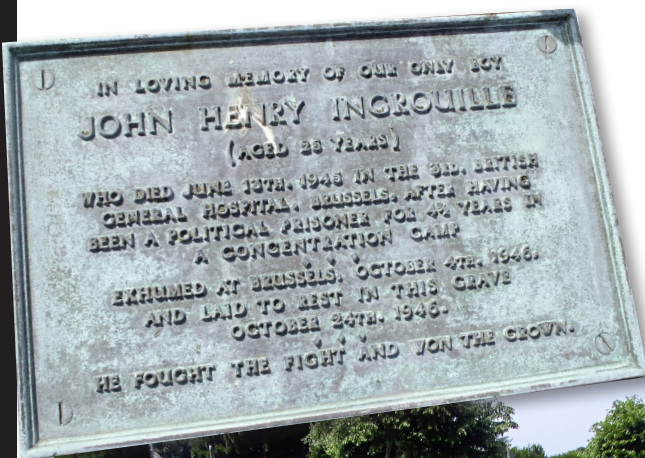


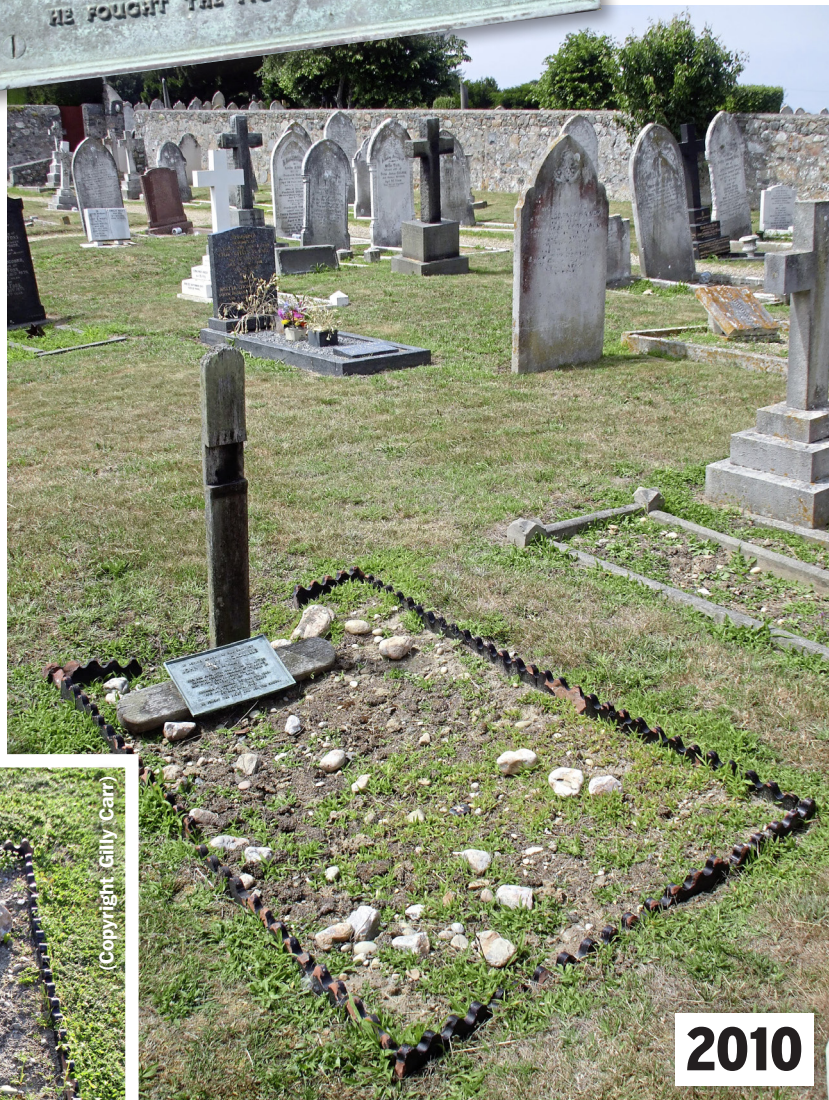
The story of John Ingrouille, one of the Guernsey Eight, who during the Occupation was falsely imprisoned and who later died of tuberculosis, raises the question of who should maintain the graves of local war heroes when their family is no longer around to do so. Occupation expert **Dr Gilly Carr**, from Cambridge University, hopes that a long-term solution can be found



How should we honour the memory of our Occupation heroes?



