

## Lunchtime talk on Violette Szabo and visit to Violette Szabo Museum

Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> July, 2023

11.00 am for 11.30 at the Pilgrim Hotel, Ross Road, Much Birch, Hereford HR2 8HJ

Talk by the Museum creator, Rosemary Rigby MBE.

Followed by lunch and a visit to the Museum.



Violette was a British-French Special Operations Executive agent during the Second World War. She accepted the offer to train as a field agent after her husband, Étienne, was killed in action at the beginning of the Second Battle of El Alamein.

She was awarded the George Cross, posthumously. Excerpts from the citation read as follows:

*“She was surrounded by the Gestapo in a house in the south-west of France. Resistance appeared hopeless but Madame Szabo, seizing a Sten-gun and as much ammunition as she could carry, barricaded herself in part of the house and, exchanging shot for shot with the enemy, killed or wounded several of them.”*

*“She was then continuously and atrociously tortured but never by word or deed gave away any of her acquaintances or told the enemy anything of any value. She was ultimately executed. Madame Szabo gave a magnificent example of courage and steadfastness.”*

Violette used to visit her family's home in Herefordshire during the holidays and in between her war missions. Mrs. Rigby now lives in that house and has devoted her life since retirement to sharing Violette's remarkable story.

In 1958 a film of her life was released. “Carve Her Name with Pride” starred Virginia McKenna. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carve\\_Her\\_Name\\_with\\_Pride](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carve_Her_Name_with_Pride) Virginia attended the first fund raising event to launch the Violette Szabo Museum. The museum website is <https://www.violette-szabo-museum.co.uk/>

For those who want to extend their visit to this beautiful part of the county there is also the Violette Szabo GC Trail. The Allied Special Forces Association, in association with the Violette Szabo GC Museum in Wormelow, launched this trail in 2000. It follows six miles of footpaths and lanes. For further details go to [https://www.herefordshireramblers.org.uk/images/group/walks/aconbury\\_hill.pdf](https://www.herefordshireramblers.org.uk/images/group/walks/aconbury_hill.pdf)