

# THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF ST. GEORGE

## GLOUCESTERSHIRE BRANCH

MAY 2023



**Patron:** Mr. Edward Gillespie, O.B.E., His 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.

### Chairman's Message:

Hello dear members and friends,

Just thinking back on the recent St. George's day service held in Holy Trinity Church Longlevens and a warm glow fills me. Someone who lived in Kemble village over 30 years ago was in the congregation and emailed me the following day congratulating the branch on a lovely evening. It is good to get that feedback especially for Margaret who 'works her socks off' for our branch. Everything seems to have to change to keep up with the expectations of the next generations but we must hold onto those roots of significance.

As I write this I am thinking of the week ahead which includes Polling day and the Coronation of King Charles III. This year, it is my 30th year of being involved with elections as I have the role of a Polling Officer. I still shudder about an event that happened years ago when we had to secure the ballot box at the end of the day with sealing wax. I was the clerk then but I was the one who lit the taper to melt the wax and part of the taper dropped into the slit where the ballot papers were inserted. There was the polling officer and me blowing into the slit. She hastily took the box into the counting venue asking for them to open the box quickly to see if the ballot papers had been spoiled! Not long after that the sealing of the ballot box changed, it is now done with plastic ties!!!!

Kemble village will be marking and celebrating the Coronation with gatherings at the local pub as we are fortunate as in its grounds there is a big undercover area. In fact

an outdoor service will be held there on the Sunday followed by a distribution of Coronation mugs. Lots of music, games, stalls, entertainment and fun for everyone, bringing the community together.

Looking forward to meeting up with you all again very soon, with warmest good wishes,

*Pat*

### From your Secretary:

It was sad to learn of the death of Roger Western in January. Roger and his late wife Ann joined the Branch nearly 25 years ago and both were staunch supporters. I have sent a note of sympathy to Roger's family on behalf of all members.

### SNOWDROP TOUR, COLESBOURNE



We very much enjoyed the visit to Colesbourne in February to see a magnificent display of snowdrops and learn about the hard work maintaining and nurturing the garden. Sir Henry Elwes led the tour, giving lots of

### Contact Information:

Pat Ayres, Chairman, Silvermead, 7a The Oaks, Kemble, Glos. GL7 6BH

t: 01285 770385; e: ayrescares50@gmail.com

Margaret Fuller, Secretary, Woodborough, Mopla Road, Tutshill, Chepstow, NP16 7PS

t: 01291 625059 (answerphone if not at home)

**Branch email:** [glosrssg@btinternet.com](mailto:glosrssg@btinternet.com); **Society website:** [www.rssg.org.uk](http://www.rssg.org.uk)  
**Gloucestershire Branch info at:** [www.rssg.org.uk/pages/gloucestershire-branch](http://www.rssg.org.uk/pages/gloucestershire-branch)





information and history. The weather was chilly but bright and everyone opted to finish with an enjoyable lunch in the Colesbourne Inn. If you've never visited the gardens, do take the opportunity on the open days next February and March when the snowdrops will once again be a memorable sight.

### ST. GEORGE'S TIDE SERVICE 2023

Holy Trinity Church at Longlevens hosted this year's Service on 24 April. Its team was welcoming and helpful throughout the organisation and planning. Unfortunately the Vicar, Rachel Forrest, was unwell on the day. The Venerable Hilary Dawson, Archdeacon of Gloucester, and our Chaplain, Reverend Gary Grady, stepped into the breach at the last minute to lead the Service and Gary gave an excellent sermon. Grateful thanks to both of them for a brilliant rescue mission, to the St. Cecilia Singers, to Reverend Paul Youde and Mgr. Liam Slattery for leading the prayers, to Bob Perkins, our Parade Marshal, his 'second-in-command' wife Rachel, the Standard Bearers, every member who took on various roles and those who came to enjoy our celebration of our Patron Saint, St. George.

Special thanks to Mr. Edward Gillespie, HM Lord-Lieutenant and our Patron, who presented the Nairac Awards and gave two young people an evening to remember.

### Nairac Awards 2023

LILLY MARSHALL-DAVIES exceeded all expectations in her GCSE exams at Five Acres School in the Forest of Dean. During her studies she had to cope with not only the Covid disruptions but also extremely difficult personal circumstances, losing both her parents within six months of each other. Nevertheless she achieved top grades in English, French, History and Geography, meaning she is carrying on her studies at Sixth Form College. The Five Acres staff felt even sitting the exams in a time of such uncertainty was a personal feat and praised Lilly's incredible resilience and determination. Lilly decided to donate her Award money to Diabetes UK, as her Dad suffered from the condition for most of his life.



*Lilly receiving her Award from HM Lord-Lieutenant, with his Cadets*

BUSTER BRASIER-DINNING was nominated by Cirencester College where he is a second-year student studying for A-levels. At the age of just 16, Buster performed an extraordinary act of selflessness when he came across a man who was clearly about to jump from a bridge over the A419. Without hesitation Buster coaxed the man down to safety and calmly chatted with him for 25 minutes whilst holding his hand. Having alerted the police, he waited with the man for their arrival. Once the man was in safe hands, Buster called his father and broke down in tears. He learned from the police two weeks later that the man was in hospital and receiving support, which reassured him. It was admirable that Buster had the presence of mind at such a young age to act on his instincts and then feel able to support such a vulnerable person.



