

The Bugle Sounded

Commemoration of the Fallen in Two World Wars
from Braishfield and Farley Chamberlayne





FOREWORD

August 2014 is the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War, a war which exposed man's inhumanity to man on an extraordinary scale. It is difficult for us to comprehend the impact of this on life in a village like Braishfield. Hardly a family in the village would have been unaffected by death, injury or traumatic war experience.

At the time of the First World War, Braishfield was an agricultural community consisting of several farms and associated cottages, with two Churches near its centre. We now have a fine War Memorial in Braishfield on which twenty one WW1 and seven WW2 dead are commemorated. This must have represented about 10% of the population at the time. There would have been many more villagers who had fought in the War who returned home wounded or otherwise scarred by their experience.

Some years ago, I started researching the WW1 names on the Memorial. I am interested in history and have researched WW2 casualties and service records in my own family. I knew thirty years ago that our house in Lower Street had witnessed sorrow caused by warfare. It was refurbished in 1940 for Tony Catton whose name is on the Memorial and who is buried in the Churchyard.

What I later found out was that Ernest Savage who died in 1917 had lived in our house. His parents were Millie Dunford's maternal grandparents. Furthermore, no fewer than three WW1 names on the War Memorial are associated with Lower Street, at a time when there were only about seven dwellings there.

We owe the men whose names are on the Memorial a great debt. One way in which we can help repay that debt is to keep a record of who they were and where they lived, so that their sacrifice is not forgotten. I hope this record and the greater detail included on the Village Website goes some way to achieving this.

John Rhodes
7 November 2013

Introduction

Braishfield Village War Memorial Commemoration of the Centenary of the First World War 1914 - 1918 and the Second World War 1939 -1945

The story of how the conflicts came to be is as important as the remembrance of the wars themselves. The consequences shaped our nation, our society, economics and politics. The lessons of what caused each war to be conducted are just as relevant today as they were a century ago. Let us bring into focus all that is needed to prevent future conflicts as well as the importance of so many innocent lives.

After the First World War, the wearing of poppies and the observance at the Cenotaph evolved as signs of the grief felt by almost every family in the land, and were a public statement of determination that the recent horrific conflict should be the 'war to end all wars'. Tragically this was not to be the case.

Armistice Day on 11 November and Remembrance Sunday mark the ultimate sacrifice of those who have died for their country; and now also Armed Forces Day on 30 June when it is intended to show in local towns and villages the great debt of gratitude that we all owe to those prepared to risk their lives on our behalf. Today, for many people, wearing a poppy has become a symbol of patriotic pride and of 'standing shoulder to shoulder' with the fighting services. This is a subtle but significant change in the symbolism. It would be wise to review our traditional pattern of Remembrance observance and amend any aspects which might, however inadvertently, glorify, sanctify or sanitise the use of armed force; and yet remain a Nation prepared to Stand Ready to fight for peace, freedom, justice and the rule of law.

It is hoped that this small book contributes a little towards a fitting legacy for those who served the Nation and lived in the village of Braishfield and the nearby hamlet of Farley Chamberlayne.

Researched by John Rhodes, George Elliott and David Morgan; compiled by Mike Mullane.

NB. A small booklet of this size does not seek to provide the full facts for those named on the Memorial. Greater personal and family detail, often with accompanying photographs, is available on the village website: www.braishfield.org.uk/warmemorial.pdf.

The website itself is a living document which is updated to correct inaccuracies and reflect new details as they come to light.

When you are travelling in almost any part of the world take the opportunity to visit the British and Commonwealth, and Allied, War Graves in that area. You will be touched by the purity, serenity and sheer expanse of those cemeteries; equally children, very receptive to everything described sympathetically, may find in their future lives that they hold dear the thought that many of their forebears left family and home to fight for the freedom that we enjoy today – manifested in a society without tyranny or brutality, and our power to elect governments and equally dismiss them if they do not achieve their purpose.

“Battlefield Tours”; under this generic title you will find many companies with their own websites who offer simple or packaged tours to suit most wishes. Some recommended companies will be listed in due course on the website above.



Village of Braishfield

The village of Braishfield is home to a community of some seven hundred people. Economic changes and social influences have wrought great changes but the village community has endured.

'Whether we come over the brow of Crook Hill, wind down the lane from Slackstead past Woolley Green, approach from Casbrook towards Lower Street and Newport Lane, or descend the long hill from Kings Somborne, as the view opens out, our special corner of the Hampshire countryside appears, and we know we have arrived back home.'

The Parish Church of All Saints' was built in the gothic style in 1855 designed by a prominent Victorian architect, William Butterfield. Many look at the interior of Braishfield Church² with appreciation of a building which despite its almost severe simplicity has an atmosphere of devotion and peace, which makes it one of the pleasantest of places to join in the prayers and praises of the church. It was not for the sake of ornamentation that part of the fourth verse of Psalm 100 was inscribed over the door – '*Enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise*' – one has but to step inside the church to become aware of the part that William Butterfield (1814-1900) has played in giving to the people of Braishfield a place of devotion and quiet where they can find, through the years, the grace of God to sustain them in '*all the changing scenes of life*'. The Church clock tower was added in 1902 to celebrate the Coronation of King Edward V11.

