

**THE SECRET WW2 LEARNING NETWORK
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 1156796**

**REPORT OF THE CHAIR AND TRUSTEES AND UNAUDITED FINANCIAL
STATEMENTS, YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2025**

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THE SECRET WW2 LEARNING NETWORK
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1156796

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS, year ending 31 March 2025

TRUSTEES:	Louisa Russell, Chair Martyn Bell Paul McCue Brian Spencer Juliette Pattinson Ashley Barnett Hanna Diamond Nick Fox
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PRINCIPAL ADDRESS	29 Wiseton Road Tooting LONDON SW17 7EE
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BANKERS:	NatWest Bank PLC 5 East Street CHICHESTER West Sussex PO19 1HH
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THE SECRET WW2 LEARNING NETWORK
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1156796

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES, for the year ending 31 March 2025

The Trustees present their report with the draft financial statements of the Charity for the year ending 31 March 2025. The Trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

The objects of the Charity are the advancement of the education of the general public in the nature, context, history and impact of covert operations during times of conflict and in particular the covert allied operations during the Second World War.

Significant activities

Significant activities for this year are listed below under the relevant headings:
The following personnel from the Charity involved in the Programme are listed below:

Martyn Cox, MC	Co-Founder
Louisa Russell, LR	Chair, Trustee and Friend
Paul McCue, PM	Executive Trustee and Friend
Martyn Bell, MBe	Co-Founder and Trustee
Brian Spencer, BS	Trustee and Friend
Carol Browne, CB	Information Officer and Friend
Nick Fox, NF	Trustee and Friend
Peter Robinson, PR	Membership Officer and Friend
Edward Jones, EJ	Supporter and Volunteer
Juliette Pattinson, JP	Trustee
Ashley Barnett, AB	Trustee, Treasurer, Projects Officer and Friend
Steph Waters, SW	Media Officer and Supporter
Charles Ashton, CA	Research Coordinator and Friend
Jen Hilton, JH	Genealogy Officer, North Representative and Supporter
Meryl Jones, MJ	Hospitality and Marketing Officer and Friend
Jonathan Saunders, JS	Volunteer and Friend
Magda Thomas, MT	Volunteer and Friend
Ian Titman, IT	Volunteer and Friend
Alan Meeks, AM	Volunteer photographer and Supporter
Mike Hillman, MH	Volunteer photographer and Friend
Tony Page, TP	Volunteer photographer and Friend
Cathy Mitchell, CM	Volunteer and Friend

Trustees' Report: 1.4.24 to 31.3.25

The following events and presentations including research are itemised below.

Greater detail and information including photographs may be found on the Charity's website: www.secret-ww2.net or on the Charity's Facebook page or in the Newsletter "By the Light of the Moon".

Events and presentation organised and/or attending including Networking:

13 April - Final day of the 'Secret Guildford' five-month exhibition. The last presentation associated with this exhibition included a showing of the film 'A Call to Spy' at the Guildhall, led by PM, CB and Cathy Mitchell.

23 April to 4th May – Two-week exhibition of information boards at Cranleigh Arts Centre about the ten 'secret war' locations within a 15-mile radius of the village.

25 April - AGM of The SECRET WW2 – conducted by Zoom.

5 to 7 May 2023 – Annual commemoration of SOE agents at Romorantin-Lanthenay and at Valencay, France. NF, David Harrison, and PM gave presentations and many visited the site of the Battle of Les Souches that involved F Section's WRESTLER circuit led by Pearl Witherington.

2 May – PM and Ambassador Gershon Gan attended an annual lunch with our Honorary Life Friend and Veteran, Jack Mann.

31 May - 'Occupied Europe, a fragmented Resistance - La Résistance au service de Sa Majesté' a film by Cécile Coolen, Supporter was held at the Institut Français, London to a large and appreciative audience.

4 -6 June - 'The White Mouse', a play about Nancy Wake, SOE Agent, held in Barnes and partly sponsored by SECRET WW2. Attended by many Friends and Supporters.

5 June - Nikki Bennett, daughter of André Hue, SOE, attended a ceremony to honour the French SAS and Maquisards, who lost their lives during WWII, at Plumelec, Brittany.

5 June – Jonathan Saunders, Friend, attended the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day Landings at Portsmouth on the same day!

11 June – quarterly Zoom presentation. '*Writing an SOE Novel*' by Louise Morrish. Louise talked about her inspiration and research for her award-winning book *Operation Moonlight*.

