

MARY LADEN

Born 3rd October 1923 - Passed away 17th October 2013

Born in Hitchin, England on 3 October 1923, Mary Laden née O'Hannan, passed away at Wezembeek-Oppem on 17 October 2013, just 2 weeks after her 90th birthday. Mary, widow of Colonel Aviator Eddie Laden, was a firm friend of the Belgian Branch over many years. Eddie, who sadly passed away in 2008, was an RAF Navigator/Bomb Aimer/ Air Gunner who was commissioned in Nov 1944 before being posted to Transport Command in Cambridgeshire. It was there at the Cambridge Town Hall Ball in July 1945 that Mary and Eddie met and they married the following May.

When they returned to Belgium in 1947, Eddie became a founder member of the Branch and served on the Committee for over 20 years, particularly acting as the key driving force behind what became the Barry Horton Memorial Golf Tournament. In later years, Mary faced the challenges of poor eyesight and ill-health with fortitude and bravery, and, thanks to the help from her family and friends, remained in good form throughout. The funeral on 26 October was conducted by Father Power in the lovely old church of Saint Pierre in Wezembeek-Oppem: the Church was crowded and included many old RAFA friends offering sympathy to her sons and grandchildren and their families. As a mark of respect and in recognition of her long association with RAFA, the Branch Standard was paraded by Jean-Pierre Blanckaert.