The Church Room was built in 1910 and extended in 1914 to provide a Shooting Range for the training of army recruits and cadets for home defence and service overseas. At that time there were already three non-conformist chapels in the village only one of which remains as the United Reformed Church, built in 1818. The Braishfield Public Elementary School was opened in 1877 bringing public education to the village children, although there were two small schools in the village prior to this date.

Major-General Ransome was instrumental in gaining for Braishfield the status of civil parish, resulting in the formation of Braishfield Parish Council in 1951. Until then the village affairs were administered from

1 *Braishfield Memories p. vii*

2 *All Saints' Church was consecrated on 15th March 1855*

Michelmersh. In 1980, Braishfield, with Farley Chamberlayne joined the Church of St Mary Michelmersh and the Church of St Andrew Timsbury to form a United Benefice. The Church of All Saints' Awbridge has since been added. The rectors of the United Benefice have lived in Braishfield since 1942.

The village War Memorial was dedicated in 1921 and was constructed on land donated by Thomas Lush, a Churchwarden of All Saints' Church. The dedication service¹ was conducted by the Reverend ER Chamney, Vicar of Braishfield. Amongst those present at the service was Admiral Sir Reginald Bacon, whose eldest son Dudley died of wounds in 1918 and is named on the Memorial. The Trustees of the War Memorial were members of the Winchester Diocesan board of Finance, with administration carried out by Braishfield Parochial Church Council.

The Memorial is octagonal, the base consisting of four steps, the die over the steps containing the names of the fallen heroes, and the shaft being surmounted by a cross fleury. The height of the monument, of Portland stone, is 17ft 6in and it is enclosed by a post and chain structure. The work was satisfactorily executed by Mr C Pace, of Romsey.

In 1999, with the approval of the Charity Commission, the War Memorial became a Registered Charity (No 1064699) and Braishfield Civil Parish Council became the sole Trustee. Braishfield Parish Council insures the Memorial and carries out maintenance out of public funds.



The Dedication of the Memorial in 1921

1 *Braishfield Memories* p. 11

BRAISHFIELD WAR MEMORIAL

IN PROUD MEMORY OF THE MEN OF BRAISHFIELD WHO FELL IN THE GREAT WARS

1914 – 1918

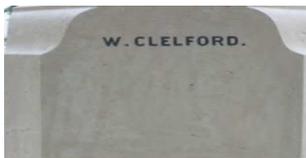
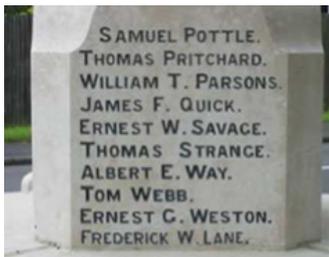
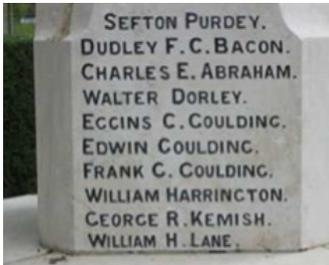
Sefton Purdey
Dudley FC Bacon
Charles E Abraham
Walter Dorley
Eggs G Goulding
Edwin Goulding
Frank G Goulding
William Harrington
George R Kemish
William H Lane

Samuel Pottle
Thomas Prichard
William T Parsons
James F Quick
Ernest W Savage
Thomas Strange
Albert E Way
Tom Webb
Ernest G Weston
Frederick W Lane

W Cleford

1939 - 1945

William H Burnett
Anthony C Catton
George W Chapman
Frank VA Dewey
Charles W Kirk
Robert RJ Rose
John A Watts MC



Recovering the Fallen in Our Midst

Today the public still embraces our Armed Forces – but perhaps more as victims, “lambs to the slaughter” like the Light Brigade at Balaclava. Such an attitude greatly dismays many of the thoughtful public and certainly the majority of those who serve - sailors, soldiers and airmen. There is one fact which is certain when we face the future - whatever their size or commitment they face, all ranks of the Armed Services ‘are stronger together and stand ready’.

Realistically, politicians will continue to discern moral imperatives in the future and will commit the nation’s military, whether ‘sailors at sea, boots on the ground or pilots in the air’. This precious reserve established for the defence of the nation offers flexibility and a disciplined and available national resource such as no other institution in the land can match. Many appreciate dangers ahead but many fail to grasp the implications which threaten. Our own village Memorial and the picture it paints is but a glimmer of the reality which was faced by the nation. It is extraordinary to view the fallen in our cemetery and on our roll of honour from Normandy to the Baltic and the wider conflicts across the world.

The story told and the photographs of the cemeteries overseas are astonishingly beautiful and wonderfully maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC).

