THE WAR MEMORIAL

The Village War Memorial stands some ten feet tall in the Churchyard of the Church of Saint Edward King of the West Saxons in Teffont Magna. It was almost certainly built in 1919, 1920 or 1921 and is the centrepiece of the Remembrance Day Service for the whole village. There is no separate memorial outside the church in Teffont Evias, possibly because there were no First World War facilities from Evias. It is, however, not the only War Memorial in the Village in that the Reading Room was built in 1922 as a War Memorial – a separate section gives the details of that building.

It would be very satisfying to have the details of who decided to erect it and when and who paid for it but none of these have been retained. However, the name of the stone masons are inscribed at the base – Gething & Co, Chilmark. We do know that five names, all from Teffont Magna were inscribed on it.

The Names are:

1. Lance Corporal P G Smith Wiltshire Regiment
2. Trooper G Elliott Life Guards
3. Private F G Kellow R. Worcestershire Regiment
4. Private J Mould Warwickshire Regiment
5. Private W H Randall Coldstream Guards

In addition, a sixth person, Lieutenant A.N.Trotter, Royal Scots, was killed during the War and he is commemorated on a plaque in the Ley Chapel of Teffont Evias.

It is a very safe assumption that arranging and organising the War Memorial would have been taken over by Colonel Kennedy Shaw who moved into Kings Orchard as agent to Lord Bledisloe in 1919; he was the force behind the building of the Reading Room and immediately became Chairman of Teffont Magna Parish Council. Apparently a movement to construct such War Memorials spread across the Country in 1919. They were normally paid for by house-to-house collections and there is no reason to think that Teffont is any different. We do know that Lord Bledisloe was very generous to the Village.

The first reference to the War Memorial is in a Minute of a Parish Council Meeting in December 1946 where it was stated that ‘the question of placing on the War Memorial of the names of the fallen who gave their lives in the 1039-1945 War was then discussed and it was proposed by Colonel Shaw and seconded by Mrs Buchanan that the Parish Council obtain estimates and open a public subscription list to pay the cost. In the summer of 1947, it was Minuted that ‘it was agreed that Mr Crouch be deputised to find out whether records of persons who lost their lives in the War of 1939-1945 could be added to those on the existing War Memorial in the upper village’. At the next meeting, Mr Crouch reported that ‘regarding the placing of further names on the War Memorial, an estimate would be presented when the full particulars had been obtained’. The following January, in 1948, the Chairman also reported that work on the cleaning and the additional names on the Memorial would be started when the weather became more suitable for work on them to begin. By October of that year, Mr Crouch was in a position to be able to report that the War Memorial had been cleaned and the extra names engraved on it and that the bill had been paid – presumably as a charitable gift rather than through the Parish Council’s accounts. With this work done, there were now eleven names on the Memorial which had been altered so that the new names are facing the Yew Tree.

The Extra Names from the 1939-1945 War are:

1. Private F H Wright Royal Norfolk Regiment
2. 2nd Lieutenant M S Willan KRRC
3. Gunner J M F Faramus Royal Artillery
4. Flight Sergeant R E Tenham RAF
5. Private F J Brockway Home Guard

Flight Sergeant Tenham is elsewhere spelt Tinham. In addition, Doris Davis is not on the War Memorial but is on the 1939 to 1945 British Legion Roll of Honour. Sergeant Daniel Trevor Jenkins, Reconnaissance Corps RAC is also on the Roll of Honour but not on the War Memorial.

Only five years later, the Parish Council reported that the PCC had written to it to ask whether it would be prepared to take steps to renovate the War Memorial so that the names inscribed would stand out and be readable. The Chairman reported that Mr R Lever had started to ink some of the names in and that those which had been painted were standing out quite well. It was resolved to ask Mr Lever to complete the work and that it should be reconsidered in twelve months time.

That appears to be the last reference to the War Memorial in the Parish Council’s files but that may be because it is probably a PCC responsibility. The Memorial was renovated with the names highlighted in black together with the stone mason’s name on the initiate of the PCC in 2016.