

BIG DIG BEGINS



Y Services Memorial Plot at the NMA

After many months of designing, planning, negotiating and lots of waiting, work on the refurbishment of the Y Services Memorial Garden finally got underway on 14 June 2021. Full story page 2



Contents:

2. Y Services Memorial Garden Refurbishment
3. Branch Chairman's Message
3. Membership
3. Fundraising
3. Summer Gathering
4. Housing for Veterans
4. NI Contributions
4. WSFDC Closure
5. Re-Dedication Ceremony
6. Poets Corner



□ Refurbishment of the Y Services Memorial Plot at the NMA

Over four years ago, your Branch Committee discussed the best way to keep the Y Services Memorial Plot at the NMA looking neat and tidy. The Y Services plot was one of the first memorials at the NMA and this was largely due to the drive and enthusiasm of June Nicholls (RIP) a former ATS operator at Bletchley Park. Since then, Branch members and members of the JSSU(V) have provided working parties to weed the Y shaped gravel footpath, clean and care for the benches and generally look after the plot. Other tasks, including mowing the grass and trimming the hedges, were completed by NMA staff. More recently, Branch member Graham Barber has organized small parties of members to carry out weeding and cleaning tasks. In 2020, the NMA advised all plot owners (that includes our Branch as 'owners' of the site) that from henceforth they would be responsible for all maintenance work. At the same time it had been decided to install a sign at the entrance to the plot (it had otherwise been unnecessarily anonymous). The new sign includes the WRAC hat badge which is not shown on the memorial plaque.

It was also decided to explore the feasibility and costs of replacing the loose gravel pathway and wooden edging on bare earth, with a more permanent and low maintenance surface. Several contract bids later, problems with a builder who withdrew through illness, delays due to Covid-19 and many days of wet weather we found ourselves in March and April 'discussing' terms for cost of the maintenance with the NMA. An agreement for annual maintenance was reached and work began on 14 June 2021. Lichfield based firm D McCarthy Brothers Ltd carried out the work, which was completed on Friday 18 June 2021. The new footpath needs a little tweaking due to an excess of gravel provided by the contractor and this is in hand. Once the grass along the new edging stones pokes its way through the whole appearance of the site will be greatly enhanced.



A big thumbs up from a (heavy) mobility scooter user

**There is still time
To reserve a place to attend
The Re-dedication Ceremony
Email
Branch Secretary John Swann:
Yservices.secretary@rbl.community**

**Before
6 August 2021**



Spreading topsoil and re-seeding the edges

The cost of maintenance up to and including 30 October 2021 has been covered by funds already ringfenced for the purpose. The cost of the footpath refurbishment has been funded from the very successful appeal held in the Spring.

The refurbishment will make the plot much easier to maintain. The future annual cost of maintenance, which is now a Branch responsibility, is something your Branch committee is considering. One idea is to ask as many people as possible to become 'Friends of the Y services Memorial,' a friend being someone who sets up a Standing Order and contributes say £3.00 a month to a ring-fenced maintenance fund. There has already been some interest in this idea. A different option is to set up a separate charity with the possibility of being able to attract GiftAid to further swell this income stream. BUT, this is all still at the thinking stage. More on this in future editions of this Newsletter

Branch Chairman's Message

Despite the pandemic, regular Branch activities are beginning to slot into place. The Summer Gathering in Chippenham in July is organised and plans continue for the re-dedication ceremony of the Y Services Memorial at the NMA. There is still time to get your name on the guest list for this important event and be a witness to a part of our Branch history.

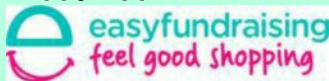
I am delighted to report that our involvement in the [easyfundraising](#) scheme recently topped the £2000 mark. Many thanks to the 85 supporters who have made this happen. All the funds we raise this way go to the Poppy Appeal - very little effort is involved when you buy something online and we benefit from a free donation from the retailer - see our regular advertisement below.

