

Dick Robinson's tribute to Sue Light

My first encounter with Sue was almost 10 years ago on a First World War Forum – a website where people swap information on a whole range of topics. You earn a rank depending on how many comments you have published. Sue, with over four and a half thousand posts, was billed as a Major-General, no less.

We then began to exchange emails as I was looking for information about my great aunt, Edith Appleton, who had served as a professional nurse in France throughout the First World War. Edie wrote an amazing daily journal mentioning over 200 names – patients and colleagues. With Sue's expert, detailed and generous help I was able to access information and make many, many contacts, leading to a website and later a book version of the diaries.

I've been looking back through our emails. I thought there would be a few dozen. There were hundreds! And I know I am just one of many indebted to Sue for her tireless sharing of her wide knowledge. Not just that. If she wasn't sure she would go digging at the National Archives at Kew where she was a frequent visitor.

We met a few times. Perhaps most memorably at the unveiling two years ago of the blue plaque at the home of Dame Maud McCarthy, the Matron in Chief of the British Army. It was – mostly – a gorgeous sunny day and I have a lovely photo of Sue and Hannah in front of the plaque. It was Sue who had proposed the plaque to English Heritage. It took them six years from proposal to unveiling! Further testimony to Sue's persistence.

Sue didn't suffer fools gladly. She could get furious when she felt that the role, uniforms, behaviour of nurses was misrepresented. When the BBC broadcast *The Crimson Field* Sue took them to task for the many inaccuracies. There was no second series! She also had a lovely pop at *Downton Abbey* when that series made lots of blunders in the episodes covering Downton being used as a convalescence home for officers.

There was a time when Sue felt so exasperated about all the misinformation she was picking up about nurses that she announced she was taking down her websites. I know I was just one of many who pleaded with her not to. She didn't, thank goodness, and they are still all accessible.

In 2018 we are producing a play, dependant upon funding, loosely based on Edie's diaries. The team are keen to dedicate it to Sue who has been so instrumental in offering her advice and support.

I know I speak for many when I say that your wisdom, generosity, support, persistence, all tempered with a sense of humour and warmth of spirit are not forgotten Sue. Thank you. You are so much missed.