



**Y Services
Memorial
Rededication
Ceremony
7 September 2021
Commemorative
Issue**

Photo courtesy Linda Swann

Y Services Memorial Rededication Ceremony 7 September 2021



The 7th September 2021 proved to be one of the hottest days of the year, so we had no need to revert to our wet weather plan, which was to hold the event in the NMA Chapel. 70 people attended what was a most memorable event in bright sunshine, which helped to produce some great photographs.

This September 2021 edition of the Branch Newsletter is devoted almost entirely to the rededication of the Y Services Memorial and Garden at the National Memorial Arboretum.

Grateful thanks to Les Pickersgill who took over a hundred photographs, a selection of which appear in this edition. All of the photos Les took will be posted on the Branch Website <https://garatshay.org.uk> In early October 2021.

A Branch Calendar for 2022

Here's an idea for a practical Christmas gift - A Branch Calendar, 12 pages obviously, each with a pic appropriate to the month and with some connection to the wonderful world of Y Services. This venture is being organised by Branch Chairman Jim McDermott with all proceeds going to the Poppy Appeal. Cost will be £5.00 plus p&p. Expressions of interest by email to:
jimm26489@gmail.com

If there is sufficient interest, the calendar will be produced and details of how to pay will be notified at end of October. Calendars will be delivered in early December 2021.

Branch and Committee News

A reminder that two members of the Branch Committee are standing down at the November 2021 on completion of their extended period of office, creating two vacancies. If you are interested please contact Branch Secretary John Swann by email:

yservices.secretary@rbl.community for an informal chat. Any Branch member can apply, the duties are not arduous and you will be contributing to what we do and how the Branch is run.

A warm welcome to new Branch member

David Barrow

**Current Branch Membership total is
438**



Our Branch has been raising funds for the Poppy Appeal via easyfundraising for some 3 years now.

The scheme provides a way of raising FREE donations for us every time you shop online. Over 4,000 shops and sites will donate to us when you use easyfundraising to shop with them – at no extra cost to yourself! Why not join the over 80 Branch members who regularly raise donations? You can find our easyfundraising page at https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/rblyservices/?utm_campaign=raise-more&utm_content=en-e1

Rededication of the Y Services Memorial at the NMA Background to the Event.

Over three years ago the Branch Committee noted comments from the NMA RBL Branch that the Y Services site was looking a little untidy. Volunteers, led by branch member Graham Barber, made regular visits to the site to pull up weeds, clean the benches and generally keep the site looking neat and tidy. It was noted around the same time that the site had no entrance sign. The late Joan Nicholls, who was instrumental in setting up the site had left a legacy in her will expressly for the purpose of enhancing the site and this helped to pay for the creation of an engraved stone sign at the entrance to the plot. Attention then turned to enhancing the Y shaped footpath and making it less labour intensive to maintain. An online fundraising campaign raised close on £9,000 and in June 2021 the existing loose gravel on hard earth with wooden sides was ripped out and replaced with solid edging, a deep foundation and a surface of fine gravel rolled into an emulsion. A rededication ceremony was organised by the Branch Committee and this issue of the Brach Newsletter records the event.



Joan Nichols directing operations in 1997



June 2021



Ripping up the old - June 2021

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.

Arrival



John and Linda Swann
with Jim & Linda McDermott
welcome guests



The Rev John and Mrs Bird check in



Attempting the name card
lanyard challenge



Derek and Phyl Hume arrive in style



Art Weaver meets Ian Pears

Setting Up

Branch Vice Chairman Dennis Weir Briefing the troops before the ceremony. Note that the wearing of white straw hats was entirely coincidental.



