



Richard Parkins (1932-2006)

Richard lived at St Michaels with his sister Mary, a retired nurse, having retired early himself from Banking in London and suburbia. He served in the Royal Air Force. For years he wound St Michaels Church Clock before it was electrified. His retirement was spent as administrator of the Tenterden Museum, as Treasurer of this and several other local societies and taking canal holidays with a long-standing friend. He helped an old colleague (now in her 90's) with her finances and he is perhaps best described as a gentle man. He told me he was ready to go when the time came.

Tunstall Bates

TENTERDEN WAR MEMORIAL

The Mayor, Mr A R Boorman, called a public meeting at the Town Hall in January 1919 in order to consider the desirability of a War Memorial for Tenterden. As a result it was decided to form a committee from a large number of organisations in the town. At this and succeeding meetings, many suggestions were made to the form the memorial should take. These included:-

- building a memorial hall in the town, a portion of the money collected being set aside and invested, the income going to its maintenance and the hall to be free for all
- in every church and chapel in the town a tablet to be erected containing the names and regiment of those who died in the war who had worshipped in that particular place of worship and the balance of any money to form a trust to be called the Tenterden War Memorial Trust, the income to be devoted to assist the children of those who had served in the army and navy
- the purchase of Ivy Court (the house formerly fronted by the Merchant Chandler) to be used as a memorial building
- putting the names of those who had fallen on the plinth of a gun that was likely to be presented to the town and which could be placed at East Cross, which was rented by the Corporation, together with a public shelter if the ground could be purchased (the purchase of the ground failed)
- a drinking fountain in the Recreation Ground together with a swimming pool
- the purchase of a motor ambulance
- a monument at East Cross

Finally, a memorial was placed on the Greens in the High Street near Borough Place. The memorial has four steps representing the four years of the war and the base represents the fifth or culminating year, on the front panel of which is the following inscription: "1914-1919 To the men of Tenterden who gave their lives during the Great War. Live thou for England; we for England died." A head representing "Thought" surmounts the inscription. On the two side panels and back are inscribed the 78 names of those who fell. The shaft is surmounted by hooded lozenge panels on which are depicted the Arms of Tenterden and the Crest of the County of Kent. The lozenge panels are a sign of mourning and the spear pointing to the base signifies Tenterden in mourning. The architect was Mr W Wrigley Diggle of London, the son of Mr J R Diggle (1839-1917 and Mayor of Tenterden 1895-98, 1901 and 1902) who rebuilt and lived at the Grange in St Michaels and which was later destroyed by a bomb in 1940. The whole of the structure is of Portland stone and was executed by Mr N Hitch, sculptor of 60 Harleyford Road, Vauxhall and erected by Messrs Weeks and Son, of Tenterden.

The memorial service for the men of the Borough of Tenterden who fell in the war and the unveiling of the memorial took place on the evening of Wednesday 26 May 1920 with a large number of people attending. A muffled peal was rung on the bells of St Mildred's Church from 6 to 7 p.m. In the meantime a procession was formed at the recreation ground marshalled by Captain W L C Turner while the Mayor and Corporation, clergy and choir assembled at the Town Hall. Col J Munn Mace, Lt Col J Body DSO OBE from Wittersham and Mr W Wrigley Diggle (the architect) and the Sergeants at Mace (Messrs S Goodsell and N Tickner)

accompanied the Mayor (Cllr L Kennard Davies). The members of the Corporation present were Aldermen A R Boorman, F Edwards, E Apps and H Judge and Councillors S Hook, J S Winsor F Care, Major H Neve, Capt Dampier Palmer (Hon Secretary of the Memorial Committee), W Love, J Checksfield, S Thirkell, J M Diggle and L H Browning with Mr H B Mace (Deputy Town Clerk). The clergy present were the vicar (Rev J A Babington), Rev J Jervis (vicar of St Michaels), Rev G Glandfield (Wesleyan minister) and Rev J H Marshall (Baptist minister). The Rev Harold Rylett (Unitarian minister) was unable to attend. The Girl Guides were led by Lady Drury (widow of Admiral Sir Charles Drury and living at Homewood, now Homewood School), the Divisional Commissioner for South West Kent, whilst the Boy Scouts were under the charge of Mr R A Whiteman and Captain Chambers led the Comrades. The members of the National Federation of Demobilized Soldiers and Sailors numbered about 60.

The service at the memorial commenced with the singing of the hymn "O God our help in ages past" the choir being conducted by the choirmaster, Mr A H Smith, after which the Rev G Glandfield led in prayer. Lt Col J Body spoke and unveiled the memorial by releasing a Union Jack that draped the memorial and said "I unveil this memorial to the brave men of Tenterden, who gave their lives during the Great War." The Rev J A Babington then dedicated the memorial in the following words: "We dedicate this memorial to the memory of our gallant soldiers and sailors who laid down their lives during the Great War, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen." This was followed by Sgt-Drummer Clayton, Drummer Collier and Drummer Baker from the Buffs sounding the last post on their bugles.



Tenterden War Memorial – Wednesday 26 May 1920

Representatives of public bodies and the relatives of those that had fallen then laid wreaths at the base of the memorial. The Mayor first stepped forward and placed upon the step a magnificent wreath of lilies and carnations bearing the inscription "From the Mayor and Corporation." Lady Drury's tribute was tied with navy blue ribbons and had the inscription "In proud and grateful memory of the officers and men who gave their lives for their King and Country - from Lady Drury CBE." Conspicuous amongst all the others was a magnificent wreath inscribed, "From the National Federation of Discharged Sailors and Soldiers, Tenterden Branch – Ye that live on mid English pastures green, remember us and think what might have been." A large wreath of bay leaves was from Tenterden Branch of the Comrades of the Great War and in addition to the name had the inscription "Never forgotten." Another large laurel wreath was from the Tenterden Girl Guides – "In proud and grateful memory of the Empire's defenders."

The Rev J H Marshall followed in prayer and the choir sang "For all the saints who from their labours rest." The Rev J Jervis pronounced the Benediction. The "Reveille" was then sounded and the singing of the National Anthem brought the ceremony to a close.

After the 1939-1945 War the names of those who fell were also added.

Reference: Kentish Express Newspapers

Jack Gillett