

THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF ST. GEORGE

GLOUCESTERSHIRE BRANCH

AUGUST 2022



Patron: Mr. Edward Gillespie, O.B.E., Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Gloucestershire

President: Councillor Pam Tracey, M.B.E.

Vice Presidents: The Rt. Hon. Lord Cope of Berkeley, P.C.; Mr. Mike Smith

Chairman: Mrs. Pat Ayres, M.B.E.

Your Chairman, Pat Ayres, reported to the Branch Annual General Meeting on 11 August:

Please take a few moments to remember the members who have passed away since the last AGM: Christine Simmonds, Mary Watkins, Major Thomas Hancock, Peter Granville-Edmunds and George Ridgeon.

Our membership is declining and currently stands at 86 paid plus 7 honorary. Good news though - we have recently enlisted one new member.

This year it has been good to have some very enjoyable meetings and get-togethers, having been locked in (as it were) due to the pandemic! All have been reported in the excellent newsletter that Margaret produces so wonderfully and more importantly Margaret's reports in the National Magazine which is our 'shop window' to the rest of the organisation worldwide! Her contribution to that magazine shows that we are a branch that packs a lot in. The Nairac Awards also create a lot of work for our secretary as she investigates the backgrounds of the nominees, making sure that they are all worthy for us to acknowledge and 'highlight' at our annual service. Thank you Margaret.

Joanna Cadman, our National Chairman, is standing down in September. She has been at the helm for 8 years. The Branch will send a retirement card to Joanna.

I have been taking part in Zoom meetings with Joanna, Council members and other Branches to

discuss the way forward for the Society, including a revised Mission Statement to confirm the Vision of the Society. There has been much discussion by Branch committees and feedback given to National Council.

We need suggestions urgently for a new venue for the 2023 St. George's Day Service or are members happy returning to this year's venue at St. Barnabas? Please bear in mind the venue needs to be fairly central, have disabled access and reasonable parking. It is most unlikely that we could return to Gloucester Cathedral as high costs and our declining membership mean it isn't viable.

Saturday, 3rd September, is the annual Gloucester Day celebration. Usually a Standard Bearer and I parade on behalf of the Branch. Would other members like to join us?

It is worth noting that many of our events would end up financially in the RED if it weren't for committee members' generosity. The costs for this year's Service reception were helped enormously by Charles Tippet covering the drinks bill and Keith Boreland covering the glasses hire, whilst the President's Reception at Highnam was only break-even because Pam, our President, paid the drinks bill there. We are so lucky these events were subsidised by committee members to keep ticket prices attractive as possible. The Branch would benefit greatly from larger attendances at the events that are organised for them to enjoy.

Please put your hands together for our Secretary, Margaret Fuller, who spends hours quietly getting on with the job. Also thank you

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Gloucestershire Branch info at: www.rsg.org.uk/branches/uk/southern/gloucestershire



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very much to Terry Adams, our Treasurer, who always has up to date accounts for our committee meetings so that we know exactly what is in the Branch's purse. Terry's meticulous accounting also helps our auditor, Roy Lewis, whom we thank too. Our accounts are in good hands.

It was five years ago that the Branch welcomed Margaret and Terry back into the fold and what a difference it has made. They both make my role as Chairman seamless and worry free!

St. George for England - God Save The Queen!

Pat Ayres, MBE

From your Secretary:

GLOUCESTER DAY PARADE 2022

Pat mentioned Gloucester Day and she will be parading again this year with our Standard. It would be lovely to have some members walking alongside her. Our President, Pam Tracey, parades but usually with the City Councillors. Pat's husband, Brian, also a committee member, will be there again but this year will carry the Standard for Kemble Royal British Legion Branch.

The Parade will start at **2pm on Saturday, 3 September**, along Constitution Walk. It will be led by The Right Worshipful Mayor of Gloucester and marshalled by Alan Myatt, Gloucester Town Crier and an Honorary Branch member. The event is designed to instil and promote pride in the city by creating interest in its rich heritage and colourful past. Hopefully hundreds will march and this is a chance to promote the Branch - [do join us!](#)

MEMBERSHIP & BRANCH AGM NEWS:

A warm welcome to Caroline Meek of Quedgeley, who has just rejoined the Branch.