Perhaps fate played a part in the success story when Gertrude Jekyll, the garden designer and plant expert, teamed up with the architect Sir Edwin Lutyens, who evolved a classical style exhibited by the Cenotaph in Whitehall, and on many schemes in the early 20th century. Between them they designed the British military cemetery, comprising a fitting entrance which leads to an imposing memorial surrounded by the simplicity of individual headstones.

The harsh reality of death is softened by the selected flowers that mark each grave with individual inscriptions as requested by next of kin. The simplicity of the words chosen provides a fitting tribute. The design was adopted across the world where our fallen lie, and where all cemeteries including individual graves are tended with loving care. They provide an example of the nation’s genuine pride in recognition and memory of our fallen. The standard of maintenance of each grave and cemetery is admired and acclaimed worldwide.



If one has visited the battlefields and the British war cemeteries of France and Flanders, the appearance of a CWGC headstone is fixed indelibly in one's mind and such a stone is instantly recognisable; thirty-two inches high above ground, fifteen inches wide, usually of Portland stone, very white, with a slightly curved top – they are unmistakable. Only the essentials are engraved upon them: sometimes only 'A Soldier of the Great War': mostly with the name, rank, a regiment - corps or service, the regimental badge design, a simple cross, and perhaps a few brief memorial words requested by the family at the base of the stone:

*'The deck it was their field of fame - And ocean was
their grave'*

Royal Navy Swinbrook

'Their lives for their Country. Their souls to God'

Army Chilton

'On wings of the morning'

Royal Air Force Psalm139

Origins of World War One

The reasons behind the onset of the Great War, as it was known at the time, are complicated. Frustrations and animosity had been building up for many years, but the spark which kindled the fire was the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand on 28 June 1914. He was heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, and his death at the hands of the Black Hand (a Serbian nationalist secret society) outside Sarajevo's Town Hall set in motion a series of events that culminated in the world's first global war.

Following the assassination, the Serbs started to make demands to have their people freed and that Bosnia should be handed back. Austria-Hungary's first reaction was to fight back, but they were cautious because they knew that Russia would probably get embroiled in the conflict due to the number of Slavs living in Russia. They decided therefore to approach the Germans and seek their backing.

Germany agreed to support Austria-Hungary, who then went to Serbia with a list of demands, knowing full well that they would be rejected. By 28 July the Kaiser had given his full backing for the war and gave orders to attack immediately. From here the conflict spiralled out of control, as Germany decided to go to war with Russia in accordance with the Triple Alliance, a military agreement between Germany, Austria-Hungary and nominally Italy, each member promising mutual support in the event of an attack by any two other great powers (Italy however struck a secret agreement with the Allies). By the 3 August, the situation had deteriorated and Germany declared war on France. Britain became involved on the 5 August, and the First World War had begun.

The assassination of Franz Ferdinand was simply the trigger for war; colonial rivalry was a major contributory factor. Most of the European powers, with the exception of Austria and Russia, had colonies in Africa, which caused much rivalry over the territories.

For example, Italy turned to Germany and Austria when she lost Tunis to France in 1881. Germany, aware that they did not have a strong navy, started to build more battleships which in turn caused growing rivalry

with Britain. Eventually the frustration overflowed and the world was at war.

WW1 was a long and bitter conflict which caused great suffering. It was not a traditional conflict of hand-to-hand combat, but far more advanced with automatic machine guns, poisonous gas, tanks and submarines, all of which left devastation in their wake and caused the deaths of millions of people. The political order of Europe was destroyed and the German, Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires ceased to exist.

Prior to WW1, the poet most synonymous with war was Rudyard Kipling who, following the Boer War, tried to apologise for the aggression of imperialism. Kipling's talent lay in his understanding of sentiment and being able to express it in verse. He became the poet of the British Empire and was the recipient of many honorary degrees and awards. In 1926, Kipling received the Gold Medal of the Royal Society of Literature. Many of his poems were affectionately drawn portraits of the common soldier.

WW1 inspired writers and poets of all generations and classes, most notably among those who were directly involved in the fighting. Many outstanding poems were produced, chiefly in the form of personal memoir. Their powerful experiences of life in the horrific trenches of the Somme and elsewhere were reflected in their poetry. For many of us it is hard to imagine that something truly poetic can come out of something so abominable as war.

For those people who have been affected by its destructive force, these poems will have extra meaning. The poetry of Wilfred Owen, Isaac Rosenberg, Rupert Brooke, Siegfried Sassoon and Edward Thomas have captured the truth of the bitter conflict and engage the reader in an absorbing and compelling way. All, except Siegfried Sassoon, lost their lives fighting for their country. Tragically, Kipling's son was killed too.

Remembrance

Could we meet the eyes of the fallen?

Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday are recognised every year across the land, and the poppies that once blew among the crosses in Flanders' Field bloom again in the lapels across the land. Yet as public affection for the gesture surges, it is important that we also remember the substance of what is being honoured. The national ritual and ceremony of remembering can be dignified and almost serene in contemplation; the raw horror of war was, and is, anything but. The distinction between the two is nothing new. It lies in the gulf between the romantic patriotism of Rupert Brooke's lines:

*'If I should die, think only this of me;
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is forever England.'*

And Wilfred Owen's searing fury against those who would tell:

*'With such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory
The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est
Pro patria mori.'*

But then Brooke died in 1915, before he could glimpse the Front, while Owen witnessed its grotesque savageries at close quarters, almost until the end of the First World War. His poor mother received the telegram informing her of his death on Armistice Day.

So let us, by all means, take pride in the wearing of the poppy, but let us remember too that if our ghosts could rise up and speak, they would urge us first of all to look after their comrades among the living.

We speak of the sacrifices made by people of all nations, often without the luxury of individual choice, and urge all to value the freedom and dignity of choice that they now enjoy as their legacy.



*All
Saints'
Church
Braishfield*

*Roll of Honour
on the north wall
inside All Saints'
Church*



*United
Reformed
Church
Braishfield*



St John's Church, Farley Chamberlayne



*Silver three stem flower stand presented to the United Reformed Church in 1919 by three parishioners in gratitude for their return from the Great War. The inscription reads:
"A thank offering from
T. Archer. H. Travis. W.Cleford
1919"*



The Brass Plaque by St John's Church marks the planting in 1922 of the avenue of 16 lime trees in memory of the 8 men from Farley Chamberlayne who gave their lives in WW1.

Names of the Fallen

Exhortation

*They shall not grow 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.*

Laurence Binyon – ‘For the Fallen’

Hymn

*O Master, grant that I may never seek
So much to be consoled as to console;
To be understood as to understand;
To be loved, as to love with all my soul.*

First World War 1914 – 1918

| Name | Age | Regiment | Died | Address |
|---|-----|---|-----------------|-------------|
| ABRAHAM Charles Edward | 24 | L/Cpl 15th Btn Hampshire Regiment | 25 March 1918 | Braishfield |
| BACON Dudley Francis Cecil | 20 | 2nd Lt 4th Btn Durham Light Infantry | 1 November 1915 | Alverstoke |
| CLELFORD William Henry | 36 | Private 2nd Btn Hampshire Regiment | 1926 | Braishfield |
| DORLEY Walter | | Details unknown no official record was found but Walter could possibly be mistaken for Walter Darley although so far no local association found | | |
| GOULDING Edwin | 27 | Private 2nd Btn Hampshire Regiment | 6 August 1916 | Braishfield |
| GOULDING Eggins Charles | 19 | Private 2nd Btn Hampshire Regiment | 23 April 1917 | Braishfield |

| Name | Age | Regiment | Died | Address |
|----------------------------------|------------|---|-------------------|----------------|
| GOULDING Frank Gilbert | 30 | Private Labour Corps formerly Hampshire Regiment | 4 February 1920 | Braishfield |
| HARRINGTON William | 33 | Private 2nd Btn Hampshire Regiment | 8 June 1915 | Romsey |
| KEMISH George Richard | 27 | 1st Btn The Buffs East Kent Regiment | 7 Sep 1917 | Braishfield |
| LANE Frederick Wiliam | 34 | Petty Officer (mechanic) Royal Navy (possibly HMS Bulwark) | 20 Nov 1914 | Southsea |
| LANE William Henry | 29 | Private 1st Btn Hampshire Regiment | 2 Nov 1914 | Braishfield |
| PARSONS William Thomas | 21 | Gunner 9th Siege Bty Royal Garrison Artillery | 23 July 1916 | Braishfield |
| POTTLE Samuel James | 19 | Private 1st Btn Hampshire Regiment | 26 April 1915 | Braishfield |
| PRITCHARD Thomas | 31 | Private 1st Btn Hampshire Regiment | 1 July 1916 | Braishfield |
| PURDEY Sefton | 39 | Major 18th Hussars Army Remount Service | 25 May 1916 | Braishfield |
| QUICK James Frank | 30 | Private 7th Btn Duke of Edinburgh Wiltshire Regiment | 7th October 1918 | Braishfield |
| SAVAGE Ernest William | 18 | 2/7th Btn Devonshire Regiment | 1 February 1917 | Braishfield |
| STRANGE Thomas | --- | Private 1st Btn Wiltshire Regiment | 18 September 1914 | --- |
| WAY Albert Edward | 21 | Dorset Regiment | 13 August 1915 | Cerne Abbas |
| WEBB Tom | 32 | Private 1st Btn Devonshire Regiment | 7 November 1918 | Braishfield |
| WESTON Ernest George | 33 | Royal Field Artillery | 1 July 1916 | --- |

Farley Chamberlayne

The hamlet is set high on the chalk downs two miles north east of Braishfield. The Book 'Farley Chamberlayne, A Village History' by John Rawson-Smith provides a wonderful setting to the story when the hamlet began as an Iron Age site and developed into a medieval village. St John's Church Farley now stands isolated on chalk downs surrounded by farmland but remained the centre of community life for Farley and Slackstead. There is a record that the Church paid tax of £1-4s as a tenth of the annual value for the purpose of the last Crusade in 1290. The most significant tragedy to hit the village was the Black Death. The disease, carried by black rats from the continent, struck the county in 1348 and in less than two years killed half the population. Farley Chamberlayne was never to recover and was destined to become a 'lost village'.

