



Thame Remembers News

April
2018
No 34

Aldershot delivery

On a Saturday morning in mid-March, with a light dusting of snow and more in the air, a small group left Thame bound for Aldershot where we met up with Carole and Barry Underwood and their friend John Sweetman, a military historian and author. Our destination was the



Cathedral of St Michael and St George, which serves as the Bishopric of the Forces and has a particularly close association with the Royal Army Service Corps.

We were greeted by Tony Hyman, the Verger, who was anticipating our visit, had prepared tea and coffee, and who gave us a brief resume of the cathedral and its role in Forces life. Carole then delivered a Thame Remembers wreath in honour of Driver Harry Taylor, a Thame casualty of the Boer War, whose name appears on a memorial within the building.

Where most churches and cathedrals are centuries old this one is fairly recent, the foundation stone having been laid by Queen Victoria in 1892, and its yellow brick interior feels very open, light and airy rather than austere. Its walls and stained glass windows recall many campaigns, regiments and individual men and women from all of our Armed Forces.

Of particular interest was the crucifix suspended above the Sanctuary, which was fabricated in 2015 from parts of 23 different military aircraft from the 1930's to the present day and is supported by the wooden propeller from a 1920's biplane. Also within the Sanctuary is the original ship's bell from HMS Invincible, flagship of the British Fleet in the Falklands War.



Our party at the Cathedral church with the "aircraft" crucifix above

Crosses Recently Delivered

17 March 2018
Driver
Harry Taylor
 Army Service Corps
 Carole Underwood

Boer War Memorial at
 The Cathedral Church of St Michael
 and St George, Aldershot, Hants.

16 April 2018
Trooper
Charles R B Plim
 Imperial Yeomanry
Trooper
Michael William Bond
 Imperial Yeomanry
 Elaine Kidd

59th Company (Oxfordshire)
 Imperial Yeomanry
 Boer War Memorial at
 Christchurch Cathedral, Oxford



Delivery at Christchurch, Oxford



A Thame Remembers Wreath was delivered to Christchurch Cathedral in Oxford on Monday 17th April by Elaine and Alan Kidd accompanied by Yasmin their French granddaughter.

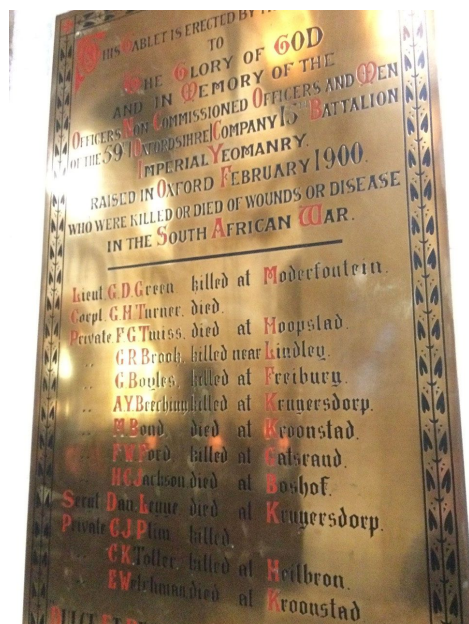
The memorial there is to the 59th Company (Oxfordshire) Imperial Yeomanry and it includes the names of two men from Thame: Michael William Bond and Charles Reginald B Plim, who both died in

South Africa during the Boer wars. You may note that the plaque says "C J Plim" but there is only one "Plim" in the Boer war records and Charles Joseph Plim was C R B Plim's father and did not die until 1927.

Elaine said. Yesterday we took the Thame Remembers wreath and other paperwork to Christchurch. We were accompanied by Yasmin, our French granddaughter. An opportunity for her to hear about the sacrifice made by two people from Thame. We were made very welcome at Christchurch and found the memorial very easily, thanks to your map. We had no access issues at the porter's lodge.

Once inside the Cathedral, we meet Rev Christopher Turner, who kindly said an appropriate prayer with us at the memorial after we had placed the wreath. We also used the prayer in the leaflet.

We were advised to ask the Verger, Mr Jim Godfrey about leaving the leaflets and he has forwarded our request to the Sub Dean, Edmund Newey. We will be asking how long we can keep the wreath in place. We were not able to place the Thame Remembers leaflets, which we wanted to do, as we needed permission.



A puzzle from the Thame Gazette 1944

The following article appeared in the Thame Gazette of 21st November 1944

GESTAPO DODGING

There was quite a good company present on Thursday evening in the Town Hall for the talk on "Gestapo Dodging in Occupied France," by an escaped prisoner of war. It was in reality a continuation of the talk given a few weeks ago, to which the speaker kindly consented to carry on from where he left off at such an interesting stage.

Councillor G Hastings presided and after a few remarks called upon the speaker to give his talk. The speaker, in order to refresh the memory of his hearers and probably to link up for newcomers again related some of his experiences prior to entering Vichy France, with a few fresh incidents, one of which was when staying with friends he was enabled to pick up radio news from England which meant for the first time he got English news. Of course the Germans forbade it, but careful watch was kept for any possible interruption by German inspection.

With a failure to get a boat in order to get away to England, the prisoner, with only a few pounds in his possession, realized that something else would have to be attempted to get out of France. So with his penny-farthing bicycle he started on his journey towards Spain and naturally he experienced many further exciting incidents, one of which was in a restaurant, where he was dining with his friend, when two German officers came in. There was at once dead silence and the rest of the company walked out leaving the Germans to themselves. In another instance the town crier was sent out to inform the inhabitants that British prisoners were at large and a reward offered for recapture. In the case of some people this was pooh-pooed and friends of the escaped prisoners did all in their power to protect and get them going on to the next place.