Thank you to all those who came to the AGM on an extremely hot evening. Richard Lane, the Churchwarden at St. Mary de Lode, and his wife Rose looked after us well, bringing fans and opening doors so that the hall was cooler and more comfortable than outside!

Those present were sorry to learn that our former Chairman, Eric Freeman, continues to suffer poor health. The last update from his family is that he will be moving from hospital to a nursing home and we have sent a card with very best wishes from all our members. News of another former committee member, Margaret Hayward, is hard to come by. We do know she is in residential care and will not be returning home, which is very sad.

The committee for 2022/23 was elected unanimously as follows:

Pam Tracey, President	
Pat Ayres, Chairman	
Terry Adams, Treasurer	
Margaret Fuller, Secretary	
Brian Ayres	Jane Jennings
Keith Bawden	Charles Tippet
Keith Boreland	Maureen Tomlinson
Jacqui Connell	

We discussed how to reverse declining membership and raise the Branch's profile in the county. Every year press releases are sent to local media (press, radio and television) in the Spring about nominations for the Nairac Awards. They are followed up by releases announcing the winners, including photographs. Sometimes they are published, but mostly not. A page of photographs taken at the 2021 Nairac Award Service was published in Cotswold Life, but we paid the photographer's fee to achieve that.

Keith Bawden put together a Branch stand some years ago and pre-Covid, with the help of other committee members, took it to several county shows. Eric Freeman's Harvest Home and also Gloucester Day one year. All that hard work resulted in just one new member who subsequently lapsed. The last time we held the Service at the Cathedral Keith Boreland sponsored the printing of 700 membership forms, which were placed on every seat. We did not gain any members as a result of that mammoth effort either.

We thought the visit by HRH The Princess Royal might have increased media attention and membership enquiries - again sadly not. Guests at the Service are very enthusiastic to support us on St. George's Day but their enthusiasm seems to evaporate by 24 April!



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In short, your committee has tried various ways to promote the Society and the Branch but it is proving extremely hard to attract members. People with rising living costs are trying to cut back and some have to put work commitments first. Other organisations have similar problems attracting members, as I'm sure some of you will know. We are very grateful to those members who encourage friends to join, as at the moment that seems to be the only route that works. We would welcome any fresh ideas for increasing our membership.

RSSG NATIONAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - FRIDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER 2022 at 6pm

The date for the National AGM was announced in the Society (August) magazine. The Notice was not in the magazine but has since been circulated by Head Office by email. I have already forwarded it to Full Branch members who have given permission for the Branch to pass on communications to their email address. I enclose the Notice with this newsletter for the remaining Full members, as you may not have received it otherwise.

It won't be easy for most members (especially those overseas) to attend a short meeting in London on a Friday evening without incurring great cost and time-consuming travel.

I emailed the General Secretary with my **personal** concerns about circulation of the Notice and the lack of supporting information. In case you are interested, I enclose a separate (because they are my **personal** views, not expressed on behalf of the Branch) paper detailing my concerns. Ignore if you wish!

THE ART AND ICONOGRAPHY OF ST. GEORGE, ENGLAND'S PATRON SAINT

The Friends of Gloucester Cathedral are hosting this fundraising talk on Wednesday, 5 October, starting at 2pm in the Lady Chapel of the Cathedral. The publicity says:

"St George is perhaps unique both in the enduring popularity of his cult and in the widespread devotion to the saint around the world, from England in the west to India in the east, from the Baltic states in the north to

Ethiopia in the south. This talk will explore the origins of the cult of St George in the Byzantine Empire and its spread across Europe. The Normans adopted him as the patron of the new form of mounted warfare and, thanks to his saving the First Crusade from disaster with his miraculous appearances in support of the Norman knights, kings and princes across Europe also adopted him. The talk will explore his emergence as the patron saint of England, then follow his transformation from warrior to courtly hero in Renaissance art and thence into the gentleman knight of the British Empire. The talk will conclude with a look at the contemporary interest in St George as part of a resurgence of English national identity."