The Great War had a marked effect on the village. On 3 July 1921 a service was held at St John's in the presence of Lady Cooper CBE, wife of Captain Sir George Cooper Bt of Hursley Park. The rector, the Reverend ST Percival took the service. In 1931 the old church porch was replaced by a new one of better appearance and dedicated to the eight men of Farley who died in the Great War. Their names are shown below as inscribed in the wooden walls of the porch; in addition, on the outer perimeter of the church grounds, a small plinth marks the planting, in 1922, of an avenue of 16 lime trees on the approach road in memory of the eight men. The trees stand today.

WW2 claimed two further men from the hamlet, shown below. Tragically they were brothers and died within 3 weeks of each other. George Miles, the eldest, was listed as missing in the sinking of HMS QUORN, but is commemorated on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial, Southsea. Ronald Miles is buried in the Cemetery at Bannerville-la-Campagne, between Caen and Pont L'Eveque, Normandy.

WW1

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Frederick BROWN | 2nd Btn Sussex Regiment |
| William Henry NOBLE | 23rd Btn London Regiment |
| Thomas RODBOURNE | Royal Fusiliers |
| John SIMPSON | 10th Btn Hampshire Regiment |
| Arthur William VINEY | 2nd Btn Hampshire Regiment |
| Alfred Stephen WELLS | 5th Btn Hampshire Regiment |
| William Thomas WELLS | 18th Btn Gloucestershire Regiment |
| Frederick FLETCHER | Wiltshire Regiment |

WW2

| | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Ronald James MILES | 7th Btn Royal Hampshire Regiment |
| George Victor MILES | HMS QUORN |

Origins of World War Two

Even after the horrors of WW1, many of the major powers were not satisfied with the outcome and felt that the Treaty of Versailles, which concluded it, was not helping the situation. On the one hand, Germany bitterly resented the losses of territory and the enforced payment for reparations imposed on it by the treaty. Germany felt they had been treated too harshly and sought some reversal. Italy, one of the victors in the conflict, was also far from happy about its territorial gains when compared to its losses during the war. Japan too was unhappy about its failure to gain control of China.

On the other hand, France, Great Britain and the United States believed that they had achieved their wartime objectives. They had reduced the military power of Germany and also felt they had re-organised Europe as they saw fit. Keen to keep a stable level of peace, they formed the League of Nations in 1920. It was designed as a forum in which nations could air their dissatisfaction and try to settle their disputes. However the League of Nations proved to be weak from the beginning. Having failed to achieve disarmament and after spectacular failures in both Manchuria and Abyssinia, disillusioned countries steadily resigned from the League, whilst realising that they would have to fight to settle their differences.

The peace-making terms of the Treaty of Versailles, rather than offering appeasement to troubled nations, seemed to encourage conflict. Feeling that Germany had been pushed too far, Hitler was ready to fight. Many historians feel that WW2 was Hitler's own personal war and that he always intended to fight in an effort to save face after the disasters of WW1, in which he had fought.

This anger among the nations grew until Chamberlain, pushed too far by Hitler's military intrusions in Europe, finally declared war on Germany on 3 September 1939. In terms of lives lost and material destruction, WW2 was the most devastating conflict in the history of mankind. Starting as a European conflict between Germany and an Anglo-French coalition, it expanded to involve the rest of the world. It killed more people, cost more money, damaged more property and caused more far-reaching changes in nearly every country than any other war. The number of people killed throughout the war can only be estimated, but it is believed that as many as 55 million lives were lost. More than 50 countries were drawn in and none was free of its effects.

Germany was totally defeated and the Nazi regime crumbled. Its leaders were eventually tried for crimes against humanity, but Hitler himself escaped the trial by committing suicide in his Berlin bunker at the end of the war. Like Germany, Japan was also in ruins following extensive bombing campaigns and the use of the nuclear bomb. Prominent Japanese military leaders were tried and convicted of war crimes, but the emperor was allowed to retain his position. Britain, having experienced extensive bombing during the 1940 blitz by the Germans, had the massive task of rebuilding many of its cities. The British had to seek economic aid from other countries and eventually phased out the remainder of its empire.

France, who had already experienced grave losses in WW1, had to recover from the effects of Nazi occupation during WW2. France was compelled to dismantle its colonial empire, but first fought long and bitter wars in an effort to maintain control. Germany of course suffered enormous casualties and material damage. Although Russia had suffered immeasurably during the war, they did manage to build a large and powerful army which occupied the majority of Eastern Europe by the end of the conflict. With these resources and the size of their population, Russia was a main contender, along with the United States, to become one of the new superpowers. Although suffering great loss of life in the war, the United States emerged at the end of the war with much less destruction than other countries, and with its economy still intact. After four years of building up a strong military base, they were left in the position of being a major world leader.

