

# **SERVICE of DEDICATION**

**FRIDAY 1<sup>ST</sup> JULY 2022**  
**(11.30 am)**



*"Lest we forget"*

**HUMBER, FORD AND STOKE PRIOR WAR MEMORIAL**



## **Background to the War Memorial – Hugh Fowler-Wright**

Our Group Parish has lacked a public memorial to commemorate those from our villages who died whilst serving our country in wars and conflicts. Some of the dead are named on plaques and gravestones in our Parish churches and in Commonwealth War Graves Cemeteries around the world. However, there is no single memorial of all their names in one location where we can be reminded of their sacrifice. The Parish Council chose the Stoke Prior 'roundabout' which hosts the well-known village pump which was once an important gathering point for the community.

A discreet, unique and distinguished memorial at a location that is fully accessible has been created which we hope will become part of our daily village life and the Group Parish community identity.

Each of the identified fifteen fallen servicemen now has their name along with rank, Service or Regiment and date of death where known set out on an individual slate plaque. By honouring each person with their own plaque, we provide a stronger and more appropriate reminder of them as individuals. Should further names of residents who died whilst serving be identified, or tragically occur in future conflicts, additional slates can be added.

These fifteen men all paid the ultimate price to protect and contribute to our freedom today and Stephen Robert's research reveals many poignant tangible links to places and people in our Group Parish. They would have been your neighbours, friends, relatives or perhaps even you had you been living during the two World Wars. They were 'taken' from this community far too young, in some cases only a few years older than the children taking part in today's service. We hope this Memorial will bring them back in name, honour and be a lasting visual reminder.

From Stephen Robert's research we know many local places where these people were born, lived and worked; Briery Mere, The Bank, Causeway Cottages, The Causeway, Court Hill, Gate House, Grove Cottage, Little Wicton, Old Hall, The Priory, Railway Cottage, Risbury Court, Risbury Cross, Stoke Prior Cross and Wall End. The latter being the home of the Griffiths brothers Gilbert and John who both died within a year of each other in the First World War. Bertram Leddington and William Tongue were in the same Regiment, and both died on the same day. Gilbert Griffiths and Charles Preece perhaps travelled furthest to serve their country fighting in Egypt. Thomas Hill, a 'boy on farm' (Risbury Court) in the 1911 census, who joined the Navy hoping for a career (HMS VIVID) but was dead by twenty-one. In the Second World War these parishes were still sending residents far and wide to fight and often die; Leslie Wathen was torpedoed on HMS FIDELITY off the Azores and John Diggory was a RAFVR wireless operator/air gunner with 106 Squadron and shot down over occupied Europe. The associations within our Group Parish, their inter relationships and connections with land, sea and air warfare throughout the world is fascinating, inspiring, and humbling.

Further information can be found on the Group Parish website [www.fhsp.org.uk](http://www.fhsp.org.uk)

## **Some background on the 1<sup>st</sup> Day of the Battle of the Somme 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916 – Stephen Roberts**

By the end of 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916, some 19,240 British soldiers had been killed and more than 38,000 wounded. This was the first day of the First Battle of the Somme. It continued for another 141 days ending on 18th November.

The Battle of the Somme was planned as a joint operation of sixteen Allied divisions; eleven British and five French. Its purpose was to break the deadlock on the Western Front.

Prior to the attack, the Allies launched a week-long heavy artillery bombardment, firing some 1.75 million shells, which aimed to cut the barbed wire guarding German defences and destroy the enemy's positions and morale. Many of the shells were dud or shrapnel shells which had little or no effect on the wire. The area of bombardment had also been increased to stretch from Serre in the north to near Montauban in the south, thus reducing the density of the bombardment.

The deeply dug-in German defences were not destroyed as expected. After the bombardment their machine gunners emerged from their shelters mowing down the advancing British troops. The Battle of the Somme saw the first involvement of many men who had volunteered for Army service in 1914 and 1915. This included the Pals Battalions – infantry units made up of friends, relatives and workmates who had joined up together. Losses and casualties to the Pals Battalions had a devastating effect on their communities at home.

Alongside the British were troops from the Empire; Australians, Canadians, New Zealanders, Indians and West Indians all playing their part. This was their first experience of a major action in the largest attack the British Army had yet conducted.

