



THE PARAGON

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ARMISTICE

WORLD WAR IS OVER



STOCKSBRIDGE CLOCK TOWER WAR MEMORIAL—Part One

I am indebted to Michael Parker for his research and permission to use extracts from his work on the 'Stocksbridge & District War Memorials'.

The Stocksbridge Memorial story is rather intriguing, it having taken 5 years from the end of the Great War to come to fruition. It became more intriguing with the knowledge that a scheme was first proposed in council in 1916. I wondered if there were reasons for this 7 year length of time.

The story begins in a council meeting on the 4th Nov 1916 when Cllr J Sheldon proposed a motion to form a committee to formulate a scheme for a suitable commemoration 'for the men who had left the district and had died in defence of their country.' This was passed in council and a public meeting was arranged in the Works School for Nov 13th.

At the meeting, after much discussion, Mr Sheldon moved that a committee should be formed to draw up various schemes of commemoration and bring these back to a public meeting. A Mr D O'Connor, representing the Roman Catholic body, said that they supported this motion but also asked 'that the names of the Shirkers, who had rushed into the works and got behind



The Chairman said that the meeting was about commemorating those who had taken an active part in the war and it was up to the meeting as to what steps should be taken. The events of this meeting were brought back to the council and a further meeting of the steering committee was arranged for Dec 16th 1916.

It is now strange to note that there were no further reports, in local or Sheffield newspapers, of any further meetings or decisions until a public meeting was convened by Stocksbridge UDC in February 1919, over two years later and after the Great War had finished.

The meeting at the Works school was ominously poorly attended, there being only 81 persons from the valley attending to consider a project of such importance.



Mr Sheldon again proposed that there should be a memorial and more, that the Stocksbridge UDC should pledge itself to providing a suitable memorial. The proposal was seconded and passed and the Chairman invited suggestions. Mr Ben Hay, from the floor, asked if the council, after two years of deliberations, had brought any suggestions to the meeting, the

Chairman replied in the negative.

A proposal was put forward for a Memorial Hall to seat about 1500 people with committee rooms attached and include swimming baths and slipper baths. Mr Drabble thought this idea was a good one but it would cost at least £1-0-0d per head of the population. Mr Sheldon asked that a committee of interested representational bodies be formed and after a rather fractious meeting, it was decided to form a representative committee.

In the meantime we note that Boisterstone village had decided to get on with things themselves and had organised a meeting on April 3rd 1919, taken three proposals for memorials, and voted overwhelmingly for a 'large cross to be erected in the church yard'. A committee had been quickly formed to ascertain particulars and costs.

On this same day, in Stocksbridge, the council had decided to accept the War Memorial Committee recommendation to erect a Public Hall and have a suitable Memorial placed in front of it.

This committee under Mr Sheldon was desired to raise £10,000 to build such a Hall and the district would be divided into ten divisions for the purpose of canvassing subscriptions.

The Improvements Committee of SUDC had decided to recommend for approval by the council to incorporate this memorial building in a general plan which would involve the erection of public baths, council offices and other necessary buildings which would be financed from the rates. The Memorial hall would be opened first, irrespective of any progress made upon the rest of the scheme. In the meantime the council was concentrating on the Government Peace Day in Stocksbridge which was being coordinated by T E Batty Esq

of the 'Hand of Friendship Lodge, RAOB.'

Meanwhile Boisterstone, seemingly not having the problems and procrastinations of Stocksbridge, unveiled their Memorial Cross on Sunday 16 May 1920 in a ceremony lead by RHR Rimington Wilson and a dedication by the Bishop of Sheffield.

Enthusiasm and impetus in Stocksbridge seemed to be waning. On 16th July 1920, at a public meeting called in Stocksbridge, the apathetic spirit in which the War Memorial scheme was being treated was made glaringly obvious by the poor attendance. In a major statement by the Chairman Mr F Coultas, the previous resolution of a Public Hall had been rescinded by the council and it had been resolved, subject to the site being available, to erect a public tower with clock, on Booking Hill, Stocksbridge.

The local churches had been quick to respond with their own memorials, with Stocksbridge Wesleyan Church being the first on Sat Oct 20th 1920, followed by St Matthias and their Reredos Memorial on Sun 7 Nov 1920 and Stocksbridge Prims Methodist on Sun 2 Jan 1921.

