

## War Memorial's in Saltash with reference to item 21 agenda for 5-1-2017

This document only includes factual information that is available from publically accessible sources.

### Background Information

At the end of WWI Saltash and St Stephens were separate administrative areas. Saltash was a Borough Town and St Stephens was a Parish Council within the area of St Germans Rural District Council. Each administrative area raised its own War Memorial. (How this was done and how those named on these memorials were selected is still being researched but is not relevant in this instance).

In 1934, after 12 years of negotiation Saltash Borough Council amalgamated with St Stephens Parish Council creating one administrative area. This was authorised by a 'Local Government Board Order' with the full agreement of all authorities involved.

At this time the Town War Memorial for Saltash (Adjacent St Nicholas and St Faith Church) became the memorial of the newly enlarged Borough. The memorial at St Stephens that was within the boundary wall of St Stephens Parish Church and on church land became (or always had been) the responsibility of St Stephens Parish under the control of the Parochial Church Council (PCC).

### Post WWII

#### Saltash Borough War Memorial

At the end of WWII Saltash Town Council created a committee chaired by the Mayor to:

- a. Select appropriate names (both military and civil) for the war memorial.
- b. Raise funds to finance the memorial.

Both these tasks relied heavily on local co-operation. This was done by involving organisation like the British Legion (which had over 400 members in Saltash), the WRVS, Toc. H. and all churches and church organisations, it also included the vicar of St Stephens Church, Rev. Wainright and Capt. Wyld, both member of St Stephens PCC and war memorial committee), Notices were also placed in local newspapers. A letter was posted to every house in Saltash (Names of all committee members can be supplied) Cllr. Canning Vosper stated that the Borough War Memorial now represented the whole of the Borough and any at St Stephens was unnecessary.

The task took almost five years resulting in a list containing 88 names. The committee never did raise enough money estimated at between £3,000 & £4,000. The fund fell short and required topped up by a donation of £84/-/4p from the Town Council.

The memorial was completed early in 1950

#### The War Memorial at St Stephens

Because of the limited time available research has been concentrated on the years 1945 - 1955

In Jan 1935 Saltash Council discussed paying the bill for repairs to St Stephens War Memorial. Ald. R Porter, chairman of the Finance Committee raised the point that the property did not belong to the Corporation.

Records show that during this period the war memorial needed repairs. This required the top capping being removed. These repairs were sanctioned by, and the bill paid by St Stephens PCC who continually referred to the war memorial as 'our memorial'.

The idea of putting WWII names on the St Stephens war memorial was first muted in December 1949 at a meeting of the Parochial Church Council.

Dec 1949

### **PROPOSED WAR MEMORIAL**

Although the names of those of St. Stephens Parish who gave their lives in the last war will be included in the Borough War Memorial for which donations have been given and which is now in course of preparation, a wish has been expressed from various quarters that their names should also be added to the existing War Memorial in the churchyard. This has been considered by the Parochial Church Council and the principle approved provided the necessary funds are forthcoming.

A small committee was formed and it was proposed to add twenty-six names in the most suitable position, replace railings, etc., which it was estimated should cost approximately £25.

The committee of Miss R. Hunter, Mr. A. Masey, Mr. C. Stanlake and Capt. Wyld were also tasked with collecting donations

In January 1950 the vicar of St Stephens (Rev. Barrington H. Wainwright) wrote:-

The Christian Church deals with people not in masses, but as individuals. It doesn't give the individual a number, or card-index him. It gives him his Christian name at Baptism: not his "first" name or "fore"-name, but "Christian" name, as being a child of God.

*This may account for the fact that Christian names are include on the WWII side*

Jan 1950 the PCC war memorial committee reported.

