

The Great War Memorials at All Saints' Lindfield



Lindfield Village War Memorial. (photographed by Richard Bryant)

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Lindfield Village War Memorial

Initial thoughts on a memorial had been expressed in early 1919 but it was not until 1920 following formation of a War Memorial Committee by Lindfield Parish Council that discussions started in earnest.¹ The Committee considered several suggestions, for a memorial funded by public subscription, ranging from public bath facilities to a scholarship fund for village children. Agreement was eventually reached on a stone monument as this would be a lasting tribute, where flowers could be placed by relatives whose husbands and sons lay buried in foreign lands.

A site on the Common at the southern approach to the village became much favoured although there were concerns about possible damage to the memorial. Eventually All Saints' churchyard was finally decided upon, although this site presented difficulties with regard to space.

The rather unusual memorial, designed² by Ninian Comper, takes the form of a churchyard cross built into the boundary wall between the churchyard and the High Street. This position overcame the lack of space within the churchyard.

It is worth noting that Sir Ninian Comper³ [1864-1964], knighted in 1950, is acclaimed as the greatest British church architect of the 20th century and one of the last major Gothic Revival architects. He is believed to have undertaken only two war memorial commissions, the Welsh National War Memorial in Cardiff being the other.

There is little doubt that Comper favoured Lindfield with a design due to his connection with the late Charles Eamer Kempe and his nephew Walter Tower; Comper had been articled to Kempe and worked for a time as his assistant.

The memorial in Clipsham stone from Rutland, noted for its fineness and durability, stands some 25 feet high. Built into the wall and set at an angle is a square stone plinth, from this a scrolled base rises and the eight sided column ascends to the cross. At the head of the column is a cross and upon the west side are the sculptured figures of Christ crucified with St John and Mary Magdalene standing on a ledge beside the cross. Upon the reverse of the cross are the Virgin and Child⁴.



The Memorial Cross. (photographed by Richard Bryant)



The Memorial Cross. (photographed by Richard Bryant)



Base of the War Memorial. (photographed by Richard Bryant)

Engraved on the left side of the inward facing base is '1914' and below the inscription 'CHRIST DIED FOR ALL MEN' and on the right '1918' and 'THESE FOR THEIR COUNTRY'. On either side of the base on stones set into the wall are engraved the names of the fallen:

L W Ayling
J Baker
C Baldock
W N Baldock
P C Blunden
W J Blunden
W E Bourne
E C Burlong

F Hillman
G H Hobden
J H Jeffrey
H A King
C Laker
J Ledbury
R C Legge
E Leppard

F Savill
H C Scutt
S E Smith
A E Speer
H A Spiers
A Springham
J G Tayler
E R Townsend

J Caplin
 A H Cormack
 E B Fawcett
 A L Fitzmaurice
 L Fitzmaurice
 R Fitzmaurice
 C E Ford
 H W Fox
 F Gaston
 H Gaston
 J Gorringe
 R H Grundy
 R G Hill
 M Hill

L G Longley
 R F Longley
 W Mansbridge
 H Markwick
 A E V Newnham
 J F Newnham
 N H Newnham
 A Nye
 F C Oram
 H G Paine
 T Pranklin
 G A Prideaux
 A Pullen
 A Rice

G K Twiss
 W Venn
 R R Waller
 T W Weatherby
 J Whall
 G A Willey
 L S J Wilmshurst
 W Winn
 A Young

The memorial was dedicated⁵ on Sunday 12 November 1922. Almost 100 ex-service men assembled on the Common and marched to All Saints' church headed by the Lindfield Scout Drum and Bugle band. After the church service, which included the recital of the names of men who died, the congregation assembled outside.



Unveiling the Village War Memorial. Lindfield Parish Council Village Archive

Watched by a large crowd the Bishop of Lewes pulled away the flag covering the names and read the prayers of dedication and gave a well received address.

This was followed by John Arkwright's hymn 'The Supreme Sacrifice', a minutes silence and the laying of wreaths with the National Anthem bringing the service to a close.

