

# THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF ST. GEORGE

## GLOUCESTERSHIRE BRANCH



NOVEMBER 2017

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**Patron: Dame Janet Trotter, D.B.E., Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant for Gloucestershire**

**President:** Councillor Pam Tracey, M.B.E.

**Vice Presidents:** The Rt. Hon. Lord Cope of Berkeley, P.C.; Mr. Mike Smith

**Chairman:** Mrs. Pat Ayres, M.B.E.

### *From Pat, your Chair:*

Being in the middle of Remembrance (I am a poppy area organiser as well as a branch Standard Bearer) it is difficult to think of Christmas. Sadly (because I realise I am another year older – boohoo) it is just around the corner again and certain shops are displaying all the festive goodies. As this is the last newsletter before Christmas I must send my sincerest good wishes to you all, dear members, and my grateful thanks for your support during the year attending our events. Next year, our branch's 40<sup>th</sup>, we have even more to enjoy and take part in as Margaret will list elsewhere - I am already excited!

We were well represented at Stephen Wright's memorial service held in Tetbury. I know Margaret will say something about him as she had the good fortune of working with him when he was the Chair. To me he was a lovely English gentleman with that wonderful velvet voice.

As an organisation we have challenges with membership, as have many organisations nationally and countywide. As a branch we must take some lead and hopefully next year, being our 40<sup>th</sup> year, we can open doors and windows to the general public and show our fellow countrymen and women who we are and what we do. We are proud of our heritage and we are working to preserve it - St. George for England.

*We can do no great things,  
We can do small things with great love  
(Mother Teresa)*

A Blessed and Warm Christmas dear members and hope to see as many of you as possible at the New Year Lunch in January,  
Pat

### *From Margaret, your Secretary:*

#### **STEPHEN WRIGHT, MBE**

It is very sad to have to mention the passing of Stephen on 6 October. He was our Chair from 2010 until he stood down in 2015 when he became ill. He bore that illness with great courage, pragmatism and even good humour.

I first met Stephen when he joined this Branch. He was a lovely man to work with - kind, appreciative, helpful, always smiling and everyone recalls his beautiful voice. He will be keenly missed by not only Rachel, his sons and their families, to whom we extend our deepest sympathy, but by all who had the good fortune to meet him – or win a jar of his marmalade in a raffle!

The high regard in which he was held was clear from the packed Church for his Service and the words spoken by his family and a small number of his many friends.

When I told our Head Office of his passing, I received immediate responses from Joanna Cadman, our National Chairman, all of whom remarked on his kindness and ability to make them laugh during his regular emails and telephone conversations. Joanna asked me to write an Obituary for the National Journal, and I do hope I have done Stephen justice.

During the last months of his illness he was organising a fundraising event in order to improve facilities at his beloved St. Mary's Church at Beverston, where he and Rachel were married. Unfortunately he was unable to see it happen but his friend, Vernon Harwood, took up the baton and on Friday, 1 December, in this Norman Church, there will be a special evening of Gloucestershire poetry, music and entertainment in memory of Stephen.

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#### *Contact Information:*

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Full details are on the enclosed flyer and I hope that some of our members will support the event. As you will see, Eric Freeman is one of those taking part. The Branch has made a donation to the Church in memory of Stephen.

The Church is just off the A4135 to the west of Tetbury. Ignore the small wooden sign pointing down a muddy track to the church. Instead take the made road to the castle which also takes you to the church. I understand arrangements are being made for adequate parking for the evening. I have been asked to emphasise **PLEASE TAKE A TORCH!**

### MEMBERSHIP:

I am delighted that we can say WELCOME to more new members –  
Ceri and Sheila Evans of Newnham,  
William and Mary Mathers of Leckhampton,  
Albert Rixon of Huntley  
and Terence Wright of Cirencester.

### REMINISCENCES:

I recently spent an interesting hour or so with Rhoda Bamford, who was Branch Chairman from 1984 to 1992. She gave me some photographs (and promised more!) and a few documents from the early years.

Rhoda also told me several things I did not know, including that the Branch provided rose beds at various County sites, including two at the Sue Ryder Hospice, Leckhampton. Most of the older Branch records and minutes have been deposited at Gloucestershire Archives and I must spend a day there sometime and see what else I can discover.

I include two photographs from Rhoda. The first shows early Nairac Group Award winners, when it used to be presented at a separate event at EDF Barnwood. The trophy was made by GlosCat after a design competition.



In the second photograph see Rhoda and Mike Smith are planting an oak tree near Over Bridge (unfortunately date unknown):



I hope the tree is prospering!

### CONGRATULATIONS!

Her Majesty The Queen and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh celebrate their 70<sup>th</sup> (Platinum) Wedding Anniversary on 20<sup>th</sup> November – a milestone not many people manage even if they are fortunate enough to live to a good age with good health.

Marriage is a huge commitment undertaken by two people who at the outset are effectively strangers, so it's not surprising that sometimes the experience is bumpy. It must be even bumpier when you live your life in a 'goldfish bowl' and have also made a lifelong commitment to thousands of people outside your family.