The Stocksbridge Memorial plans were unveiled at a public meeting on Mon 20 Dec 1920 and the scheme of a Clock Tower was approved.

Mr Coultas in the local press appealed for subscriptions towards the £2000 costs of building, stating that £ 1000 had already been promised or subscribed. 'It should not be too difficult for a community of 9000 people to raise £ 1000 in smaller subscriptions.

However the feeling of funding a Stocksbridge War Memorial by public subscription was not favoured by everybody viz:

The recommendation of the Stocksbridge & District WMC that the sum of £20 granted to the War Memorial fund be rescinded and it was decided to distribute the sum amongst the widows and dependants of the fallen of the district'

This attitude was roundly condemned by later letters in the press and a number of articles appeared in the local press commenting on the apathetic attitude of Stocksbridge, pointing out that even the smallest hamlets in the district had raised a War Memorial.



Mr Joseph Sheldon, Chairman of the War Memorial committee must have felt it necessary to write an impassioned letter to the press (April 1922) explaining that the committee was as

anxious as the subscribers to complete the scheme, the rising costs, short time working were causing the delay. 'Bear with us,

BRAVE STOCKSBRIDGE YOUTH.

Drummer Frank Thickett, of the Hallamshire Rifles

sooner or later the memorial will be accomplished'.

Finally over a year later and 7 years after it was first proposed, on July 14 1923, the foundation stone of our Clock Tower War Memorial was laid by Mr F S Scott-Smith, general manager of Stocksbridge Works, before a crowd of some 3000 people.

Ed Note :- More next time about the unvelving, the clock and peel of bells and the later gardens.

Pevinstone Stocksbridge and Hoyland Express, Saturday, September 25th, 1915.

News has been received that one of our local boys, Private Frank Thickett, of the 1st/4th York and Lancaster Regiment, who, prior to the outbreak of the war was an employee at the works of Messrs. Fox and Co., has been recommended for the D.C.M (Distinguished Conduct Medal). In his own words in a letter to his friend he writes,

"It was on the 13th July that the enemy bombarded our trenches for half-an-hour before our guns replied, and the message came down that they were attacking. Our shells were falling short, and the shrapnel flying in our trenches. All communications were cut off, and the nearest signal station was about 800 yards off, just behind the firing line but in the same direction. Our officers wondered what to do to stop it, and asked if anyone would go. I volunteered, and one of the officers went with me. We had to cross the canal and the bridge had half of it blown away. I went as far as possible, then jumped in, being up to my waist in mud. I struggled out and assisted the officer, and we landed under terrible shell-fire without being injured. All our men congratulated me when things had settled down. It was my duty, so in any case, better luck next time. I shall never forget looking over the parapet, with the guns in action; it was like a picture to see one continuous line of fire. You will have heard about some of the Stocksbridge boys being wounded, also F. Eastwood; we were all very sorry, but he died a hero; and if the young men in England saw how the poor fellows suffer they should be glad to do their little bit."

STOCKSBRIDGE D.C.M.

Drummer Thickett Reported Wounded.

News was received by the relatives of Drummer Frank Thickett, on Tuesday, that he has been wounded. Drummer Thickett, who is in the Hallamshire Rifles, has been awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal for gallant service. It was expected that he would shortly be coming for a few days to his home in Manchester road, Stocksbridge. The information received, however, is that he has been wounded in the shoulders and back. He is now in hospital.

Sheffield Daily Independent, Monday 1 November 1915

DAUNTLESS DEEDS RECALLED.

STIRRING SCENES IN SHEFFIELD.

HALLAMSHIRE SOLDIER'S

GREAT WELCOME.

That long-delayed event, the first public recognition in Sheffield of a military honour won in the European war, was celebrated on Saturday when the Lady Mayoress, Mrs. Oliver Wilson, presented to Drummer Frank Thickett, of the Hallamshires, the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

Thickett, although a member of the popular 4th York and Lancaster Regiment (the Hallamshire Rifles), belongs to Stocksbridge, and in civilian life is a worker in the sheet mill at Samuel Fox and Company's steel works, in the village. His father and mother are Mr. and Mrs. Charles Thickett, who are well known and respected in the district.