Church War Memorial

The church's elaborately carved oak memorial⁶, in the south Transept, is believed to have been designed by John Leslie, the chief designer for C E Kempe & Co Ltd. It was made in the wood carving department of Norman and Burt, builders, at Burgess Hill. Norman and Burt were responsible for much of the wood work currently in the church⁷; they had also undertaken a number of commissions initiated by the Kempe studio and Walter Tower.



War Memorial in the south Transept. (photographed by Richard Bryant)

The memorial erected in 1921 shows St Michael as the warrior saint and 'Captain of the Host' in armour, holding a shield emblazoned with the cross of St George and a golden lance to which is attached the pennant of St George. His head bared, the helmet having been removed, is wearing a laurel wreath portraying victory.

The slain and evil shape of the formidable dragon is at his feet depicting the triumph of good over evil.



The dragon at the feet of St Michael. (photographed by Richard Bryant)

The memorial's iconography reflects that displayed in the Cumberlege window in the South Chapel installed in 1919, which was also designed in the Kempe studio. In fact both draw on the iconography of the fifteenth century wall paintings that were on the east wall of the south Transept and recorded in 1846. Part of the mural depicted Archangel St Michael standing on a defeated dragon.⁸

The Memorial inscription reads:

'Remember ye with thanksgiving and with all honour before God and men those who went forth from this place in the service of their Country during the years of the Great War 1914 – 1918 and returned not again to whose memory their fellow parishioners have set up this memorial'

The inscription is followed by the names of the fallen.

Family Memorials in All Saints'

Following requests for the fixing of individual memorials in the church by families wishing to commemorate individuals who died serving their country, the subject was discussed at the annual Parish Vestry meeting⁹ on 30 October 1916. It was agreed 'to fix fees to act as a check upon the natural desire' for a memorial, at the rate of £2 2s 0d per square foot for parishioners and no memorial to exceed three square feet.

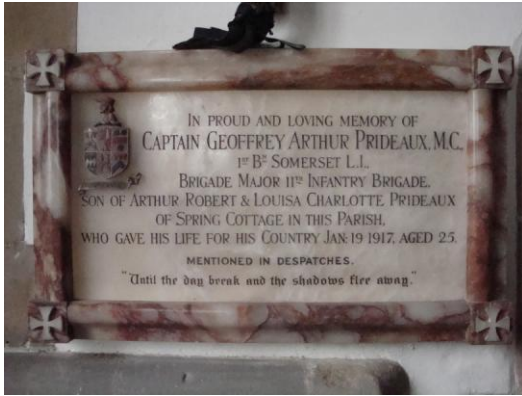
There are two individual Great War family memorials in the church.

Reginald George Hill

On the north wall of the north Transept is a brass plaque¹⁰ measuring 26in by 13in inscribed:

Pro Deo – Pro Patria
In memory of Reginald George Hill
1st Canadian Battalion
Son of Captain E N Hill late 30th Regt
And of Frederica his wife
Killed in Action 26th April 1916 near Ypres, Flanders
Aged 48

Captain Geoffrey Prideaux MC



The Prideaux tablet. (photographed by Richard Bryant)

Mounted on the east wall of the north Transept is a marble and alabaster tablet¹¹ measuring 35in by 22in. It displays the Prideaux family crest and the inscription:

“In proud & loving memory of
Captain Geoffrey Arthur Prideaux, M.C.,
1st Bn Somerset L. I.,
Brigade Major 11th Infantry Brigade
Son of Arthur Robert & Louise Charlotte Prideaux
Of The Spring Cottage in this Parish,
Who gave his life for his country Jan: 19th 1917, Aged 25.
Mentioned in Dispatches
“Until the day break and the shadows flee away.”

Above the tablet is a simple inscribed wooden cross, with a bronze laurel wreath at the top. Attached to the base are the ribbons and badge of the Somerset Light Infantry.



The Prideaux cross. (photographed by Richard Bryant)

The 1917 Vestry Meeting¹² minutes records that 'The meeting considered it an honour to have in the parish church a monument to so gallant an officer.'

