

## Setting up the Shipley Roll of Honour and War Memorial Tablet 1914 - 1918

The Vicar of Shipley, The Reverend Baker, wrote in the October 1914 edition of the Shipley Parish magazine:

*"I have just returned from a peep at Aldershot Town and Military Camp.....everywhere is military bustle and preparation, and everywhere masses of khaki.... I saw the men, like a swarm of bees, on the drilling grounds, all as eager as possible to learn the mysteries of soldiering as quickly as possible.....for these men every month promises fresh experience; meantime with plenty of open air exercise, regular good feeding, cheerful company and certain forms of health recreation (which includes football and bathing when warm enough), their health will become the best possible. I think many of us, who cannot go to the front, envy these splendid men. Theirs may be the chance of a thousand years to bring honour and glory to England and upon themselves, and many future generations will read with pride of their doings."*

*"I hope by next month to be able to publish a complete list of the men who from Shipley are serving either in the Army or Navy. We want them to know that we have them in our minds always, and that we shall never cease to pray for them".*

In the November and December 1914 editions 72 names were duly published under the heading Roll of Honour, an astonishing number for a small village. In November 1915 the Reverend Baker wrote *"We have recently placed, at the West entrance to the Parish Church, a framed list of Shipley men serving in the Army or Navy, and also a Roll of Honour, upon which are inscribed the names of those who have given their lives. The list of those serving their King and Country is a goodly one, and does credit to Shipley. I shall be glad if our friends will acquaint us of possible omissions or errors"*.

There was a subtle change in terminology at this point. The original list of "our boys" who volunteered became a list of "Shipley men serving in the Army or Navy", and the Roll of Honour became a record of those who had given their lives. By November 1915 two men had fallen, but by November 1917 this number had increased to seventeen. The final toll by November 1918 was twenty one.

The upbeat tone of the 1914 entries in the Parish Magazine gave way to a more sombre mood once the realities of the conflict became known, and was replaced by compassion for the families of the fallen and concern for the welfare of the troops. The Reverend Baker did however remain constant in the belief that the country was engaged in a just fight. He did not waver in his support for "our boys" and their families who had given so much. He was greatly supported by the Parish which went to extraordinary lengths to raise money for the war effort.

The Roll of Honour is mentioned again in December 1917 when the Reverend Baker reports on a memorial service held on 4<sup>th</sup> November: *"The friends of the fallen men*

*contributed to a laurel wreath, which was placed in the Church, and to which was appended a Roll of Honour. It was loving and thoughtful of Miss Penn to organise this".* (Miss Penn was the Mistress of the Girls' School and Church Organist).

The Vicar offered prayers for bereaved families throughout the war, and included men from nearby parishes and relatives of parishioners. He held a memorial service each December, and after the war ended commemorated Armistice Day in November.

In January 1919 the Reverend Baker announced his intention to erect a memorial to the Shipley men who gave their lives and in August a committee was formed to raise the funding. By September the committee had decided on a memorial tablet for the Church and to use any money left over to endow a cot at Horsham Cottage Hospital.

The War Memorial Tablet was dedicated on 19<sup>th</sup> December 1920 in *"a very solemn and beautiful service in memory of our Shipley Boys who were killed in the Great War"*. The Vicar reports that *"Altogether, we consider the tablet of good design and rich in effect"*. He warmly commends Sir Merrick Burrell's choice and ordering of the memorial. After all expenses had been met the Fund was left with a balance of £307, which it was agreed should go to Horsham Cottage Hospital *"it being understood that in return the hospital shall erect a permanent inscription in the hospital to the effect that the money was subscribed as a memorial to the Shipley men fallen in the Great War."*

In December 1921 the Reverend Baker reported on the Armistice Day Memorial Service held in November: *"During the 11 o'clock service at the Parish Church, the choir and clergy in procession visited the War Memorial, at the foot of which the names of our Shipley men who gave their lives were read, and, after an impressive moments silence, prayers for the men were offered. Personally I think it would be nice if this short, solemn ceremony became a custom to be observed on Armistice Sunday every year for all time"*.

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Source: Shipley Parish Magazines 1914 – 1921.