



Issue 4 - June 2010  
[www.thenma.org.uk](http://www.thenma.org.uk)

# The Memo

The latest news and views from the National Memorial Arboretum Friends



Welcome to the  
summer issue of  
your members'  
magazine

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*Where our Nation remembers*

# Welcome

A very warm welcome to the fourth issue of The Memo, the quarterly magazine for NMA Friends. With the summer season beginning we have a packed edition full of ideas, information and news from the Arboretum.

Memorial Focus looks at two new memorials introduced to the Arboretum - the beautifully carved wren dedicated to SS Aguila in the Wrens Garden and the poignant rededicated Basra Memorial Wall. Our NMA Events update brings you forthcoming highlights for your diary - including Mid-Summer Open Evenings and a week of events to mark Armed Forces Day.

The Friends' first point of contact is this issue's featured case study; Maynard Scott interviews the NMA Friends Membership Secretary and NMA Telephonist Paul Gater. To keep you busy in the kitchen or perhaps that's the dining room...three fabulous recipes can be found on pages 10 and 11, as well as a unique offer for all food lovers on page 12.

In addition, the usual gems are still scattered within the pages, including Wildlife Focus with our resident expert Richard Thorpe and the Friends Update.

The Memo welcomes article submissions from the NMA Friends and if you would like to submit a piece for consideration please do contact me.

Once again, thank you for your continued support!

*Harpreet*

Harpreet Jutlla  
(Marketing & Fundraising Manager)

# NMA Friends magazine, Summer issue

## The Memo - Summer Edition

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# In this edition of The Memo...

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Take a look at the latest products available from the on-site NMA shop

Please let your family, friends and colleagues know all about this unique place in the heart of the country. More information can be found online at [www.thenma.org.uk](http://www.thenma.org.uk)



Where our Nation remembers

# Memorial Focus...

We bring you up-to-date with recently dedicated, and re-dedicated, memorials at the Arboretum.

The SS Aguila Memorial in the Wrens garden: The carved wooden Wren, recently dedicated to the 21 Wrens and one Naval Nursing Sister lost when the SS Aguila was torpedoed on August 19th 1941, was unveiled on Saturday 15th May 2010.

The Wren stands on top of a metre high granite plinth; a glass time capsule is set into the top of the granite recording the names of the 22 lives lost when the SS Aguila sank.

Also recorded is a brief history of the Women's Royal Naval Service and the story of the SS Aguila, the name of which is printed on the reverse side of the scroll.

The Wren was carved by Peter Benson and his dedicated team of Essex Woodcarvers. The bird is carved out of Cedar, several pieces laminated together prior to embarking on the carving.

Sue Elliott, Grounds Administrator comments,

"As an ex-Wren I feel it is a wonderful asset to the Wrens garden, giving a bit of height, and from certain angles she looks as if she is perching on the hedging. Also she is visible from outside the garden which will help to draw people into the area. The carving is very tactile and almost without exception everyone who goes to look at the bird ends up touching and feeling the wood."

Basra Memorial Wall: Recently dedicated on 11 March 2010, the Basra Memorial Wall is a monument to the 178 UK Service personnel and one MoD civilian who lost their lives on combat operations in Iraq and also lists members of Coalition Forces who were killed whilst under UK command during six years of conflict. The wall was built and eventually dismantled by British soldiers



from 37 Armoured Engineer Squadron, a personal gesture to commemorate their fallen comrades.

The original memorial was built in Basra in 2006 and stood outside the front of the Headquarters of the Multi-National Division (South East). It was the focus for a Remembrance Service during the 2008 Poppy Appeal launch and has been dismantled and re-erected at the Arboretum.

Where possible, the new Basra Memorial Wall incorporates elements of the original structure that stood in Iraq. The central marble tablet,

which was blessed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, in the presence of Her Majesty The Queen at a service at St Paul's Cathedral last October commemorating UK operations in Iraq 2003-2009, forms the centrepiece of the wall.

All of the brass plaques which hang on the wall - each one listing a life - are the plaques from the original wall. Unfortunately the bricks used in the original construction cannot withstand the UK weather conditions, so instead they have been used to form the foundations and core of the wall, while the outside has been faced in marble.



## Wildlife Focus...

At long last the weather is warm and the Arboretum is looking as beautiful as ever.



