



Issue 5 – Autumn 2010
www.thenma.org.uk

The *Memmo*

The latest news and views from the National Memorial Arboretum Friends

**Welcome
to the autumn
Remembrance
issue of your
members'
magazine**



Photo - Stuart McAllister

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Welcome

Welcome

Welcome to the autumn Remembrance edition of The Memo. In this edition we were pleased to have the opportunity to talk with one of our longest serving volunteers, Les Wills. He has had a busy year receiving an MBE and publishing a book. NMA Young Friend Ellie Ham spoke to Les about how he came to be involved with the Arboretum, his new book and meeting The Queen.

Thanks to all those who returned our annual Friends survey. The response was even better than last year and we loved reading your positive feedback. Many of you were interested in learning more about the Arboretum site so with this in mind we've also managed to chat with our tree expert and Arboretum Curator, Paul Kennedy.

If all that reading makes you feel a bit peckish, our seasonal recipe is an unusual one....rest assured, tried and tested, it is sure to be a pleasant and warming surprise this autumn.

As promised we've also included some of our winning photography competition entries and details about our first Walk to the Wall fundraiser, which was held in May.

Finally, our events calendar is enclosed detailing our autumn Remembrance events as well as much more.

If you know of someone who you think would like to become a Friend of the Arboretum the details can be found on our website or please feel free to contact us by phone.

Lianne

(Volunteer Marketing and Fundraising Assistant)

NMA Friends magazine, Autumn issue

The Memo - Autumn Edition

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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



Memorial Focus...

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

Royal Military Police:

Dedicated on 5 June 2010, the imposing Royal Military Police Memorial is located along The Beat, behind the Basra Memorial Wall. The memorial is dedicated to the men and women of the Royal Military Police who gave their lives in the service of their country. The memorial bears the Royal Military Police Motto "Exemplo Ducemus" or "By Example We Lead." Here at the Arboretum the Policeman is fondly referred to as Foxy, after the mode, a Corporal Fox.



Edward's Trust: Located in the Children's Woodland the Edward's Trust Memorial Garden overlooks the River Tame and provides a peaceful place to reflect on loss. Edward's Trust is a Birmingham based charity set up in 1989. The trust provides counselling and support

for adults and children who are bereaved following the death of someone close to them. Although still under construction visitors are welcome to sit inside the memorial, "A Leaf For A Life" which has been designed by Hannah Genders. Trellis and benches, allowing for private reflection, surround the impressive copper and resin tree that overhangs the garden. When completed copper leaves will hang from the tree's branches and will be engraved with names.



Tree Hugging...

This month we had the opportunity to talk with our Arboretum Curator Paul Kennedy. He told us some interesting facts about the trees we have on site.

The Arboretum trees and plants were principally placed to help to preserve the memory of those who have lost their lives in the service of their country, or offer a place of Remembrance for a loved one. Now, the 150 acre Arboretum site is scattered with a varied number of trees and plants, and although relatively young, there are over 50,000 new saplings and established trees in the grounds. Paul Kennedy, the Arboretum's Curator explains some interesting facts about the extensive range of species we are currently growing, and their importance.

There are over 300,000 species of flowering plants in the world, of these 60,000 are trees. The first trees or primitive plants can be traced back 270 million years and were called Cycads. Trees are a useful tool in helping to reduce the effects of

global warming on our planet by absorbing Carbon Dioxide. Trees also absorb lots of water, 1 sq kilometre of woodland can take up 5,000 cubic metres of water (that could fill 2 Olympic size swimming pools) a day. It's also interesting to know that trees can have healing effects - studies have shown that medical recovery is speedier for patients who have a view of trees during their recovery.

All of the 32 remaining native UK species of tree can be found in our Arboretum including; *Fagus Sylvatica* (Beech), *Fraxinus Excelsior* (Ash) and *Taxus Baccata* (Yew). In addition, the Arboretum hosts some trees which have more exotic origins including a Wollemi pine, native to Australia, Dawn Redwoods that are native to China and King Billy Pine a native of Tasmania. Our work in this area helps with the

conservation of these trees.

The symbolism and poignancy created in many of the memorials is a result of trees used. For example, dead Oak trees are used to make the sculpture in the Gallipoli memorial. They symbolise the outreached arms of soldiers who lay in the mud among the dead during the Gallipoli Campaign. It is this powerful combination of nature and man - created structure that leads to the Arboretum fulfilling its true potential as the place where our Nation remembers.

