

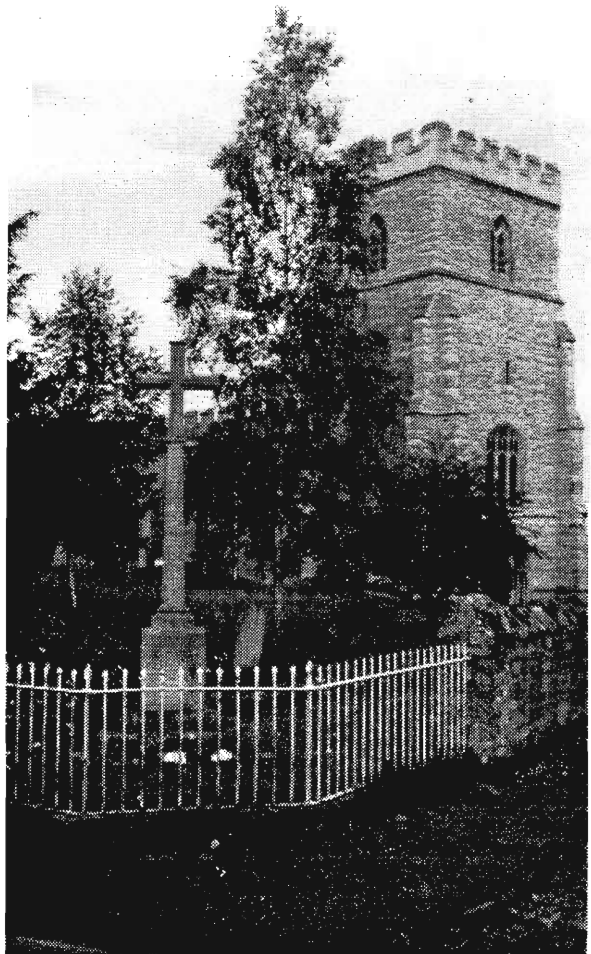
Our Village Heroes

Dinton and Ford

War Memorials

by

David Pickup



Forward

Mickfield
Suffolk

I am indeed very honoured to be asked to write a foreword to this work by David Pickup. Really it speaks for itself and needs nothing more, but having read it, I feel that he has given us a tremendous gift, something we should treasure.

Many of us remember the dead of the two World Wars. On Remembrance Day we stand for the two minutes silence before the war memorial, listen to 'The Last Post' and hear the list of names. As someone who has lived in Dinton the greater part of my life, those names are so familiar. I married the brother of one of them and have know so many members of those local families. A lot of water has gone under the bridge. It is this work of David's which puts flesh on those bones and gives us a picture of Dinton and Ford as it was in those perilous times. It takes each name and turns it into a real person; a young man, who in his own way, at his own particular Armageddon, paid the ultimate price and for our tomorrow gave his today.

Patricia Currie

Introduction

Most village war memorials record very little information about the men whose names are commemorated. Dinton and Ford memorials are not different. Now nearly eighty years after the names were written, the passer-by who stops and reads them will not even discover the Christian names of the men. What were they like? Where did they serve and how did they meet their deaths? This booklet is an attempt to discover as much as possible about the men, their war records, their personalities and their sacrifices. After so many years it is not possible to answer every question or to get a complete picture. It is a story of heartbreaking loss. Ford was, and still is, a small village. It sent 12 men to the First World War, but only three survived. We start by looking at the villages.

David Pickup April 1999
12, Roundhill,
Stone,
Aylesbury,
Bucks.,
HP17 8RD

Kohima

In Kohima War Cemetery where Bill Currie, of Dinton Hall, lies stands the memorial to the 2nd Division. Inscribed on it are the words which are known as the famous Kohima Epitaph.

***When you go home
Tell them of us and say
for your tomorrow
we gave our today.***

Dinton and Ford during the Great War

The civil parish of Dinton with Ford and Upton was very much a rural community dominated by the ancient church and Dinton Hall, occupied by the Lord of the Manor, Lt. Col. Goodall. The population of the parish in 1911 was 616. The village has not increased much in size over the years. The census figures for 1996 show a population of 817 for the present civil parish. Most of the villagers were dependant on farming the chief crops of wheat, barley, oats, beans and turnips. The local limestone when mixed with water and straw was a useful building material for walls and homes. It was known as "wych earth" or "Dinton marble". There were a number of businesses in Dinton including four shopkeepers. Thomas Ward was the village blacksmith at Forge Cottage and Reyner Brunton was a poultry dealer at Rosedene. Fred Welford and Fred Woodford ran carriers to Aylesbury every day. Dinton had a school for 140 children built in 1871 where Mr. Churchill was the master. Just over a mile to the south lies the hamlet of Ford where there was a Baptist chapel that had been enlarged in 1852 to seat 250 people. The chapel had a history going back to 1716. In 1915 a Dr. Clifford preached on "The New World After the War" to a congregation of 230. The minister, Eustace Little, served for 70 years until his death in 1921. There was a mission hall in Dinton for 120. Alfred Ludlow and William Kingham kept farms at Ford as did William Rose.

When war broke out men like the Jeffrey cousins joined up to have a good time. By 1918 there were 69 men from Dinton in the forces. These included Frank, James, John and Thomas Hollyman from Westlington; and the vicar's two sons Alaistair and Stewart both of whom were Lieutenants. The blacksmith's sons Charles and Frederick were in uniform. Charles was in the Army Veterinary Corps and Fred was serving in the Royal Navy on H.M.S. Fawn.