### **ST. STEPHENS WAR MEMORIAL FUND.**

Owing to there being a greater number of names to be inscribed than was actually anticipated, a preliminary survey has shown that the original estimate may have to be revised, and it is considered that a minimum of £30 should be aimed at. Whilst a retiring collection was taken in church on Sunday, January 22nd, it is felt there are still a good many who would wish to subscribe who have not already done so who were not in church that day. It has been decided to close the Fund on February 15th, and the committee hope that this comparatively small sum will be available by then, and that the work can be put in hand. At the moment the fund stands at approximately £14/5/-

Feb 1950

### **WAR MEMORIAL**

In view of questions respecting the commemoration of names of the men of this parish who fell in the Second World War on the St. Stephens War Memorial, the Council offered its services for the collection of names and money. It cannot, of course divert church funds to this purpose. *(the council being the PCC)*

May 1950

A fund has been subscribed to add to the War Memorial the names of those from St. Stephens who fell during the war, and the work should be shortly begun.

May 1951

The names of the men who fell during the war who belonged to St. Stephen's Parish have been added to the War Memorial.

Nov 1953

### **THE WAR MEMORIAL**

After defraying all the expenses of cutting the names on the War Memorial, there remained a small balance which was handed over provisionally to the Church yard Account. The committee which raised the funds and collected the names has chosen the following inscription: —

"Ye that live on mid English pastures green,  
Remember us and think what might have been."

The Church Council has approved and these words will be cut on the memorial, the cost being met entirely from the balance mentioned above.

## War Memorials Trust (guidelines) extracted from document

### **Establish 'ownership'**

Use local sources to establish if there is a formal transfer of 'ownership' to a community body (e.g. parish council, local trust, etc.) in order to obtain permission for adding names (or conflicts).

### **Research the history of the war memorial**

Use local sources (e.g. parish records, local archives at libraries or museums, local newspaper archives) to establish the history of the memorial.

Please note that criteria for inclusion can be adapted if the local community feel this is appropriate, but it is useful to know what the original criteria were, so that the proposed additions do not compromise the original intentions of the community or the memorial's design.

The majority of war memorials were created by a local community.

These communities may be geographical or based on a workplace, place of worship, school or social group or event. Therefore research will need to be focussed on that community.

### **Conclusions**

The War Memorial at St Stephens should be looked at as two separate memorials on the same structure. The west side of the War Memorial (WWI) is based on a geographical community and the south side (WWII) is based on a place of worship and reflects the criteria and wishes of St Stephens Parish through their PCC. (This also applies to the memorials in St Nicholas & St Faith Church, Burraton Methodist Church, Saltash Wesley church and the one that was in the chapel at Forder). The memorial on the fire station being a work based memorial. There is also a war memorial is Saltash.net school, this original was in Saltash Grammar school.

The war memorial stands on church land within the boundary wall of the Parish Church. In church documents it is repeatedly referred to as 'our' memorial. Maintenance and repairs to the memorial were carried out and paid for by St Stephens PCC. This would indicate that the War Memorial is the church's responsibility and in their care. No evidence has yet been found to the contrary.

The names selected by the PCC (29 out of 88) were selected because of their connection with St Stephens Parish Church. (The vicar Rev. Wainright and Capt. Wyld both sat on the Borough war memorial committee) This PCC have sat continually to this day.

Any suggestion that the firemen were 'overlooked, missed, left off, forgotten,' etc. is incorrect. The names for the memorial at St Stephens were extracted from the names already selected for the Town Memorial which included all firemen.

Even if the War Memorial was in the care of the Town Council there is no evidence in this case to justify any additions to the memorial. (see notes A and B)

### **Sources of information.**

Saltash War Memorial Committee Minutes 1945 -1951

Documents enclosed with the above minutes

St Nicholas and St Faith – St Stephens's Parish Church, Magazine 1945 – 1955

Saltash Gazette Newspaper

Cornish Times Newspaper

Cornish Guardian Newspaper

Western Morning News

St Stephens Parish Council Minutes up to 1934

War memorials Trust

## Further research

Build a database of all Saltash people who lost their lives due to enemy action (Peter Clements has taken this in hand), This will include all known information and sources.

Establish how the memorial at St Stephens was originally funded after WWI

Examine records held at Liskeard, Redruth and Truro.

## Personal view

The whole argument in this case comes down to. "Is there any justification for adding additional names to the WWII section of the War Memorial at St Stephens?"

