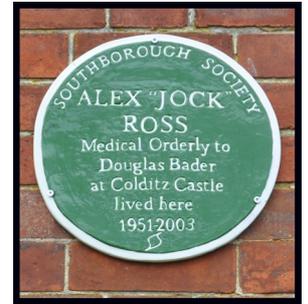


Alex “Jock” Ross - Medical Orderly to Douglas Bader by Michael Howes

Location of plaque - Weare Road, High Brooms.

Alex Ross, generally known as “Jock”, was born at Tain, near Inverness, Scotland, on 14 August 1917, the younger son of George and Dolina Ross.



He joined the Seaforth Highlanders as a bandsman and Medical Orderly in the 1930s and, after the outbreak of war, went to France with the 2nd Seaforths. In June 1940 in Northern France, his division were cut off by the German offensive, forced to surrender and were taken prisoner. Jock had been wounded in the ankle but was forced to march several miles in great pain to a hospital in Rouen. After he had recovered, he stayed on at the hospital for two years to help care for the other PoWs.

In 1942 Jock was transferred to Stalag VIIIb in Germany where RAF ace Douglas Bader was beginning a ten day spell in solitary confinement as punishment for trying to escape. Shortly afterwards when Bader was transferred to Colditz Castle, Jock volunteered to accompany him. It was here that he remained as Bader’s medical orderly until 1945, a job which Jock never reminisced fondly about in interviews later in his life. Bader was a difficult character and was often rude to Jock. He had to be carried piggyback down a spiral staircase to be bathed every day, then back up again – dripping wet – which even under normal circumstances was a difficult task since Jock had only two leg stumps to hold on to.



Jock Ross pictured with Douglas Bader at Colditz in 1942

Jock was handed a letter from the Red Cross in late 1943 explaining that as a non-combatant he was eligible for repatriation. Delighted with the news, he went to tell Bader that he was going

home. His reply was “No you’re bloody not. You came here as my skivvy and that’s the way you’ll stay!”. Jock remained loyal to Bader and stayed with him until the end, nearly a year-and-a-half later.

After the war he worked at the High Brooms Brickworks and later at Carr’s Ironmongers in Southborough right up to the age of 84. He became something of a celebrity following an interview on national television. He always maintained how arrogant and obnoxious Douglas Bader was during those not so pleasant years at Colditz.

Jock Ross died on September 3 2003, aged 86. He is remembered by a Southborough Society commemorative plaque at his home of more than 50 years in Weare Road, High Brooms. The unveiling last year was attended by a

large number of people including the Colditz Society and members of Jock’s family.



Jock - later in life as many of us will have remembered him