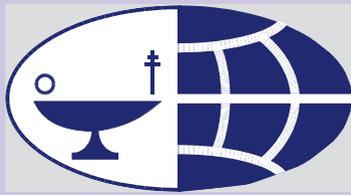


In Touch



April 2020

Charity No 211042  
SC045491

## Centenary Edition 4 of 10 Toc H — 1940 to 1949



### Quis Separabit

Why doth He bear our grief and share our  
sorrow?

Why does He promise joy to those that mourn?  
Why doth He pledge the triumph of tomorrow  
To the oppressed, the outcast. The forlorn?

It is because the breath of benediction,  
Which overwhelms our frailties and fears.  
Is breaking down our sense of dereliction.  
Our darkness and our tumults and our tears.

Where cometh healing for a world heart--broken?

Not from the sword, the sermon, or the pen  
Why are His promises sincerely spoken?  
Why does His every word bring life to men?  
If ye would learn the heart of the Redeemer,  
Trust and be true to His indwelling light.  
Let workers hope; for dawn will crown that  
Dreamer.

Who, step by step, establisheth the right.

P.B.C (Tuppy)  
At Yatesbury : July

FRIENDSHIP SERVICE FAIRMINDEDNESS WITNESS

By Toc H MEMBERS (*Past and present*) for Toc H  
MEMBERS (*Present AND FUTURE*)

ISSN 1758-2407

# IN TOUCH

## EDITORIAL TEAM

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### *Terry's Letter*

I'm writing this Editorial during the lock down that we are all living through, the problems associated with coronavirus are in many ways difficult to comprehend. Yes, we know about coughs and fevers and the need to stay close to home apart from shopping and the authorised walk if these are possible.

The wider implications are hard to see at this stage, what kind of society will we be when the release comes. Will the good will of neighbours and volunteers continue, will people feel better able to communicate with one another, only time will tell?

In this issue of *In Touch* we can read about how Toc H members contributed to keeping good will as a touch stone in difficult times.



**Charity No 211042  
SC045491**

The examples that Jo has collected give us

insights into life in extreme circumstances and may offer insights that we can learn from.

A problem for all of us and for all charities that in the present time we are unable to offer services and support in part due to age and our capacity to be active, though I'm sure that there will be Toc H members who are part of the many thousands of volunteers who have offered their services to their local community.

The challenges we face are not it must be said commensurate with the 1940's for obvious reasons, though the potential for celebrations when we have a return to normality may be something for which we can all make a contribution, perhaps a street party, a church service of thanksgiving with a celebratory meal and no doubt other examples come to mind.

it is important that we also reflect on the thought that voluntary actions are at their best in the Toc H style when they are offered with no expectation of a return and perhaps in our time without publicity.

An example of voluntary action that came to me in reading the contributions in this issue of the journal was the report of the opening of the Toc H Centre in Rome following the liberation. My father was one of the soldiers who entered Rome on the liberation. Very close to the end of his life he visited us in London, a rare exception In that he always said that he had travelled enough in the war and hardly ever left home for a holiday.

During the visit he insisted that he wanted to visit All. Hallows due to the Toc H link, none of his family were aware of any contact with Toc H, like many men of his generation he never talked of the war. On reflection and with hindsight its possible to make a link with his army experience bringing him in contact with Toc H.

In many ways this reflects the approach of doing good with stealth and not shouting from the roof tops! The sad element is that it was only in the last days of his life that the connection was made.

In our high-profile media age of the good so many people do we need to remember that the best voluntary activity is a private act that needs no thanks. In contrast perhaps with the importance of a very public statement of thanks to all those who this time of the virus who are working in hospitals, care homes and those working in supermarkets who can so easily be taken for granted. In each of these cases there are individuals and groups supporting the rest of us by continuing to do their job.

On a personal note my thanks go to the newsagent and the person who delivers my newspaper for keeping alive what for me is a very important service. another example of the unsung heroes.the 1940's were a time of clear distress on every level, war is not something that any of us want to experience. Linking the virus to a war time situation is not necessarily appropriate in my opinion, more important is our ability to come together (though not too close) to ensure that all who need support are given it and in what is offered living out the Four Points of the Compass even though most of the

support given will be by people who have no idea of the existence of these principles that are so important to Toc H members. I hope that by the time we publish the next issue of *In Touch* we will be out of lock down and be able together to work for a society that builds on what we have learned from the present very difficult time.

I hope and pray that all who read these words stay well in the coming months.

**Terry Drummond**

PS. A special thanks to Hilary and Doug who even in the period of lock down continue to produce issues of *In Touch*

**.... and following on from that .....**

We feel that you are all owed an explanation and an apology that things at Head Office are **somewhat chaotic and not just because of Covid 19!!**

Most of you may remember when Toc H had to respond to a financial situation that had arisen for reasons that are now historic. Toc H then was then liable for debts or guarantees of some four and a half million pounds. If Toc H was to survive it had little option but to make all staff redundant and sell many properties. So a staff of near on 100 were indeed made redundant and although many were working in nurseries and moved with the nurseries to other administrators there were also a great many headquarters and admin staff who were needed to equip the complex and many faceted organisation the Toc H had grown into. This was now a dozen years ago, but Toc H itself survived with virtually no staff and the Trustees fought hard to achieve that with a loaned office space in Birmingham.

In recent years we have been delighted that financial stability had been achieved and Doug became a lone member of Staff to cover a great deal of the finances and administration. Eventually we achieved a dedicated Head Office and were able to appoint Marcia as full time staff. .... However as most of you will be aware Marcia became ill and stopped work in October and sadly died just after Christmas.

So we were back to just Doug and the Trustees with Jo specifically to research and present the story of Toc H in these Centenary *In Touch*.

Help came in the form of Wendy who as a qualified book-keeper was able to relieve Doug of some of the pressures he faces with admin and negotiations and the general on going things that keep us legal and functioning. Wendy, following the death of a relative and therefore needing to self isolate for at least two weeks but all being well will return when able to , but only for the one day a week that she has agreed to.

In the meantime Doug is diagnosed with cancer which has apparently spread and needs chemotherapy, and we are self isolating and not even going to the office unless we are really have no option and then only if it is unoccupied, which is now is most of the time.

