

National Memorial Arboretum

Please, right now, if you are reading this article, take 5 seconds - just 5 seconds, to remember someone you knew who has died....

Now, how do you feel having given a few seconds of your life, remembering theirs?

Located in the heart of the country within the National Forest near Lichfield, the National Memorial Arboretum comprises 150 acres of over 50,000 trees and over 150 memorials devoted to the concept of Remembrance and acknowledging the enduring sacrifice of those who mourn their loss.

Well known as being the home of the Armed Forces Memorial, the arboretum also hosts a wide range of memorials which fall into several categories including: Military, Civil Services, Police, Fire Brigade, Ambulance Service, Local Organisations, Overseas Organisations and Charities.

The Arboretum is supported by the Royal British Legion, is free to enter and welcomed over 300,000 through its gates in 2008.

BUT THEY NEED HELP – AND, IN OUR DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY YEAR, WE ARE ASKING EVERY CLUB TO CONSIDER SIGNING UP TO ANSWERING THEIR NEED.



The Arboretum has recently expanded, providing an additional area for further memorials. Unfortunately, this means the existing two shelters provided for visitors to rest and seek protection from the elements are some distance from the new grounds. A location has been identified for a third shelter, and the need to serve the public is urgent, but the Arboretum needs assistance in providing it, the cost being around £25,000.

Fellow Lions have for some time believed that we should have a presence in the Arboretum and the expansion of the site has given us the opportunity to fulfil this dream.

Visitors come from across the British Isles and Ireland – from all of our Districts, Regions and Zones. It also welcomes visits from both primary and secondary schools. There is an education programme available and study opportunities are available for any age group and form part of an educational programme linked to the National Curriculum with a focus on history and citizenship, incorporating remembrance and conflict.

When visitors are tired, need to rest or take refuge from the elements, the need for a shelter is paramount. We recognise that need and, apart from the immediate request from the Arboretum, we are also looking into a similar gesture in Ireland.

WE HAVE THE CHANCE ‘TO SERVE’

WE CAN MEET THIS NEED IF WE ALL ACT TOGETHER



The shelter design would incorporate a carved Lions logo and a dedication plaque to those fellow Lions who have given their lives in whatever capacity they served.

All we are asking at this stage is for EVERY CLUB to discuss the project and email us by the end of January with a pledge for a sum of money. If each Club pledged about £75 (many will do more, some less) we would reach the target and the project would be able to move very quickly to fruition. Only when we have received enough pledges, would Clubs be asked to forward the funds to a central account.

Now you know why so many people make the pilgrimage to the Arboretum to pay their respects to their departed, right here, right now, take another 5 seconds to remember yours.



Now please discuss our proposal and consider how much YOUR club could donate.

Then e-mail arboretum@lions.org.uk with the title Arboretum Shelter, your Club name and amount you are willing to pledge.

Thank you.

Christine Rowe

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