A Wood Mouse

There is a lot of nesting activity going on at the moment - mallards, wrens, swans, pied wagtails and moorhens. We have had a lovely display of snowdrops and daffodils this year and if anyone ventured as far as the confluence of the Rivers Tame and Trent they will have been amazed by the mass of celandines which grow there every spring. This area is now a must for wildlife enthusiasts especially those of you who enjoy bird watching. The shingle banks on the Croxall side of the river are starting to provide extremely attractive habitats for a whole host of different species. Just near here is a sand bank by the pillbox. This sandy cliff area is home to a colony of sand martins that return every year.

It is sad to report that the injured swan discovered during last winter died on the way to the RSPCA headquarters. Since then we have had to call them out again, this time for a greater spotted

woodpecker found injured on the site.

Just to remind you that an evening bat walk is planned sometime in August and a mammal event on October 16th. In addition there will be two half day wildflower courses to be run on July 5th and August 2nd.

The Wildlife Watch group for youngsters keen on nature continues to thrive. We have about 20 regular members and we have had to start a reserve membership list!

A final plea is for you all to grow as many flowers as possible to attract bees. Their numbers have been struggling recently. I think we are doing our bit at the Arboretum with the wildflower meadows we have.

Enjoy the Summer!!

*Richard Thorpe*

## Case Study - Paul Gater...

Maynard Scott reports on the Friends' first point of contact.

With the membership of the NMA Friends now over 700, many of you will have made your first point of contact with Paul Gater our Membership Secretary. So who is this cheerful chappie?

Paul is an ex-Army man. He had a successful career as a physical training instructor with the Royal Signals but soon after returning to civvy street he was working on a building site when a wall collapsed on him. The outcome was a broken back. Paul was devastated when someone told him that he would never walk again but after spending nearly five years in a wheelchair he felt a sensation in his right leg. Unfortunately, his left leg did not respond immediately, but he

reckons that it was the unofficial motto of his old Physical Training squad "Mind over Matter" that eventually helped him to 'will' it into movement. With the help of his physiotherapist, some really hard work and lots of determination he was eventually able to take an enormous step towards regaining his independence.

During his rehabilitation, Paul worked for Remploy, a company which specialises in helping injured service personnel regain full employment. They introduced Paul to the NMA as a telephonist. Paul thoroughly enjoys his work particularly as he speaks to and helps so many people, especially those with a military background.

When the phone lines are not busy Paul can usually be found updating the Friends Membership list and issuing new Membership Cards. As the NMA Friends Membership Secretary, he has a place on the Friends Committee and with this and his full time

job he holds a wealth of information about the Arboretum and its people.

Recently Paul was heavily involved in organising the 'Walk to the Wall' event, which took place on 22nd May. When he expressed disappointment that he was not able to participate himself, a few of us decided that we might sponsor him for a shorter walk within his own capability. Paul therefore walked to the wall after all! For someone who was once told he would never walk again, this was quite an achievement.

In addition to all that, Paul is also a part-time caseworker for the Royal British Legion so what does he do to wind down and relax? Well, he just turns his hand to writing poetry and even a bit of calligraphy.

\*NB. At the time of going to press our inaugural WTW has just taken place and a full report and pictures will appear in our autumn edition of The Memo.



# Around the Arboretum...



At 150 acres, and with over 160 memorials, there is a lot to take in at the NMA. In this feature we will focus on different areas of the Arboretum, providing a fresh insight and helping you plan what to see on your next visit:

## 1. General Post Office Memorial Garden

The General Post Office (GPO), was the predecessor of both the Post Office and British Telecom and at the outbreak of WWII it was the largest employer in the country. With most of the men off to war, women worked on the post and telephone services, carrying out their duties under extreme conditions. The GPO Memorial tells of their courage, and marks the endeavour of the unsung heroes, as well as paying tribute to those who gave their lives in the Armed Forces.

## 2. The Commandos

The memorial was created at Anwick Forge in Lincolnshire and dedicated in the presence of HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, in July 2007. The British Commandos were first formed by the Army in June 1940 during World War II as a well-armed but non-regimental raider force. The memorial consists of a reproduction of part of the Association badge – the

wreath in copper and the Fairbairn-Sykes fighting knife in stainless steel. The Fairbairn-Sykes fighting knife is a double-edged knife with a foil grip developed by William Ewart Fairbairn and Eric Anthony Sykes in Shanghai before World War II. The first batch of knives were produced in January 1941 by Wilkinson Sword Ltd.