At another town where refugees were assembling to move off though a fighting area, the speaker related how he mixed with the refugees to cross over a bridge without attracting attention but it did not succeed. In another attempt he sandwiched himself and his bike between a car and a family with a push cart in the hope of getting by as only one in 25 had their papers examined. This time sure enough they got by the sentries. Later, however, further obstacles presented themselves and had to resort to asking the sentry why he could not pass when on his way to get his wife. However, he was refused and so was compelled to wander about for a while. After losing his direction in a swamp and losing heart he wrote a note in French to be passed on. He, however, was lucky enough to get out of his difficulty and able to proceed after a good nights sleep and more clothes ... On another occasion he slept in a barn and was awakened by noises and saw ten German soldiers. Realising something had to be done, he decided to go into the enemy's camp, so to speak. He spoke to one of them who seemed a decent sort and matey, and they entered into conversation after which refreshments were handed him. Later a lorry came along and together with the Germans, our friend got in and when they got to their destination they parted the best of friends.

In this case it was not their place to arrest anyone. With further directions from friends the journey was continued whilst scrapping some of his belongings so that he did not look like a traveller. The speaker related many more incidents that took place until they reached Marseilles, at which place they were told they could not legally get out only through Spain. In order to do that our friends got in touch with a party of Spanish smugglers who knew the track through the countries. Having made arrangements with these chaps the journey was made across the frontier and in the company of a guide nosed around.

The speaker next told of the hazardous journey over a mountain and eventually reaching the other side near Barcelona. Then he set off for Madrid with everything going all right and congratulating themselves until coming up against a horrible looking man of authority who asked questions. A lady however intervened to help matter, but he had to go before a Consul in a taxi and when arriving at their destination found a lovely building but when inside it proved to be a prison where they were searched. An appeal was made to the governor not to take what was most needed for our friend's beautiful mistress. The governor fell for it and wished our friend good luck. They were put into a cell where they could do anything they please, staying there six days. The Consul got

Cont over.

A 1944 puzzle (cont)

an expulsion order to go into Portugal and they were released. Before proceeding farther they went to an hotel where a curious thing happened. Through the window our friend the escaped prisoner saw a figure in battledress and said to his companion "Do you see what I see?" They rushed down to investigate, saying "You're a British soldier, where did you come from?" He replied, "I just walked across." This chap had wandered through Spain where the people had never seen a battledress, and thus got about without being stopped.

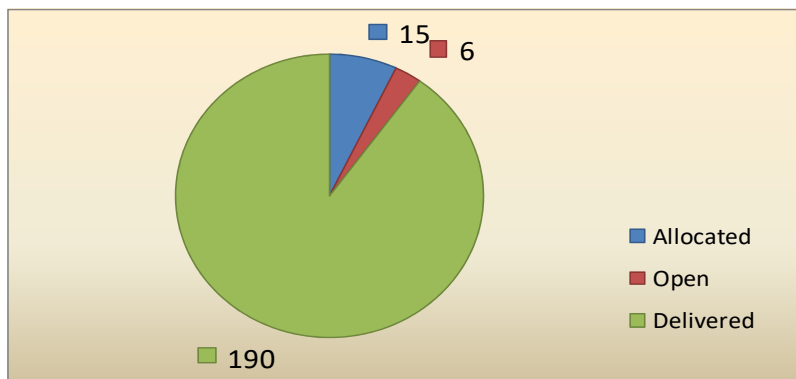
Next day our friend got a train to Lisbon, feeling very jubilant, and met with a great welcome, and then flew to England and home once again. The above is only a brief summary of the very interesting story related by our friend and escaped prisoner of war.

At the close Councillor Simmons proposed a very hearty vote of thanks to our friend for his story of unique experience grit and perseverance; it had been a gripping address. The audience fully endorsed the remarks made.

The story was brought to our attention by a lady in Northumberland (that's another story) who like us would love to know who the man was.

Project Update

This year is going to be a busy one: Our supporters have planned visits this year to Denmark, Gallipoli, Southern Belgium, Eastern France and Italy, all to deliver a cross or a wreath. There are a number outstanding for which we are still seeking offers of visits to lay a cross: Karachi, Jerusalem, Basra (Iraq) and Tunisia where there are three graves to visit.



All the Boer War tributes have now been taken up and we will be reporting soon on the other two. Despite all our research we still have two names from the War Memorial where we do not know their fate or final resting place. The two names are James Lawrence Castle and H T Wilson. James Castle was last heard of in 1915 in South Africa and we are now paying a researcher there to see if they can find out more. For those where we do not manage to get to the grave or memorial, we will lay a tribute at The National Memorial Arboretum on 22 July.

Thame
museum

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This paper is intended as a digest of news items about the Thame Remembers project to keep the people of Thame up to date with what is happening.

Thame Remembers
79 High Street
Thame
OX9 3AE

01844 212801
www.thameremembers.org

Diary dates

22 July 2018
Arboretum Coach Trip
only £10

11 Aug to 19 Dec '18
Thame Remembers
Exhibition
Thame Museum

11 to 15 Sep 2018
'O What a Lovely War'
Players Theatre
Tickets from the
Theatre

20/21 Oct 2018
Thame Remembers
Book Launch

9 & 10 Nov 2018
Thame Remembers
'Ten Tommies from
Thame'
Players Theatre
Tickets TBA

11 Nov 2018
Remembrance Sunday
11am
Remembrance Service
7pm
Beacon Lighting

Thame Remembers is a project of Thame, Oxfordshire to commemorate the centenary of World War One by researching those from Thame who fell in all conflicts worldwide, and remembering them by placing a Thame Cross on their grave or memorial wherever in the world that may be. If you feel that you can help please contact Dave on 01844 21 5178.