The Second World War

There were airfields at Haddenham, Oakley and Westcott. Locals were employed there. While the men went away there were new arrivals. Many children were evacuated from London and probably had their first taste of country life. They were welcomed by locals but some suspected that evacuees were responsible for the cricket pavilion burning down. Land girls worked on the farms as did Italian Prisoners of War from the camp at Hartwell. They also worked the sandpits in Stone. The Italian Prisoners of War were friendly but the German Prisoners of War who arrived later were considered surly.

Dinton and Ford men served as Air Raid Wardens and in the Home Guard. There was a unit at Stone run by men from St. John's Hospital. These were dangerous times for the villagers as well as for the men in uniform. There was at least one stick of bombs that fell on Dinton and Stone. This was probably an aircraft dumping its bombs on the way back from a raid on the midlands. A resident remembers a bright moonlit night and bumping into a German air crew-man who was walking down a Dinton Road after his plane had been shot down. The German fighter is believed to have crashed near the brook in the field near Dinton Folly. Presumably the German was detained elsewhere. The villager had been in a group of three women and one man

whose Air Raid Warden duties were to patrol Oxford Road in Dinton. They saw the airman but did not challenge him.

A training flight for a Canadian Wellington bomber ended in disaster at Moat Farm, Ford, when it crash landed killing two of the crew in January 1944. Local children went to the scene of the accident to collect bullets strewn in the fields. Towards the end of the war "doodlebugs", the German pilotless flying bomb, flew over Bucks. On one occasion Dinton villagers were enjoying themselves in the village hall when one was heard to fly over and its engine cut out overhead. They lived to tell the tale.

Locals remember columns of vehicles travelling along Oxford Road before D Day and American servicemen throwing candy and gum to the village children. The field between Upton and the Hospital became a makeshift transit camp for armoured troops in transit to the Invasion forces.

Roll of Honour

MATTHEWS Private Frank 7817 2 Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry died on 21st October 1914 Menin Gate memorial Ypres. No known grave. Probably a regular or territorial soldier because of his low number.

WELFORD Lance Corporal A 12697 6 Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry died on Saturday 25th September 1915 Royal Irish Rifles. Graveyard Laventie Pas de Calais.

HALSEY Leading Seaman Benjamin J/41010 HMS Queen Mary, killed in action at battle of Jutland 31st May 1916 age 22, son of George and Alice Halsey of 2 Temple Croft Terrace Upton. Awarded Naval General Service Medal (Persian Gulf) He is commemorated on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial Hampshire. H.M.S. Queen Mary disappeared in a "...Dazzling flash of red flame...and explosion." She was a battle cruiser blown up with the loss of 1,268 when a shell hit the magazine. 7 men survived.

Ben's father was a regular soldier in the Royal Irish Rifles who served in the Boer War. Ben went to school at Haddenham and won a scripture prize. His family have treasured a photograph and the Christmas gift box from Princess Mary given to servicemen in 1914. A newspaper cutting contains a photograph of men on board his ship receiving the presents.

A village recruiting meeting held in Dinton probably in 1915 included an appeal to men of "all classes between 19 and 38" to join up. An "interesting



Leading Seaman Benjamin Halsey, killed in action at battle of Jutland 31st May 1916 age 22



A remarkable scene at sea under a dull overcast sky. It shows men of H.M.S. Queen Mary drawn up on the quarter deck, receiving at the hands of their captain the Christmas and New Year cards from the King and Queen. Most of the men have sent the cards home for safe keeping. (Photo: Colib.)

DINTON.
RECRUITING MEETING.—LETTER FROM
LIEUT.-COLONEL GOODALL.

A successful recruiting meeting was held at Dinton on Monday evening under the chairmanship of the Rev. E. C. Stukeley, who, notwithstanding a recent accident, patriotically accepted the invitation to preside. There was a good attendance at the meeting, which was in connection with the Bucks Unionist and Liberal Associations.

A letter was read from Lieut.-Colonel Goodall expressing regret at his inability to be present, and wishing the gathering every success. An interesting communication read was one from a Dinton lad on board the Queen Mary, whilst several letters were received from the men of the village expressing their thanks for the comforts received from their friends.

Mr. R. H. Scotter, from the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee, then delivered a forcible address on the war, urging the great necessity there was for more men, and appealing to all classes between the ages of 19 and 33. He made a strong appeal to the women to use their influence to get able-bodied men to so train themselves that they could take their part in repelling the enemy in case of invasion.

At the conclusion the Vicar thanked Mr. Scotter for his address, and the meeting terminated with the singing of the National Anthem.

report in the Bucks Herald noting the reading of an interesting letter from a local lad

letter" was read from a village lad (Ben) serving on H.M.S. Queen Mary and other notes from men expressing thanks for comforts sent to troops.

SAYELL Private Arthur 4276 2nd/1st Bucks Bn Ox and Bucks 19th July 1916 age 25. Son of Jeffrey Sayell of Ford. Loos Memorial Pas de Calais. The Loos Memorial commemorates 20,000 officers and men who have no known grave. This was the first major engagement for the unit which had been in France since May 1916. The battalion had gone into action with 20 officers and 622 men. There were 322 casualties including 4 officers and 62 men killed in two days on the Somme.