18 June – *L'appel*. An annual ceremony, organised by the Defence Office of the French Embassy in London, marks the BBC appeal of General de Gaulle to France on 18th June 1940, a day that came to mark the beginning of French resistance to occupation. PM laid a wreath on behalf of the SECRET WW2. Other 'Friends' also attended.

18 June - '*Maintenance on Peut Le Dire*'. This is the re-discovery and showing of the French language version (dubbed) of the iconic film, '*Not It Can Be Told*'. MC and CC attended two screenings of the films at a programme of events at Cahors, France.

22 June - Unveiling of SECRET WW2 information board about SOE's Special Training School (STS3) at *Stodham Park*, in Liss Hampshire. Initiated by AB and supported by PM.

3rd July (*Verrières*) and 7 July (*Rom*) - Two 80th anniversary commemorations in central France to mark the tragedy of behind-the-lines Operation Bulbasket. Six Friends of SECRET WW2 travelled with Jane Storey, the daughter of the operation's commander and her husband, Derek, to these and other locations connected to the operation. We previously visited in 2010 not long after PM had reproduced his book '*Operation Bulbasket*' about this largest loss of life by the SAS Regiment in Nazi-occupied France.

7 July – '*Belgium Remembers*'. The annual walk and talk on 'secret war' Belgians buried or commemorated in Brookwood Military Cemetery, which was led by NF on behalf of SECRETWW2 and helped by EJ and MH. NF talked about Lt Henri Gaillot, nicknamed 'Grandpère', who was caught and executed at Buchenwald concentration camp in 1944. Colonel Bruno Plaetsier, Defence Attaché from the Belgian Embassy in London, Rudy Peleman on behalf of the Fraternelle des Parachutistes, were also in attendance together with Peter Doneux, son of Capt Jacques Doneux of T Section.

7 July – Annual picnic and networking event at the *Violette Szabó GC Museum*, Womelow. CB and Sharon Spinos, Friend, staffed a stall.

13 July - PM laid a wreath at The Belgian Cenotaph Parade.

31 August - Joyce Wilding, a former FANY (SOE) driver who served at STS 51 Thame Park and Station XIV Briggens has agreed to become our third Veteran Honorary Life Friend.

1 September – Annual Commemorative Ceremony of Jewish 'secret war' casualties, at the Memorial to the Missing 1939 -1945, Brookwood Military Cemetery. Ensign Denise Bloch, a French Jewish agent of F Section SOE, was individually remembered. Two members of the Defence Attaché team from the Israeli embassy in London and several members of AJEX were in attendance. NF laid a wreath on behalf of SECRET WW2.

4 September - '*The Polish involvement in Countering V-weapons*'. MT supported by PM delivered a presentation at Ognisko Polskie, London.

7 and 8 September – Annual week-end event at Wanborough Manor, Surrey's School for Secret Agents. PM and AB presented '*The secret history of Wanborough Manor and its part in saving Nazi-looted art*' and MJ gave a presentation about Pearl Witherington, SOE's only woman circuit leader.

10 September – quarterly Zoom presentation. '*SOE's Operation POSTMASTER*'. Presented by Ashley Barnett, Trustee, Treasurer and Projects Officer of SECRET WW2.

14 September - Unveiling of SECRET WW2 plaque commemorating the HQ premises of F Section, pending installation on 83 Baker Street at a future date.

22 September - Another unveiling of our SECRET WW2 plaque at the site of Mauthausen concentration camp. PM and NF were instrumental in this project and relatives from the Sehmer and Wärndorfer families were present as well as representatives from relevant embassies and several Trustees and Friends of the Charity.

29 September - PM acted as historical guide with a 40-strong party from a British Army unit, conducting a Battlefield Tour of 'secret war' and behind-the-lines locations across central and northern France.

6 October - Intelligence Corps ceremony at Brookwood Military Cemetery. Led by NF, supported by PM.

19 October – Friends' and Volunteers' Annual Conference/Luncheon held in Tothill Street next door but one to the former SIS/MI6 headquarters of 54 Broadway in central London. Talks were given by PM, Clare Mulley, Supporter and Carina Evans and Colin Cohen, both Friends of SECRET WW2. Eddie Jones ran the income-generating auction.

22 October - Launch of '*I am André*', a book written by Diana Mara Henry, Friend of SECRET WW2. PM and Sheryl Green were two of the three-person organising committee and Sheryl, a Friend of SECRET WW2, presented the book at a club in Knightsbridge. Members of André's family from both the USA and Europe attended and Diana Henry participating via a zoom link from the US.

