

Proposals for the RLI Trooper Memorial to remain at Hatfield House

The RLI Association Executive Committee (Exco) has decided that the RLI Trooper Memorial will be moved from its current location in the grounds of Hatfield House to the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) in Staffordshire, UK.

This move is to be completed by the end of summer 2022. The reason for the move they state is 'Access, Security and, to a certain extent, Maintenance.' As regards security, the threat posed by anti-colonial movements within the UK is, apparently, of concern.

This paper refutes this decision and proposes that the RLI Trooper Memorial remain at Hatfield House.

Access and location :

The Trooper Memorial : www.hatfieldpark.co.uk

The Trooper Memorial is currently situated in the grounds of Hatfield House, Hertfordshire, UK (AL9 5HX) on Lord Salisbury's estate.

It is situated on the banks of the River Lee in an isolated, quiet and grassy area and is surrounded by woodland. At its present site one could not imagine a better location, quiet and peaceful, in tranquil surrounds and in the beautiful English countryside. It is a wonderful place for members, family and friends to visit and reminisce on those proud years and, of course, to pay respects to our Fallen.

An additional, very salient point is that the RLI Colours are housed in the Salisbury family chapel in very close proximity to the Trooper Memorial.

Furthermore, the RLI Museum is a short distance by road to Bedford thus all **three sites can easily and conveniently be visited within a day.**

The Trooper Memorial can be visited **throughout the year** by individuals, families or small groups. Ceremonies or large groups are however, prohibited during the months 1 April to 31 October annually.

The NMA site: www.thenma.org.uk

The NMA, situated north of Birmingham (Postal Code DE13 7AR) in Staffordshire UK, is a 150 acre site and holds some 400 monuments/memorials. The Trooper Memorial would be one amongst many thus losing its exclusivity.

The Rhodesian corner which houses the RAR, RhAF and BSAP memorials, is located on an unsightly piece of ground a few steps away from the carpark and various work sheds. There is no security fencing nearby. (See Google Earth)

Security:

Unless the Association, Lord Salisbury's estate or anyone else for that matter has received direct threats indicating the memorial will be targeted for desecration or if there has been other evidence, there is not a strong enough reason to relocate the statue.

The relocation of the statue from a secluded, privately-owned (and difficult to access) site to one fully open to the public will increase its exposure and the threat it is supposed to address. Thus, the Trooper Memorial would be safer at Hatfield House than at a completely accessible venue such as the NMA.

Once the statue has been entrusted to the NMA, the RLI Association would no longer have control over its access, safety nor ideological status.

The recent destruction of monuments in Britain by certain elements has necessitated Hatfield House to increase its security and restrict large group functions between 1 April and 31 October annually. This is a POSITIVE move which will provide increased security for the Trooper Memorial.

Recently the acquittal of the 4 Bristol statue thugs has opened the door for further action by extremist activists and it is therefore important to ensure that the Trooper Memorial is situated in a less public area.

Costing :

RLI Exco have not revealed costings for neither Hatfield House nor the NMA for maintenance, insurance and other costs.

For the NMA policy on costings see their Memorial Application and Alteration Policy, SOP 44.

Costings for moving to the NMA:

Exco have estimated that the cost of moving the statue from Hatfield House to the NMA would be in the region of £25,000. This amount will therefore need to be raised which is a big ask and would not be necessary should the statue remain in situ.

At the NMA the applicant (RLI Assoc) will be responsible for **ALL costs** associated with the development, dedication, insurance and maintenance of the memorial.

(See the NMA Memorial and Policy SOP 44)

Maintenance :

The Memorial owner is responsible for **maintenance** of the entire plot area. (See NMA Memorial and Policy SOP 44)

Insurance : It is a condition of all memorial installations that there is suitable insurance in place. (See NMA Memorial and Policy SOP 44)

NMA Policy regarding names :

Memorials with individual names will not be approved.

At Hatfield House the Trooper Memorial bears the names of all those RLI soldiers who paid the ultimate price and are listed on a remembrance plaque. **THIS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED AT THE NMA.**

The memorials will honour organisations and causes but **not individuals** either specifically or named on the memorial. (See NMA Memorial and Policy SOP 44)

Conclusion :

During a recent telephone conversation with Lord Salisbury he re-iterated that the Trooper Memorial may remain in situ for the duration of his lifetime and that of his son thus, for the foreseeable future, its tranquil resting place is assured. He reinforced his sentiments that he enjoys the affiliation with the Regiment.

His office confirmed that **visitors to the Troopie Memorial are welcome throughout the year** except on Christmas Day. During the summer, visits to the grounds are restricted to groups of up to 12 people at any one time. The house is closed to the public from 1 November to 31 March but prior permission can be obtained from the office to see the RLI Colours which are housed in the family chapel.

A referendum on the issue of moving the RLI Trooper Memorial from its present location to the National Memorial Arboretum must be held as soon as possible.

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