He was killed while visiting the front line by a burst of shell fire.¹³

Cumberlege Window

At the annual Easter Vestry meeting¹⁴ in 1919 it was agreed to accept the offer by Henry and Blanch Cumberlege of Walstead Place, Lindfield for a stained glass window in gratitude for the safe return from the Great War of their three sons:

Captain Geoffrey Cumberlege, DSO, MC, Royal Fusiliers and Oxfordshire and Bucks Light Infantry¹⁵

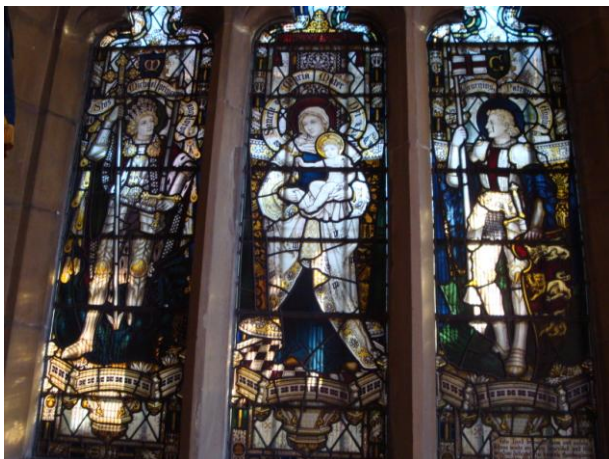
Captain Reginald Cumberlege, Royal Field Artillery¹⁶

Lieutenant Commander Marcus Cumberlege, Royal Navy

¹⁷

Henry Cumberlege served as a church warden at All Saints' for almost 40 years¹⁸.

The three light window in the east wall of the South (Massets') Chapel was installed in 1919¹⁹. It was made by C E Kempe & Co Ltd and designed by Walter Tower but the detailed drawing was probably undertaken by John Leslie, the firm's chief designer.