*Buster with his Nairac Salver and framed Certificate*





Buster is donating his Award money to The Farming Community Network, a charity which supports farmers and their families. Buster is interested in working in this field and hopes to study at the Royal Agricultural University in September.



*Member Tony Evans resplendent in his Town Crier's regalia at the Service*

I was delighted to see that at least one major St. George's Day parade was held in the Forest of Dean - in Coleford. The Scouts (St. George is their Patron Saint too), Sea and Army Cadets and local school pupils took part with Standards on parade and a marching band. The Sea Cadets gave a drill display and a good number of photographs were published in the local paper.

### **BRANCH EVENTS 2023**

**A Musical Talk by Mike & Rachel Fenton - Tuesday, 13 June at 2.30pm** at Kemble Village Hall.

Mike and Rachel Fenton offer an afternoon of music interspersed with short humorous stories.

Mike left teaching to play his autoharp full-time in 1987 and became International Autoharp Champion. He has travelled the world playing and has produced a CD 'The Best of Mike Fenton 1984-96'. Mike and Rachel play several other instruments,

including the Jews Harp and a courting dulcimer.



A booking form is enclosed. Cost is £10 per person. Please bring friends and relations for music and entertaining stories followed by afternoon tea. (If you like to bake, cake donations would be gratefully received - we can never have too much cake!)

**Branch AGM - Wednesday, 21 June at 7pm** at The Farmers' Club, Gloucester. Notice and supporting paperwork enclosed.

**Summer Sunday Lunch** - late July/early August on a date to be confirmed.

**"The Tale of Two Cities"** - An afternoon talk at The Farmers' Club, Gloucester, about the history of Ypres by our member John Lee. September on a date to be confirmed.

### **NATIONAL SOCIETY NEWS**

Our Chairman, Pat, has been regularly Zooming into meetings organised by Head Office for all Branch Chairmen. She would like to share with you, through this newsletter, bullet points from their last meeting held in April:

1. Key updates
  - a. Feedback on the latest Journal and Newsletter was very positive. Hard copy of the Journal is still important, both for members and as a marketing tool for the Society. Both hard copy and soft copy of the Journal would continue to be available.
  - b. Chris Houghton (RSSG Deputy Chairman) gave a brief update on the Website. All branches were asked to





send news and events information for the website to the office.

- c. Chris Houghton now has a team of volunteers for a membership sub-committee to work on attracting new members. More volunteers for this task would be welcomed.
- d. Cdr. James Nisbet (RSSG Vice Chairman) reported efforts to build relationships with the various cadet forces at national level and local branch level. This could apply to overseas branches as well.
- e. Two more schools are now affiliated to the Society and will be taking part in the Cenotaph event. Jennifer Yates-Rowe has been working on a presentation pack for schools to talk about St. George and engage the children in further activities.
- f. Order of St. George Medal - this is a joint initiative with the Order of St. George to present a medal to any worthy individual who have made a significant contribution to their local community. Recommendations will be put to a joint selection committee who will select a winner. There will be more information in the next Journal and on the website.
- g. David Burns has been appointed Overseas Branch Representation Officer and Dennis Stinchcombe will take on a similar role for English branches.

### 2. Campaigns

- a. English Anthem / Song - a small sub-committee is being established to look at adopting a song as an English Anthem for the Society and, hopefully, for English sporting teams. Anyone wishing to be involved, please contact Head Office.
- b. St. George's Day - all branches are encouraged to commemorate the day with members and include non-members.

### 3. Events 2023

- a. Cenotaph Cadet Parade - 22 April
- b. Coronation Boat Trip – 10 May
- c. St. George's Society of Philadelphia - 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration on 22 April
- d. Battle of Britain Lunch – 15 September
- e. Standards Service – 29 October

### 4. St George – The truth behind the man

Work will be undertaken to update information on the website so that it will become a standard reference for all members about St. George.

Do take a look at the upgraded National website if you can at [www.rssg.org.uk](http://www.rssg.org.uk) As soon as I can put it together there will be more information on our branch page!

### MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN

The Branch Chairmen's meeting notes state that a membership sub-committee has been formed at National level to recruit more members.

Your committee has been working along the same lines and has produced a poster. Some have already been put up in halls and shops. A copy is enclosed and we would be extremely grateful if you would arrange for it to be displayed in your local hall or shop. I will be happy to provide more copies as needed - please ask me!

We have also put together an article suitable for parish or local community magazines and Jacqui Connell, Committee member, has already had that published in her local magazine and is approaching other publications. Again, I can provide a copy of the article, by post or email, to any member who is willing to publicise the Branch and Society in this way.