The plaque on John Ingrouille's grave.



‘Should there be an organisation or group of volunteers who make it their explicit business to regularly care for the graves of such people?’



WHAT does the state of a person's grave reveal about the way in which their memory is honoured today? Should the graves of heroes of the Occupation always be looked after and, if so, by whom?

In the last couple of years, graves of three of the Guernsey Eight – islanders who died in Nazi prisons and camps – have been tracked down in Germany. In Straubing, the final resting place of Sidney Ashcroft, deported for stealing some food from the Germans, was augmented by a plaque in his memory, placed there by his cousin in 2015 and blessed by a local Anglican priest. In 2016, the grave of Joseph Gillingham, a member of Guns, the Guernsey Underground News Service, was found in a cemetery in Halle, where his remains, along with those of other former prisoners, have been looked after by the city and a local memory organisation that cares for victims of Nazism. Earlier this year I travelled with Phil Machon, grandson of Charles Machon, the founder of Guns, to witness a memorial unveiling to his grandfather in Hamelin cemetery.

Charles had died in Hamelin Prison. Although the graves of those who died as a result of the Nazi regime were not always cared for in Germany in the past, it is increasingly the case today. Some will also be familiar with the way that the people of Biberach tend the graves of Guernsey deportees who lie in the town's cemetery.

And yet, what about the graves of two members of the Guernsey Eight who lie in the Vale cemetery today? That of Major Marie Ozanne is cared for by her family and the Salvation Army. A couple of years ago her headstone was scrubbed gleaming white and marble chippings were placed on the grave to discourage weeds. John Ingrouille's grave is neglected, decayed and overgrown. As an only child, after his parents died there was nobody left to tend the grave. John died before he could have a chance to have a family of his own. Born in 1920, John was only 20 years old when he was arrested. A woman nearby, who John had witnessed having an illicit relationship with a German soldier, travelled to Jersey to falsely testify that John had threatened to raise an army of 800 local men to fight the Germans. She wanted John out of the way in case he told others about her. He was tried in Jersey and given a five-year sentence with hard labour. He spent almost two years in prisons in Caen, followed by his transfer to Germany, to the prisons of Rheinbach, Berlin Moabit and then Brandenburg-Görden, where he was ill-treated, starved, and caught tuberculosis.

He was liberated by the Russians in late April 1945. On his way home his health deteriorated and he died in a British military hospital in Brussels. He was buried in Brussels and his parents repatriated his body to Guernsey in 1946. In 1966 they were given compensation by the Germans for the loss of their son. They spent the money on a stained glass window of the crucified Christ, dedicated to their son's memory. This can be seen today in the Vale church.

I visited John Ingrouille's grave for the first time in 2010 with Richard Heaume, director of the Occupation Museum. At that date, the wooden cross above his grave had fallen in half and the grave was overgrown. It was subsequently tidied and the cross replaced by a small piece of granite upon which the brass inscription plaque was attached. I saw the grave again in 2015, and it was once again badly neglected. The sexton tidied it and sprinkled sand on the grave to neaten it up. Today the grave is once again overgrown. A longer-term solution is needed to look after John's grave. Guernsey has many heroes, including Occupation heroes.

Should there be an organisation or group of volunteers who make it their explicit business to regularly care for the graves of such people?

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission doesn't take care of the graves of civilians, so John Ingrouille is not their responsibility.

There are many old graves throughout the island with no known relative to tend to them. Every life has equal value, so we cannot necessarily argue for only one group to be looked after. And yet, John Ingrouille's name is engraved on a memorial in St Peter Port. Without family to take care of him, he is nobody's responsibility. Or are the dead everybody's responsibility? As a community, does it fall to us all to take care of those whose lives we honour today?