John Swann,
Dave Lawrence
and Gill Bennett,
discuss the order
of events

Terry Whittles keeps a
watchful eye on proceedings



The Ceremony



**Bandmaster
Antonio Socci,
Royal Regiment
of Fusiliers
Plays 'Fall in'.**



**The Union Flag and
Branch Standard march on parade**



**A warm welcome from
RBL Trustee,
Chairman of the NMA
and Branch member
Lt Col (Retd) David
Whimpenny**



"They shall grow not old"

**Branch President Col
(Retd) Eric Sambell de-
livers the exhortation**



**Branch member and former
Spec Op, the Rev John Bird
who officiated throughout,
leads the singing of the hymn
'Eternal Father Strong to
Save.'**

The Ceremony



Branch Secretary John Swann read the Lesson



Branch Chairman Jim McDermott delivered the Address remembering in particular the late Joan Nicholls.



Mrs Joyce Long (centre in white hat) who worked at Beaumanor Hall during World War Two recited the Y Services prayer



WO1
Gill Bennett, RN,
recited the Royal
Navy prayer

70 people attended the rededication. It was a moving and memorable service of rededication at the Y Services Memorial Garden which has grown from a muddy field into a haven of peace and remembrance.

Front Cover: World War Two veterans Pat Davies and Joyce Long reminisce

The Ceremony



Lt Col Ian Pears,
Royal Signals
recited the
Royal Signals prayer



Lt Col (Retd) Sam Southam,
Intelligence Corps
recited the
Intelligence Corps prayer



Branch Committee member
Linda McDermott
recited the
Royal Air Force prayer



Following the prayer readings the Reverend John Bird recited the Dedication and read out the names of Y Service personnel killed in recent conflicts. Mrs Pat Davies a World War Two WREN who had worked at Bletchley Park and other Y Service sites laid a Royal British Legion wreath on the memorial stone ably supported by WO1 Gill Bennett and Lt Col (Retd) Art Weaver.

Finally Col (Retd) Eric Sambell recited the
Kohima Epitaph:

***"When you go home, tell them of us and say
For your tomorrow we gave our today"***

The bugler sounded "Fall Out" and the Union Flag and Branch Standard marched off.

All those attended were presented with a goody bag as a thank you and to mark the occasion. Key elements of the event were sponsored by members of the Branch Committee. The RBL Y Services Branch is now responsible for the cost of maintaining the Y Services Memorial and funds are needed every year to meet this commitment. Full details of how you can contribute can be found on the Branch website:

<https://garatshay.org.uk>

The Ceremony and after



The goody bags were well received



Time to mingle



Friends reunited



Pete Gilbert and colleague grabbed the last seats

In the News

The day began with an early morning shout out about our event by Sara Cox on the radio and the whole event was televised by ITV for broadcast that same evening.

After the ceremony when everything had been cleared away, your hardworking Branch Committee repaired to a local hostelry to analyse the days events and enjoy a drink or two (at their own expense of course).

Some words about our honoured guests

Mrs Joyce Long who read the Y Services prayer so beautifully was accompanied by two of three proud daughters. Joyce, who served in the ATS and worked at Beaumanor Hall during World War Two, stresses that she was not on the technical side but, as chief clerk, ensured that all the girls were well fed and watered and, most importantly, got paid! While she was at Garats Hay news came through that the war was over. Joyce was selected to go to London to join the Victory parade along with several others from her company. She remembers marching in rows of 12 on Horse Guards Parade and being drilled by a Guards Sgt Major. She attended a service in St. Paul's and that was the first time Joyce saw the Queen for real as she was sitting near the aisle as she walked in. In 1946 Joyce was married to Arthur (an RAF navigator) and so sadly, she says, that was the end of her Army career as they did not have married women then.

Mrs Pat Davies recalls that she was sent to have her understanding of German tested: "I was rather alarmed because I thought maybe I'd have to be a spy and jump out of an airplane or something in Europe. I was very relieved when I went for the Wrens general training. I was trained to intercept German ships' radio communications." Pat said the memory of that time that sticks out most was during the tense hunt for a U-boat that had surfaced to relay communications. After the war and a successful academic career at St Andrews, Yale and Oxford, Pat decided to become a journalist. She worked for the Daily Mail in Manchester where she began her TV career as scriptwriter and then trainee producer at the newly formed Granada TV. She moved to the BBC and produced, University Challenge, the Sky at Night, Ask the Family and coverage of the moon landings.