### **SO Please bear with us !!!**

.....we can only do so much at this difficult time!! Do phone but leave a message and we will get back to you when we can!! If you have our home number which many do then please feel free to use it, if not messages left on the office phone are transmitted over to us and the office phone does have an extension over here too, but we can only hear it if we are in the same room as it is!!

We will do our best to keep these Centenary In Touch coming, but as the entirety of the editorial team fall within the category of those that should be self isolating even that has it's problems because we can't physically meet up any longer!!! At that point I should like to apologise for the front cover of The Thirties—all I can say is that had the full text when it went to print.

**MOST IMPORTANTLY ~ Many many thanks for the good wishes, get well cards, and support you have given us as we go through this difficult time!!! We are very touched and uplifted by them and Chris ~ the flowers were so special!!!**

**What a family Toc H is!!!!**



## Cenotaph 2020

Once more we have received an email from The British Legion asking us how many places we would like for the 2020 parade.

Now I know that Covid-19 may well alter plans that far in the future but lets be very positive and see what we can do to get Toc H there in its centenary year.

If any of the members out there would like to go to this event, I have myself in the past and found it deeply moving, please can you drop a line to us here at Toc H and we will do our best to get you onto the parade.

While the event is many months away in November, work on checking all those who are going needs to be started fairly soon. So the dead line for letting us at the centre here know if you would like to attend is MID MAY at the latest.

If you have never been and would like to go this is what is normally required, arrive to assemble at about 8:30 or 9:00 in the morning, a lot of standing about (or using shooting sticks) then a march from at most Trafalgar square down Whitehall to Parliament Square right and right again to march or walk by now up beside the Hyde Park to the horse guard's parade to be salute by a member (normally) of the royal family, tea and coffee available, pictures taken and off home again.



Feel free to phone if you want to discuss anything about it. 0121 44 33 55 2 or 0121 444 5925. Or email [dgc@toch.org.uk](mailto:dgc@toch.org.uk)

Doug Geater Childs

# The Movement of Toc H

## 1940~1949

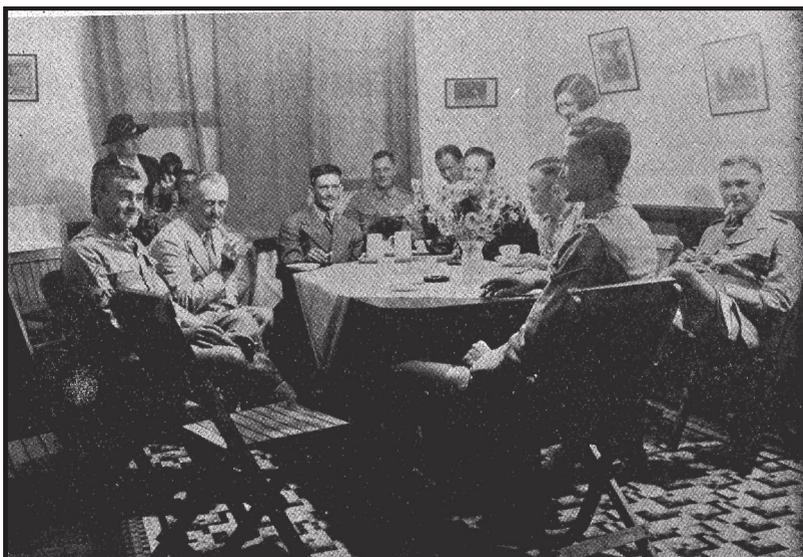
### Author's Note:

*So far, these articles have been largely anonymous citing, 'the organisation', 'the branches', 'the members', but this one will be different naming some of the individuals that have stood out in the history of Toc H in the 1940s.*

### 'Don't mind whatever happens. It's alright. I am upheld'

The title of Tubby's New Year Message this year when the country was facing the prospect of a year at war, following its outbreak on September 3<sup>rd</sup> 1939.

They were the final words of Guardsman Fred Hinks, a Portsea Club boy to Tubby as he left Talbot House in Poperinge for the Battle of Passchendaele 23 years before. It must have been a horrifying thought that the spectre of a World War had returned so soon and ongoing hostilities were in fact, to shape the work of the organisation for the next decade.



**Servicemen relaxing in an unknown location**

The Annual Report published in April 1940, included a War Policy to reiterate Toc H values and emphasise particular areas in which the organisation should be involved. These included Services Clubs, Orkney Naval bases (Tubby's particular interest), the British Expeditionary Force (B.E.F.), civilian needs, The Marks, Seafaring boys and overseas work. Services clubs were perhaps the easiest to address and branches immediately began to use whatever premises they had, to feed, water, house, entertain or just provide a quiet space for servicemen and other displaced people in this country and, as time went on, in Gibraltar, Malta and South Africa to name but a few.

**TOC H  
SERVICES CLUBS**

*Carry Your Friendship  
and Hospitality to all  
the Services*

*White Space for Local Notice*

Similar work continued all over the world sometimes utilising Toc H's Marks, a tank brigade, ships or any other location that could be commandeered! It is impossible to name them all, but they included Port Moresby in Papua, a Troop ship sailing the high seas, Algeria, Tunisia and Burma. Some provided accommodation and/or food and others just fellowship and respite. A canteen in South India deserves a special mention feeding 400-600 men a night! The Journal, realising the need for secrecy, omitted exact locations for security.

Slightly more unusual services were provided by members in Switzerland who wrote to POWs in Jerusalem,

servicemen on leave were given tours of religious sites and in Malta, a request for books was sent home. Sometime later many books were despatched including 70 volumes from the Queen!



### **Pilgrim House of Toc H, Orkney**

On the outbreak of war, Tubby was in Scotland and went immediately to Orkney where he realised that the Naval Base at Scapa Flow would need support. Such was the size of the military operation that five Toc H bases were established. Kirkwall had a range of buildings and could deal with two thousand men. Wakefield House provided hostel, rest room and recreational facilities to many non-naval personnel who sail the minesweeper, drifter and other auxillary craft. Hankey House at Netherbutton was mainly for men in camp who had to stay near the guns and searchlights. Across the flow was Halifax House where members from destroyers could go and Pilgrim House in Orkney, where sick men from all the forces could go for rest and recuperation. These sites had been sustained so far with the help of the three services and members of the House of Commons.

