

# Dedication of War Memorial

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A large company of parishioners and others assembled at Great Coxwell on Sunday afternoon, when an impressive ceremony took place in the unveiling and dedication of the War Memorial which has been erected to the six men of the village who lost their lives in the Great War.

The memorial is placed in an enclosed garden abutting on the village street, and adjacent to the School.

The Memorial is a cross of Hollinton stone, with three steps. It rests on an octagonal base, 7ft wide and 3ft.3in. high, constructed of rough hewn stone, with open joints, in which ferns and other rock plants will be grown. The whole rises 15ft. from the ground. An interesting feature of the design is that the base of the old village cross has been used for the new one. The base was found amongst the stones taken from the ruined house which, till a few years ago, stood in the site now occupied by the Memorial. The old cross was, no doubt, destroyed in the Cromwellian times, and its materials taken for building purposes. The architect of the Memorial made his designs so that the old base could be used for its original purpose.

The inscription on the square of the Memorial which faced the road was as follows:-

“To the glory of God and in honour of those who fell in the Great War , 1914 – 1919,” and the following names:-

Tom Titcomb	14 <sup>th</sup> October,	1914
Tom C. P. Higgs	25 <sup>th</sup> December,	1914
Walter J. Dyer	30 <sup>th</sup> June,	1915
Herbert C. King	21 <sup>st</sup> March	1918
Reginald Pearce	1 <sup>st</sup> September	1918
Frank E. Robey	31 <sup>st</sup> October	1918

At a quarter to two 14 men (with ex-Staff Sergt. Shilton in charge) who had served in the Army during the war, formed up near the Post Office, and marched to the enclosure and took up position on two sides of the Memorial, acting as a Guard of Honour. The Vicar, the Rev. W Boldero, accompanied by those that formed the War Memorial Committee, and a few others, proceeded from outside the Church to the Memorial and a large number of people remained in the roadway and solemnly took part in the service. The hymn “O God, our help in ages past,” was sung and then followed the Lesson – Wisdom iii 1-6 v 15, 16.

The Memorial was then unveiled by Colonel W.H. Ames (Bourton), who gave an appropriate and thoughtful address. It was a great honour to him, he said, to have been asked to come there that afternoon to unveil the memorial which they had erected to the memory of those men from the village who gave their lives fighting for their country. He saw there were six name inscribed on the Memorial – one of who, he was informed, died from disease – and this was a good proportion from a village of that size. There were many thoughts which occurred to one on an occasion like that, and their first thought must be of those that had gone, those who gave their lives in order that others might live. It was a most remarkable fact indeed, and one that was recognised in many quarters – the cheerfulness and alacrity with which the men went to France and to other areas of the war and did their duty. It was one of the most distinguishing features, and must be due to the fact that they knew that the cause for which they were fighting was a right and just cause, and they were willing to

leave their homes and fight for the cause of justice. This Memorial would remain in the parish for many years as a mark of the respect and homage which all who remained wished to pay to those who went from this village to take part in the great conflict., and they could only think of them as having manfully done their duty. And after all they died the death which was a glorious death of the highest form in which men could make sacrifice if called upon to make it.

## The Bereaved

They must also think of those of their relatives who remained behind, and to them they extended their greatest sympathy, and it may be a comfort to them to think that those they had lost had nobly done their duty, and that perhaps they themselves had dies the death that they would have preferred to die, Still their sympathy must always be with the bereaved ones; they must always feel for them – as indeed they felt for all others who suffered loss in the Great War which fell upon them.

## The Lesson for All

One other thought, in conclusion, he should like to put before them, and that was for themselves. What lesson had that Memorial come to teach them all in the future? And he thought that in this way they got on to the right lines of thought about life in general. We are running a great risk of losing the advantages which those men who are dead fought to secure us. The dominant factor in a soldier's life he thought could be summed up in one word and that word was "service." A soldier had to do a variety of things in his daily round and task of duty. He did not do them for himself, he did not do them for his own advantage, but he did them because they were a small part of one big machine, and he did them in a proper spirit of service for his company, his unit, and for his King and Country. Service for others was the dominant note in a soldier's life, and not service for self. In the same way, don't you think that in all those great problems that come before us in these troublous times we ought to think and remember that we do not live for ourselves alone, and that all our works ought not to be done merely for ourselves, to enrich ourselves, to make ourselves comfortable, but that we are all a part of one great work to make others happy and, if he might add, good. Whenever they passed that War Memorial they would think how those men whose names were inscribed there, and others, served their King and Country, and would thereby be reminded of what their own duty was – to do good service to their fellow men, and if they did that duty in their daily lives, then those who fought and died for them would not have fought and dies in vain.

The Memorial was then dedicated, the special prayers being said by the Vicar, who also read the names of those inscribed. Then followed "silence for a space" in memory of the fallen, and other prayers were offered. The hymn "For all the saints who from their labours rest" was sung, after which the Vicar pronounced the Benediction, and the solemn service was concluded with the bugle sounding of "The Last Post" by an ex-soldier from Faringdon, Mr S. G. Bowler.

The Union Jack on the staff in the school yard was lowered to halfmast, and at the conclusion of the service a muffled peal was rung on the Church bells.

A number of wreaths were placed on the Memorial. Several were without cards. Those which had cards attached were:- In loving remembrance of dear Frank, from Mother, Father and Brothers; From Mr and Mrs William Packer and Family, Uffington, in proud and loving memory of Herbert Charles King – "We owe a duty we'll ne'er forget; he helped to win 'The Day'." In ever loving memory of dear Charlie, from his Brothers and Sister; In loving memory of Tom Higgs died December 25<sup>th</sup> 1914; interred at Bethune; In loving memory of Walter Dyer, from Mr and Mrs Dyer and family.