

Muggleswick
M 48.03.

'WELCOME HOME'

Less than a month after the Armistice with Germany came into effect, communities throughout the land were beginning to consider how they should commemorate those killed during the First World War, and how they should welcome home men then with the armed forces. On 6 December 1918, a Public Meeting was held in Muggleswick and District Parish, which embraced the community of Waskerley, in North-West County Durham, to consider this very subject. As in so many villages, towns and cities elsewhere, it was decided to erect a suitable permanent memorial to those killed while serving in HM Forces. A Committee was elected, which met monthly until the Peace Celebrations were held on 19 July 1919, and periodically thereafter, and the Memorial Cross was dedicated. In all, two Public and nine Committee Meetings were held.

The Memorial, a white marble cross, was erected in Muggleswick churchyard and dedicated by the Bishop of Jarrow at 6 pm on 20 July 1920. Special medals were struck (at a cost of £35-12-0, or £35.60 today), for presentation to those who served in the armed forces, inscribed *Presented to ... in gratitude for services in the World War, 1914-18*. The Memorial Cross cost £85, and was inscribed:

In grateful memory of soldiers from this Parish who gave their lives for

God, King and Country in the World War 1914-1918

T. Gladstone Hall Robinson R. Milner

Joseph Craggs Roger Lowdon, MM

T. W. Brown, BSc Thomas Smith

Joseph Boyle

Erected by Parishioners and Friends

'The memory of their sacrifice is dear to us'

In all, £171-12-3 (£171.61 today) was raised for the Memorial and Peace Celebrations by public subscription, with about thirty subscribers; collections; proceeds from whist drives; and grants from local authorities - Lanchester Rural District Council gave £8-15-0 (£8.75), and the Parish Council gave £20. A final surplus of funds, amounting to £1-5-3 (about £1.26 today), was donated to the Royal Victoria Infirmary, in Newcastle.

Peace Celebrations went on in many villages and other communities on the day the War officially ended, 19 July 1919. In Muggleswick and District, catering was provided for teas for one-hundred-and-seventy adults and one hundred children, which were free to parishioners but cost of 1s (5 pence today) to adult visitors and 9d to children (about 4 pence today). The Celebrations included sports, such as flat races, egg and spoon races, three-legged races, wheelbarrow races, tug-of-war, wrestling, and skipping contests; a fancy-dress bicycle parade; teas; an ascent of *Ordinary and Grotesque Fire Balloons*; and a dance in the evening, at Waskerley Institute.

Originally, it was proposed to provide returned soldiers with a supper after the Peace Celebration, for which £8-8-0 was allocated, but this was postponed until May 1920, to await the return of more of the men then still serving in the armed forces.

David Thompson

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