The help for the B.E.F. in France initially occurred in an unofficial capacity as Toc H members realised the need for places of respite along the front. This then gained official sanction from the War Office in February, and in March a team, who could be recognised by a small bronze Lamp of Maintenance and Toc H on their cap

badges and collars, had crossed the channel to make plans. Some work had already been done in Paris by four R.A.F. members who, with the help of Padres, had found a small room over the Café de la Gare in Paris where servicemen could relax and find some fellowship and thus avoid the inevitable boredom and temptations of the beer tent. Subsequently, another letter from France describes two centres for British troops that had opened under the auspices of several organisations of which Toc H was one. Apart from these clubs, Toc H Paris continues to be busy taking parcels and books to servicemen in hospital, contributing to a Christmas Concert at Almshouses by singing and performing the Highland Fling, many in National Costume. This was so successful that more were planned for French troops. The writer's parting line was 'So gay Patee is still gay!'

This optimism however, was to be short lived as the B.E.F. campaign collapsed in May after the capitulation of Belgian forces resulted in the retreat of the British and French.

Back in Britain, in a parish hall in a London suburb Toc H ran a club every Thursday night for refugees. Here people from all over the world mingled with club members and enjoyed concerts, talks, singing and refreshment. One participant from Bavaria was overheard to say

'in England one can breathe,' a sentiment that was shared by many in the room.

As far as possible other work overseas continued where possible. The British Empire Leprosy Relief Fund (BELRA) continued their work with Leprosy although often hampered as people were called up. Staff in Shanghai managed to continue with Scouts, blood transfusion and hospital visits but an increasing problem was that of the thousands of Jewish refugees that were arriving in the area. Despite being a long way from the conflict, Australia was determined to be ready for anything. They established clubs for refugees, collected books, papers and magazines for men at the training camps, helped with transport and opened Servicemen's clubs in some larger towns. They also ran A.R.P training and First Aid classes as well as trying to maintain their usual activities.

Perhaps the most unexpected request for a Toc H presence was in Iceland where, after the fall of Denmark was occupied by British Troops

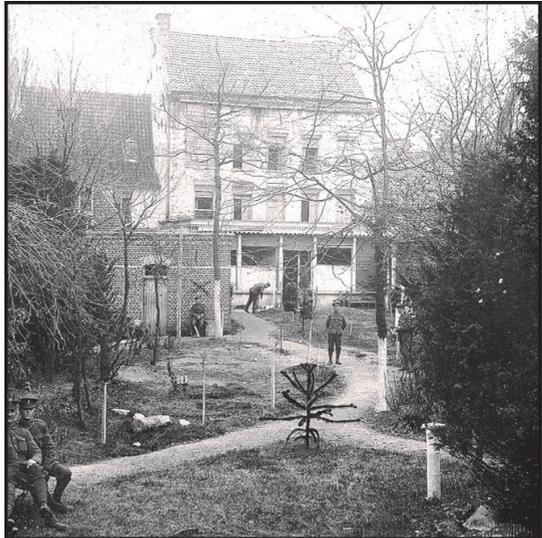
to prevent a German base being established in the area. Despite local laws that prevented foreigners from occupying houses, Toc H managed to find a suitable house and then helped by an article written by a British officer in the local newspaper explaining Toc H, became operational.

As the year progressed the effects of the war unfortunately, made an impact. Malta reported that they were managing to carry on despite the efforts of the Italian Air Force and at home, the branch in Coventry was completely destroyed by bombing, thankfully no one was hurt.

On a more administrative level, discussion had taken place about the position of the Conscientious Objector at this time. One member of Toc H had taken this stand and after due consideration his views were upheld and he agreed to serve in the Royal Army Medical Corps in a non-combatative role.

### **Talbot House in Poperinge.**

Between 1940 and 1945, Talbot House in Poperinge, the birthplace of Toc H had experienced a troubled existence. Initially, much of Belgium was destroyed as the B.E.F. failed and there were reports that the house had been badly damaged.



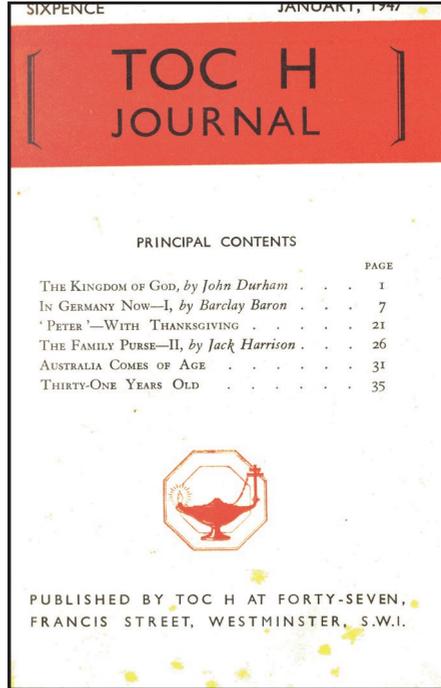
However, in September 1944 the returning allied forces discovered it still standing, with all its windows intact, a big Union Jack flying from an upper window and being guarded by Belgian soldiers. It was much altered inside as it had been used by Germans in the interim, 'but the great majority of the pictures, books and relics, records and objects of historic interest had been most carefully carried off by loving hands and hidden in a large number of scattered places for safety'. By 1945, it was fully renovated with all the aforementioned artefacts, (including the Lamp that had been hurriedly buried in the

garden by the Secretary's wife) returned. As the Allied forces passed through it was used briefly as a Serviceman's Club again but soon became redundant as peace returned. It was looked after by Army Authorities and Belgian friends and became something of a tourist attraction.

**The Journal**

The Toc H Journal changed considerably over the decade, necessitated by the effect of the war years. After 1940, it was not printed in 1941 and 1942, but returned in 1943-46 with less news but with long articles about other countries or current affairs, before changing its format completely in 1947 when it became a smaller

'pocket' size with 48 pages costing 6d per copy or 5s annually. The Editor warned that the ongoing paper shortage may have an effect in the future, as indeed was the case later that year when the March issue could not be published.