Tickets are £10 for members and non-members and can be obtained through the Friends' website:

<https://gloucestercathedral.org.uk/whats-on/friends-lecture-the-art-and-iconography-of-st-george-england-s-patron-saint>

or send a cheque payable to "Friends of Gloucester Cathedral" to the Friends Office, 11a College Green, Gloucester GL1 2LX by 22 September.

NAIRAC AWARDS 2022

Full details of this year's Awards were in the June newsletter. Police Cadet Harry Clarke presented his Award money to Victim Support:





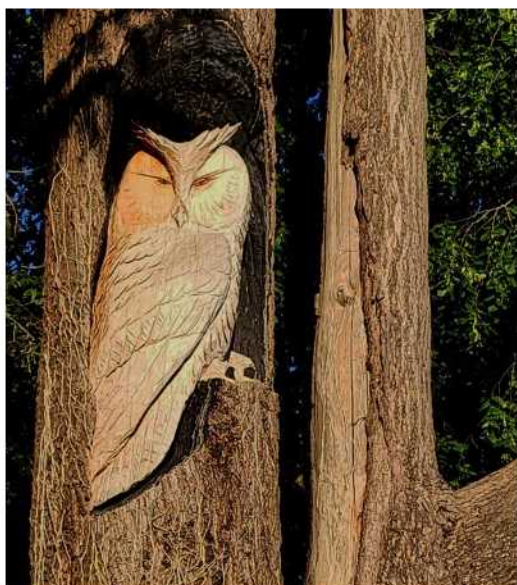
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HIGHNAM COURT - 7 JULY PRESIDENT'S RECEPTION

We had a wonderful evening at Highnam Court to raise a toast to Her Majesty The Queen for her Platinum Jubilee. We are very grateful to owner Roger Head for opening his home to us and to Mike Bennett for a brief house tour, which included the music room where Sir Hubert Parry is believed to have composed the tune for 'Jerusalem'. The previous evening a visiting choir had sung the hymn in that room and Mike said that had been extremely moving.



The weather was perfect and after the Loyal Toast we spent time admiring the beautiful gardens and amazing tree carvings.



Thanks to Terry Hughes for the photographs

BRANCH EVENTS 2022/23:

Private Tour of Chavenage House, Tetbury - *TUESDAY, 6 September 2022:*

Chavenage is the home of the Lowsley-Williams family and, as we will learn, the history of the estate goes back many centuries. More recently it has occasionally hosted film and television crews and you may recognise parts from, for example, Lark Rise to Candleford and Poldark.

***** Original booking date has now passed BUT there is room for more provided you contact me (Margaret - see foot of page 1 for contact details) by 31 August at the very latest *****

A reminder of the details:

Arrive from 1.30pm for a bespoke guided tour of the house starting at 2pm. Price per person for the tour is **£12**. If you would like to stay for tea after the tour, then a Full Cotswold Tea is available for **£10** per person.

Jubilee Tree Planting - Autumn 2022:

In the June newsletter I mentioned the Branch will be planting a commemorative tree at Horsbere Brook, Gloucester, as our contribution to The Queen's Green Canopy's "Plant a Tree for the Jubilee" initiative. A planting ceremony will be arranged when the sapling (likely to be an oak) is ready in the autumn - date will be in the next newsletter.

New Year Lunch - Sunday, 8 January 2023:

We will return to Bowden Hall for our New Year Lunch. Details will be in the next newsletter - please put the date in your diary in the meantime!

Evening with Swans at Slimbridge Wildfowl Trust:

We had hoped to arrange this visit in the autumn but Slimbridge have advised they will not be doing the events until January/February 2023. Hopefully I will be able to give you more news in the next newsletter.

If you wish to opt in to receiving newsletters and/or email communications from the Branch and copies of emails the Branch receives from Head Office, please let me (Margaret) know on glosrsg@btinternet.com