

## Herefordshire

There are few places in Britain which can still offer the rich variety of scenery or the tranquillity to be found in Herefordshire. This beautiful county bordering Wales presents a landscape still dominated by agriculture and is a haven of peace for the walker.

Herefordshire has orchards laden with fruit giving a hint of the major cider industry located in the City and rich, rolling countryside is certainly the rule rather than the exception.

The County is steeped in history and this ensures a basis for much enjoyment for the visitor - historic churches in town and village, interesting buildings and a variety of landscapes.



Festivals, agricultural shows and local craft and artistic events still prosper and enliven the lives of the scattered communities throughout the seasons of the year.

Between the A40 and the Severn Bridge; between the Black Mountains and the Royal Forest of Dean lies the glorious Wye Valley area of outstanding natural beauty, the beautiful Golden Valley and Ross-on-Wye. Walking, fishing, riding, golf, ballooning, canoeing, tennis, mountain biking, caving, celebrity concerts, theatre, festivals can be enjoyed to the full in this lovely area.

The Violette Szabo G.C. Museum, Wormelow is situated in the south of the county of Herefordshire, just off the A49 – within easy reach of the City of Hereford, Ross-on-Wye and Monmouth.

**Rosemary E. Rigby MBE**

**Cartref House, Wormelow, Hereford HR2 8HN**

**Tel: 01981 540477**



*Come for a Day.....or decide to Stay.  
Send for a Free comprehensive Visitor Guide  
which includes full details of Accommodation,  
Places to Visit, Activities and Festivals and Events.*

**TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRES AT – 50p**

Visit Herefordshire, 1 King Street, Hereford HR4 9BW  
Tel: 01432 268430, E-mail: [reception@visitherefordshire.co.uk](mailto:reception@visitherefordshire.co.uk)  
Market House Visitor Centre, Market Place, Ross-on-Wye HR9 5HD  
Tel: 01989 562768 E-mail: [visitorcentreross@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:visitorcentreross@herefordshire.gov.uk)

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# Violette Szabo, G.C. MUSEUM



*“Carve Her Name With Pride”*

Secret Agent, Violette Szabo G.C., Croix de Guerre, was one of Britain’s most daring Secret Agents, and is remembered with great pride in a quiet, rural part of the beautiful county of Herefordshire.

A Museum and Millennium Green has been dedicated to honouring her memory and Memorabilia on display illustrates her bravery and fortitude behind enemy lines during the Second World War.

[www.violetteszabomuseum.org.uk](http://www.violetteszabomuseum.org.uk)



**Violette Szabo** (nee Bushell) was the daughter of an English father and a French mother, the family consisting of four sons and one daughter. From an early age, she was outstandingly beautiful; her beauty was matched by her complete fearlessness, and she surpassed her brothers and cousins at all their sports.

Vi, as she was known, left school at fourteen and during the next few years worked in various shops in the Brixton area where the family lived.

She had an independent nature and joined the Land Army for a while, but in July 1940 when in London looking for a French soldier on Bastille Day (to whom her mother wished to offer hospitality), Violette met Etienne Szabo, a 30-year old officer of the French Foreign Legion, serving with the newly formed forces of General de Gaulle. In a short time, they had fallen in love and married at Aldershot a month later. Violette then joined the A.T.S. and served with great competence in an anti-aircraft unit until just before June 1942, when a few days before her twenty-first birthday she gave birth to a daughter, Tania. By that time, her husband was with General Koenig's French Force at Bir Hakeim; he never saw his daughter for he was killed at El Alamein in October 1942.

After this terrible loss, Violette was contacted by authorities in London responsible for the selection, training and employment of British Secret Agents in occupied countries. Taking up the offer with great determination, she became skilled and competent and on her second mission into France, parachuted into the Limoges area barely twenty-four hours after D-Day for a very special assignment.

She was entrusted with the dangerous and responsible task of passing messages to units of Maquis, whom once coordinated and instructed, were to be effective in holding back a Panzer Division which was being rushed from the south of France to Normandy to strengthen the German resistance to the allied landings. In saving a key agent, she had to use, single-handed a sten gun, and was finally captured by overwhelming numbers.

**After imprisonment, torture, forced labour and great hardship, she was shot at Ravensbrück Prison on an unknown date in January 1945. She was posthumously awarded the GEORGE CROSS for "a magnificent example of courage and steadfastness".**

A COUPLE VERY MUCH IN LOVE AND BOTH HONoured BY THEIR COUNTRIES.

ETIENNE SZABO - who was awarded the Legion d'Honneur and Medaille Militaire and VIOLETTE SZABO - the George Cross - and BOTH awarded the Croix de Guerre with Clasps, along with their respective War Medals.

Their daughter Tania, lives and works in JERSEY - and there is a large display case displaying the Honours of these two special people at the Exhibition of Jersey's Occupation Experience (The German Underground Hospital).

The following poignant Poem was set to music for the film "Carve Her Name with Pride", and has been recorded by Virginia McKenna - "The Love That I Have" (Violette), Sovereign Records (No.125) Released in 1974.

*Violette Szabo G.C.  
26 June 1921 – January 1945*

*The life that I have is all that I have*

*And the life that I have is yours*

*The love that I have of the life that I have*

*Is yours and yours and yours.*

*A sleep I shall have, a rest I shall have*

*Yet death will be but a pause*

*For the peace of my years in the long green grass*

*Will be yours and yours and yours.*

It is understood that this poem was the work of Leo Marks, who was Code Master of the S.O.E. (Special Operations Executive) during the Second World War; he joined in 1942 at the age of 22 years.

In 1988, at a special ceremony, a Plaque was unveiled at 'Cartref' to mark the appreciation of the community for outstanding courage and in 1994, another plaque was added by the St. Weonards Branch of the ROYAL BRITISH LEGION.



*Rosemary E. Rigby, MBE at 'Cartref'*

The Opening of the VIOLETTE SZABO MUSEUM by Virginia McKenna - who played the part of Violette Szabo in the 1950's film "Carve Her Name With Pride" - took place on Saturday, 24th June 2000.

**OPEN:** Every Wednesday, April to October inclusive, 11am – 1pm and 2pm – 4pm. Other times by appointment. Groups by special arrangement only, please telephone 01981 540477. Rosemary E. Rigby MBE, *Owner and Founder*

This unique Museum has received financial contributions from the people of Herefordshire and across the world – further donations to assist with the on-going support of the Museum would be greatly appreciated.

The contribution of *Awards For All* through the National Lottery and R.D.A. Small Projects Fund via Southern Marches Partnership is also gratefully acknowledged.

Thanks to the dedication of Miss Rigby, the brave exploits of Violette Szabo can now be heard by thousands of blind people. "Carve Her Name With Pride" by R. J. Minney, has been brought out in cassette form and is available from the RNIB Talking Book Service (Catalogue No. 7230(1)). It is read by Violette's daughter.