharity) and follow us on Twitter: @soldierscharity

**The Royal British Legion** – Shoulder to shoulder with all who Serve - The Royal British Legion has been helping Service people past and present for 90 years, and although their needs have changed over that time the need for our work is as vital as ever. We spend nearly £1.4 million a week carrying out our support services, and our services are flexible and wide-ranging. From helping a young widow through an inquest to ensuring that an older veteran can stay independent in their own home, we're here to help.

We are also one of the country's largest membership organisations, with about 370,000 members nationwide, and a further 11,000 overseas. We welcome men and women of all ages, whether or not they have served in the Armed Forces.

For more information about The Royal British Legion visit [www.britishlegion.org.uk](http://www.britishlegion.org.uk) alternatively, please contact: Clare Peppiatt Community Fundraiser, Hampshire and The Isle of Wight T: 023 80 477 274 E: [cpeppiatt@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto:cpeppiatt@britishlegion.org.uk)



**Oxfam** is a global humanitarian, development and campaigning organisation working with others to overcome poverty and suffering. Since its Oxford-based beginnings in 1942, it has grown into a worldwide force. Oxfam is now working in nearly 60 countries on a diverse range of projects, from providing emergency water sources to supporting community health projects.

Oxfam has one million supporters in the UK. For every £1 donated to its general funds, 84p is spent on emergency, development and campaigning work, 9p is spent on support and governance and 7p is invested to generate future income. Oxfam has nearly 700 high street shops across the UK selling donated fashion, books, music, home wares and new ethical products. It is supported by a workforce of 22,000 volunteers. Oxfam also launched the UK's first online charity shop in 2007.

Oxfam GB is affiliated to Oxfam International, a global confederation of 17 independent affiliates' committed overcoming poverty and suffering.

For more information about Oxfam please contact Thomas Winslow | Head of Programme Funding | Oxfam GB Oxfam House | John Smith Drive | Oxford OX4 2JY | United Kingdom  
Tel +44-1865-472043 | [TWinslow@oxfam.org.uk](mailto:TWinslow@oxfam.org.uk) | [www.oxfam.org.uk](http://www.oxfam.org.uk)