There are guidelines available via the War Memorials Trust regarding the addition of names on war memorials. No attempt has been made to follow these guidelines.

Those who think the names of two firemen should be added to the War Memorial at St Stephens have, as yet, done little or no research. They have not produced any evidence, not one document, not one reference, not one piece of verifiable information to justify their wishes.

They have used emotive words and phrases like; forgotten, omitted, left off, overlooked, mistake, righting a wrong, will of the people etc. None of these are true.

Another phrase used was; wishes of the decedents. These wishes, in the form of letters, were not spontaneous. They were generated by contacting the decedents of firemen to solicit them to write letters in an orchestrated attempt to influence any decision by bringing emotional pressure to bear.

I also understand that they approached a number of armed forces organisations for support. None accepted

Those who do research, and base decisions on factual evidence and an understanding of how the system worked at that time, know that the whole issue of people from Saltash who lost their lives in both world wars due to enemy action is a huge subject. It will take much time to resolve, if ever completely. The limited time available for research has resulted in much information coming to light which indicates there is much more to discover, (see conclusions above). One cannot 'cherry pick' names on a whim. All should be treated equally with the same respect. Guidelines are there to guide, not be ignored. In this case all evidence indicates that the two firemen (and 58 others) were not included in the names selected by the Parochial Church Council of St Stephens Church, which represents the congregation and parishioners of that church, because they did not meet the criteria that the church decided on for inclusion

When research is done, it must be seen to be done. If a statement is made then evidence should be produced to support that statement. Without that evidence it is nothing but speculation.

When names are put on a memorial they are all equal in death, regardless of rank or status. They all died due to enemy action. That's how they should be remembered. Who are we 70 years later to question their decisions?

*Bruce Hunt*

## Notes

### A. Buried at St Stephens

It has been suggested that because the firemen are buried at St Stephens they should all be on the war memorial. Place of burial is completely irrelevant. Many are buried on the battle fields where they fell and many have no known grave, particularly those who served in the RN and were lost at sea.

### B. Gary Nelson and Leonard Furze

It is quite right and proper that all people that lost their lives due to enemy action should be remembered and included on memorials as long as their family (next of kin) wish it to be.

Gary Nelson lost his life in the Falklands Conflict and his name is on the north side of the memorial at St Stephens. It is usual to list names by conflict (Suez, Korea, Malaya, Balkans, Gulf War, Afghanistan etc.) or just as (Post 1945) but not to add those names to unrelated previous conflicts.

The history behind the inclusion of Leonard Furze on the memorial is less clear. He lost his life in Palestine in unknown circumstances. Why he was added to the WWII section and not independently is not known but is the subject of ongoing research.

It would appear now with hindsight that assumptions were made at the time and actions taken without knowledge of guidelines and protocols. I understand in the case of Furze, family pressure played a part. This does not set a precedent. If anything it teaches us to be more careful in the future.

## Research

Research tends to fall into two general categories

A. To look at something in its current state and work backwards to find out how that was arrived at (a good example is family history).

B. Analyse past events to assist making decisions for the present and future (health and safety). Quite often it is combination of the two.

What you do not do is decide on an outcome first and try to justify that decision by any means possible.

There are often exceptions to procedures but these are exceptions. Decisions should not be taken on a series of exceptions but on compliance with accepted criteria.

## Comments on Burial Board Minutes (Cllr Mrs S Hooper)

Councillor Hooper has some valid points although her information seems to be almost wholly internet based with the exception of a paragraph from one booklet. Most web sites (unless specialist) do not go into specifics as deep as origins and history of individual monuments but they do give information on where to look. This information is usually found locally (see WMT for sources).

So far over 40 documents containing related information have come to light and these point the way to many more.

The information above is extracted from some of these documents and cross referenced to others.

## Archives

The archive at Saltash Heritage was utilised in the research above as were other sources. It should be noted that Saltash Heritage is an independent non-political organisation run by volunteers to collect and document information about the Saltash area for future generations. To make that information available in the Local History Centre for anyone to study. Saltash Heritage is aware that different people will draw different conclusions from the same documents. It can provide advice on where further information can be found.