The number of poets who wrote about WW2 is relatively few compared to those in WW1. The three poets who do represent this period are Sidney Keyes, Keith Douglas and Alun Lewis, all of whom were soldiers in active service. Dylan Thomas, on the other hand, found the idea of war completely absurd and unreasonable and stated categorically that he would not be able to kill another human being. He did everything in his power not to be drafted into the army, and used his time writing scripts for wartime documentaries. One of his poems, *'A Refusal to Mourn the Death, by Fire, of a Child in London,'* portrayed his sentiments about the futility of war.

The harvest of life's devotion is contained in the anthology *'Other Men's Flowers'* compiled by the late Field Marshal Lord Wavell - soldier, statesman, author - for his own relaxation. First published during the darkest days of WW2, *'Other Men's Flowers'* brought thousands inspiration and comfort. Since then, it has become a permanent fixture in the nation's literary heritage.

Braishfield during World War Two

The article in Braishfield Memories 'The War Years'¹ written by Robin Merton of The Manor, an ex-soldier, gives an introduction to life as seen by one living in the village in 1939. It is of particular interest to recall the activity of the war effort in Braishfield and villages nearby. Air raids were frequent and although distant, the sirens could be heard with the threat of an invasion a reality and a sea landing anywhere along the south coast and Isle of Wight a possibility. Air-raid wardens and a Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) in the village were established. The BBC News told a depressing story each day particularly after the Germans had invaded the Low Countries across the Channel – far too close for comfort. Smelly gas masks were issued with warnings of necessary action to be taken in every situation imaginable. A national 'call' was made to support the Local Defence Volunteers, later the Home Guard; the Braishfield Platoon² with a strength of 36, was ordered to maintain a watch, remain alert and to report anything suspicious. In 1939, lights at night were subject to 'black-out' and rationing was imposed, initially meat, butter and sugar: clothing coupons were also issued.

On the north end of the village near the Manor crossroads and where Coombe Willow now stands was a Royal Artillery (AA) Troop 'dug in' with camouflaged sandbag emplacements, south facing towards the Isle of Wight. 'Every time there were raids in Southampton we were absolutely deafened by the big anti-aircraft guns. They were all camouflaged and dug into big trenches so you could not see them.'³ The men lived in a tented camp on the opposite side of Braishfield road in the adjacent field next to Chalk Pit Cottage. Vehicles and equipment were hidden in the woods by Fernhill which also accommodated a tented camp. Farley Mount was an established training area. The searchlight batteries were deployed locally, one at Casbrook Common. They were mounted on trailers and deployed with cunning to create the impression that there were more than there actually were.

The field south of the Wheatsheaf by Braishfield Road to The Homestead was common land. It was requisitioned by the Ministry of Agriculture and cultivated as part of the 'Dig for Victory' scheme. Ganger Farm and Woodley, opposite Hilliers' Arboretum, became a POW camp, mainly for Italians. Prisoners would gather at the perimeter fence selling hand made items to passers-by; rope soled slippers with woven raffia uppers, and novelty toys. After the war the camp also housed displaced persons (DPs), refugees from Eastern Europe. Quite a number of PoW and DPs were employed in agriculture in the village.

American GIs based in Hursley were frequent visitors to Braishfield and were made to feel at home; generous and appreciative, particularly of the three pubs in the village, they were keen to barter 'parachute silk' for the dressmakers and before long a number of girls were enticed away to start a new life across the Atlantic. In January 1943, one particular GI wrote home: 'Don't worry about me. I am now in a land of character, among people with the most admirable qualities of heart and soul.'

The noise of air-raids, particularly in the Battle of Britain and first two years of war 1940-42, the dog-fights in the sky and the bombing of Southampton, could be clearly heard particularly at night. Those in Braishfield were the spectators of it but some were there playing their part; Alec Cottle's knowledge of the streets of Southampton, having

1 Braishfield Memories p. 120

2 Braishfield Memories p. 123

3 Braishfield Memories p. 126

worked as a commercial traveller, made him a valued fireman in the town. Sidney Scorey, the Verger of Braishfield Church until aged 92, describes a responsibility of the Railway Home Guard [HQ Eastleigh], of which he was one: 'owing to the threatened invasion of Jerry tanks, concrete blocks with slots to take bent and shaped rails were inserted at intervals in the permanent way [railway line] which would, when fixed, create a blockade We were requested to work with our rifles not far away from us. Every Friday we were to work at least for one hour with our respirators on'.