Paul is always developing the Arboretum grounds - so they are for ever changing and growing. Do keep your eyes peeled for any new tree additions when you visit and carry on reading The Memo for future updates.

Les Wills- Interview

Young reporter Ellie Ham recently interviewed volunteer Les Wills who's had a very busy year. Les has recently received an MBE, published a book about his life experiences, "A Turnworth Odyssey" and is currently featuring in the "Ordinary People" exhibition here at the Arboretum.

So what made you come to the Arboretum to become a volunteer?

I first heard about the Arboretum in 1997 when a general appeal was issued for money at a naval reunion - we gave £300. We planted a tree in March 2001 in dedication of our ship, HMS Indefatigable. It looked like a great place to work.

How long have you been a volunteer?

Nine years and three months, I've worked in the shop since 2001 when the Arboretum opened.

Why did you become a volunteer?

When I lost my wife I had two choices; I could either sit at home and watch TV, or get out and about.

What do you like best about volunteering at the Arboretum?

It takes up my time and I also get to meet so many people and talk about their life stories.

I listened to your life story WOW! It's fantastic, how on earth do you have time to do all this for the Arboretum?

Well I work two days a week, I'm retired and have plenty of time to work on different projects.

My mum says that you've got a book out, how does that feel?

I feel satisfied and excited; you never know where these things may lead.

Unfortunately, I haven't read it so I don't know what it's about, can you tell me?

It's about my grandparents and parents' lives in Dorset as well as my own life experiences. It covers a period of about sixty years.

How old were you when you joined the Navy?

Sixteen.



Les and Ellie

I heard on your life story that you were born in Canada, what was that like?

I lived in a rural part of Canada. It was like living in the bush.

I hear you were awarded an MBE. When did that take place, what was it for?

I received it in the 2010 New Year's honours list, for services to the West Midlands.

How were your emotions before meeting the Queen?

I was excited and pleased. It was a very exciting day.

What did the queen say to you?

She asked what the award was for and spoke about that.

Your life has been very memorable but give me three of the most memorable highlights so far?

I have so many I could give you more than 300... When I sailed into Sydney Harbour and saw the bridge. Also, I was in Japan for the surrender of Tokyo and when I got married.

Around the Arboretum...



KEY

- A VISITOR CENTRE
- B CHAPEL
- C TOILETS
- D CAR PARK
- E FERROW BUILDING
- F ARMED FORCES MEMORIAL

At 150 acres, and with over 160 memorials, there is a lot to take in at the NMA. In this feature we provide a fresh insight into different areas of the Arboretum. This time we're exploring some of the gardens on Giffard Avenue:

1. The Royal Artillery Garden

The Royal Artillery Garden designed by Ray Hutchins is a peaceful haven where many sit and reflect on the long history of the Royal Artillery. The garden contains a large Alder tree; the use of this tree in the garden is significant as Alder charcoal was originally used in the production of gunpowder. Benches in the garden are used to display the Artillery's battle honour "Ubique". The honour granted by William IV in 1833 is the Latin word for "everywhere" and was awarded to the regiment for their continued presence at every major battle since their formation.

2. Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society Garden (SANDS)

Founded in 1981, SANDS was set up by a small group of bereaved parents who were left devastated by the death of their babies. The charity provides support and promotes research to help reduce the number of neonatal deaths. On entry to the garden the trees and plants are prickly, as you continue to walk the garden opens into a clearing to represent the emotional journey that bereaved parents face. The two benches in the centre of the garden are carved from reclaimed elm.

3. British Limbless Ex-Servicemen's Association (BLESMA)

BLESMA is a charity with a heritage of over 70 years. The association was formed by groups of disabled amputees trying to adjust to life after the Great War. BLESMA, whose motto is "Service and Fortitude", still provides support today to soldiers who have lost limbs in modern day conflicts. The memorial was dedicated in July 2001 and contains fruit trees; the trees are kept at a low height to allow the fruit to be picked by those in wheelchairs. The BLESMA garden has an extension with a further 70 fruit trees, access is available from the Far East Walk.



Visit www.thenma.org.uk for a full list of memorials onsite.

Wildlife Focus...

Richard Thorpe, our resident wildlife expert tells us about some new furry friends that you may see when visiting the Arboretum.