The Christmas gift box from Princess Mary given to servicemen in 1914.

WOODFORD Private Benjamin 23168 5th Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry, died on Thursday 3rd May 1917 Arras, memorial Pas de Calais. The Memorial commemorates 35,000 casualties who have no known grave and fell in the fighting between Spring 1916 and August 1918

NEWNS Private Harold 266589 1/1 Bucks. Bn, Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry, died 16th August 1917 age 29, son of Mr and Mrs E Newns of Dinton Green Aylesbury husband of Rose of 9 Brook Row Tyne Cot. Memorial Zonnebeke West-Vlaanderen Panel 96 to 98 3rd Battle of Ypres. The Battalion put up an "excellent fight". One of 54 men and 2 officers killed in the battalion. 13 officers and 637 men went into action and there were 338 casualties of whom 1 officer and 46 men killed, 122 missing.

KINGHAM Private Thomas 266198 (see cutting) 2nd/1st Bn Ox and Bucks Light Infantry killed in action on 22nd August 1917 only son of Mrs. C Kingham of The Cottage Ford. He was 28 years of age. He joined the Territorials in the early days of the war and a few days before he fell was awarded a parchment in

"recognition of his gallant conduct and devotion to duty during an attack by the enemy on the outpost lines".

When killed he had volunteered to form a search party for injured comrades. He was widely respected in the village and in particular in the Baptist Church where he was a member and worker. A memorial service was held in the chapel.

He is commemorated on Menin Gate Memorial



PRIVATE THOMAS KINGHAM

General sorrow was felt in Ford and the neighbourhood when information was received that Private Thomas Kingham, of the Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry, had been killed in action on August 22nd. Private Kingham was the only son of Mrs. C. Kingham, of the Cottage, Ford, and was 28 years of age. He joined the Oxford and Bucks L.I. (Territorials) in the early days of the war, and a few weeks before he fell he was awarded a parchment "In recognition of his gallant conduct and devotion to duty during an attack by the enemy on the outpost lines." It is a striking tribute to Private Kingham's gallantry that when killed he had volunteered to form one of a party to go out to find missing comrades. He was highly respected in the village and neighbourhood, and will be missed by all who knew him, as well as by the members of the Baptist Church, in which he showed great promise of becoming a useful member and worker.

A very impressive service was held at Ford Baptist Church on Sunday last in memory of the deceased soldier, who was the first member of the Church to fall in action. The minister (Rev. E. J. South) conducted the service and preached to a good and sympathetic congregation.

C. E. M. S. (AYLESBURY)

newspaper clipping, remembering Thomas Kingham

ALISON, Private Frank 266602 6th Bn Ox and Bucks, 20 September 1917, age 20, son of William and Amy Allison, of Biggs Lane Dinton. Tyne Cot Memorial Zonnebeke West-Vlaanderen Panel 96 to 98. A notice in The Bucks Herald of 10th November 1917 stated that Mr. and Mrs. W. Allison of Biggs Lane, Dinton had received official news that their son had been missing since September 20th 1917. Information from any of his comrades would be appreciated. It is interesting that the notice was nearly two months after he went missing. The fact that he is commemorated on a memorial shows that his body was never found. One can imagine the anguish of his parents who probably never received any more information about what happened to their son.

JEFFREY Gunner Walter Edward 101960 161st Bde Royal Field Artillery, died of wounds 21st October 1917 age 19. Son of John and Elizabeth Jeffrey of The Summers Dinton. John was a gardener at Dinton Hall. Dozinghem Military Cem'y Westvleteren Poperinge, West-Vlaanderen. The Bucks Herald dated 10th November 1917 recorded that he died at a Casualty Clearing Station in France on 20th not 21st October. He had joined the army in July 1915 (at the age of 17) and volunteered for active service in October. He was wounded in the battle of the Somme in July 1916 and invalided home. He returned to France again in October 1916 and suffered from the condition called trench feet in February 1917. He was hospitalised and then sent to a convalescent home in France. Lieutenant C.R. Cliff wrote to his mother as follows on 28th October,

"It is with deepest sorrow and regret that I have to inform you of the death of your brave son. He was wounded in the back by a splinter from a bursting shell at the Battery position on October 20th and died later in the day at the Casualty Clearing Station. He was buried in a military cemetery a few miles behind the lines. He was a good soldier, conscientious, hardworking and beloved by all his comrades; and I can assure you that his death is greatly mourned by all the officers, N.C.O.s and men of the battery. As his section officer I feel his loss very keenly as he was one of my very best gunners. You have my deepest heartfelt sympathy in your sad bereavement."

The Absent Voters List records a man called Harry Jeffrey who lived at same address. Presumably they were brothers.

BRUNTON Private Charles (Charlie) Samuel 205162 1/1 Royal Bucks Hussars died as a result of shell shock 13th November 1917 age 20, only son of Reyner and Ada Brunton of Rosedene Dinton, Gaza War Cemetery Israel. The site of three battles of Gaza ending with the victory over Turks on 7th November 1917. The description of the cause of death is interesting but is explained by a letter sent by his officer. *The Bucks Herald* of 24th November 1917 stated that he died of wounds. He had been a motor engineer at Iris car Works in Aylesbury and was called up on mobilisation in August 1914 in the Bucks Yeomanry. He went to Egypt with the regiment, survived the Gallipoli campaign, to fight the Turks in the Holy Land. He was overseas continually without any home leave.