Patricia Foxcroft, the blacksmith's daughter, recalled: 'There were the huge, white and grey-bellied barrage balloons moored high above the dock areas. Sirens sounded night and day. Searchlights and explosions lit up the sky. On our way home, looking up, we saw an aeroplane on fire diving out of the sky. Dad picked me up and into the bungalow and under the dining room table we went!'¹

Mrs Quick and Anne Beggs recalled 'this German plane came over to machine gun (the village) and there were bullets flying around. We dived into the ditch as he flew over the recreation ground'.² One German bomber crash-landed within the bounds of the village which caused quite a stir! The German pilot survived. Ena Ninnim and Maggie Batchelor recalled: 'Several bombs dropped on the village probably because of the guns being there, and we all felt vulnerable. Mother was on her own, Dad being in the army at the time, and when the air raid siren went we all rushed over to the next door neighbours, Mr and Mrs Dewey, taking our pillows and blankets and slept under their big kitchen table.'³

Fanny Holbrook⁴ who lived at 3 Crook Cottages the whole of her life, over 80 years, worked in 1942-3 in the Vickers Armstrong aircraft factory at Shirley, making Spitfires. The factory was bombed during the working day; Fanny was lucky to survive but was deaf thereafter.

Forty-five children, all evacuees from the submarine base at Gosport attacked from the air, were welcomed into many homes in the village and to the school.⁵ But by 1943 'bad' news of the war began to subside and, just before D-Day 5/6 June 1944, there were trucks packed in the village all down the lanes, wherever there were trees, and all through the woods, army lorries, big gun transports and troop carriers. Going to school we could see them, all camouflaged, waiting to go to Southampton and then across to France.⁶

At the end of the war the Village held victory celebrations on the recreation ground with fireworks and the letters VE and VJ, three or four feet high constructed with wire, straw and sacking, then soaked in paraffin and ignited. There was always a Dunkirk spirit in Braishfield which can be discerned to this day at the annual Senior Citizens Lunch in the Social Club, truly a feast of food and entertainment. When the communal singing, led by the intrepid Old Cadet Band, includes 'It's a Long Way to Tipperary' of WW1, followed by the 'Dambusters' theme linked to the daring RAF raid by 617 Squadron on the night 16 May 1943, it is always an emotional moment which never fails to pull the heart strings.

1. Braishfield Memories p. 68

2. Braishfield Memories p.25

3. Braishfield Memories p. 127

4. Braishfield Memories p. 92

5. The Evacuee, Anne Frost, nee Beggs. *Braishfield Memories* p. 23

6. Braishfield Memories p. 126

The Darkest Hour

1940 claims the nation's "darkest hour"; then emphasized by Winston Churchill, speaking to the nation;

'Upon this battle depends the survival of the Christian civilization.

Upon it depends our own British life and the long continuity of our institutions, and our Empire.

The whole fury and might of the enemy must very soon be turned on us.

Hitler knows that he will have to break us in this Island, or lose the war.

If we can stand up to him, all Europe may be freed,

and the life of the world may move forward into broad and sunlit uplands.

But if we fail, then the world, including the United States,

and all that we have known and cared for will sink into the abyss of a New Age

made more sinister and perhaps more prolonged by the lights of perverted Science.

Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duty, and so bear ourselves that if the

British Empire and Commonwealth lasts for a thousand years, men will still say,

This was their finest hour'

'Goodnight, then: sleep to gather strength for the morning, for the morning will come. Brightly will it shine on the brave and true, and kindly on all who suffer for the cause, and gloriously upon the tombs of heroes. Thus will shine the dawn.'

Winston Churchill - broadcast to defeated France, 21 October 1940

Names of the Fallen

Exhortation

*When you go home
Tell them of us and say,
For your tomorrow
We gave our today.*

Inscription on the Kohima Epitaph, Burma

Second World War 1939 - 1945

| Name | Age | Regiment | Died | Address |
|---|-----|---|--------------|-------------|
| BURNETT William Henry Charles | 28 | Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders | 21 Nov 1942 | Romsey |
| CATTON Anthony Charles | 21 | Royal Air Force | 8 April 1940 | Braishfield |
| CHAPMAN George W | 24 | Pioneer Corps | 31 Dec 1942 | Braishfield |
| DEWEY Frank Victor Albert | 26 | Royal Fusiliers | 9 Sep 1943 | Braishfield |
| KIRK Charles William | 21 | Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve | 8 June 1944 | Braishfield |
| ROSE Robert Richard J | 20 | Hampshire Regiment | 4 Oct 1944 | --- |
| WATTS John Albert | 27 | Royal Tank Regiment | 3 April 1945 | Bishopstoke |

'He telleth the number of the stars: and calleth them all by their names'

The Book of Common Prayer

All Saints' Church, Braishfield Graveyard Heritage

'It always seems to be sunny when we park by the church.

The church yard is one of the most tranquil places I know, at its best in the sun after fresh rain has washed a sparkle into the ground.'

Alan Abraham

(Father: Charles Henry Abraham (1915-1999), brother Edward and sister Stella)

The Church of All Saints' lies tranquil in the heart of the village amidst its graveyard lying to north and south. As Canon Boothman said in his All Saints' Centenary Appeal letter in March 1955, 'During this year we shall often speak of the Church, meaning of course, the building in which we worship. Let us not forget that the building takes its name from those who meet within its walls, for the Church of God is the blessed company of all faithful people.' Religion encourages us to try to become more perfect human beings – to 'love our neighbour'. Faith continues to play a big role in defining who we are and can be felt with varying degrees of strength. But faith is part of our history as a nation and that history informs our identity today. Christianity has shaped the laws, democracy and culture of the nation, but also provides a set of morals and values – love, duty and honesty.

