

Friends of the Violette Szabó GC Society



NEWSLETTER APRIL 2020

It is with great sadness I try to write this letter, with our whole country, and many other parts of the world, trying and hoping to beat this very terrible coronavirus, which is now threatening our lives!

I can only try to imagine what Violette and others like her can feel when looking down from heaven, having given their lives for us all to be well and happy!

May God watch and care for everyone.

The Violette Szabó GC Museum

“Cartref House”, Tump Lane, Wormelow, Herefordshire

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To all Violette's special Friends of her Violette Szabó GC Society 2020

I can only hope and pray Violette may give to us all – her great admirers – some of her wonderful strength and fortitude to survive and conquer this most dreaded disease, coronavirus, which at the moment is killing so many of our special people and completely destroying our way of life. I am sure like me most of you are not allowed out of your homes! I find especially when living alone, every day seems like a month!

Now I must say with great sadness and with all this very difficult day-to-day living I have decided to postpone this year's special day on Sunday 12th July, and to put every bit of energy I can muster into making her great day next year – Sunday 11th July 2021 – the most wonderful ever! Please help me to achieve this by spreading the word to everyone and making sure they know how very much their presence is needed!! Remembering it is the 100th year for Violette! and the 21st birthday of her Museum!! I have sent an official invitation to our Queen.

“Bonnie” my little dog is finding the new rules very difficult, she is a very friendly little soul and has many people she loves to speak with, and cannot understand why we now have to pass by on the other side of the road! on our daily outing.

I am trying everything in my power to survive this nightmare of coronavirus, and not let Violette down! but should I die, my greatest wish is to leave everything in place so that she will have her new extension – her Reading Room! completed in time to be officially opened on her great day next year, 11th July 2021. To this end several truly wonderful things have taken place, firstly a gentleman from north Wales gave his time and drew the plans and Herefordshire Council kindly passed them. During the last 12 months I have been tirelessly trying to raise the money, firstly thought to be £25,000 but now stands at £35,000 constantly encouraging anyone I met to make a special donation! With God's help and Violette's, things have quietly come together!! Just before Christmas I was out walking “Bonnie”, when a car drew up and a gentleman got out asking for directions to me! I turned around and brought him back and showed him the Museum. From that strange encounter, a meeting was arranged at the Pilgrim Hotel on the Friday after Christmas, and the outcome was – he with the blessing of his late father, gave to Violette £12,500! I immediately broke down in tears! His wife, on seeing me, also started to cry!! He was so very captivated with the idea of The Reading Room and realized how greatly I needed help!

Regarding Violette's lovely Royal William roses – Violette kept 3 – gave one as a present and sold the rest, with a little extra help from several people, I banked £500. I was thrilled!! So many thanks.

A few weeks ago and having just received 2 £100 donations, I decided to add Violette's money up, and was amazed to find she had just reached £27,000, but still needed £8,000! A friend, a gentleman I have always held in high regard came into my mind, and in desperation I decided to phone him and beg for his help! He was wonderful, and promised the £8,000 would be in her account within one hour! May God bless him!! Violette now has her money in the bank, and is assured of her Reading Room. Thank God and all who helped!!

This now leaves the account for running costs empty! If anyone might be kind enough to send an extra donation it would be most welcome, as Violette will not now be having her special day in July this year.

One Hundred Years Apart – 1919-1920 In World War I the Government made an appeal for young nurses to go to London to nurse in the hospitals where the badly injured soldiers coming back from the battlefields were being treated. My mother then 18 or 19 living in a very quiet village called Preston Capes in Northamptonshire volunteered. The men were very ill with terrible injuries, some without legs, arms, blind and other horrific injuries.

Towards the end of the War the Spanish flu broke out and the men were suffering with that as well. My mother unfortunately developed it and was very ill herself in the same hospital. The War ended and the hospital became redundant, but my mother was still too ill to move, so on closing it the management left 2 nurses to care for her. My mother remembered sitting up in bed and seeing her comrades march down the drive and away! It weakened her very much and for the rest of her life she was a poorly person, and that is the only way I ever remember her. Her name was Muriel Taylor who later became Muriel Rigby. How like now – with the terrible coronavirus 2020.

On a happier note – there is now a racehorse named Violette Szabó. How wonderful if she could make a guest appearance next July 11th. Remembering with joy this year is the 75th anniversary of D-Day! What exciting memories I have of that – tins of fruit, jelly and ice cream! Heaven knows where it came from!! But it did taste super!!!

A designer from Norfolk contacted me many months ago with the idea of creating a garden for Violette to mark the 75th Anniversary of the end of the Second World War at the R.H.S. Malvern Spring Festival. She was accepted and with all the plants bought, the whole event has been cancelled. So what to do with the plants and shrubs? For you and for me more exciting news! Remembering the aforementioned Preston Capes, well just a mile or two from there is another small village called Badby, very famous for its wonderful carpets of bluebells each spring!! Now at Badby there is a wonderful 300 year old Inn called The Maltsters, which has been reopened by a gentleman called Merlin Griffiths, who has come to the rescue of the plants. Later this year a Violette

Szabó GC Garden will be opened in his garden!! How about that? Somewhere I have known all my life. I have talked with him and he very much hopes I will be present for the opening, and he is so fascinated to hear all the news of Violette's Museum, he wants leaflets and information to enable him to promote her Museum in every way possible! A case of good coming out of evil?

One sad note, I have lost my little cat – Violette – it was a lady visitor to the Museum who christened her, but she now rests with small daffodils on her grave, under her famous namesakes precious window!

May God take great care of us all and as our Queen said that we will all meet again.

Yours most sincerely

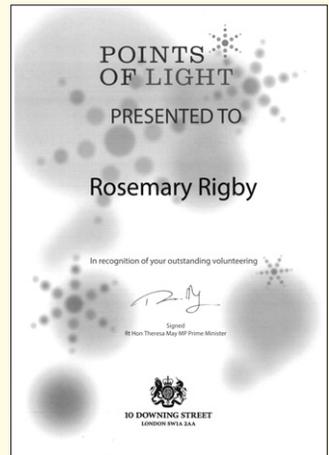


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P.S. Regarding Violette's Roses – May I especially thank Mr Paul Hodges to whom 20 years ago as Manager of Wyevale Nursery I begged 23 Royal William rose bushes, over the years he has kindly pruned them and has this year dug and replanted Violette's 3 and also dug the others for sale!

P.P.S. Red Hot News! The proprietor of The Pilgrim Hotel at Much Birch has graciously decided to rename his delightful lounge – Violette Szabó GC Lounge, and Virginia McKenna OBE – Violette's Patron, has accepted with God's blessing to open it – on Saturday 24th October at 4.30 pm. Anyone wishing to join us would be most welcome.



In 2017 the Prime Minister Rt Hon. Theresa May honoured me with her Points of Light Award, recognising my project to keep alive the memory of Violette Szabó G.C.