His parents received a letter dated 28th November 1917 from 2nd Lieutenant Fred. Archer.

"I regret to inform you of the death of your son, Trooper C

Brunton, who died of wounds on November 14th. Your son was wounded by a shell hitting him on the leg while galloping into action. Everything possible was done for the poor boy, and I am now told he died from shock in the Casualty Clearing Station.

His death will be a big loss to us all, and I shall personally feel his death more than most as I used to be in the same troop as your son Charlie in the old B Squadron in England and Egypt; also we were on the peninsula together (Gallipoli?) and in the same section.

Your son was always bright and happy and was a brave boy. I don't think the poor boy suffered much pain, as he smoked a cigarette soon after he was hit, and when I spoke to him he very bravely said he was alright and in no pain.

Please accept my sincere sympathy in your great loss and believe me,

Yours sincerely,

Fred Archer 2nd Lt. ”

HINTON Private A 203812 2nd/4th Bn. Oxford. and Bucks Light Infantry died on Thursday 21st March 1918, Chapelle British Cemetery Holnon, Aisne France.

PIPKIN Private Henry James 26715 3rd Bn Grenadier Guards died on 27th March 1918, Arras Memorial. The memorial commemorates 35,000 casualties who fell between spring 1916 and August 1918 His death was reported in *The Bucks Herald* of 20th April 1918. Private Pipkin was the landlord of The White Horse Inn, Dinton, (now known as La Chouette) for ten years before being called up. He left a widow and a child. He had come from Long Marston where his parents still lived. He had joined up in 1916 and went to France the next year. He was 32 at the time of his death and served as a stretcher bearer. He was respected in the village and had a keen interest in football. The Chaplain wrote as follows to his widow,

“Pte. Pipkin was a splendid man and an excellent stretcher bearer. It was whilst we were being attacked that he was killed nobly carrying out his duty of rescuing the wounded. He did excellent work, and would probably have been recommended for the work he did had he lived. But he gave his life to save life. That is the highest act of humanity, and surely as he associated himself with the sacrifice of the Blessed Lord so he showed his likeness to his Redeemer. God bless you in your grief and give you that which no one can take away - the memory of one who died for his country and now lives to reign with his Lord for ever. ”

ROSE Second Lieutenant Eric Rose MC Lancashire Fusiliers attached 1st/8th Bn died on 5th April 1918. Commemorated on the Arras Memorial.

Eric Rose went to Lord William's Grammar School at Thame where he "showed great promise". He left school in January 1915 and went to work on his father's farm at Ford until December 1916. He then joined the Artist's Rifles regiment and was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Lancashire Fusiliers in September 1917. In the following month he was sent to France. The "quiet and clean hearted boy" developed into a keen and conscientious officer. He was a good officer known for his efficiency when not in the front

line. His platoon won the battalion competition for efficiency. He was awarded the Military Cross for bravery and a brother officer wrote that it was very well deserved. He died on April 5th 1918 fighting gallantly with the remnants of his Company at Bucquoy. His Commanding Officer described him as having the making of a brilliant officer and was beloved by all ranks. The boy had only experienced school and farm until he joined up as soon as he could. He led his men so well and was only aged 19 when he died.

JEFFREY Private Cyril 68338 4th Bn Devonshire Rgt 9th September 1918 age 19. Son of Alfred and Jane Jeffrey of Chalfont St. Peter native of Dinton. St. Sever Cem'y Extension Rouen - Seine-Maritime. A Letter from the vicar of Dinton, Rev'd. E C Stukeley, dated 14th September 1918 says Cyril was wounded in the head and died in hospital at Rouen. Cyril and Walter were cousins.

HOLLYMAN Private Frank 39122 8th Bn Royal Berkshire Regt. Died on Monday 9th September 1918 aged 19, came from Westlington. Buried in Dinton, Northeast of churchyard SS Peter and Paul Churchyard The same letter from Rev'd E C Stukeley says that Frank was badly wounded in both legs and lived long enough to be brought to a London hospital where he died. His body was brought to Dinton where he was buried on the following Thursday. The Rev'd wrote that both were very nice lads and he was very sorry that we had lost them. The letter was sent to Reginald Ward the brother of Able Seaman Ward. Reg survived the war. The vicar's son was in the forces and also survived the war.

ELLIOTT Private W J 2021979 16th Canadian Infantry (Manitoba Regt.) 1st October 1918 age 28. Son of Alfred and Sarah Elliott of Ford. Probably another ex pat like Private Percy

JESSETT Sancourt British Cem'y Nord Sancourt village captured by Canadian Corps on 29th September 1918. One of 200 casualties commemorated on that site. There is a George Elliott of Ford on Absent Voters List.

