

## Faringdon World War One Memorial

In 1919, a War Memorial Committee was formed with the intention of erecting a war memorial to honour the dead of the Great War. Some members proposed that the Town Hall (which we now refer to as the Old Town Hall) be pulled down and replaced with a war memorial. There was considerable opposition to the destruction of this historic building and alternatives were proposed such as installing commemorative plaques on the Portwell Pump. After a campaign by those opposed to its destruction, the Town Hall was renovated and the commemorative plaques were placed on the building itself thereby making the whole building a war memorial and so preserving it for posterity.

It was suggested that the Faringdon War Memorial record the names of the fallen from within a three-mile radius of Faringdon, but this was rejected because it would include 'half the village of Longcot, Buscot Park, Great and Little Coxwell, Shellingford and Hatford.' It was 'therefore suggested that the War Memorial be for the civil and ecclesiastical parishes of Faringdon which would include Littleworth, Thrupp and Little Coxwell.'

The War Memorial was unveiled and dedicated at a ceremony on Sunday 6th February 1921 at which Lord Faringdon gave an address. It lists 87 names. All Saints', United and Baptist Churches each have their own war memorials reflecting those who worshipped there. The All Saints' Memorial lists 92 names; five are of men not listed on the Faringdon War Memorial, but hailing from neighbouring villages; United Church records nine names, four of which are not listed on the Faringdon War Memorial but are of local men closely linked through family ties to members of the then Methodist Church, while all of the six names on the Baptist Church War Memorial are listed on the Faringdon War Memorial.

Taken together, these war memorials identify 96 men all of whom are listed in this book; but there is one extra name: James Henry Wearn, a Southwark man who married Annie Mary Luker of Great Coxwell in 1914 in Faringdon. She returned to Faringdon with her son, James Leonard Wearn, after her husband was killed at the third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele) on 31<sup>st</sup> July 1917. Sadly, James Leonard, a Private in the Ox and Bucks Light Infantry died at Salerno on 27<sup>th</sup> September 1943 during the allied assault on southern Italy. He was 29. Wearn Road, off Coxwell Road, is named to commemorate both father and son according to the Town Council's policy of naming all new roads after the fallen from both world wars.

The following pages commemorate not only the 96 men listed on the various Faringdon War Memorials, but others who had connections with Faringdon and one woman: Winifred Absalom from Hinton Waldrist. The information has been compiled from the extensive records collected by Mark Stone and from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission web site. If you can add any further information, please contact me or Faringdon Town Council.

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