



The Hundred Parishes

An introductory article about WAR MEMORIALS

Most towns and villages in the Hundred Parishes have a memorial to those who lost their lives in the two World Wars. Most were erected in the years following World War I. A generation later, more names were added to these memorials. The number of names added after WWII is generally less. Overall British casualties in WWII were around half the number in WWI.

Most war memorials come in a range of similar styles, usually surmounted by a cross, as shown below in Finchingfield on the left and Saffron Walden on the right.



Some war memorials do not follow the normal style. In the church grounds at Arkesden the memorial is constructed from a large pudding stone. In Barkway, in addition to the traditional village memorial, there is a large stone engraved with the names of the seven men from Newsells Park estate and stud who died in WWI.



A good number of churches also display a list of those who died; some also have a board that commemorates all who served in one or both of the World Wars.

An archway in Little Dunmow's parish church is shown on the right. It honours those who served.

The inscription above the window reads:

IN THE GREAT WAR, MCMXIV – MCMXX,
THESE IN THEIR VARIOUS SPHERES
SERVED THEIR KING AND COUNTRY.
GOD BLESSED THEIR LABOURS AND
GAVE THEM SAFE RETURN.

The shields below display the names and regiments of 34 men, including the vicar whose accreditation is "Military Intelligence".

Below the shields are names of four men:
"Of these Almighty God was pleased to accept the greatest sacrifice"



Takeley's war memorial, shown on the left, has a separate section devoted to seven INNOCENT VICTIMS OF WAR who died when a German bomb fell on Takeley Street in December 1940.

Stansted Mountfitchet's Memorial Gardens, pictured below, include a seat that was donated by The Hundred Parishes Society.



Behind the names lie many tragic, personal stories of young men who failed to survive the horror of war and whose surnames may still be found in their parish today. Almost every village and every family was affected in WWI. More than twenty men from Ashdon died but the names of three brothers, Albert, Frederick and Erasmus Kent, were not inscribed on the war memorial at the request of their parents.

The three memorials immediately below may be seen, from the left, in High Easter, Little Easton and Hormead.



Two Hertfordshire memorials shown below stand 8 miles apart but have an unusual link. Wareside's memorial, pictured on the left, overlooks the Ash valley and honours 19 young men who died in WWI. Aspenden's memorial stands beside the parish church and remembers 21 men from that parish.



The Wareside memorial includes the name of Ernest Warby, while Aspenden's includes William Spencer. In 1911, shortly before the war, it is likely that these two young men attended the wedding of their respective siblings when Charles Warby married Lily Spencer. Many years later, Charles and Lily became the grandparents of Janice who is now the wife of Ken McDonald, secretary of The Hundred Parishes Society. Like Ken, Janice grew up in London, not knowing that one day she would live close to where her father's two uncles had worked on the land before joining the other young men of their generation on the battlefields of Europe.

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Any comments or suggestions for improvement may be submitted by using the Feedback form on the website. The website has many short articles on various aspects of The Hundred Parishes, as well as introductions to individual parishes and to a number of local celebrities, and an extensive What's On section. More than a hundred walk route descriptions can be freely downloaded, with each of the hundred parishes featuring in at least one walk.