LUDGATE Rifleman Cecil Bertie 57591 18th Bn. Royal Rifle Corps. Killed in action Friday 1st November 1918 age 20. Son of Joseph and Edith Kate Ludgate of Ford. Vichte Military Cem'y Ieper, West-Vlaanderen

TOMES Private George Albert 25365 11th Bn Royal Berkshire Regt. Labour Corps, died of meningitis 5th October 1919 age 35, son of Alfred and Elizabeth Tomes of Ford. Husband of Florence of Lower Green Cuddington. Tincourt New British Cem'y Somme

SIMONDS Private Harry 7949 Machine Gun Corps (Inf) 20th February 1920 age 24, son of Harry and Alice Simonds of Dinton. Buried in Dinton churchyard. Harry was badly gassed in the war and had a special room built in his house at Westlington Lane. The room rotated so that Harry could get as much fresh air as possible. On 29th July 1919 a social evening of demobilised servicemen was held at the White Horse Inn. A collection of £3.12.8 was taken on behalf of a comrade suffering from the effects of gas poisoning. The un-named man could have been Harry.

WARD Able Seaman Frederick George J/4150 H.M.S. Vampire Royal Navy died 2nd November 1920. Buried in Dinton, North of churchyard Ss Peter and Paul Churchyard. Lived at the Forge Cottage.

Second World War

HOLDOM Sergeant Anthony John 1325933 162 Sqdn RAFVR died Thursday 27th January 1944 age 23, son of Ernest John and Florence Holdom, husband of Grace Florence Holdom of Wyverstone Suffolk. Berlin War Cemetery Brandenburg Germany. Majority of graves are for airmen lost over Germany and some POWs. *The Bucks Herald* of 11th February 1944 reported that Sgt Holdom, youngest son of the late Mr. Holdom and Mrs Grace Holdom of Chapel Road Ford, was missing after a recent raid. This was his 14th operational flight as a gunner in a Lancaster bomber. He was 23 and had recently married Grace from London who had been in the ATS for two and a half years. Sgt Joe Holdom had attended Queen's Park School and was a member of St. John's Choir in boyhood. He worked for the ironmongers firm called Messrs. J.H. Bradford of High Street Aylesbury and lived in Mandeville Road before moving to Chapel Lane, Ford. He joined the RAF in 1940.

CURRIE WM Lt. RASC 45th Cavalry aged 28 died 5th May 1944 in Burma at Kohima. Dinton Church sanctuary was restored in his memory and was dedicated by the Bishop of Oxford in April 1949. The work was designed by K.T. Lindsay and consisted of an English altar reredos and communion rails in oak carved by local craftsmen.

SHIELDS Flight Lieutenant Alwyne Robert Peirce 124416 42 Sqdn RAFVR died Tuesday 18th July 1944. Singapore Memorial 24,000 names commemorated of men who have no known grave. He is believed to have been a single man and probably did not have a job before joining up. His father was a Group Captain in the Air Force and Flight Lt. Shields followed his father into the RAF. The memory of him in his uniform saying goodbye never to return to his village has not been forgotten by a local villager. He is believed to have been killed in Burma.

JESSETT Sgt William (Bill) T/61379 55 inf Bde Group Coy. Royal Army Service Corps 12th September 1944 age 31 younger son of Mr and Mrs Edwin Jessett of Dinton. He was the brother of Private Percy Robert Thomas Jessett number 81450 "C" Coy. 10th Bn Canadian Infantry (Alberta Rgt.) who died on 22nd May 1915 age 19 son of Edwin Jessett Of Dinton. Percy is commemorated on the Vimy Memorial Pas de Calais and Haddenham village war memorial.



*Sgt William (Bill) Jessett,
whose death remains
a mystery*

A number of men from Buckinghamshire emigrated to the colonies, including Canada, in the years before the war. Many of them volunteered to fight in the Dominion forces for the Empire. The brothers' father was born in Carshalton, Surrey, but emigrated to Canada where the boys were born. The father had been a Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Their mother died in Canada and on a visit to this country the family decided to stay.

Bill was the proud owner of a motorbike which he and his pillion passenger still remembers falling off on its first outing up New Road. He was a tall fit man and a keen cricketer and fisherman. Bill joined the Regular Army before the war and had been a batman, or servant, to a Colonel Lawson. He went with the BEF to France at the start of the war and was evacuated in the last ship to leave Dunkirk in 1940. He survived, although he had been reported as "missing" on that occasion. He went with his unit to the Far East and was captured by the Japanese soon after his troopship entered port. The official notice posting him as missing for the second time states that he was serving

in Malaya when the garison capitulated on 15th February 1942.

A letter of sympathy was sent from Buckingham Palace. The family heard nothing for along time although they received a few printed postcards. These gave sparse details such as "My health is

excellent" and that he was held in No 1 or No 4 P.O.W. Camp Thailand. The official death certificate dated 10th January 1946 gives his date of death as 12th September 1944 and that he was killed at sea. However it seems he survived the war but went missing during repatriation. The family received a letter addressed to him arranging to meet up after the war. They put a notice in *The Bucks Herald* with his service



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

The Queen and I offer you our heartfelt sympathy in your great sorrow.

We pray that your country's gratitude for a life so nobly given in its service may bring you some measure of consolation.

George R.I

A letter of sympathy from Buckingham Palace.

details and three men replied all saying that he had survived the war and were together when he was evacuated. A possibility is that he fell ill or met with an accident. What really happened remains a mystery.

He is commemorated on the Singapore Memorial. He has no known grave.