Throughout the week the Church acts as an important centre of social activity, assistance, religious charity, and material aid to society. Richard Brazier has successfully followed in Tom Gould's footsteps by leading the merry band of mowers, the team of men and machines, who maintain the church yard so beautifully. The individual graves are tended and respectfully acknowledged. Parishioners and visitors to All Saints' appreciate what they find and wish to thank those who carry out these duties, past and present, and to Richard for his enthusiastic leadership. The team's work demonstrates generosity of spirit which is so evident elsewhere in the village in the many activities which flourish and are widely enjoyed.

England's unique graveyards are at risk of crumbling away, conservationists fear. The country's 15,000 churchyards are full of beautifully carved and historically significant tombstones. They are not being engulfed in a sudden crisis but are suffering from gradual decay. There is a concept called 'pleasing decay' but there comes a point when the most important historical facts you treasure are lost - the inscriptions become illegible, the relief sculpture just disappears. We need to keep a watchful eye on each of them before the individual story being told seeps away.

The Victorian idea of the cult of the grave has declined but not in Braishfield. We are lucky. Our churchyard is beautiful and lovingly cared for, with few of the dangers mentioned above. The seat outside the Church-room, placed in memory of Tom Gould and others in the graveyard encourage moments of contemplation. The gravestones stand silent but also speak to us of past history, much of which we have shared as family or friend. Suddenly the peace is broken and we are forced to look up by the call of rooks circling above the three Scots' pine, dominant and firm in the wind. For many years the birds have made their home there while looking down on the silent graves below. Like the rooks we can detect a message of encouragement - the tree is a symbol of life and the germ of the next pine is there in the cone. This can bring strength to us all with these comforting words by George Herbert:

'To fruit or shade; at least some bird would trust her household to me.'

We need that strength now as our life moves through the seasons, but ...this would be made easier if we could only see:

'Eyes take in the light for hearts to see by.'

How wise it was, when Armistice Day was first established in 1922, to include the Two Minutes Silence when the country unites as at no other time to remember those who died or were wounded and to reflect on what it has meant for humanity since then. We cannot alter history, what's done is done, but by remembering and reflecting, we can honour the sacrifices others have made for us, by using the lessons of the past to influence our behaviour. Our memories can strengthen our resolve to care for and understand each other and to seek peace around the world.

Serving the Nation

The vast majority of those who donned a uniform in WW2, and over six million served in the British Armed Services, returned safely to their family. Roughly 722,000 or 12% died, and most of those serving did not lose an immediate family member. This is not to trivialise the immense losses that Britain, the Commonwealth and Allies incurred, or the long term suffering of many survivors. But it does mean that visiting war graves or refurbishing village war memorials may neglect the majority of our forefathers, let alone foremothers, who supported the war effort in other ways - in factories, shipyards, munitions and armaments, food production and digging for victory in the land army; also supporting refugee relief and charitable work. There were many ways to serve the Nation; supporting those who would deliver ultimate victory at the fighting front was vital.

It would be a sad paradox if support for the Armed Forces is accompanied by a real dwindling of Britain's traditional role as a warrior nation. By cutting manpower relentlessly so that the Armed Forces can no longer fulfill the kind of task for which they have been thanked in the past, politicians may be forcing the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force to the margins of national experience. That will not stop us expressing gratitude on Remembrance Day for the past, but it may endanger Britain's role in shaping the world and guaranteeing future liberties at home.

We Will Remember Them

*Bid them be patient, and some day, anon
They shall feel earth enwrapt in silence deep;
Shall greet, in wonderment, the quiet dawn,
And in content may turn them to their sleep.*

The Anxious Dead

John McRae



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JOY

by Anthony Catton
Sergeant Observer Royal Air Force



*O Joy that comes not to a foolish heart,
Nor shows itself to men who know not peace,
Nor falls to those who cannot cease
To hate and make their jealousy an art
For fools to weep upon and from love depart
In envy of a neighbour's better place
Gained by fair industry and God's grace
To those who run the race and play their part.
Joy is a happy thing of woods and flowers,
Love and contentment, innocence and mirth,
The games of childhood, the simplicity of earth,
Which finds its joy in all the common things
Of life, and in the heart of man endowers
The love of God, and peace denied of kings.*

*CLOSE the veil and for one short moment,
The hours of a day, divide your memory,
Pull down the blind against the other worlds,
The future and the past, and for that moment
Live for the day and hope accordingly.
No coward's act is this but one short holiday
To do your work, your duty and your play
Without the cumbrance of a yesterday, or future's
Dreary call of worry and expectancy.*



Anthony Catton of the Royal Air Force
gave his life on active service on
8 April 1940