**All Hallows Church**

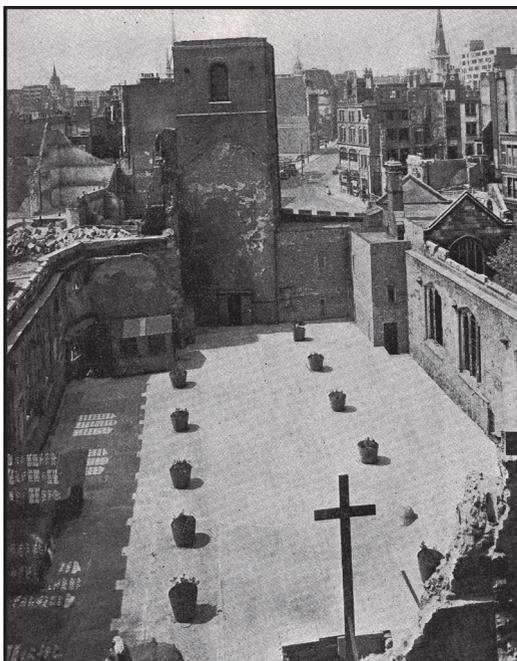
The mother church of Toc H, All Hallows, suffered a direct hit during the London bombing and only the walls and tower remained.

Whilst this was obviously a blow to

the organisation, controversy was to follow shortly afterwards when the High Commissioner for Canada preached that the first job of Toc H after the war was to rebuild its "Mother Church". This was widely reported on the BBC and in newspapers causing consternation amongst members who felt this was bad publicity for the organisation and that their priorities should be directed to more important causes. Toc H hastily tried to address this by refuting his comments in an effort to mitigate the bad publicity.



After the war the church was gradually re-built, helped by gifts from all over the world including steel, wood and tiles from various donors in the USA, Canada and New Zealand, a font hewn from Gibraltar rock to name but a few. This ensured that no materials were taken away from housing needs. The North aisle of the Church was re-opened for worship in September 1949 with Queen Mary in attendance.



## **A new location for branches**

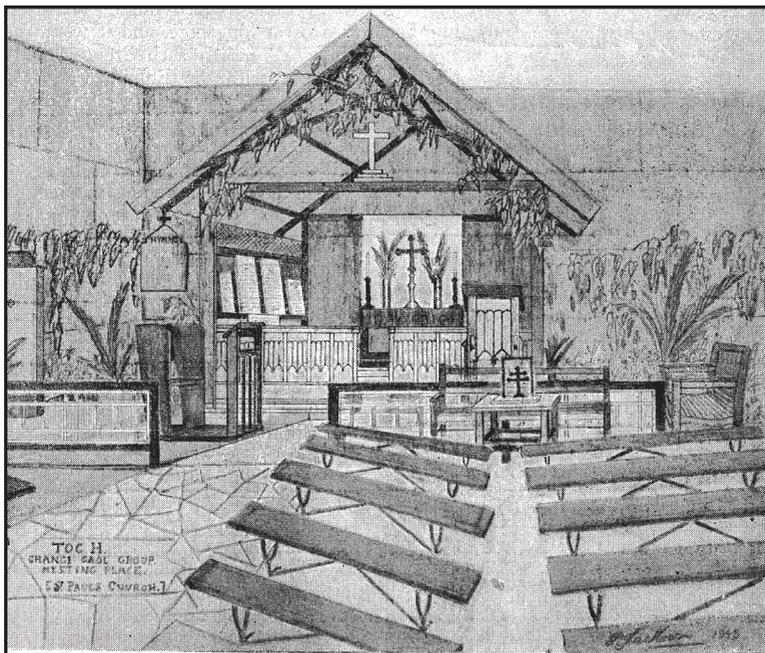
An unexpected, and unforeseen new location for Toc H branches were the new ones formed in the Prisoner of War Camps in Germany, Italy and Singapore. These were at first, initiated by Toc H members who had been taken prisoner, but numbers gradually increased as fellow prisoners joined. The value of Toc H to these men, some of whom had been incarcerated for many years, could not be underestimated as it provided them with fellowship and purpose

‘ to help to ‘make prison life not merely bearable but fruitful’.

A detailed account of life in the Singapore POW camps was written by Frank E Miles who joined Toc H in captivity and became Chairman of the Changi Gaol group. He explains that unlike camps elsewhere, officers and other ranks and those from other nations were not separated, which created problems that the Toc H groups were able to overcome. Personnel were constantly changing as some got sent away to work on the Burma-Thailand railway, many thousands of whom did not return. Meetings were restricted by space, time, and interruptions by Guards but still managed to recreate something of the format of a Toc H meeting at home. Padre Gilbert John Chambers who became their spiritual leader, sadly died shortly before liberation.

Also from Changi Goal an interesting new story had emerged about the Rushlight that was used in their Chapel. This had been made by a lad who had lost his leg in the conflict, from odd bits of aluminium, wood and duralumin wire flattened into strips using tools made of broken glass and sharp stones. It was used in the Chapel from 1943 until 1945 and on July 4<sup>th</sup> 1946 was handed over to the re-constituted Singapore group to be kept safely, until it could be placed in the Cathedral as a memorial to the 43 Elder Brethren who had died at Japanese hands.

*At the top of the next page is a pencil drawing of Changi Chapel - it was drawn by a prisoner and then hidden and then eventually brought home.*



### **Toc H work at home**

Work continued back in this country but suffered from a drop in numbers as members got called up and some sadly injured or killed. Funding was also a problem as subscriptions fell but help sometimes came from unexpected sources. A club in Bristol survived mainly because of donations from grateful GI's and in Leicester a club was funded by parents who had lost their only son, a poignant circumstance that also occurred elsewhere.