## 3. Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS), The Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service (QARNNS) and The Voluntary Aid Detachment (RN)

At the far end of the Royal Naval Review is a charming garden which is dedicated to above mentioned branches of the Royal Navy. The garden has been designed to reflect the blue, red and gold colours of these branches, and also to encourage birds, insects and butterflies. The naval theme continues with pathways laid in the shape of an anchor around rose beds planted with "Wren" roses.

See our feature Memorial Focus for the recent addition to the garden.

## 4. The Merchant Navy Convoy

The Convoy is dedicated to over 46,000 British merchant seafarers and fishermen lost in conflict during the 20th Century, including two World Wars, Falklands, Kuwait, Vietnam, Iran, Iraq and others. In World War II 31,908 seafarers perished, the youngest known casualty was 14 year old Reginald Earnshaw (known as Reggie) who died under enemy fire on board SS North Devon. The 2,535 trees represent the British vessels lost at that time. Many of those lost were civilians who bravely faced the enemy and the sea, to keep the supply lines open to Britain and its allies.



Visit [www.thenma.org.uk](http://www.thenma.org.uk) for a full list of memorials onsite.

# Seasonal Recipes...

We have not one but three seasonal recipes - perfect for a warm summer evening!

The NMA's very own Delia, Lynne Barkas, has kindly supplied her own seasonal recipe for the main course

## Mediterranean potato salad (serves 4)

### Ingredients:

- 500 g/1lb 2oz new potatoes
  - 1 small red onion, thinly sliced
  - 8 cherry tomatoes
  - 8 pitted black olives, halved
  - 85 g/3 oz feta cheese, crumbled
  - 45 ml/3 tbsp chopped parsley
  - 1 clove garlic, crushed
  - 45 ml/3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
  - 15 ml/1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
  - Salt and pepper
  - 30 ml/2 tbsp pine nuts, toasted
1. Cut the potatoes into halves or quarters if they are large. Cook in a pan of lightly salted, boiling water for 15-20 minutes, or until tender.
  2. Add the onion, tomatoes, olives, feta cheese and parsley, tossing well to mix evenly.
  3. Place the garlic, olive oil and balsamic vinegar in a screw top jar and shake well until evenly blended. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
  4. Pour the dressing over the salad and toss lightly to coat the ingredients evenly. Scatter with pine nuts and serve on a bed of salad leaves.



If you have a tried and tested recipe that you would like to share with the NMA Friends, please email [friends@thenma.co.uk](mailto:friends@thenma.co.uk)

You never know, you may be the next Delia or Jamie Oliver!



For dessert, the recipe is by courtesy of Gareth and Esther Howes at the Apple Tree in Barton Marina

## Baked Apple and Roquefort

Take one Russet Apple (Egremont Russet apples are perfect) - Allow one per person

Core and slightly slice the base of the apple for it to stand  
Sprinkle the apple in Demerara sugar  
Loosely wrap in foil and pop in the oven for 30 minutes on 200 degrees Celsius.

Remove from oven, and stuff the apple with Roquefort, then drizzle with Manuka Honey.

Sprinkle with chopped pecan nuts and put back in the oven for a further 5 minutes.

Serve with a glass of Sauternes.

## Elderflower cordial

### Ingredients:

- 25 flower heads
- 2 oz tartaric acid
- 3 pts cooled boiled water
- 4 oranges
- 1 lemon
- 3 lbs sugar

Chop fruit and then put everything together. Leave 48 hrs then strain through a muslin sieve (or something similar) then bottle. It will keep for a year as it is high in sugar. It will need diluting to drink.

# Gourmet Society

A very special offer for fellow foodies!

