

# At the Going Down of the Sun

*Sir Peter Bottomley MP*

*Worthing Herald Article*

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We will remember them. Remembrance matters. Ceremonies and Services help; so do initiatives by colleagues, reminding us of the suffering of the armed forces community, civilians and whole categories of innocent people. Think of international failure to prevent the modern massacre at Srebrenica.

Sir Lindsay Hoyle, Speaker of the House of Commons, has initiated a Garden of Remembrance in New Palace Yard, by the car ramp where Airey Neave was fatally injured by a terrorist bomb in 1979 and where Police Constable Keith Palmer died defending parliament. On Monday, the Mother of the House Harriet Harman and I planted our memorials side by side.

Lindsay announced that the Royal British Legion's National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas near Lichfield will in time include a site to honour the service and sacrifice of parliamentary staff and members. In 1988 Commander David Childs conceived the idea of a national focus. John Major talked with Leonard Cheshire VC before launching an appeal in 1994 for a living tribute for future generations to reflect on and to enjoy. Part funded by the Millennium Commission which Virginia once chaired, the scheme began with no money, no land, no staff and no trees. The successful project is now part of the Royal British Legion family of charities.

On Thursday I shall be on parade as parliamentary warden of St Margaret's church at the opening of the Poppy Factory's Field of Remembrance by Westminster Abbey, before laying wreaths on Sunday in the Arun and Worthing parts of my constituency.

Wednesday this week is emotional for me. It is the anniversary of Kristallnacht when Hitler and his Nazis destroyed hundreds of synagogues and attacked shops owned by Jews. The Times declared on 11 November 1938: "No foreign propagandist bent on blackening Germany before the world could out do the tale of burnings and beatings, of blackguardly assaults on defenceless and innocent people, which disgraced that country yesterday."

It is also the time of year when in 1978 then MP Chris Patten recommended me to Julian Filochowski, then at CAFOD and now leader of the Romero Trust, and to the distinguished Liberal Lord Avebury to be the token Conservative and protestant on the British Human Rights Mission to recognise the remarkable Archbishop Oscar Romero in the civil war and oppression in El Salvador, the central American country named after the Saviour where priests, trade union activists and others were killed with impunity.

If anyone comments adversely on my international concern for human rights, I invite them to learn about the ten 20c saints' statues above the Great West Door of Westminster Abbey. Now I can recommend they listen to students at our excellent Oscar Romero school where Julian will have presented prizes this week at the invitation of the head teacher Pete Byrne.

My Commons interventions have been more frequent than I expected. I thought it appropriate to contribute on Standards events and on responding to issues of fairness and discrimination in sport, starting with Yorkshire cricket.

It seemed so different from the happy afternoon I shared with George and Barry of the club with Dan and Russ of the council at Woodside, watching Worthing FC get ahead and stay ahead of Potters Bar. Racism has no place on sport or anywhere else.

Intolerance must be challenged, whether locally, nationally, or internationally. That is why I stand with the feminists against the unwarranted attacks by hooded protestors on Helen Joyce and Professor Kathleen Stock from Sussex University. I will protect trans people, but I will resist the fringe extremists who appear blindly to deny the obvious.

We know what happens if the early steps to intolerance are not resisted. Which would have been the right time first to challenge Hitler?