27 October - 80th anniversary commemoration of British intelligence and special operations units in the Slovak National Uprising. Service held at the Memorial to the Missing 1939-1945 in Brookwood Military Cemetery. Special mention was given to Major John Sehmer of SOE, who died at Mauthausen concentration camp (plaque unveiled at Mauthausen on 22 September). The Sehmer family and the Slovak military forces were well represented and the group then continued on to the ceremony organised by the Memorial Association for Free Czechoslovak Veterans.

10 November - Remembrance Sunday ceremony at the monument to SOE agents, Lambeth Palace Rd, The Queen's Walk, London SE1 7LB. PM and LR, who laid a wreath, in attendance.

11 November - Armistice Day French ceremony at Brookwood Military Cemetery. After the French Embassy's ceremony at the Free French burial plot, representatives from the French Embassy and officials attended a SECRETWW2 ceremony and met families of the agents either named on the memorial or those who survived after serving in occupied France. Refreshments were provided afterwards by Volunteer Eddie Jones.

14 November - Audley End House garden seat unveiling at STS 43, SOE's training school for Polish agents. PM and MT were invited to attend.

14 November - Reception at the residence of the Belgian Ambassador attended by PM and NF.

19 November - LR and PM were guests of AJEX to their annual ceremony and parade to the Cenotaph in Whitehall, London. LR and PM were delighted and proud recipients of awards from AJEX and a further award was given to Charles Jenkins, a Friend of SECRET WW2.

2 February 2025 - A commemoration was held at the Memorial to the Missing at Brookwood by SECRET WW2. PM give a short address remembering the murders of Violette Szabó, Ensign Denise Bloch and Section Officer Lilian Rolfe who were murdered 80 years ago at Ravensbrück concentration camp.

Tuesday, 10th December 2024 8-9 pm (UK) – quarterly Zoom presentation.
'The Lesser-known ODETTE': SOE's Yvonne Baseden by Professor Juliette Pattinson, Trustee of SECRET WW2. Juliette highlighted this remarkable agent and survivor of Ravensbrück concentration camp and was joined by Simon Bailey, son of Yvonne Baseden and Friend of SECRET WW2.

26 January - Our Veteran Life Friend, Squadron Leader Stanley Booker died, aged 102. A courageous RAF navigator, he was shot down over France, tortured by the Gestapo, survived a death sentence at Buchenwald and worked for SIS/MI6 in Cold War Berlin.

LR, PM and CB were kindly invited to Stanley's funeral by Pat Vinycomb, his daughter, on 28 February where Paul highlighted in his address Stanley's mantra: *'It is the duty of the living to honour the dead'*.

11 March - *'Operation CADILLAC'*, a film created and presented by MC and including a short USAAF film purchased by SECRET WW2..

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTERS

PM continued to produce a series of quarterly newsletters, **'By the Light of the Moon'** for Friends, Supporters and those on the Charity's email. These have been exceedingly informative and well illustrated.

OTHER ACTIVITIES:

Steve Weiss Student Research Bursary (in memory of Dr Stephen Weiss, a WW2 veteran and UK-based academic and writer who died in 2020, aged 94). Two applications were received and approved this year.

Ursula Graham Bower Bursary. A 3 year scholarship, awarded in conjunction with the Kohima Education Trust (KET), continues to 2025.

Barnett's 'Out and About' Activities. AB, as Roving Reporter, has undertaken much (self-funded) travel, exploration and reconnaissance in the UK and written in length for the Newsletters. Other contributors have included NF and MT.

Plaques/information boards: we presently have projects under way or under consideration in Israel and here in the UK. Funding was obtained by AB for an information board re STS 3, Stodham Park, Liss, Hampshire.

External Contacts: Our global reach and reputation continues to grow and requests for information and help have come from: Germany; the United States, Australia, Israel, Austria and Norway.

Talks to other groups: Zoom talks in 2024-5 have been given, attracting participation from France, USA, Israel and Australia. Seventeen in-person and by Zoom presentations and walk/talks, for a charity donation, were given to community/interest groups in southern England.. We have further bookings in 2025/2026. A talk and exhibition tour to a Sea Cadets unit was free-of-charge.

Filming – we have been supported by Friend Mike Hillman and Supporters Alan Meeks and Tony Page in filming and photography at several of our ceremonies and events.

Projects - advisory work for the Israel Antiquities Authority continues regarding SOE and SAS/SBS/Greek Sacred Squadron service in the former British Mandate for Palestine. We continue with adding or amending SOE, MI9 and SAS details to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's records.