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My maternal grandmother was meaning to console my mother, who was upset after a quarrel with my father, when she said “after all, he’s no relation”!

I sent the Royal couple a congratulatory card and took the liberty of signing it on behalf of all the members of RSSG Gloucestershire.

### REMEMBRANCE - NOVEMBER 2017

Wreaths were laid during Remembrance ceremonies at Chaceley (Bernie Swan), Cheltenham (Peter Granville-Edmunds), Gloucester (Pam Tracey), Kemble (Pat Ayres), Lydney (me), Taynton (Eric Freeman), Oxenhall (Colin Thompson), Tewkesbury (Margaret Keeper), Winchcombe (Rosemary Hancock), and Ypres (John Lee at The Menin Gate).

Thank you so much for paying this homage.

Our Chair, Pat, and her husband Brian attended the Annual British Legion Festival of Remembrance at The Royal Albert Hall, as always a very moving occasion. Brian carried the RBL Kemble Branch Standard. I did look for them both on the television but unfortunately didn’t spot either!

John Lee took these photographs in Ypres:



*Wreaths laid at Menin Gate, Ypres – RSSG Gloucestershire wreath front row second left*



*23,000 poppies ‘planted’ behind the Menin Gate*

### ST. GEORGE’S DAY 2018:

Just to remind you again – no apologies for nagging – if you have a nomination for the Nairac Awards please let me or any committee member have details as soon as possible. We are looking for individuals or groups under the age of 18 and living in Gloucestershire who have demonstrated determination, courage and selflessness, similar to the qualities epitomised by Captain Nairac, G.C., in whose memory these Awards are named.

Some of the organisations we have invited to our Service in the past are no longer able to attend due to their branches folding, the increasing age of their members, etc. If you have contact details for an organisation or individuals you think should be invited, please let me have them soon. I will be sending invitations to those on our mailing list around the end of January.

I will send ticket application forms to members with a January newsletter. Please help facilitate seating planning by sending your application back by the requested date.

Next year we will be (even more) strictly enforcing a ticket only admittance to the Reception, to ensure comfort and safety. Despite our best efforts in the past the number physically present at the Reception somehow

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always creeps up beyond the number of tickets issued or taken at the door.

A rise in catering costs this year (the first for some years) means that we have to increase the price of a Reception ticket to £8 from £7. This decision was taken with a heavy heart because we wish as many members as possible to be there. However, those of you who attend the AGM and/or see our annual accounts will know that the Service and the Reception always produce a deficit. Whilst the Branch absorbs this it would be happier to have a smaller deficit in future!

#### **EVENTS:**

We had a lovely, well attended social evening at Witcombe on 14 October with an excellent fish and chip supper. Jim Wilkie of Dustbin Films brought along some salvaged gems from the past – a particular scene of a farmer fuelling his tractor with a jerry can whilst smoking a cigarette reminded us why the Health & Safety pendulum has swung so far!

Our next event is the New Year Lunch at Bowden Hall, Upton St. Leonards, on Sunday, 14 January 2018 – yes, it really is nearly 2018. It seems only yesterday we were all worrying about the Millennium Bug! We have arranged a three course lunch with tea/coffee for £21 per person. Bar opens at 12 noon and lunch will be served from 12.30pm. The menu is enclosed and, with Christmas intervening, I need to confirm numbers and menus with Bowden Hall quite early so please **let me have your bookings by NO LATER than Friday, 22 December.**

#### ***To come:***

**Saturday, 3 March 2018** – an afternoon with Daphne Neville and her otter Rudi at Frampton Mansell Village Hall, near Stroud  
**Monday, 23 April 2018** – 40<sup>th</sup> St. George's Day Service in Gloucester Cathedral  
**Wednesday, 20 June** (provisional date) – Branch AGM

**Summer 2018** – Garden Party

**End September/early October 2018** – Formal Dinner in the Sergeant's Mess at Imjin Barracks to mark the Branch's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – date and details to be confirmed.

We are also trying to add at least one other interesting event in 2018.

#### *Reminders:*

If you would like tickets for the Garter Ceremony at Windsor Castle on Monday, 18 June 2018, please let me know. Whilst I now have enough for the usual allocation of 10 places (provided we are successful in the ballot), I will also keep a 'waiting list' in case someone has to drop out.

The Branch holds a small stock of regalia and what we don't have in stock we can order from Head Office for you. Please contact me (Margaret) if there is an item you wish to purchase.

#### *Last but not least:*

I send you all my own best wishes for a Happy Christmas and, above all, a Very Healthy New Year. The committee thanks you very much for your support during 2017 and we hope to see you often during 2018.

If you have a story for a future newsletter, comments on anything in this one or something you would like to share with other members, then do let me know.

If you receive this newsletter by post but are happy to receive it by email in future, then tell me at [rsgglos@woodbro.plus.com](mailto:rsgglos@woodbro.plus.com)

This newsletter and up to date information on events, etc., will be on the Branch website:

**[www.rsgglooucestershire.co.uk](http://www.rsgglooucestershire.co.uk)**

**All Branch contact details are at the foot of this newsletter.**

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