### **The work of Tom Bartlett, a Toc H member**

In August 1943, Tubby tells the story of Tom Bartlett who then lived in Harrow with his family. Some twenty years before he had arrived in the area alone and knowing no one apart from Frank Johnson in Muswell Hill and a Mr Nickin in New Barnet. Tubby felt that these three could be credited with the re-birth of Toc H in North London. Tom, worked tirelessly on many acts of service but was particularly good at helping people who were blind, deaf or dumb or any combination thereof. He devised ways of helping them communicate and passed this on to others in the branch.

It was however, a hobby of his that is of particular interest. He had always been a keen bird watcher and had produced a highly detailed booklet, 'From Birds to Aeroplanes' about their flight and habitat. Tubby suggested that this should be re-issued and with special reference to the RAF amongst whom there were many keen bird watchers. Co-incidentally, The Army Council were also promoting a bird-watching scheme for soldiers working overseas and in prison camps, so interest was growing. It was considered perhaps a healthy diversion for soldiers and young boys to distract them from bombs and gun turrets. An 'Eight Point Drill' to provide a framework for watching and recording birds was devised and The British Trust for Ornithology and the RSPB schemes were drawn in to encourage school children, Scouts and Guides to get involved. Thus the hobby of a Toc H member enriched the lives of both servicemen and young people.

### **Allied invasion of Europe**

On June 6<sup>th</sup> 1944 the Allied invasion of Europe began and thousands of troops crossed the channel to land in France. This campaign was eventually to lead to the cessation of hostilities but took nearly 11 months before peace was declared. During this time Toc H and other similar organisations undertook to support the troops much in the same way as in the 1<sup>st</sup> World War. Toc H sent teams of people out to support the work of Chaplains and find suitable premises to utilise for meetings, canteens or services. However, as the troops moved on, Toc H had to constantly move too and as well as establishing some permanent bases, quickly decided to use a mobile unit to enable it to help as many people as possible.



## **1944, a feeling of optimism grows**

This year the tone of the Journal seemed to change as an air of optimism crept in, as people dared to hope that the end of the war was coming.

### **The feelings of a member of the LWH who called herself 'A Sand Widow'**

In January 1944, a heartfelt article titled 'When husbands come home' was published in which LWH member writes movingly about her feelings about the imminent return of her husband, from whom she had been separated for some time. It is followed by the man's view. The accounts are raw and emotional, impossible to paraphrase, but both highlight their hopes and fears about their reunion and future life together.

Their marriage like many others during those turbulent years, may have been rushed, their time together short, others may have been unfaithful and both parties had had to cope without each other in the interim, possibly developing into different people, as their lives and the world around them changed during the war years.

The wife felt that their marriage service was a long time ago and seemed unreal so suggested that a new marriage ceremony should be written to allow couples to start again...

'I want to be able to go to church in my prettiest clothes and gayest hat, with my husband in his uniform with his buttons nicely polished and his decorations up. In the presence of our nearest friends and kindest relations, I want to enjoy a short and simple service in which our reunion is blessed and we give thanks for each other and for our married life now about to begin'.

A suggested format for the service followed. Later in the year, the Journal reported that the Archbishop of Canterbury and several Bishops were considering the idea and discussions were ongoing. A gunner in Italy wrote to the Editor saying he had also read the article and shared it with his fellow soldiers who may have had similar misgivings.

On a more practical note there were also two articles titled, 'The boys come home' which discussed the problem of how existing Toc H members would stay in contact and find groups at home to join.

## **Young\_people**

In 1944 there was growing concern in many quarters about the youth of the country, highlighted by research carried out by Major Radcliffe, a former member of Toc H who looked at conditions for young people going to sea, in industry and in mines and shipyards. He felt that this was a very serious situation that should be addressed by all, from Government ministers, employers, to Club leaders and parents to ensure that young people were safe and could develop into responsible adults.

## **The work of Jimmy 'Pop' Yates**

This problem however, was not new and had been addressed by Jimmy Yates who, after the Ist World War, began to look after homeless lads by taking them into his home. He struggled on for years with very little money until Toc H stepped in with funds and man power. Over 24 years 857 young people have passed through his care at 'Blighty' as his house was called, with many others staying for just one night.

He then makes the point that, following the end of hostilities this time, instead of erecting stones and plaques in memory of the fallen, 'Memorial Houses' should be built to help the hundreds of homeless young people who will need help. He appealed to Toc H saying 'so come on! Do summat worthwhile-*lest we forget!* And may God guide us all!'

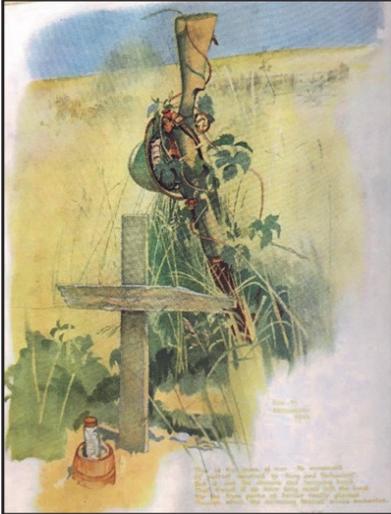
## **Two Toc H members at war – "Spud" Thomson and an 'Unknown Toc H Soldier'**

A reminder of the horrors of war was vividly described in a letter from "Spud" Thomson, a member from Partick, sent to the Journal in April 1944. He was on active service in Italy when he decided to shelter in what he thought was an abandoned house. As he pushed open the door he saw that part of the Toc H Journal dated May '43 was stuffed into the door jam. The previous occupants had obviously left in a hurry, a still warm meal on the table, petrol cans positioned as improvised seats, army blankets laid out and a half written letter to someone's mother. He realised he was not alone and upstairs he found a badly injured soldier. He could do nothing to help, but stayed with him until the end. He had nothing on him for identification, but on his wrist was a Toc H strap badge.

When his unit caught up with him they buried him,

“We had peace to do it; after the noise and hustle everything was so quiet and tranquil; no elaborate ceremony, no flowers, a rough wooden cross”.

Spud buried his Toc H diary with him and said ‘The Ceremony of Light’ over him, proud that he had been able to do something for a new member to the Elder Brethren.



**This is the grave of man.  
No patriot mourned by King  
and Parliament .....**

Painting: Eric H Kennington  
1st 2 lines of Poem:W J Turner

### **Bevan Boys**

Concern for young people was the focus of a similar appeal made to Toc H members in mining districts to address the problem of care for the ‘Bevan Boys’ as they were called.

