



TENTERDEN WESLEYAN CHURCH ORGAN

On the afternoon of Wednesday 15 December 1920, The Mayor of Tenterden (Major Neve), accompanied by the members of the Corporation went in procession to the Wesleyan Church to unveil the organ and tablet erected to the memory of the twelve men of the church, who made the great sacrifice during the 1914-1918 War. After the singing of the hymn "O God our help in ages past," prayer was offered by the Rev P M Despres and the Lesson was read by the Rev G Glandfield.

Addressing the congregation the Mayor said: "I esteem it is a great honour and privilege to unveil this memorial. The men whose names are on the tablet left all to fight for their country. Those who commanded them say that they fought like heroes and eventually died nobly in a noble cause. This organ is a memorial to their honour, and of our gratitude, and we should give thanksgiving and praise to Almighty God for their great and noble service." Flowers were then presented by the friends of the fallen men.

The Rev G Glandfield read the inscription on the tablet as follows: "This organ is erected to the Glory of God, and in ever grateful memory of those whose names are recorded below, who valiantly gave their lives in the Great War 1914-1918."



The newly built Memorial Pipe Organ at the Dedication Service in 1920 showing flowers to be presented to the families of the twelve young men who gave their lives

Albert E Bishop
George Bishop
John E Burgess
Horace R Burgess

Harold Goodman
H Allen Goodsell
Sydney J Goodsell
Horace B Link

Percy W Parsons
Arthur F Taunt
Herbert J Taunt
Frank Wiles

'Greater love have no man this'

The Rev J E Harlow, Chairman of the Kent District, in dedicating the memorial, said: "It always seems to me that there is a beautiful and impressive fact brought home to us in thus commemorating our noble dead. Since the Armistice Day and the unveiling of the Cenotaph I have been reverently impressed with two of the most momentous incidents in English history – the moments of silence everywhere and the burial of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey. I can do myself no greater honour than to attend any memorial service when a man's memory is re-called. We are here today to pay honour to those whom many of you knew. Some of you present are the relatives and friends of the men, whose names are on the tablet, and all here have a personal interest in them, they died nobly, there is nothing left for us to do, but to live nobly, that is the one voice that comes to us from those twelve men. I am quite sure that all present will feel the best dedication, after all, would be that every one of us whatever his business, should dedicate himself in the spirit of courage for the tasks we have to do. As a man who has had his share in this great struggle, I say to the relatives, lift up

your head afresh, and like the men who have left us, let us do the best we can for our Country. This organ will have all the richer notes because erected as a memorial. This world is in an awful condition even now the war is over, but we are still hopeful that all for which they died will surely come to pass.”

The Nunc Dimittis was then chanted, followed by the hymn “O valiant hearts, who in your glory came.”

In the evening, Mr Godden of Hamstreet gave an organ recital which fully displayed the sweet and powerful tones of the instrument. Appropriate solos were sung by Mrs Macrae Diggie (whose husband, Joseph Macrae Diggie was a partner in the firm of Howard and Sons Bark Tanners of West Cross) and Mr Bernard Oliver, while the choir sang the anthem “Walk about Sion” and “The Lord is my Shepherd.”

The organ was built by Griffen & Stroud of Bath at a cost of £376 and is one of only three WW1 Methodist memorial pipe organs remaining in England. David Smith, a newcomer to the town and church in 2016, realised that the pipe organ there required cleaning and repair to its damaged pipe work. He researched the organ’s history discovering it to be a war memorial and managed to secure grants for its total repair. The names of the fallen recorded on a brass plaque were made legible once again, and the cost of the restoration work was completed with grants totalling £10,500 shared equally by the War Memorials Trust and The Pilgrim Trust. Work was carried out by organ builder Alistair Curtis of Wadhurst and completed in April 2019.

On Wednesday 13 November 2019 a rededication of the WW1 Tenterden Wesleyan Memorial Pipe Organ was held. As in 1920, a parade took place from Tenterden Town Hall and included the Mayor (Cllr Mrs Jean Curteis) and twelve pupils from Homewood School who presented a flower in memory of each fallen soldier whilst Henry Purcell’s “When I am laid in earth, remember me” and Walford Davies’ “Solemn Melody” were played and details of the twelve who gave their lives was read by Major Philip Linehan REME.



Mayor Cllr Jean Curteis and Major Philip Linehan reading inside the church

The Rev Samantha Funnell, Superintendent of the South Kent Methodist Circuit took the service and the rededication of the organ was carried out by the Rev Helen Hollands, the Assistant (Eastern) District Chair of the South-Eastern District of the Methodist Church.

Dr David Flood, organist at Canterbury Cathedral, played the restored instrument while John Link, who is an Ashford Borough Councillor and a former Mayor of both Tenterden and Ashford, read the lesson (Ecclesiastes: Chapter 3, Verses 1-8). The Mayor of Tenterden gave a short Address. At the end of the service each pupil from Homewood School was given a drinking mug, showing on its side the above photograph of the organ, in recognition of the event.

None of the men on the War Memorial have any known relatives except for Private Horace Burt Link who is Cllr Link’s grandfather. Private Link served with the 6th Battalion, Royal Warwickshire Regiment and died aged 32 on 4 October 1917, a month before his 33rd birthday. Born in Bethersden and later moving to Silver Hill, Tenterden, Private Link was the father of a boy and a girl born in 1907 and 1909. He is buried in Tyne Cot Cemetery in Belgium.

As in 1920, the service finished with the Nunc Dimittis and then afternoon tea followed.

References:

Kent Messenger Group

David Smith and the 13 November 2019 Order of Service

Jack Gillett

Previous newsletters can be viewed at

www.mytenterden.co.uk/directory/tenterden-history-society-newsletters-article-307.aspx