Surrey Street was lined by about a hundred men of the Hallamshire Rifles, stationed at Endcliffe Hall, who marched down headed by their band. Drummer Thickett marched with them, and was cordially cheered on the way to the ceremony

A crowd of 10,000 people, stretching right back to the Queen's Monument and filling Surrey street, jostled each other good humouredly awaiting the arrival of the hero - an arrival, strangely enough, that was delayed owing to his being associated with a motor disaster, while on his way to Sheffield from his home at Stocksbridge.

TERRIBLE MOTOR COLLISION.TWO KILLED AND LADY INJURED.

TRADEGY OF THE FOG.

Drummer Thickett, of the Hallamshire Rifles was a passenger on the motor-bus, being on his ay to Sheffield to receive his Distinguished Conduct Medal at the hands of the Lord mayor. He assisted in the rescue of the injured persons.

In an interview with our representative after the accident, Drummer Thickett said the morning was very foggy and the collision was a very bad one. The motor-bus was crowded with passengers, both inside and out.

He was sitting on the top, right in front of the 'bus, when the accident took place he jumped down into the road and with other passengers rendered assistance to the victims.

He got the injured boy from under a wheel of one of the vehicles. The boy's injuries were of a terrible nature. It was

A comprehensive Surnames 'S' will be included in the next Paragon together with the conclusion on the Clock Tower story and of course other snippets.

ENGRAVED GLASS FRUIT BOWL



A couple of weeks ago we had a visit to the museum by Mr David Grayson, who on a trip to Blackpool, had successfully bid for this engraved lead glass bowl at an auction. It had caught his eye because of the engraving of St Mary's Boisterstone Church. Under the engraving was a date '19 Dec 1918' and on the opposite side of the bowl was the finely engraved '1918 { HJBW—ERS } 1968'.

David left the bowl with us asking could we please find out anything about it. Luckily that evening we were doing a presentation at Boisterstone Church and were able to ask the lady members if they had any ideas. I was most pleased when Sue Casson of the Guild was able to ascertain that a wedding had indeed taken place at Boisterstone on that date.

This was the wedding of Edith Rebecca Stanley to Henry John Birks Woodfield.

Edith was the daughter of John & Jennet Stanley of Waldershalg. On the 1911 census she is at home and is a teacher, her father John is down as a coachman?

Henry came from Birmingham, born in the same year 1893, he was the son of John & Frances Woodfield.

At the time of their marriage, Henry was still in the Army although the war had just ended. He had been in the war since the start in 1914, with promotions through corporal, sergeant in France and was then in Italy as 2nd Lieutenant until 1920.

The couple appear to have moved to Birmingham and we next here of Henry being a travelling salesman in books,

apparent to the Infirmary doctors that Wordsworth's condition was extremely critical, and unfortunately he succumbed early yesterday morning. The passengers in the motor-bus were shaken but escaped injury.

to New York in 1931. Whether he was sent by his employers is not known. He was there for two years before moving to Canada in 1934.

In 1936 Henry and his wife Edith founded a book publishing company—Junior Bookshelf, and in the 1939 Census they are still residing in Birmingham and John is still named as a Travelling Book Salesman.

In 1946, after the war, we find them at Riley Cottage, Kirkburton Nr Huddersfield where they have started a book printing business - Woodfield & Stanley. They must have grown rapidly because the firm moved to two vacant Nissen huts at Brookfield Mills and a further move in 1948 took them to Penlstone Road at Kirkburton.

Edith and Henry seemed to have had no children and the move to Kirkburton could have had some connection with her sister Caroline who lived at Thurstonland and who became a director in the company.

Editor's Message

This edition of the Paragon is a special one on the centenary of the ending of the Great War, The Society is providing and laying a wreath this year at our iconic War Memorial. I hope we have caused no offence in publishing this insight into the Memorial scheme and it would appear that Stocksbridge is indebted again to another one of Sammy's great men, Joseph Sheldon for giving us the best Memorial in South Yorkshire.

Our best wishes for the forthcoming festive season and we look forward to the next edition in the New Year.

Programme of Events

December 13th

Christmas Carol Celebrations—Members Only

Why not visit our Website at - www.stocksbridgehs.co.uk

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