This Battle of the Somme changed the face of modern warfare and was to prove a steep learning curve for the British Army. During the battle, it also saw the introduction of a new weapon on the 15th of September 1916, the tank.

After nearly five months, the British had advanced just seven miles and had failed to break the German line. More than three million soldiers on both sides had fought in the battle, and more than one million had been killed or wounded.

More than anything else, the Battle of the Somme, and especially its devastating first day, would be remembered as the epitome of the brutal and seemingly senseless carnage that characterised trench warfare during World War I. It remains the costliest day in terms of killed and wounded in British military history and is an appropriate date for us to dedicate our village Memorial.

## ORDER OF SERVICE

**WELCOME** - *Chairman of the Parish Council – Councillor Hugh Fowler-Wright*

**BIDDING** - *Reverend Celia Rees*

We are assembled here in the presence of God to remember before Him those, who in days of strife, died for their fellows, and the right they saw. In the faith of Jesus Christ, we shall here claim, for both the living and departed, those gifts of pardon and eternal life which are ours through his most glorious sacrifice alone.

We shall also pray for the world they died to serve, that goodwill, trust, and peace may supplant hatred, fear and conflict, so that the fruits of the lives they gave in death may not be wasted or lost.

**Hymn: Guide me, O thou great redeemer** - *All*

- 1      Guide me, O thou great redeemer,  
        Pilgrim through this barren land;  
        I am weak, but thou art mighty,  
        Hold me with thy powerful hand;  
        Bread of heaven, bread of heaven  
        Feed me till I want no more;  
        Feed me till I want no more.
  
- 2      Open now the crystal fountain  
        Whence the healing stream doth flow;  
        Let the fire and cloudy pillar  
        Lead me all my journey through:  
        Strong deliverer, strong deliverer;  
        Be thou still my strength and shield;  
        Be thou still my strength and shield.
  
- 3      When I tread the verge of Jordan,  
        Bid my anxious fears subside;  
        Death of death, and hell's destruction  
        Land me safe on Canaan's side:  
        Songs of praises, songs of praises,  
        I will ever give to thee;  
        I will ever give to thee.

**WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE – Reverend Celia Rees**

Let us remember before God and commend to his sure keeping, those who have died for their country in war; particularly these men of our villages whose names we remember today; those whom we knew, and whose memory we treasure; and all who have lived and died in the service of mankind.

**The names of the Fallen - Mr Stephen Roberts. An RBL cross will be placed on each stone in turn by children of Stoke Prior Village Primary School.**

Pte John W Griffiths, Canadian Infantry 26th September 1916

Pte John Arthur Daniel, King's Shropshire Light Infantry 13th November 1916

Ordinary Seaman Thomas John Hill, Royal Navy 17th February 1917

Pte Gilbert G Griffiths, Queen's Own Worcestershire Hussars 6th June 1917

Pte Harold Helme, Gloucestershire Regiment 20th August 1917

Pte William A Tungue, Herefordshire Regiment 6th November 1917

LCpl Bertram George Leddington, Herefordshire Regiment 6th November 1917

Pte James Henry Acton, Welsh Regiment 24th March 1918

Pte Charles Bath Preece, Herefordshire Regiment 2nd July 1918

Pte Bernard Pritchard, Canadian Infantry 2nd September 1918

Pte Arthur Richards, Herefordshire Regiment 4th September 1918

Sgt John Diggory, RAF Volunteer Reserve 3rd July 1941

Able Seaman Leslie Frank Wathen, Royal Navy 30th December 1942

Hubert Parker

S Preece

**WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE - Brigadier (Retd) Iain Cholerton CBE**

They shall grow not old,  
as we that are left grow old.

Age shall not weary them,  
nor the years condemn.

At the going down of the sun  
and in the morning.

We will remember them.