TAPPING Corporal 5386728 John (Johnny) French 2nd (Airborne) Bn., Oxford. and Bucks Light Infantry, which was part of 6th (Airborne) Division. He died on 24th March 1945 age 30. Son of James Frederick and Ada Tapping of Waddesdon. Buried at Reichswald Forest War Cemetery, Germany. Johnny lived at Westlington Green and worked for International Stores in High Street, Aylesbury as a representative. He had gone to the local school in Dinton. Johnny is remembered as a schoolboy hero by his nephew, who recalls a strapping man who enjoyed fishing and swimming. He served with 6th Airborne from D Day at Pegasus Bridge through the Battle of The Bulge in the Ardennes and died in one of the last airborne operations of the war crossing the river Rhine serving with the gliders. The aim was to land troops on the east side of the Rhine near Hamminkeln. The landing site was well protected by anti-aircraft artillery and casualties were very high. About half the strength was lost and most gliders were hit somewhere.



Corporal Tapping who died in one of the last airborne operations of the war.

MILLER (Tommy) T A Ox and Bucks. Lived at Wootton Farm with his parents and worked on the farm before the war. Apparently after being wounded he suffered an injury to his kidneys by being kicked deliberately by the Germans.

IMPERIAL JAPANESE ARMY

Date 10 June 1944

Your mails (and ~~...~~) are received with thanks.
 My health is (good, ~~poor~~).
~~I am ill in hospital.~~
 I am working for pay (~~I am paid monthly salary~~).
~~I am not working.~~
 My best regards to All at Home

Yours ever,

Bib

SERVICE DES PRISONNIERS DE GUERRE

Name W. JESSETT
 Nationality BRITISH
 Rank SERGEANT
 Camp No. 4.P. O. W. Camp,
 Thailand.

To: Mrs. E. JESSETT
URWAY, OXFORD ROAD
DINTON
NE AYLESBURY, Bucks
ENGLAND

俘虜郵便
 泰俘虜收容所
 押印欄

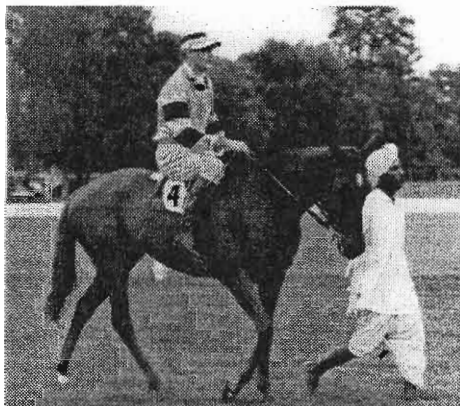
Printed postcard sent from Prisoner of War Camp in Thailand The statement "I am working for pay" is highly unlikely.

Lt. William Mackinnon Currie

Lt. Bill Currie was one of two sons of Sir William and Lady Currie of Dinton Hall. He went to Cheltenham school which he represented at rugby and boxing. He joined the family shipping firm after school and on the outbreak of war enlisted in Hodson's Horse, (4th Duke of Cambridge's Own Lancers) and later transferred on its formation to 45th Cavalry, Indian Army.

A letter of condolences from his former CO, Lt. Col. Jerome Prioleau, to Lady Currie described how he had known him for three years. He wrote that at the time the new regiment, the 45th Cavalry, was raised at Meerut in April 1941 Bill Currie had made that difficult task much easier. Lt. Currie was "always cheerful and most kindly natured". He was popular with men and brother officers and showed conspicuous courage.

His last Lt. Colonel wrote of Lt. Currie's "delightful manners, kindness of heart and cheerfulness". He also praised his inspirational qualities as a troop leader of the Pathans serving under him.



Lt William Currie, showed promise as a polo player

In *The Times* of 7th July 1944 a friend wrote that, "he had a happy knack of making friends everywhere. He went full out at every game and sport in which he took part. He promised to be a first class polo player, won many races on the flat and over the country and was a fine man to hounds."

The Bucks Herald reported his death on 26th May 1944 with only brief details. The family asked for no letters and no doubt wished to grieve for their "beloved elder son" in private. On 23rd June 1944 the local paper published a Ministry of Information communication which gave more facts about the action in which he fell. Lt. Currie had led a column of tanks manned by British Rajput and Jat crews with armoured cars driven by Sikhs. They attacked Japanese positions at Kohima supported by British and Indian Infantry. The attack came under heavy fire and Lt Currie was killed. The attack was successful and cleared three road blocks and the Japs out of the District Commissioner's bungalow.

The battle of Kohima was one of the turning points of the war. The victorious Japanese army that had taken all before it, was, "driven back from the gates to India..." The allied "Forgotten Army" ... "from half the nations under the sun, fighting under one of the great captains in mountain, jungle, and dry plain, in hot sun and drenching monsoon, inflicting on one of the great warrior races its most crushing defeat." (*Quartered Safe out Here* by George MacDonald Fraser, 1992. p. xiii, p. 3).

The photographs of Bill Currie give an impression of the man's personality. He seems to have the friendly face of a confident young man with his future before him. An oil painting belonging to the family portrays the officer in Indian Army Cavalry officer's uniform wearing ribbons including the Indian Service Medal.



Bill Currie, a confident young man with his future before him, killed at Kohima.