Support from other organisations and individuals and partnership working

The SECRET WW2 acknowledges and is extremely grateful for the support and/or partnership activity of the following organisations in the 2024-25 year:

The Gerry Holdsworth Special Forces Charitable Trust

Eddie Jones at The Trench Experience, Brookwood Cemetery

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

AJEX (London)

Liss Parish Council

East Hants District Council

Canadian High Commission

Embassy of the State of Israel

Embassy of Slovakia

Embassy of the Czech Republic

Embassy of Belgium

Embassy of France

Memorial Association of Free Czechoslovak Veterans (MAFCV)

Mauthausen Memorial, Austria

Brigadier-General (Res) Erez Maisel IDF and the Haganah Historical Assoc

The Brookwood Last Post Association

The Brookwood Society

Public benefit

The Trustees have due regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit.

FINANCIAL REVIEW**Results for the year**

There was a surplus for the year of £746.

The state of affairs of the Charity, which The Trustees consider to be satisfactory is set out in the Balance Sheet and there are adequate resources available for the Charity to be able to meet its commitments at the balance sheet date.

Reserves policy

The Charity has very limited need for future reserves whilst it is in its initial period of operations. The Trustees believe that the Charity holds sufficient reserves to enable it to meet those costs for the foreseeable future.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**Governing document**

The Secret WW2 Learning Network is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) governed by its constitution. It was constituted on 24 April 2014.

Recruitment, Appointment, Induction and Training of Trustees

It is the policy of The Secret WW2 Learning Network to invite new Trustee members to give an expression of interest to join the board outlining their reasons for doing so, what they can bring to enrich the organisation and the experience and knowledge they can offer. The Trustee Board then discusses the application, formally votes on the application, and then if successful, the new Trustee is inducted onto the Board and into the Organisation. All new Trustees are provided with copies of its constitution, accounts and documentation, explaining the approach the Charity takes on a number of key issues. It is expected that most new Trustees will already be experienced in that role, if not some training will be given. In 2022, one Trustee was redesignated Executive Trustee to reflect the executive duties of the position.

Organisational structure

The Trustees oversee the day to day management of the Charity by the Executive Trustee.

Risk management

The Trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the Charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error.

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales, the Charities Act 2011, Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the Charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently:
- Observe the methods and principles and in the Charity SORP
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent:
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by order of the Board of Trustees on 22 April 2025 and signed on its behalf by

Louisa Russell, Chair and Paul McCue, Executive Trustee.

The Secret WW2 Learning Network						
Statement of Financial Activities - Year Ended 31st March 2025						
Income and Expenditure Account						
		2023/2024		2024/2025		
		£		£		
Income						
Donations:						
Harper Collins (Levine SAS Book)		1,200				
83 Baker Street Plaque		693				
Tour for British Army Unit		600				
For Research / Talks		998		818		
Miscellaneous		941		628		
Secret Guildford				2,574		
Mauthausen Plaque				1,500		
Martyn Cox Cahors Film	Note 1			1,460		
Sir Frank Nelson Plaque	Note 1			700		
Czech Project				500		
		4,431		8,179		
Events:						
Annual Conference		1,220		1,465		
		1,220		1,465		
Friends		2,899		3,072		
Gift Aid Reclaimed (only a residual claim this year)		1,321		55		
Grants:						
Gerry Holdsworth (Hue & Israel Plaques)	Note 1	1,800				
East Hampshire District Council (STS 3)		990				
Gerry Holdsworth (NICBT2 Film)	Note 1			6,000		
Gerry Holdsworth (SOA & Nelson Plaques)	Note 1			900		
		2,790		6,900		
Total Income		12,661		19,671		
Expenditure						
Advancement of the Charity's Core Educational Objectives:						
Events:						
Annual Conference		928		3,086		
Other Event Costs		888		1,003		
		1,815		4,089		
Projects:						
Info Boards		1,116		1,352		
Now It Can Be Told Films		6,988		6,090		
Plaques		534		2,743		
Website Design		1,080				
Czech Project				750		
White Mouse Play				500		
Other Project Costs		1,235		2,306		
		10,953		13,740		
Overheads:						
Insurance		96		179		
Website Hosting		547		562		
Zoom & Mailchimp Subscriptions		288		304		
Foreign Exchange Loss				50		
		931		1,095		
Total Expenditure		13,699		18,924		
(Net Spend) / Surplus		(1,038)		746		
The Secret WW2 Learning Network						
Statement of Financial Activities - Year Ended 31st March 2025						
Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2025						
		2023/2024		2024/2025		
Current Assets						
Cash at Bank		14,367		16,210		
Unpaid Invoice (GBC)		348				
Less Unpaid Expenditure (PM - paid post YE)				(749)		
		14,715		15,461		
Represented by:						
Accumulated Reserve						

