

Remembrance at St Michael & All Angels: 1944 to 2024
Marking 80 Years since D-Day and Chiswick's V1 and V2

D-Day preparations in paintings by Ray Howard-Jones, war artist from Wales, who worshipped at St Nicholas, Chiswick



*Above: Preparing for D-Day: Coloured Troops of a Port Company Building a Field Kitchen in Wales.
Gouache, 1944, 37 x 57 cm. Private collection*

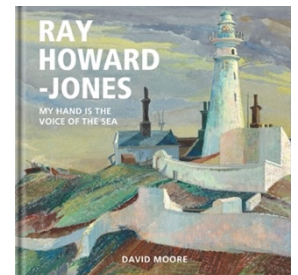
Ray (Rosemary) Howard-Jones was a renowned Welsh war artist, sea painter, mosaicist, community theatre pioneer, poet and Christian mystic. During WW2 she was commissioned by the War Artists Advisory Committee to produce paintings of the fortifications on islands in the Bristol Channel; she also depicted the preparations for D-Day taking place around Penarth and the Cardiff Docks. WAAC accepted 15 of her paintings, including a portrait of her brother, a REME brigadier; these are now held by the Imperial War Museum, the National Army Museum, Amgueddfa Cymru/Museum Wales and other British galleries.



For much of her life, Ray lived and painted in Wales but she stayed in London for periods during the war. In 1942 she painted the picture on the left:
Ravenscourt Park: Workmen from Gibraltar. Gouache, 1942, now in the National Army Museum, London.

In 1947 she settled there with a studio by Ravenscourt Park. The following year she met Raymond Moore and this was the beginning of a two-decade creative partnership. By 1954 they had moved into a Victorian villa in nearby Ashchurch Park Villas which Ray kept until she died in June 1996.

Ray worshipped regularly at St Nicholas Church in Chiswick and her funeral took place there. In September 2024, during the Chiswick Book Festival, the church hosted a talk on Ray's life and work by David Moore, author of *Ray Howard-Jones: My Hand is the Voice of the Sea*, from which these images are taken. Our thanks to him, Sue Hiley Harris and the rights holders for permission to use them here.



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Invasion Scars: The first Landing Ship Tank to reach Utah Beach in Normandy on D-Day, 6th June 1944 - Imperial War Museum



Ray would have liked to go over to France with the invasion forces, as some male artists did, but her requests were not granted. Instead, she was able to record the aftermath of D-Day, by painting a badly damaged Landing Ship Tank (LST) on its return to Wales from Utah Beach in Normandy - *Invasion Scars* (above).

Before the invasion, she also recorded preparations for D-Day in Glamorgan, including the watercolour (below right): *Sea Transport: Poles loading bombs*. Watercolour, 1944, now in the Imperial War Museum.

And, in February 1944, the WAAC bought an oil painting of Ray's brother Tony (below left), who played a major role in the Western Desert Campaign: *Brigadier L. Howard-Jones, OBE, REME: 8th Army, 1942-43*. Oil on panel, 1943.



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Losses on the Home Front: Mabel Harmer of Thornton Avenue, Chiswick Polytechnic + the first V2 bomb in Staveley Road



Nos 1 to 5 Staveley Road were almost completely destroyed – the crater is in front of them and you can see the houses of Burlington Lane beyond. The photo was preserved by Special Constable Sydney York, who was sent to "guard the hole"

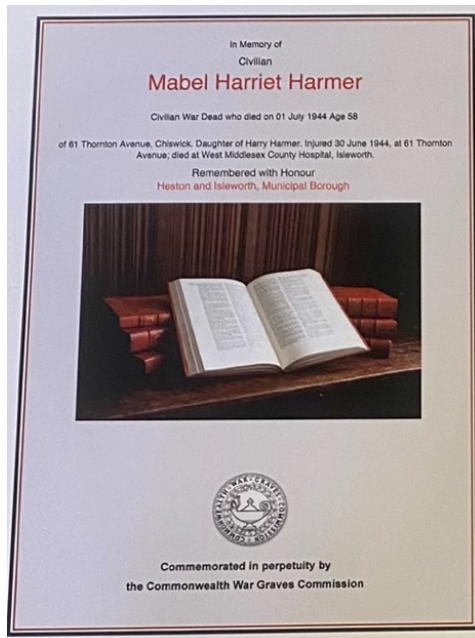
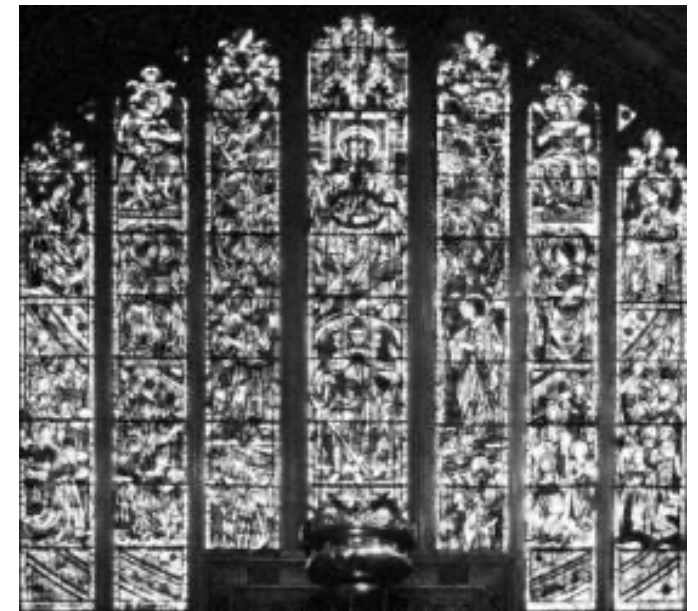
Shortly after D-Day, Ray Howard-Jones and her brother Tony suffered a family tragedy when one of the V1 flying bombs, or 'doodlebugs', landed on Tony's house in Woolwich, killing his wife Irene and her parents.



People in Chiswick would face similar losses in the following weeks:

- the first V2 landed in Staveley Road, Chiswick, in September 1944 (see crater, *above*, and memorial *left*, organised and maintained by the Brentford & Chiswick Local History Society)
- a V1 'doodlebug' landed in Bath Road in August 1944, destroying Chiswick Polytechnic (now ArtsEd) and blowing out the East Window of St Michael & All Angels Church (*below*)
- the death of Mabel Harmer, one of only two women on our war memorials and the only one from WW2, killed by a bomb in Thornton Avenue in June 1944.

Mabel Harmer was aged 58, a dress maker, and lived at 61 Thornton Avenue. She was injured when a bomb fell on it on 30 June 1944 and died the next day in the West Middlesex Hospital from the injuries she received. History does not relate whether the bomb that killed her was a V1 (like the one that destroyed Chiswick Polytechnic two months later) but the area of damage it caused must have been considerable, judging by the size of area now occupied by the flats where 61 Thornton Avenue previously stood. Mabel Harmer is listed on the CWGC website (left) among the civilian war dead.



Read more and see more of this year's Remembrance images on the St Michael & All Angels website: www.smaaa.org.uk.