The summer months have seen quite a lot of wildlife activity. Before I describe this, some of you will have noticed that the Darbyhire Ditch has been deepened and looks rather bare at the moment. This has been done to help with drainage from the Arboretum grounds and I managed to save some of the original habitat close to where the Basra Wall is. Needless to say it will all re-colonise with various species in due course.

Hedgehogs have been seen near the Visitor Centre and up on the Far East Ridge. At least one of them is a youngster which we have called Dunstan! Any guesses as to where it was first found? We have also seen a small vole near the Rose Garden which seems to enjoy being fed by visitors. A wood pigeon was found nesting in the Ann Frank tree!

There are various wildlife events taking place in the next few months which we hope you will join us for. On Saturday 16 October, we are having a mammal

event at 2pm when you will be able to see and touch a variety of small mammals. This is always a popular event. On Sunday 9 January 2011 there will be a winter bird walk led by Lichfield RSPB. You need to book both of these events through Lynne Barkas at the Arboretum.

Over the summer there was a wildflower course given by Dominic Price of Plantlife. This was very informative and well attended by a totally new audience to the Arboretum and we were all amazed as to the variety of flowers there are in the grounds.

The Wildlife Watch Group continues to thrive. Memorable sessions included the children having snail races, looking at snail eggs down a microscope and doing a ladybird count in the riverside wildflower area. We also found lots of black and yellow cinnabar moth caterpillars which are attracted to the ragwort plant species.

Richard Thorpe



Recipe...

A moist sweet chocolate cake with an obscure, key ingredient. This recipe is the perfect accompaniment to colder days and darker nights.

Chocolate Courgette Cake

Tried and tested, this is not as odd as it sounds - a modern spin on an old favourite.

Ingredients:

- 200g / 7oz self raising flour
 - 1 tsp baking powder
 - 1/2 tsp bicarbonate of soda
 - 1/2 tsp salt
 - 110g/ 4oz caster sugar
 - 2 size two eggs
 - 6 fl oz vegetable oil
 - 170g/ 6 oz of good quality plain chocolate
 - 225g / 8oz firm courgettes peeled weight
 - 55g / 2oz finely chopped walnuts
1. Grease and flour two 8ins sandwich tins, Sift all dry ingredients into a bowl.
 2. Beat the eggs with the oil.
 3. Melt the chocolate over a simmering pan of water.
 4. Grate the courgettes.
 5. Beat the eggs and oil into the dry ingredients.
 6. Stir in the chocolate, courgettes and nuts.
 7. Divide the mixture between the two tins then bake in a pre-heated oven, 180 °C, 350 °F, gas mark 4, for 25 to 20 minutes.

When cooked the cake should be well risen and a skewer inserted should come out clean. To finish, fill with whipped cream and sprinkle with icing sugar.

(TIP: This cake is very moist and will collapse easily when warm, it will need to cool completely to keep its shape.)

If you have a favourite recipe that you would like to share with your NMA Friends, please email friends@thenma.co.uk.



Friends Update...

Throughout the spring and summer, the NMA friends have been an active force in raising both the profile of the Arboretum and funds:

Walk To The Wall - WtW

On a gloriously sunny 22 May the first annual Walk to the Wall took place. Following two routes, one circular and one linear, the walks were designed to suit all ages and abilities and were a huge success, finishing under the impressive shadow of the Armed Forces Memorial. Over £10,000 of individual sponsorship has been collected. A helicopter ride was awarded as a prize to the individual who raised the most money (generously donated by James Leavesley).

A special thank you goes to Burton Cadets who helped our Friends and volunteers to marshal the event.

Next year's event will take place on the 21 May 2011, so please remember to pencil the date into your diary as you will need to pre-register to take part.

Over 200 walkers, of all ages, took part in the event. Here are just a couple of the many pictures of the event.



Yorkshire Sculpture Park

The NMA Friends recently visited the Yorkshire Sculpture Park in Wakefield. Twenty-four friends visited the park and despite the weather, the visit was very enjoyable. Special thanks go to David Millington who organised the event.



Photography Competition

Throughout the summer NMA Friends were invited to submit entries for our annual photography competition. The theme, "Where our Nation remembers", was interpreted differently by all those who entered and some fabulous prizes were received by the competition winners.

The winning and highly commended photographs were exhibited in the long gallery in June and July, and were well received by visitors.

Pictured, a small selection of the winning photographs. To view all photographs please visit our website - www.thenma.org.uk.



Hero's Wall - Roy Morgan



Strength Among Heroes - Oliver Ayto



My Brother And Me Will Remember - Kitty Whirledge

Thanks to...

