

## RAY CHOPPING (RAF Retd)

The Late Ray Chopping did his National Service in the RAF. When he married his wife Joan, they moved to Borough Green, and became founding members of the Borough Green Beavers Fundraising group. They were ever present raising funds at fetes and fairs. They helped raise funds for the Youth Drop-in Centre in 2002, and despite their age, became volunteers to run the venue in the evenings.



For many years Ray was the Poppy seller in Borough Green, and was regularly celebrated as one of the British Legions most successful sellers, and collected for the RAF Benevolent Fund.

Ray had long campaigned for a War Memorial. We had the Memorial Pavilion in the Rec, we had memorials in Borough Green and neighbouring village Churches, but not one that honoured all our War Dead in one place. Ray was successful, and in 2015 we obtained some joint funding from TMBC and began design. Ray was a member of the British Legion in Sevenoaks, and recruited fellow member and artist Ramon Higgs to come up with some designs. The design was a ragstone wall with brick quoins, echoing the local building vernacular. Because Borough Green Parish was "born" in 1934 from pieces of our neighbouring Parishes of Wrotham, Ightham, Platt & Plaxtol, 4 Kent White Bricks were carved with their names and installed in the corners. Platt War Memorial was being moved at the time, and a brick from there, and a brick from Russell's Greengrocers that used to stand on the site, were also incorporated. Suzanne Young, a local genealogy expert drew up a list of the names of the War Dead from what is now the Civil Parish of Borough Green, and Don Sheppard of Chiddingstone carved those names into a polished black granite slab. Construction began in 2016, with Ray digging the first sod, and construction carried out by local builder Nick Taylor. The memorial contains a plaque commemorating the Quarries & Sandpits that gave birth to the village



The new War Memorial at the Junction of Western Rd and the A25 Sevenoaks Road was dedicated on Remembrance Sunday 2016 by Tom Tugendhat our local MP.

Ray's wife Joan passed away shortly after this, and Ray moved into Queen Elizabeth House at the British Legion Village, where he met Queen Elizabeth II on one of her visits, a moment of enormous pride for Ray.



Ray passed away in 2023, and a commemorative plaque has been installed next to his War Memorial. He and Joan are also commemorated in a carving on the Coronation Oak Bench next to the Memorial.