Once in a while you see an offer which you think is too good to be true! This happened to me three years ago. A flier dropped through the door inviting me to join the Gourmet Society where I could eat in selected good restaurants and pubs for half price, or other offers such as 25% off the whole bill including drinks. I was sceptical, but decided to gamble and join. I think that the gamble paid off. Our membership card arrived together with a handbook listing the participating restaurants and off we set to the City Café in Birmingham, enjoyed a wonderful meal and saved most of the cost of the membership on that first meal! We've used our card around the country and most of the local restaurants listed which suit our palate. In so doing we have saved ourselves a considerable amount of money, and have not been disappointed in any of the meals.

## How does it work?

You simply select the restaurant at which you wish to dine from **The Gourmet Society Directory** Check the exclusive Gourmet Society promotional offer and whether you need to book in advance, if you do, give them a call stating that this is a **Gourmet Society booking**.

When you are seated order whatever food you want from the normal a la carte menu

## Enjoy your meal

Present your membership card to the waiter when asking for the bill

Your bill will be presented to you, minus your Gourmet Society discount

Go home and find the next place in the Directory.

Incredibly the Friends committee have secured a wonderful and generous offer from the Gourmet Society just for 'Friends'. If you visit **www.gourmetsociety.co.uk** then enter the promotional code **3NMA** on the 'become a member' page you can join for just £27.95 instead of the RRP of £53.50. (NB. Offers and availability may vary slightly) I know some of our Friends do not have access to the internet, but that's not a problem. If you telephone 0800 043 1970 you can join over the phone again quoting the promotional code.

And if all that's not enough Gourmet Society members can get discounts off wines, rail travel, ferries, books, hotel accommodation etc....

Eat well and enjoy food!

*Steve Reeves*

# Friends Update...

As usual, the NMA friends have been invaluable in raising both the profile of the Arboretum and funds over the last few months:



## The Ankerside Shopping Centre

The NMA Friends attended and hosted a stall at The Ankerside Shopping Centre in Tamworth raising funds and awareness of the Arboretum.



## Corsets to Camouflage

Women and War, a talk by Kate Adie. The talk held on Saturday 10 April proved a great success.

## Pick 'n' Pay cycle race, South Africa

Cyril Wagstaff took part again in the Cape Argus Pick 'n' Pay cycle race in South Africa. The race is the biggest in the world and is a gruelling 70 miles starting and finishing in Cape Town. Over 35,000 riders started the race and 28,870 completed it. Cyril completed the race in 5 hours 28 minutes and finished in 18,868th position, not bad for a 77 year old! Cyril was sponsored for the race and raised £1,100 for the National Memorial Arboretum.



## Get involved

The NMA Friends are also busy over the coming months raising both profile and funds for the Arboretum at various events. If you would like to be involved please contact David Millington of the Friends Committee for more information or email friends@thenma.org.uk

twitter facebook

## Join us on Facebook and Twitter

These online groups are an ideal way to keep up to date with all the latest news, so look us up and join in today!

*Where our Nation remembers*

# NMA Events Calendar...

Please visit [www.thenma.org.uk](http://www.thenma.org.uk) for full listings or call 01283 792 333. Highlights for the summer include the series of Mid-Summer Open Evenings and a week of events to mark Armed Forces Day.

## SUNDAY 20 JUNE

**Father's Day - bring your dad for a day out to remember!**

**Austin Healey Midlands & National Concours:** Drive in and display of up to 80 classic cars.

## MONDAY 21 JUNE

**Charles II and the Legacy of the Royal Oak:** Presentation by Alan Lewis.

**Midsummer Open Evening:** Enjoy the amazing location outside of our regular opening times and hopefully be rewarded with a wonderful sunset.

**Shakespeare in the Glade:** Alrewas Dramatic Society in association with Alrewas Arts Festival presents excerpts from 'Twelfth Night'.

**The Royal Navy; Today and Tomorrow:** Discover the importance and relevance of the Royal Navy within a modern United Kingdom society.

## WEDNESDAY 23 JUNE -

### 'GOLD STAR SERVICE' DAY

As part of our Armed Forces Week programme, we are offering a memorable Arboretum visit for a nominated member of HM Forces, past or present. So if you know a special person who deserves a unique treat, then nominate them for a 'red letter' experience.

### Midsummer Open Evening:

Enjoy the amazing location outside of our regular opening times and hopefully be rewarded with a wonderful sunset.

### Sheffield Male Voice Choir:

The repertoire extends to many kinds of music including opera, musicals, sacred music as well as modern popular songs.