**All say:**   **We will remember them.**

**The Last Post** – *Played by Mr Colin Hales LRSM, BMus (Hons), MMus*

*All serving officers wearing headdress are to salute and maintain the salute subsequently for the Two Minutes Silence. For the duration of the Last Post and the Two Minutes Silence, gentlemen wearing headdress should remove their hats; ladies wearing hats and all other personnel are requested to bow their heads.*

**TWO MINUTES SILENCE**

*The Salute is continued throughout the Two Minutes Silence*

**Reveille** - *Played by Mr Colin Hales LRSM, BMus (Hons), MMus*  
*The salute ends at the first note of the sounding of the "Reveille"*

**THE LAYING OF WREATHS**

*Chairman of the Parish Council – Councillor Hugh Fowler-Wright*  
*Senior Royal Navy Representative – Commodore (Retd) Jamie Miller CBE DL*  
*Senior Army Representative – Colonel Andy Taylor OBE DL RIFLES*  
*Senior Royal Air Force Representative – Air Commodore (Retd) Peter Whalley CBE*  
*RBL Representative – Major (Retd) Alan Harrhy ROYAL WELSH*  
*Others who may wish to lay wreaths*

**PRAYER** – *Reverend Celia Rees*

“O God our Heavenly Father, look mercifully upon the unrest of the world, and draw all people to yourself and to one another in the bonds of peace. Grant the gifts of understanding and acceptance between all nations, with an increase of sympathy and goodwill. Give to the world the gift of true unity in which there is both justice and mercy, both truth and freedom, so that the sacrifice of those who have died in war may not have been in vain; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.”

**AMEN**

**READING** – *Councillor Hugh Fowler-Wright*

God makes wars to cease to the ends of the earth;  
He breaks the bow, and cuts the spear in pieces;  
He burns the chariot in the fire.  
Be still, and know that I am God:  
I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.  
The Lord of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our refuge.

*Psalms 46 v.9-11*

**ADDRESS** – *Reverend Celia Rees*

**All say:**

Our Father, which art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy name;  
Thy kingdom come;  
Thy will be done;  
In earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive them that trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation;  
But deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the Kingdom,  
The Power and the Glory, forever and ever.

**AMEN**

**REMEMBRANCE** – *Read by children from Stoke Prior Village Primary School*

In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.

*(Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, Canadian Army)*



**CLOSING PRAYER** – *Reverend Celia Rees*

Almighty God,

Source of the reconciliation and healing of mankind,  
continue your blessing upon those in our own day who  
make peace,

As we have remembered the price paid by men and  
women when strife and hatred were let loose,

Let us go from this place to extend, to deepen, and  
to secure the peace we have received with true  
thanksgiving in Your son, Jesus Christ.

**AMEN**

***“Let there be peace on earth”*** (*Vince Gill*)

*Sung by Stoke Prior Village Primary School Choir*

***“When you go home, tell them of us and say  
‘For your tomorrow, we gave our today’”***

(The Epitaph on the Memorial to the Fallen of the 2<sup>nd</sup> British Division in the Kohima CWGC Cemetery)

*Colonel Andy Taylor OBE DL*

We are most grateful to those who have sponsored individual stones.

James H Acton: The ROYAL WELSH

John A Daniel: The RIFLES

John Diggory: The Wilson and Saxon family

John W Griffiths & Gilbert G Griffiths: Ms Jenny Jackson of Wallend Farm

Harold Helme: Roger & Zena Helme

Thomas J Hill: The Thomas family, descendants of the Bemand family

Bertram G Leddington: A Herefordshire veteran

Hubert Parker: Philip and Margaret Brown

Charles B Preece: Janette Fulwood

S Preece: Charlie, Deane and Jeanette of Ashwood House

Bernard Pritchard: Bridget & Peter Egerton of 'Monkerton' formerly 'Stoke Prior Cross'

Arthur Richards: The McCappin family

William A Tongue: A family from Stoke Prior

Leslie F Wathen: The ROYAL NAVY

The trough sponsored by the Fowler-Wright family, Nick and Donna Helme of Wharton Court and the Peplow family of Fernside

We are also very grateful to those who assisted with the completion of our War Memorial:

Letter Cutter and Carver in Stone. Caitriona Cartwright

[www.caitrionacartwright.co.uk](http://www.caitrionacartwright.co.uk)

Complete Engraving & Signage Service. EM Davis Industrial Ltd

[www.emdavisengraving.com](http://www.emdavisengraving.com)

Post Signs

[www.fingerpostsigns.com](http://www.fingerpostsigns.com)

Hitrees Ltd: Ian Godding 01568 780 496

The Stoke Prior Village Hall Committee

The Group Parish Council of Humber, Ford and Stoke Prior





Those attending are now invited to place their personal poppies on the Memorial.  
Refreshments for Sponsors, invited guests and those who have pre-booked are available after  
the service in the Village Hall.