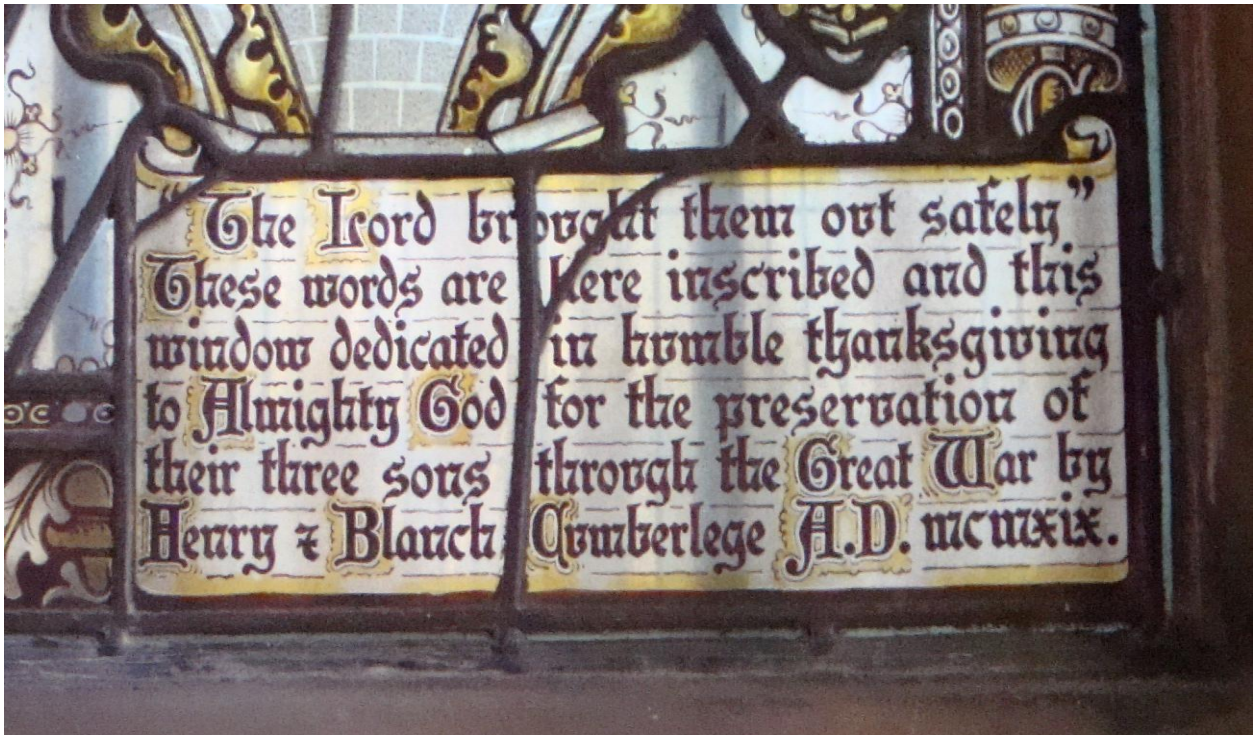


The Cumberlege window in the South Chapel, from the left St Michael, the Virgin and Child, and St George. (photographed by Richard Bryant)

In the left hand window light is St Michael, the warrior saint holding a sword in triumph with his lance impaled in the dragon at his feet. The Virgin and Child are featured in the middle light. To the right is St George with the three golden Lions of England emblazoned on his shield. His sword is sheathed and lance at rest, witnessing and upholding the faith in the Incarnation²⁰.

An inscription in this window light reads:

“The Lord brought them out safely” These words are here inscribed and this window dedicated in humble thanksgiving to Almighty God for the preservation of their three sons through the Great War by Henry & Blanch Cumberlege. A.D. MCMXIX .



The Window dedication. (photographed by Richard Bryant)

Near the left hand bottom of each window light is a small insignia depicting the regiment or the Service in which the sons served, from the left, Royal Fusiliers (as shown below), Royal Field Artillery and Royal Navy. The C E Kempe & Co Ltd motif of a black tower superimposed upon a wheat sheaf is in the left hand bottom corner of the left light.



Royal Fusiliers and Kempe studio motif. photographed by Richard Bryant)

References

- ¹ D4.002.2 War Memorial (copies of misc articles and notes) at Lindfield Parish Council Village Archive.
- ² D4.002.2 War Memorial (copies of misc articles and notes) at Lindfield Parish Council Village Archive, and Lindfield Parish Council Village Leaflet.
- ³ Various websites such as, Scottish Architects, www.scottisharchitects.org.uk, Westminster Abbey www.westminster-abbey.org/our-history/people/sir-ninian-comper, and www.angelforce.co.uk/friend/comper.html
- ⁴ D4.002.2 War Memorial (copies of misc articles and notes) at Lindfield Parish Council Village Archive; and personal observation.
- ⁵ D4.002.5 War Remembrance (copies of misc articles and notes) at Lindfield Parish Council Village Archive.
- ⁶ B. Field, *All Saints' Lindfield A Guide to the History of the Church*, (All Saints' Church, 1995), p. 47 and personal observation.
- ⁷ Field, *All Saints' Lindfield*, p.11, p. 17, p.19, p.23, p.44, p.46
- ⁸ Field, *All Saints' Lindfield*, p. 25, p. 28
- ⁹ PAR/416/14/1, Lindfield All Saints Vestry Minutes at West Sussex Record Office
- ¹⁰ Personal observation
- ¹¹ Personal observation
- ¹² PAR/416/14/1, Lindfield All Saints Vestry Minutes at West Sussex Record Office
- ¹³ E. Wyrall, *The Somerset Light Infantry 1914-1919*, (Methuen & Co Ltd, 1927) p.159. Republished by N & M Press.

¹⁴ PAR/416/14/1, Lindfield All Saints Vestry Minutes at West Sussex Record Office

¹⁵ Ancestry.co.uk – British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards

¹⁶ Ancestry.co.uk – British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards

¹⁷ National Archive, Officers Service Records, ADM 196/144/187

¹⁸ Memorial tablet in All Saints' Lindfield

¹⁹ Field, *All Saints' Lindfield*, p.32; and personal observation.

²⁰ PAR/416/14/1, Lindfield All Saints Vestry Minutes at West Sussex Record Office