These young men between the ages of 18-25, were conscripted to work in the coal mines between December 1943 and March 1948 as an alternative to Military Conscription. Nearly 48,000 boys



reported to various training centres to become coal mining probationers. After just a month of intensive training they were sent to collieries for permanent employment, often working in dangerous conditions to provide the country with much needed fuel. They were often vulnerable having been sent away from home, to live in digs, with few friends and little to do in their spare time. It was suggested that members befriend them by visiting them in their homes, sharing rations, taking them out and introducing them to local amenities, in an effort to make them feel more at home. Apparently some then began to visit local Toc H meetings.

### **1945 onwards**

This was the year in which World War II came to an end with victory in Europe declared on 7<sup>th</sup> May and the surrender of Japan on August 14<sup>th</sup>. This was celebrated with joy and relief throughout the United Kingdom and amongst the Allied forces across the world.

It was a time of transition and change for many and the Journal included several series of articles, notably 'Sinews of Peace' and 'Youth work', discussing the way forward for Toc H, reiterating the principles of the charity and highlighting some of the causes that they suggested they should be involved in. Topics covered included planning for post war, fund raising, fundamental beliefs and more practically, instructions of how to build a new Unit.

Toc H reiterated that its work with Leprosy would continue despite continuing shortage of funds. They remained committed to sending trained volunteers to work for BELRA and issued a heartfelt plea for more to come forward. The 'job description' is not for the faint hearted...

'You must be constitutionally strong to stand the strain. Otherwise don't apply. Produce a Doctors Certificate and be prepared for five years overseas with only one leave. What about pay? You will not save. You will not starve. You will not touch your own capital. You will be happier than you've ever been. The problems of Post War will not affect you. You will have your choice to do Christ's will. Pray about it. Agonise over it. Then when you know the truth which makes you free, write in...'



### **The long term future for Toc H Post war**

This became a source of growing concern and was frequently discussed by Tubby and many others. There were obviously very few of the original members left and even before the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War there had been concern about retaining members when they got married and had children. During the hostilities many groups (both men's and women's) had disbanded or reduced in number and some had combined which was to become another source of contention! However, perhaps the most important question voiced was the financial position of Toc H. It was suggested that unless changes were made the organisation would be bankrupt by 1948.

At its conception in 1919

'Toc H had £9 invested in a 2<sup>nd</sup> hand typewriter, and nothing else except a group of men, forty in London and two in Manchester and one in India, who believed in it'.

From this it grew rapidly as people joined, driven by a faith in God and a desire to help others. The extra work undertaken at the outbreak of war and in the years that followed were essential but had resulted in too great a financial strain. Tubby's main suggestion was that in the next two years, numbers must be increased and hundreds of new Units created across Great Britain. Other plans included an Annual Fund raising show, a self-denial week, increasing the habit of giving and 'begging', the latter justified by the teaching of St. Francis.

## **Work continues**

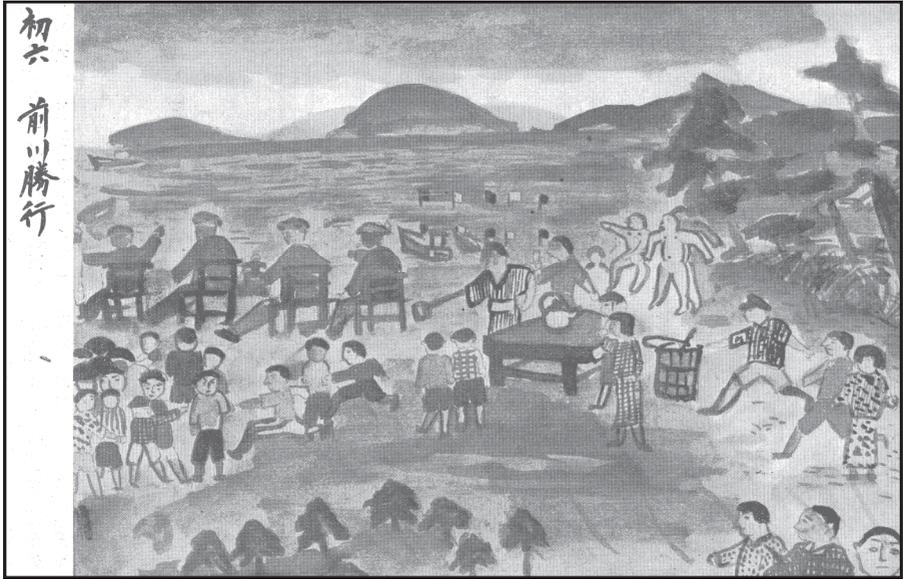
Despite these concerns work continued both here and overseas, much still involved in caring for the Services during the Post war years.

In Rome the first club in a liberated capital opened, followed by a large number of clubs both static and mobile all over the country. Some of which were closed and opened elsewhere as the occupying troops moved on. These clubs predominantly existed for servicemen as places to rest, relax, and be entertained in their off duty hours. They were very varied depending on the accommodation available, but could include canteens, chapels, billiard rooms, gymnasiums amongst their facilities.

A Warden from a club in Malaya was very honoured to entertain Lord Louis Mountbatten for several days. He had, apparently expressed a wish for 'a quiet restful time' and he was given the exclusive use of their H.Q. Hillbrow. When he left he expressed

'a keen appreciation of our work here in the Far East, and expressed his thanks for a 'perfect' weekend, and for the work being done here for 'my boys'.

