

Friends of the Violette Szabó GC Society



NEWSLETTER APRIL 2018

*I feel sure Violette would wish to recognise the following great events
One hundred years since the end of World War One.*

*The Centenary of the Suffragette's Achievement
and the Royal Air Force*

The 150th Anniversary of the Royal National Institute for The Blind

The Violette Szabó GC Museum

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To all the many Friends of The Violette Szabó GC Society 2018

Special good wishes to everyone, and hoping you have managed to cope very well during this terrible winter.

Violette's great gathering this year is to be on **Sunday the 24th June**, starting at **2pm**.

Please note the following dates very carefully – over the last several years I have found it increasingly more difficult to achieve the presence of very important people at Violette's special Sundays, because of the new prominence of the *Armed Forces Day* which is held on the Saturday before Violette's Sunday! So the only way forward I felt was to retire graciously and to create a new tradition! So Violette's gathering for the three following years... **2nd Sunday** in July: **14th July, 2019 – 12th July, 2020 – 11th July, 2021**.

Now Ladies and Gentlemen and all wonderful Devotees of Violette's, very exciting news! On Sunday 11th July 2021, with God's great help and guidance, we should be celebrating the 100th anniversary of Violette's birth!! I must say that the whole of my existence from now when awake and often asleep is to create a most wonderful occasion for her! This I cannot do without the help of all of you! So may I implore *all of you* to spread the word among Friends, Organisations, Local Newspapers, so that we can give her the day she – Violette – so richly deserves!!

Many will remember, but many will not know, that on Saturday 24th June 2000, the special day of the opening of the Museum, it was thought 2000 people from all over the world came to honour Violette and her many friends for their great bravery and to say thank you. Let the Parade of Standards and people through Wormelow be a unique memory for people to hold, remembering the last time there were over 100 in the parade!

I do hope by changing the Garden Party date to a fortnight later may help the many British Legion Clubs who I know have been finding the original date very difficult, and increasingly so!!!

Now I would like to share with you a once in a lifetime very happy happening! For the last several years I have had Christmas Lunch at the Pilgrim Hotel, to avoid being at home on my own. So I arrived as arranged at 12pm and was escorted to my table by Trevor, the Manager, who mentioned it was a little different this year – and it was! For there to greet me was a smiling Neil Mackay from Merseyside, near Liverpool, who had driven so many miles to entertain and join me for lunch!! I also received flowers, chocolates and even a small gift for Bonnie – how truly wonderful, what unbelievable kindness. You will remember that Neil is a great devotee of Violette, and is the person who has tiled and decorated with such care the toilet in the new building! My special thanks must also go to his family, who were deprived of his company all day!

The last year has been a busy one for visitors calling – I have been out and around giving talks. The great interest never wanes! I have even opened several times this awful winter for groups and individuals who wished to pay their respects.

You may remember last year the visit of Ruby Ann, who came to sing for Violette, and all of us! She was so greatly enjoyed that by 100 percent of requests asking for her to return this year, she has very happily accepted! With joy we will look forward to her arrival.

You may also be interested to know another great Wormelow project was to save our old Red Telephone Box and it has now opened as a little lending library, and being very well used. On this occasion too, Ruby came and captivated the locals with her lovely singing and winning ways!

We look forward once again to the special company of Virginia, who by the way is very happy with the change of dates and quite appreciates why.

This year I feel inspired to highlight a remarkable though fleeting friendship Violette had while in Ravensbrück Concentration Camp with a very young girl – Hortense Daman from Belgium. Hortense at the time was 16 years old and very ill. Violette was appalled to learn the only place this child had to sleep was on the earth!! Violette's reply was to give her bed to Hortense and to sleep on the floor herself!! Hortense felt that this was how her life was saved. It was so wonderful to have Hortense with us on the day of the opening of the Museum in 2000. I have often wondered what her thoughts must have been that great day, as she sat on the green grass facing the Museum. In the small hamlet of Wormelow in Herefordshire, watching Virginia McKenna OBE open the Museum, not just to the memory of Violette Szabo GC but, to the remarkable young person, who so many years ago had saved her life, through a very selfless gesture, which had meant everything to her – the difference between life and death.

While living in Stoke-on-Trent Hortense had the honour of receiving the Freedom of her city and also the City of London, for her special bravery during the War, when as a child of 14 years, she is credited with saving the lives of 20 British airmen, by taking food to them in their hiding places on her bicycle. What another tremendous spirit – RIP Hortense.

Regarding parking on the 24th, guests again have the privilege of parking in the same lovely field behind my house, for which we are most grateful.

Following the Celebration Service and Tea in the Garden at 5.30pm, Tania Szabo will be giving a talk about her mother's life in the Much Birch Community Hall. The tickets are £6, please contact me early for these, because I feel sure there will be a rush towards the end and the hall only holds so many!

Please note – Violette's Evening Meal at The Axe and Cleaver Inn, Much Birch at 7pm following her special afternoon, courtesy of our hosts Sue and Andy. We have three choices – (1) Herefordshire Roast Beef with Yorkshire Pudding, served with roast potatoes and seasonal vegetables, (2) Local Roast Pork with sage-and-onion stuffing, served with roast potatoes and seasonal vegetables, (3) Home made Cheese, Leek and Potato Bake, served with new potatoes and fresh mixed salad. Sweets: (1) Apple Crumble with Custard, (2) Traditional Sherry Trifle, (3) Local Vanilla Ice Cream. One course £11.95, Two courses £15.95. If you would love to join us, you must please phone or write to me giving your choice of menu and cheque for the full amount.

I feel sure that you will be delighted to know that Sue and Andy have just managed to purchase the Axe and Cleaver! and we wish them great good luck!!

Once again I am worrying about the garden at "Cartref" and would be most grateful for a little help to make it as nice as possible for the 24th June! The staff at Waitrose Store in Monmouth have been most kind in past years and I hope and pray they may be again! The trouble is it is a big garden and can take all the help I can inspire.

I am again asking for donations of refreshments such as a loaf of sandwiches, cakes, scones etc. We also urgently need help with serving the tea. My neighbour and friend Mrs Shirley Jones is wonderful, but help is always needed. Please may we also borrow your garden chairs and small tables, we need so many and never have enough.

I am so lucky to have the help and support of the members of my British Legion Club – St Weonards – so greatly appreciated.

Violette's 2019 Memorial Gathering with God's help, should be on Sunday 14th July at 2pm. Please make sure you come and bring friends!

Violette's new special helper – Mr Philip Round of Hereford, still comes when possible offering lots of good help and advice.

May I on behalf of Violette and myself thank everyone for their continued constant support, so much needed.

Lastly please note – on Friday the 22nd June, we urgently need lots of help with erecting the marquees and tents in the garden. This is an immense task and special help is desperately needed! We try to start at 10am.

Let joy and happiness once more bring us together!

Yours most sincerely

Rosemary E. Rigby

Rosemary E. Rigby M.B.E.
Holder of the Points of Light Award and
Founder and Owner of
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The Prime Minister Rt Hon. Theresa May has honoured me with her Points of Light Award, recognising my project to keep alive the memory of Violette Szabó G.C.