The following companies who donated prizes and resources to either the WtTW or the Photography Competition:- Aspray Insurance Claims Management Property Repairs Network, all of the Dar family at Dar's Premier, Colombier Wines, Midland Pest Control, Papillion PR and Property Insight.

Get involved

If you are keen to get involved in either of these events next year details will be included in future editions of The Memo so keep looking.

So far this summer the NMA friends have attended- The Lichfield Bower, Clifton Campville Country Fair and The Kings Bromley Village Show. Thanks to all those who were involved - your support is invaluable.

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!

[twitter](#) [facebook](#)

NMA Events – forthcoming highlights...

Please visit www.thenma.org.uk for full listings or call 01283 792 333. Highlights for the Autumn include:

MONDAY 11 OCTOBER

Autumn Wildlife Discovery Walk:

Explore the confluence of the Rivers Trent and Tame and the Mythaholme footbridge with Richard Thorpe, the Arboretum's volunteer wildlife officer.

You will need to assemble by The Polar Bear Memorial at 2:30pm. The two mile walk will last for approximately 1.5 hours and will be suitable for those in wheelchairs unless it is very wet.

MONDAY 11 OCTOBER – MONDAY 15 OCTOBER

'Portraits For Posterity':

A unique photographic exhibition drawn from Holocaust survivors living in Great Britain. Photographs will be displayed at the Arboretum, South Staffordshire College and Lichfield Cathedral.

The exhibition will be open during regular Arboretum, opening times. For further information please visit www.portraitforposterity.com.

SATURDAY 16 OCTOBER

'Looking At Mammals':

An onsite exploration for signs of wildlife with Derek Crawley.

Interested parties will need to be assembled at the Arboretum by 2pm.

SUNDAY 17 OCTOBER

The Crooked Bawbees:

An afternoon of Northumbrian Folk Music. Price £7.00 or £6.50 for NMA Friends.

THURSDAY 11 NOVEMBER

Armistice Day Service:

Annual outdoor service of Remembrance. Tickets will be required if you wish to observe the service from the Armed Forces Memorial.

SUNDAY 14 NOVEMBER

Remembrance Day Service and band concert:

Annual outdoor service of Remembrance.

(There will be a free park and ride facility via Catton Hall estate on both the 11 and 14 November)





SUNDAY 28 NOVEMBER

Christmas starts here!:

A packed programme of festive activities, retail opportunities, and of course, Santa who will be dropping by on an unusual mode of transport. Cars will be charged £5 for entry. The Arboretum will close for visitors at 3pm. The site will then reopen for this special event at 3:30pm.

TUESDAY 28 DECEMBER

Friends Event

Annual Friends Christmas walk:

Featuring the Fauld explosion site near to Hanbury, Staffordshire. The walk will be followed by an optional two course meal at the Cock Inn, Hanbury. The meal will cost around £15 per head. Walkers will be meeting at the Cock Inn, where there is parking at 9:50am and will be setting off at 10:00am. It is imperative to book in advance. To book your place(s) please email

or telephone Judith Thorpe at the NMA on JThorpe@thenma.org.uk or 01283 792333 with the number of places required.

To book or for more information on any of these events email info@thenma.org.uk or call 01293 792333. There is no charge for events unless otherwise stated, however, donations will be appreciated.



Where our Nation remembers

Word Scramble...

Test your knowledge of the Arboretum by unscrambling these letters to form the names of some of our memorials. We've been nice and given you some clues. The answers are at the bottom.

1. **hethenfrotom** - A tribute to civilians of the UK from 1939 to 1945.
2. **bathtee** - A memorial avenue planted with Chestnuts.
3. **stmuraarb** - Is a smaller replica of a memorial standing in the Commonwealth War Cemetery in Kohima.
4. **HTCO** - The main focus of this memorial is a lamp.
5. **dnmamosoc** - This memorial is made up in part of a copper wreath.

1. The Home Front 2. The Beat 3. Burma Star 4. TOC H 5. Commandos

NMA Shop Update...

Available now to buy... Life stories by Hannah Hiles.

A poignant collection of moving real life biographical stories. Hiles book captures the stories of individuals touched by the Arboretum, and is a wonderful literary depiction of why our work here at the Arboretum is of such vital importance. The book is available now for purchase from our shop for £3.99.

To purchase the book please contact us on 01283 799862 or email shop@thenma.org.uk