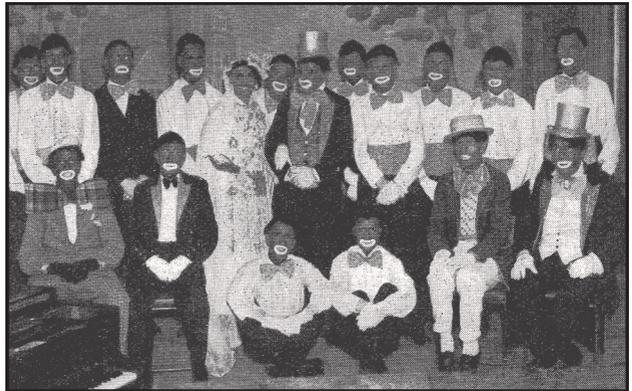
On March 28<sup>th</sup> 1946 a contingent of Toc H arrived in Japan to work with the occupying troops and local Japanese. Together with W.V.S staff and Japanese staff they planned to run a camp that would accommodate 200 British and 300 Indian troops to include comfortable living areas, a chapel, recreation rooms, canteens, a shopping area and even an indoor skating area and English pub. Apart from the practical aspect of looking after the troops the idea was to integrate and learn about the local people and inspire feelings of goodwill between British, Indian and Japanese people. This resulted in invitations to floral arrangement demonstrations and tea ceremonies from the Japanese with the British providing jeep rides for the children and a concert, which culminated in a rendition of Auld Lang Syne in English and Japanese. The children seemed to break down a lot of barriers and loved the company of 'Uncle Toc and Uncle H'. The picture of a swimming competition says it all.



There were 8 clubs in the British zone of occupation in Germany. Toc H personnel helped by young servicemen went out into the community to help with swimming lessons, walks in the woods, singing, Scouting, camping and chairing Anglo German discussion groups.

Elsewhere in the world, in Buenos Aires there was the good news that the Mark that had had to close in 1944, had been completely refurbished and reopened with great ceremony and optimism for future service

Toc H continued to work in South Africa despite the racial tensions that were increasing, which, with hindsight, created an interesting paradox with the hugely successful 'Minstrel Shows' that Dawlish branch were running.....



Back in Great Britain it was reassuring that many of the usual Toc H activities had resumed, even the Stamp Collecting Club started up again!

However, on a more serious note some members had become aware of a new problem facing those who, after being injured during the war were now seriously disfigured. Some had experienced alienation and rejection in everyday life so it was suggested that on their discharge from treatment and return home, local members could contact them with a view to asking them to their meetings or helping with anything else they may need to smooth their transition back into civilian life.

Another new form of service, also a direct result of the war, was the work beginning in England and Wales offering friendship and support to German Prisoners of War who were still in captivity. In July 1947 there were still 297,800 held in camps in this country, although they were being repatriated as quickly as possible. The restrictions they faced were gradually being relaxed so members were encouraged to give them hospitality, invite them to meetings or take them out on trips.

More good news, as the group at The Royal Hospital and Home for the Incurable received branch status. Some of their most ingenious acts of service there had included the invention of a sunshade holder gadget and an attachment for a bed that enables a bed-ridden patient to change the programme on their wireless without assistance!

### **League of Women Helpers – Toc H (Women's section)**

The LWH continued throughout the war years, suffering like the men with loss of personnel at times but by the 9<sup>th</sup> Women's festival in 1948, 3000 gathered at St. Martins-in-the-Field with their patron the Queen, for a memorable weekend. Relations between the men's and women's groups seemed to have mellowed during the war years with a 'greater degree of co-operation' between them, demonstrated by them being described as Toc H (Women's section) in the Journal from 1945.

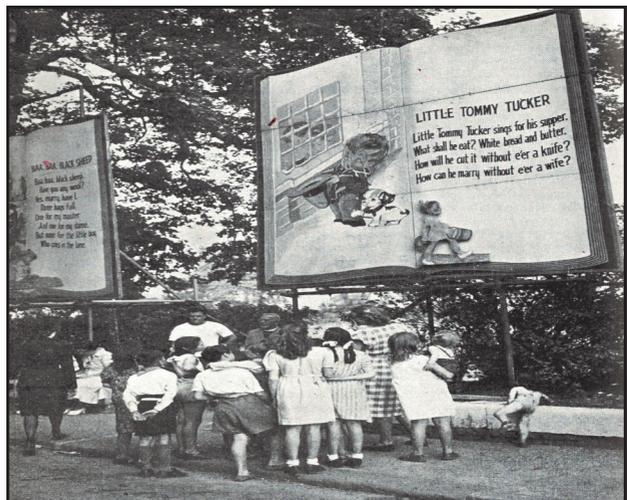


Central Executive of the  
Toc H (Women's  
Section)

### Winant Volunteer programme

In 1947, Tubby in partnership with John Winant, the former US Ambassador, initiated a scheme that was to continue until 2017. Since Tower Hamlets was the destination for some early colonists from the USA, Tubby suggested that a volunteer exchange scheme in which students from America would come and work in the area helping to rebuild churches and community centres that had been bomb damaged.

One of their first roles was life-guarding at the children's playground on the banks of the Thames, which Tubby had created in the 1930s. He was heart-broken when, after the Lifeguards had been taken away for National Service, five children had drowned.

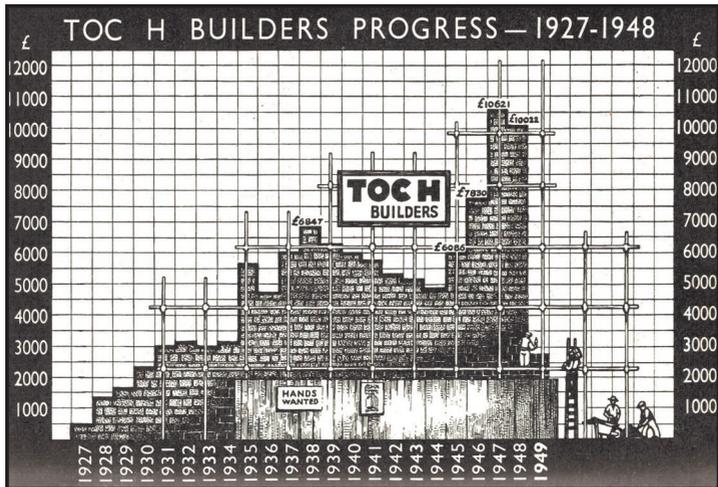


Despite the many pronouncements in the second half of the decade that Toc H was doomed, 1949 ended the decade on a high with celebration of the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the work of the Toc H Builders.

The term 'Builder' had been created :-

to give title to the new body of non-member supporters who were to be invited to pledge financial help in the building of Toc H.'

