

## Tony Thinking Aloud lxxx

In November we remember.

I came to live in East Staffordshire about 35 years ago and if anyone had told me that the Queen and other members of the Royal Family would be making many visits to Alrewas in the next few years and I would occasionally be in attendance, I wouldn't have believed them!

In the years leading up to 2001 we saw the gradual establishment of the National Memorial Arboretum under the careful guidance of Commander David Childs (who, with Group Captain Sir Leonard Cheshire, felt the nation was forgetting to remember the service and sacrifice given by others so we could live our lives as we do today). He was influenced by the similar National Memorial Arboretum in the United States of America. Small events happened in the early years but in 2021, the 400<sup>th</sup> memorial has just been dedicated (to the NAAFI) and it is now the national place of remembrance second only to the Cenotaph in Whitehall.

It is there we honour the fallen, recognise service and sacrifice, and foster pride in the British Armed Forces and civilian community. This year it is celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

You experience remembrance in the many thousands of trees. In the next week on Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday we will remember those who have died in times of war and conflict so that we may live in peace. We have that responsibility – we live in that peace; it is their ongoing memorial. Just as the trees are a living and an ongoing memorial offering a place of commemoration and reflection that will grow with the generations.

*They shall grow not all as we that are left grow old,*

*Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn*

*At the going down of the sun and in the morning*

*We will remember them.*