Those of whom less is known

There are a number of men about whom I have been unable to find out much information

DAVIS Albert Private	First World War
KEEN J	First World War
JONES WHB	Second World War Possibly one of a large family from Upton.
WOOD F	Possibly one of three brother from Aston Mullins farm.
SAYELL Frederick Private	First World War
JEFFREY HW Private 44358	Royal Artillery First World War

Dinton War Memorial

The Memorial is situated in a corner of the churchyard near the road that passes Dinton Hall and the path that goes to the west end of the church. The memorial consists of a cross on a square limestone plinth. The names are carved into the four sides of the plinth. The ranks and units are indicated and one side lists the nine men of the local regiment the Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry. The use of the Cross of Christ is perhaps to be expected as the memorial is situated in the churchyard. Yet it is placed in its own grounds marked off by railings and roadside position would make it visible to all.

1914-1918

Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry

L Cpl A Welford	Pte B Woodford	A Sayell
FW Sayell	F Matthews	H Newnes
T Kingham	F Allison	Hinton

1914-1918

Royal Navy

B Halsey	F Ward
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Royal Artillery

WE Jeffrey	HW Jeffrey
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Royal Bucks Hussars

Tpr CS Brunton

Grenadier Guards

Pte H Pipkin

1914-1918

Lancashire Fusiliers

2nd Lt EW Rose MC

Royal Berks

Pte F Hollyman

Devonshire Regt

Pte C Jeffrey

Kings Royal Rifles

Pte A Ludgate

Machine Gun Corps

Pte H Simonds

Canadian Army

Pte W Elliott

1939-1945

WM Currie RASC
W Jessett Royal Engineers
T A Miller Ox and Bucks
J (E) Tapping

Ford Memorial

Slate memorial built into a wall no information of rank, unit or death. although Lt Rose's Military Cross is acknowledged. The names are in alphabetical order.

1914-1918

Davis A	Elliott W	Hinton J
Keen J	Kingham T	Ludgate A
Rose E.W. MC	Sayell A	Sayell F

1939-1945

Holdom AJ	Jones WHB
Shields ARP	Wood F

There is a photograph of a similar memorial made of a light coloured stone, not slate built on a wall as well. The inscription is

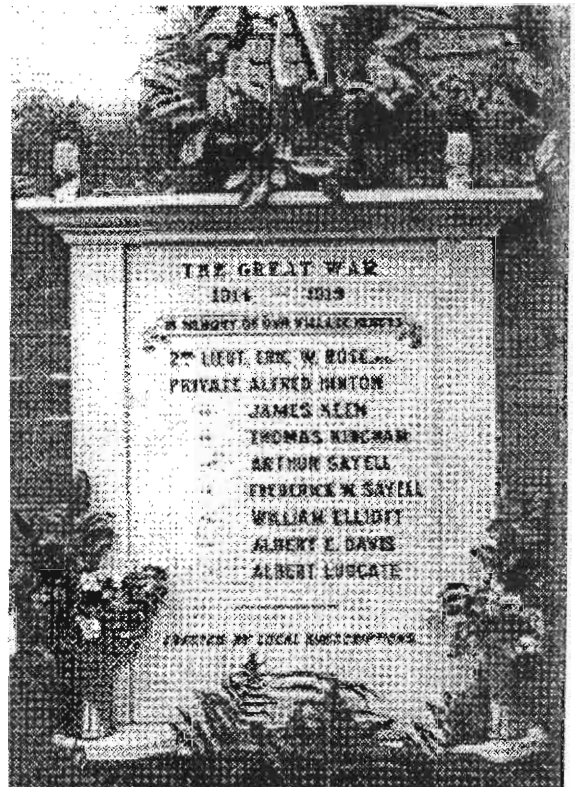
THE GREAT WAR 1914 - 1919 IN MEMORY OF OUR VILLAGE HEROES

The memorial gives the men's rank which in each case is Private apart from Eric Rose who was an officer and is the first name. The other names give Christian names instead of initials and appear to be listed in order of date of death. Although the details do not tally exactly with information from other sources. The lack of any Christian symbol or wording is not unusual.

The inscription ends with

ERECTED BY LOCAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

On 23rd October 1919 the memorial was unveiled by Lady Smyth on a "perfect Autumn afternoon." The simple grey slate tablet was decorated with vases of flowers and a bow in red, white and blue. The ceremony was performed in the presence of a large group of villagers and representatives of local organisations including the Mayor of Aylesbury, the Agricultural Labourers' Union, school children led by mistresses Gregory and Kingham, ex-servicemens' societies and others.



The memorial, which was one of the first in the area, had been paid for by public subscriptions amounting to £10.10. The Union representative stated that memorial was largely due to the efforts of his members. There had been a committee which included Mr. Ludlow, chairman, Messrs. Sayell, Elliott, Burgess and Hinton.

The Mayor of Aylesbury addresses the gathering and mentioned,

“The question of war memorials was being discussed all over the country, and especially in large towns it was difficult to find a memorial which would be satisfactory to all parties. Ford had chosen a beautiful and simple memorial which could be seen by all passers-by.”

The Union representative,

“...appealed for the greater development of humble village life which was represented that afternoon and for a larger spirit of brotherhood.”

The press report of this ceremony in *The Bucks Herald* of 1st November 1919 gives an impression of the impact of the war on village life in Ford. Out of the population of Ford which was 100, 12 men joined the services but only 3 returned to their homes, Harold and Fred Taylor and George Elliott.