Stay safe and stay well

Jim McDermott

Branch Chairman

Poppy Appeal Fundraising the Easy Way



We continue to raise funds for the Poppy Appeal year round using this really easy system. To register and attract a donation every time you make an online purchase with any of the **thousands** of participating retailers GO TO:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/rblyservices/?invite=1DZNV&referral-campaign=s2s>

Membership

Our current Branch membership stands at 437/8. This approximate total follows a series of admin calamities beyond Branch control which saw several members mistakenly deleted. With a great deal of effort our Branch Membership Secretary Peter Derrick has managed to retrieve the situation and we hope to continue now creeping forward to at least 450 members by the year end. Please do not hesitate to point any potential members from the Y Services world you may know in the direction of Peter on email:

y.services.memsecretary@rbl.community

We currently have
c438
Branch Members

Summer Gathering 2021 – 23-25 July 2021

Full details were made available in the last newsletter and the attendance list is now closed. However if you would like to attend but have not formally applied please contact Branch President Eric Sambell on email: summergathering2021@gmail.com

to see if we can squeeze you in. You can view the May Branch Newsletter at:

<https://garatshay.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/BranchNewsletterMay2021.pdf>

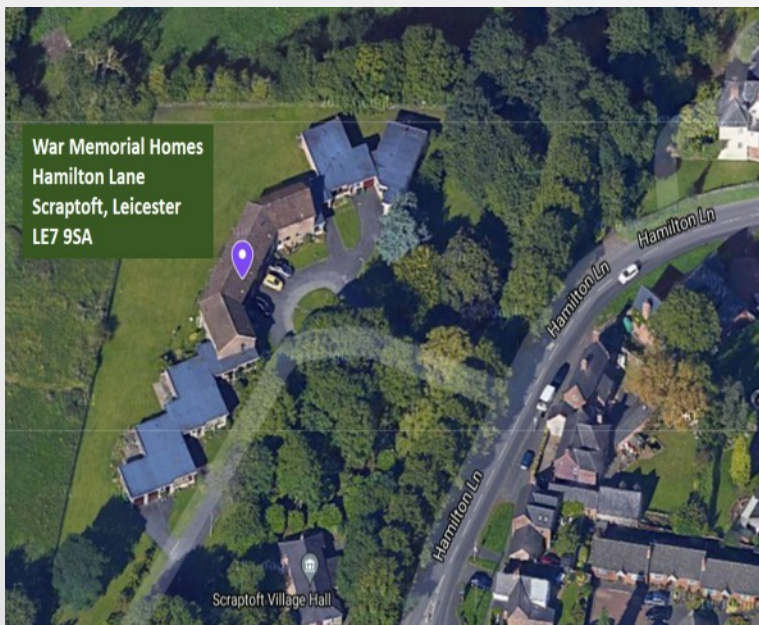
Editorial note:

Contributions to this monthly Branch Newsletter are always welcome on any topics members think will be of general interest. We aim to provide uplifting stories and attempt not to duplicate messages already sent from RBL HQ. Copy should be sent by email to the editor Jim McDermott at jim.mcdermott77@ntlworld.com Preferred format is unformatted MS Word and any photos, cartoons or pictures should be submitted separately as JPEGs.

Charity Offering Accommodation to Disabled Leicestershire Former Service Personnel

Our Branch members get everywhere doing good deeds and changing the world. Branch member Tony Moore is the Secretary of the Leicester & Leicestershire War Memorial Foundation (LLWMF) which provides and maintains 9 homes for War Disabled Pensioners who have served in the Armed Forces. The rent for this accommodation is kept well below market rates; water rates are also paid by the Foundation. The criteria for becoming a beneficiary of the charity are:

- Be from, or closely associated with, the City or County of Leicester (including Rutland). Be from, or closely associated with, the City or County of Leicester (including Rutland)
- Have served in the Armed Forces, Merchant Marine or Civil Defence forces of the Crown and
- Be in receipt of a war pension – or equivalent.



The Homes are the War Memorial for the village of Scraftoft, Leicester and comprise 1 x 1-bedroom flat, 4 x 2-bedroom bungalows, and 4 x 3-bedroom houses.