### 2023 FEES

Membership fees were due on 1 January. Thank you for the excellent response this year as very few renewals are now outstanding. For those few I enclose another renewal form.

### DAVID LOWSLEY-WILLIAMS

Some of those who took that wonderful tour of Chavenage House last September saw the owner, David Lowsley-Williams, during our visit. Sadly he passed away at Easter and I sent a message of sympathy to his family on behalf of all our members.





Those of you who knew Mr. Lowsley-Williams through his involvement with many county organisations might like to know that a Memorial Service will be held at St. Marys' Church, Tetbury, Gloucestershire GL8 8JG, at 2pm on Thursday, 27 July.

### POSTAGE STAMPS

A final reminder that regular stamps without a barcode will no longer be valid after 31 July 2023 (following the introduction of a six months 'grace period' from the initial 31 January deadline). So if you have a small stock without barcodes you need to use them up soon - stamps are now too expensive to waste!

**Please note** that this does not apply to special pictorial and Christmas stamps without a barcode. They will continue to be valid.

### THE GARTER CEREMONY - 19 June 2023

We should hear very soon if we have been lucky in the ballot for tickets for the first Garter Ceremony of our new King's reign. If we have a positive answer, I will contact those who have told me they would like to go as soon as I know.

The Order of the Garter was founded by Edward III and its motto 'Honi soi qui mal y pense' (Shame on he who thinks evil of it) has been emblazoned on its heraldry from its inception.

That very first Garter Ceremony was held on St. George's Day 1349 and convened in St. George's Chapel, Windsor. Through the establishment of the Order Edward III elevated St. George and aimed to promote chivalry and incentivise war (I hope, indeed expect, the latter was abandoned long ago - humanity has experienced and still sees far too much war) for the leading nobility of the realm, with the mythical figures of Arthur, of the Round Table, and St. George spurring them on.

### THE CORONATION

My apologies that this newsletter is a little late, because my printer threw a tantrum and I

also 'lost' a day sitting in front of the television watching the Coronation. There may not be another in my lifetime so I was determined to savour every minute.

What a memorable event! It was full of tradition, pageantry and wonderful music, with modern tweaks too.

Top marks to our incredible Armed Forces for everything they did in the planning and on the day; top marks to Penny Mordaunt and so many others who took part without displaying any of the inevitable nervousness they must have felt but nevertheless carried out their roles impeccably. I do hope you enjoyed it as much as I did. Congratulations to King Charles and Queen Camilla - the rain may have dampened their parade a little but the weather was much the same for the Coronations of George VI and Elizabeth II and this country was blessed to have both of them - so a good omen perhaps.

(In case you haven't guessed yet - I'm an ardent royalist and make no excuses for it!)

Some of you may have thought the Dean of Westminster Abbey, The Very Reverend Dr. David Hoyle, seemed familiar and not only because of his many recent appearances on television. It may have been because Dr. Hoyle was a Canon at Gloucester Cathedral and during his time there attended several of our St. George's Day Services.

In fact he led our Service in 2006. That year marked the centenary of the birth of Lt. Col. James Power Carne, V.C., of the Gloucestershire Regiment. Col. Carne was captured during the Korean War and held in captivity in Pynchong-in Camp, Korea. Whilst there, he carved a five-inch-tall (13cm) Celtic cross out of volcanic rock using, it is believed, just a nail. The cross was used in services at the camp and the Royal Gloucestershire Berkshire & Wiltshire Light Infantry kindly gave permission for it to be taken to the altar for our 2006 Service by Sergeant Major Will Rouse of the RGBWLI.

For our Service in 2011, which marked marking the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of The Battle of





Imjin River, The Rifles Gloucestershire gave permission for Lance Corporal Kevin Barber to take the cross to the altar.

It is highly unlikely we will have the privilege of seeing the original cross paraded at our Service again. It was publicly displayed for many years at the Cathedral but was moved into its Treasury about six years ago when it had become clear it was a high value artefact.

Three replicas of the cross were then carved by Gloucester Cathedral stonemason Wieslaw Szod, using sandstone from the Forest of Dean. One replica is now displayed in the Cathedral, one at the Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum, and one was sent to Paju in South Korea. The South Koreans commemorate annually the brave actions of the Glosters at Imjin River and they maintain strong links with our county.

I consider myself privileged that some years ago I was able to acquire a letter handwritten by Lt. Col. Carne on 15 September 1973 to The Very Reverend Gilbert Thurlow, Dean of Gloucester Cathedral at that time.

Col. Carne wrote "Thank you .. for consulting me about the proposed light for the cross. However, this question is undoubtedly one for you to decide and I will accept willingly whatever that decision may be." The letter is safely stowed away and my executors have already been instructed where it should go when I shuffle off this mortal coil!



The original cross - photographed when it was displayed publicly in the Cathedral

***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](mailto:glosrsg@btinternet.com)***



As there is room on this final page, I thought you might like to see the Coronation display on the village cross at Aylburton, a few miles along the A48 from where I live. It must have taken hours of work by members of Aylburton WI and has been much photographed.