## FRIDAY 25 JUNE - CIVIL DAY

### Role of the Post Office in WWI - talk by Chris Taft, Curator of the British Postal Museum & Archive:

Highlighting the vital contribution made, drawing from many previously unseen sources within the Royal Mail Archive.

## SATURDAY 26 JUNE - ARMED FORCES DAY

### \*Friends Event\*

**'Where our Nation remembers':** Exhibition of Arboretum images resulting from the NMA Friends photographic competition.

### The Grand Theatre of Lemmings presents,

**Attention!:** Gigantic guardsmen with huge busbies reaching skywards.



Mechanical Sailors



### Service of Tribute to HM

**Armed Forces:** Marking the 150th Anniversary of the Cadet Forces, the Nuneaton No 121 Squadron ATC Band are providing the musical accompaniment, supported by Cannock Ex-Servicemen's Club Male Voice Choir.

### The Grand Theatre of Lemmings presents ...

**Mechanical Sailors:** Street theatre that has a quirky view of mechanical sailors performing a hornpipe.

## SUNDAY 27 JUNE - NATIONAL SERVICE DAY

(All events below have no entry charge, but donations are appreciated)

### The Lady Wulfrun Fair

**Organ:** Joe Davies will be providing musical entertainment throughout the day.

### Commando Veterans

**Association:** Service for Association members, and to

mark the 70th anniversary of the formation of the British Commandos.

### National Service Foundation

**Day:** Annual service of remembrance for Association members, with Burton on Trent Salvation Army Band.

### National Service Parade

\*All details are correct at the time of going to print. The National Memorial Arboretum cannot be held responsible for any programme changes, errors or omissions.

### NMA Friends organised trips - all welcome!

**Two fantastic trips for our NMA Friends, their friends and families - book now to reserve your place!**

## SATURDAY 31ST JULY:

### HARLOW CARR GARDENS Leaving from the NMA:

Cost to be determined (dependent on numbers).

Ticket price will include coach and tour, cost to be under £20.00.

This Royal Horticultural Society garden is based near Harrogate and boasts to have something for everyone - from vegetables to wildflowers and alpinists to woodland.

## TUESDAY 24TH AUGUST:

### YORKSHIRE SCULPTURE PARK (YSP)

**Leaving from the NMA:** Price £12 adults and £6 for under 16's

YSP is a unique place. With four indoor galleries and 500 acres of beautiful 18th century parkland, it is an international centre for modern and contemporary art.

To book or for more information on either of these trips please email [friends@thenma.org.uk](mailto:friends@thenma.org.uk) or call Paul Gater on 01283 792 333

# Puzzle teaser...

Designed by NMA Young Friend, Ellie Ham – test your knowledge of the Arboretum with this fun brain teaser.

## Word Search

See if you can find all 21 hidden words

e	t	a	e	s	n	d	t	s	a	y	t	a	e	i	w	m	n	m	e	i	r	n
t	h	e	b	e	a	t	i	r	l	y	g	e	n	a	t	s	o	b	r	g	w	e
a	n	w	c	h	l	a	w	l	a	i	r	o	m	e	m	a	r	s	a	b	d	
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l	e	e	a	a	v	b	a	i	o	n	e	s	d	t	c	v	r	s	i	s	r	a
s	b	e	t	r	e	r	e	n	a	a	i	f	r	g	m	a	l	i	e	r	a	n

Armed Forces Memorial  
Army Wood  
Basra Memorial Wall  
Bevin Boys Memorial  
Blues and Royals  
British Korean Veterans  
Burma Star  
Fire and Rescue Service  
Gallipoli  
Normandy Veterans  
RNLI  
Royal Naval Review  
SANDS  
Shot at Dawn  
Staffordshire Regiment  
Sumatra Railway  
The Beat  
War Widows Rose Garden  
Western Front Association  
Womens Institute  
Y Group

## NMA Shop Update...

Watch this space.... Soon to arrive at the shop are the NMA Friends pin badges!

Key accessory to any outfit the enamel badge is expected to arrive at the shop in the next couple of months and will be available for purchase for any NMA Friend on display of a membership card. On sale for just £1.50 we hope our Friends will wear their badges with pride!

Please contact us on **01283 799862** or email **shop@thenma.org.uk**