For further information and an application form for yourself or any eligible veteran you may know please contact **tony Moore** on email: anthonyj.moore@btinternet.com



NI Contributions Relief for Companies who employ veterans

National Insurance contributions relief for employers who hire veterans provides a zero-rate of secondary Class 1 National Insurance contributions on civilian employment after leaving the regular armed forces.

Details

This relief is available from April 2021. From April 2021 to March 2022, employers will need to pay the associated secondary Class 1 National Insurance contributions as normal and then claim it back retrospectively from April 2022 onwards. Source: Published 10 February 2021

Available at: [National Insurance contributions relief for employers who hire veterans - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-insurance-contributions-relief-for-employers-who-hire-veterans)

Branch Artefacts at Welbeck Defence Sixth Form College- The End

The sadly moribund Welbeck Defence Sixth Form College (WDSFC) located where Garats Hay barracks once stood, is now winding down. Branch Chairman Jim McDermott has been in touch with the college to establish the situation with regard to any artefacts they have on their premises which should be returned to our Branch when the college closes. As far as we have been able to determine from staff at WDSFC, there is just one item: a framed banner from a previous Branch Standard. Arrangements have been made for this to be returned to the Branch during July. If anyone has information that there are other items which may have been presented or loaned to the college then please email: y.services.chairman@rbl.community
Thank you.

Re-Dedication of the Services Memorial Garden

*Following the refurbishment of the Y Services Memorial Garden at the National Memorial Arboretum, a Rededication Ceremony is planned for **7 September 2021 commencing at 1415 hours**. All Branch members are cordially invited to attend. This will be one of the few opportunities in recent times for members to meet up and socialize and the event will be an important milestone in the history of the Branch. If you do wish to attend please contact Branch Secretary John Swann on email: y.services.secretary@rbl.community and your name will be added to the list. Please note that the list will close on **Friday 6 August** in order to provide NMA with the final list of attendees in good time before the event. Full "joining instructions" will be provided by email after the list closes. There has already been considerable interest and we will be joined by guests who served in the Y Services Organisation during World War Two as well as those serving now. We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at this important event.*

Poetry in Motion? (After William Wordsworth)

Sergeant Craig Chesterton was an Intelligence Corps Spanish linguist on an emergency tour with JSSU Belize in the late nineteen eighties, running a very isolated detachment at Cooma Cairn, on the top of Mountain Pine Ridge. The sanitary arrangements were almost worse than primitive, with a no-door thunder box outside the compound exposed to the elements and any wildlife. He was surprised, to put it mildly, by a prowling jaguar..... His wife Sarah, also an Intelligence Corps linguist, was away on an emergency tour with JSSU Falkland Islands at the time.

'I'd like to lay to rest a rumour
about the present Laird of Cooma!
He thundered lonely on that box
which nestles high in Cooma's pines
deep in thoughts of Goldilocks
(his better half in Falkland's climes)
and wondered when he'd see improvements
in his lack of bowel movements.
In several visits to the throne
they'd heard the poor chap grunt and groan.
despite his agonies sublime
the only thing that passed was.....time!
White knuckled o'er that hole he strained
our Spanish Linguist (potty trained!)
No Elsan, Sanilav or flushes,
no front door to spare his blushes....
simple wooden walls and seat
above a drop of several feet!



And stretching out before his gaze -
steaming jungle, palm-clad cayes.
On "bog al fresco" there he mused
upon the remedies he'd used
Ex-lax, Andrews and such potions
still did not affect his motions.
Melinda's Sauce and juice of prunes,
Castor Oil – a dozen spoons!
The blockage just could not be shifted
so his daily musings drifted....
as he sat, like Rodin's Thinker
eyes a-bulge, his face much pinker,
a jungle cat slunk into view
in front of him a foot or two.
Then it happened, bless my soul!
His sphincter failed – he lost control
and days of pent-up waste were shed.
The Jaguar (Onca Felis) fled
in mortal terror down the hill.
(For all we know, it's running still!)
Our hero, drained, rose from the can
a frightened, paler, lighter man!
But as he rises, he just cracks –
he hadn't taken down his slacks!

Jobe Belize 1989