Over the years they have contributed £109,605 to the organisation, demonstrated by the pictorial graph



They come from all over Britain and overseas and all have a personal interest in Toc H and indeed many were also members. They donated funds, took an interest, attended festivals and many also took part in Toc H work. The aim of the article was to recognise that their contribution, whether financial or in kind, was valuable

'the value of the support lies mainly in the love which prompts it.'

Throughout Great Britain and in many places across the world Toc H continued to carry out a huge variety of work reacting to local needs prompting a comment describing Toc H in a local newspaper that summed it up

**"One of the most silent organisations of today. Yet it is in so many ways performing a real service to the community".**

*We will remember them !*

William Robinson  
Kathleen Moisey  
Marcia Wynter

*Age shall not weary them*

## **A Meditation by a Member**

I am a simple man, unable ...unwilling ....or too frightened to  
form long and very meaningful prayers

Please accept the truth that you see in my heart

Lead me to be of service and be with me on my journey.

Help me to see past what is said to what is meant

Aid me to see past my own interest to discern what is  
right and for the greater good

It is easy to become complacent, to follow the familiar patterns -  
help me to be inspired.

All we do, should in the end, be of service to who it may effect.



**The National Health Service**  
**Formed 5<sup>th</sup> July 1948**

**Our Army**  
**(Sung to the Dad's Army theme tune)**

Who do you think you are kidding Coronavirus  
We will soon have you on the run  
We have the NHS to stop your cowardly game  
We have the fighting spirit to make you think again  
So who do you think you are kidding Coronavirus  
If you think old Blighty's done

The NHS are here to stay and their aged 71  
They will keep on fighting  
Until Covid 19's Gone  
So who do you think you are kidding Coronavirus  
If you think old Blighty's done

**"May Day" "May Day"**

With it being VE day next month I thought as an activity maybe some of us in isolation would like to dress their windows throughout May or make a fun scarecrow out of any recycled material for their garden or window sill to mark the occasion.

If you are on the internet you could look up any games or food recipe ideas etc. of the war years and share what you have found and done with your family and friends by phone or social media. Let's all try and keep in touch and show our support to each other in what ways we can.

God Bless to all

Saltburn Toc H



One of Saltburn's famous Scarecrows that Saltburn Toc H Branch were involved in created for the town's Scarecrow Festival last summer..

A change of costume and the addition of the page opposite, which is on his lap, are set to keep spirits up and build community in these troubled days.

The branch also delivered pansies and tea light lanterns to every care home in Saltburn to help them celebrate Easter— what a thoughtful thing to do!!



## Another “Thanks” to Jo Leading to News and Memories of Tiverton

Congratulations on your excellent resume of Toc H in the 30's which I read last evening. I have never read such a comprehensive summary of the movement in those times and I now look forward to your next instalment.

On page 20 you refer twice to Tiverton, the Devon town in which I now live. I help a little at the local museum and I know the Tiverton Toc H banner is housed there. It came out for the Remembrance Sunday parade last November (see photo attached). You also refer to 'documentary evidence' about Toc H in Tiverton and I would be pleased to receive a copy of that so that maybe the banner and the 'evidence' could be displayed in the museum.

I was a very active member of the Toc H branches in Mount Charles and St. Austell in Cornwall in the late fifties and early sixties. I am still a non-active member but heavily involved (in normal times) with Rotary and other local organisations. I visited Poperinge and Talbot House in 2018 where I believe the banners of my two branches are now housed but my attempts to obtain details and confirmation via Jan Louagie there have proved fruitless.



Keep safe,

Kind Regards, *Les Rendell*

## An Uprising of Community Spirit

You will have seen the amazing ways in which Saltburn are helping folk to keep their spirits up in this troubled time! How are you all coping? What's happening near you that you can join in with and feel part of whilst abiding by Government and NHS guidelines.

Have you been taking part in Thursday night communal clap to say thanks to all those working to save lives through the NHS. AND what about Tom and his grand fundraising effort which currently stands at 27 million pounds for the NHS as he celebrates his 100th birthday!! Now there's a grand example of community spirit!!

What is happening in your neighbourhood?? Tonight the road where Doug and I live are having a community "stay at home Fish and Chip Supper". All received an invitation to take part and a way of ordering what they want to eat, and paying for it. Orders were phoned through to a local Chippy, and one person is going to pick up the prepared goodies which will then be delivered to the folks doorsteps and doors knocked. There you are all sorted and no face to face contact but the joy of having a yummy Community event.

We have a lot of jig-saws that we would probably never do again—so on Sunday morning we put them on our steps for folk to help themselves—quite a few went and we didn't meet a soul, but we hope they enjoy them and we will do the same again!!

Have you got examples to share about how we are supporting each other? Please share them here too—after all it has always been central to Toc H's way of working—see a need and fill it if you can, but better still have fun doing so!!! I hope you'll send in more examples????? Hilary Geater

It is with regret: that we have to acknowledge that the forthcoming productions of the play  
"The Four Points of The Compass"  
cannot take place under current conditions but hope that there will come a time when they can!!

# NATIONAL PRAYER CYCLE

(This can be used weekly or monthly)

## **Friendship –**

To love widely we seek to witness humbly thinking of the Toc H Centenary and for all special events being planned this year

## **Service – To build bravely**

To build bravely thinking of people's needs in the UK and overseas and for new ways of serving and supporting them.

## **Fair mindedness – To think fairly**

We think of plans for Toc H's ongoing development and for the Board and others looking after its opportunities.

## **Witness – To witness humbly**

To witness humbly thinking of the Toc H Centenary and for all special events being planned this year.

Pray that more will share in the vision and work of Toc H.

*Prepared by Canon William Bestelink  
January 2020*



## MISSION STATEMENT

The aims of Toc H are defined by the four points of the compass, first defined in 1920:

Toc H is committed to building a fairer society by working with communities to promote friendship and service, confront prejudice and practice reconciliation.

<b>Friendship:</b>	To love widely
<b>Service:</b>	To build bravely
<b>Fairmindedness:</b>	To think fairly
<b>Witness:</b>	To witness humbly