A report in *The Bucks Herald* of 4th December 1920 states that Lady Smyth approached the secretary of the War Memorial Fund, Mr. R.H. Fowler, and suggested that a “pediment” should be erected on top of the Memorial tablet. In return she paid for a three yard square area being marked off with ornamental railings and padlocked gates. The purpose was to provide a base for flowers and wreaths to be placed. The report went on to say that this protected the monument and gave it a “more sacred appearance”. The cost of the tablet was subscribed for by the Cottagers’ Society and carried out by Mr. Harper of an Aylesbury firm, the Monumental Works.

Dinton Church

There are two memorials in the church itself. The first is in the sanctuary, There is a wooden wall plaque,

**Lt William Mackinnon Currie 45th Cavalry
killed at Kohima 5th May 1944 age 28
sanctuary restored in his memory**

in the church porch there is a carved wooden notice board to Flying officer Alwyn Shields Burma.

Sources

Much of the information comes from *The Bucks Herald* which contained many letters and stories from the front and notices of the fallen.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission has a register of casualties from both world wars. This contains details of the name, number and unit of the serviceman, the date of death and place of burial. Many casualties are missing, the place of burial unknown.

Absent Voters List in the County Record Office. This was compiled in 1918 and lists men entitled to vote in the General Election but who were away from home because of military service. This has details of the man's unit and number which is vital for tracing further service details.

The Citizen Soldiers of Buckinghamshire by Major-General J.C. Swann 1930

Information on H.M.S. Queen Mary from "*Britain's Maritime Memorials and Mementoes*" by David Saunders. 1996.

"*The Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry Chronicle* vol 4 (1944-1945) and "*The Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry Enshrined in Stone*" by John H. Roberts 1994 for information about the glider attack on the Rhine crossing in March 1945.

Acknowledgments

The staff of Aylesbury Lending and Reference Libraries and the County Record Office for their never failing patience and knowledge.

Councillor Mrs. Chlöe Lambert.; Mrs. Patricia Currie; Mrs. G. Lee, Parish Clerk; The Editor of *The Bucks Herald* for kind permission to use extracts from the newspaper.

Mr. and Mrs Horrace Jeffrey for information about his cousins, and Bill Currie, Bill Jessett, Johnny Tapping and Tommy Miller. Mr. John Mott, Mr. and Mrs Halsey, Mrs. Ewers for information about her brother. Mr. Tom Wheeler for information about his uncle. and to all who have encouraged or assisted with this project.

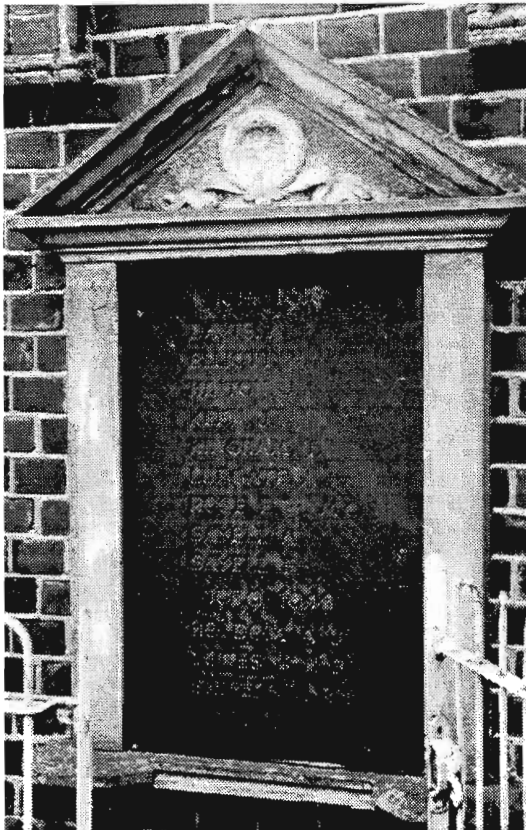
List of Photographs

Cover photograph Dinton War Memorial

Rear cover Ford War Memorial

1. Leading Seaman Benjamin Halsey HMS Queen Mary
2. Newspaper cutting about recruiting meeting - source unidentified but probably *The Bucks Herald*
3. Newspaper cutting showing men on HMS Queen Mary receiving Christmas gifts.
4. Christmas box sent to all servicemen in 1914, including photograph, card, message, tobacco, and cigarettes.
5. Newspaper obituary of Private Thomas Kingham. *The Bucks Herald*.
6. Grave of Private Harry Simonds Machine Gun Corps. North of Dinton Churchyard. Photograph by author.
7. Photograph of Corporal (later Sgt.) Bill Jessett Royal Army Service Corps.
8. Printed postcard sent from Prisoner of War Camp in Thailand. The statement "I am working for pay" is highly unlikely.
9. Letter of condolence sent to Bill's family from the King.
10. Corporal Johnny Tapping, 2 Ox and Bucks, 6th Airborne.
11. Photograph of Lt. Bill Currie, 45th Cavalry, on a favourite horse with a native servant.
12. Oil painting of Bill Currie in uniform.
13. Photograph in Local Studies Collection din0043.pcx undated of Ford memorial showing wreaths and flowers. Used by kind permission of Buckinghamshire County Museum Images.

Our Village Heroes



Dinton and Ford War Memorials

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