



John Fulford, who died aged 5 when Abbots Gardens was hit by a V2 rocket in 1944.

## Never forget

Readers may remember the extraordinary account we printed last year of the day that Abbots Gardens and surrounding roads were hit by a V2 high-explosive rocket on 15 November 1944. Five residents were killed, including two children aged five and 14, and six houses destroyed in the explosion.

The Cromwell Hall Residents' Association, covering Abbots Gardens, Cromwell Close and parts of Deansway and East End Road, has applied to Barnet Council for planning

permission to install a memorial plaque to commemorate those who lost their lives. It will be placed on a grass verge near the site of the explosion.

Our photograph, kindly supplied by David Smith, shows the youngest victim John Fulford, aged five. He is riding his tricycle on the pavement outside 107 and 108 Abbots Gardens. Both houses were destroyed in the attack and in the background is Mrs Maysel Houghton, who was permanently blinded by the explosion.

### THE ARCHER needs a volunteer distributor for Bedford Road

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## War dead commemorated

By Ann Bronkhorst

Many villages in the United Kingdom have a war memorial, listing familiar local names. If London is a collection of villages, where is East Finchley's war memorial?

The answer is that we have to look elsewhere in Barnet. Apart from plaques in churches and schools, there are 11 council-maintained war memorials, all accessible to the public. This year, Barnet will be officially represented at 15 Remembrance services or parades held at churches, synagogues and memorials across the borough.

### Cemetery memorials

Other Londoners who died in the two World Wars are commemorated here, however, in the two large cemeteries lying roughly east and west of East Finchley. Here are graves of men and women from Marylebone, St Pancras and Islington who were killed in action, as well as civilian and service war memorials, the latter easily identifiable by the Cross of Sacrifice, a tall stone cross embedded with a bronze sword.

Some war graves are grouped together in well-tended gardens. Others are



The Cross of Sacrifice in East Finchley Cemetery, East End Road. Photo by Ann Bronkhorst.



Jane Conway with copies of her book at the launch at Muswell Hill Bookshop Photo by Steve Conway

## Woman of Two Wars

By Daphne Chamberlain

Last month Jane Conway, from Bedford Road, celebrated the launch of her first book.

*A Woman of Two Wars* is also the first book about Mary Borden. Born in 1886, a relative of both axe-wielding Lizzie and the inventor of condensed milk, this American millionaire's daughter has her own claims to be remembered.

Her powerful poetry and prose, written from behind the lines of the First World War, brought her to Jane's attention. Jane says, "She haunted my imagination... all the more intensely because I could discover little about her".

Then she made an amazing discovery. A young man included in an old family photo turned out to be Mary Borden's son. In Jane's words, "This uncanny coincidence made it seem that my discovery of May (Mary) was predestined".

As part of an MA course in Life Writing, Jane contacted Mary's family, who provided her with a mine of information.

### Honoured for war work

Mary Borden was a twice-married society hostess, friend of the famous, patron of the arts, teacher in India, and prolific writer (one book, *Action for Slander*, became a film). Possibly, though, she found her deepest satisfaction in funding and running her own mobile hospital in the mud and blood of the First World War, for which she received the Croix de Guerre. She again ran her own medical unit, the Hadfield-Spears unit, in the

Second World War.

### An inspiration

Jane remarks that Mary always remained positive and determined. She says: "This was a great inspiration to me in writing my book. When I was unable to find an agent, I decided to publish it myself, which I have done with the help of my family."

Family and friends were out in force for the book's launch at Muswell Hill Bookshop, where actress Olivia Morgan read extracts. With special thanks to husband Steve and to David Atkinson for indexing the book, and to all her supportive friends, Jane said: "There is nowhere else I would have liked this launch to be".

*A Woman of Two Wars* (ISBN 978-0-9563297-0-7) is available through [www.maryborden.com](http://www.maryborden.com) and in most bookshops, including Muswell Hill Bookshop and The Cherry Tree in East Finchley.

scattered singly, in sites chosen by families, often obscured by undergrowth but all distinguishable by the plain, uniform headstones designed in 1917. Those marking graves of unidentified servicemen simply say 'known unto God'.

While vandalism of war graves and memorials has been rare in our two cemeteries, time and pollution affect the stone, so every grave, whether tended by a family or not, is maintained on a regular cycle by that remarkable organisation, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. They also mow grass and plant flowers around the group graves.

### Civilian deaths honoured

Civilians who died as a result of enemy action in World War Two have their group memorials in these cemeteries, too, usually maintained by the present-day councils. The designs vary and they can be harder to find than the service memorials.

The Mayor of Islington attends a private Remembrance ceremony each year at the service and civilian memorials in Islington Cemetery. Camden holds Remembrance ceremonies in the Borough, not at the cemetery, but a few descendants come to place poppies at the Camden (St Pancras) civilian memorial in West Road. The Marylebone one, near the crematorium, is no longer owned by Westminster and looks sadly neglected and unvisited: a casualty of the notorious Shirley Porter cemetery sale.

Each autumn, red poppies remind us that these graves and memorials still have meaning. And after the poppies have blown away, the CWGC will continue its quiet work.

For more information, visit [www.cwgc.org.uk](http://www.cwgc.org.uk)

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