

Buckerell's

WAR MEMORIAL

UNVEILING CEREMONY

The handsome and imposing wayside cross, erected on the greensward outside the parish church at Buckerell to the memory of those men from the village who fell in the Great War has been unveiled by Mayor-General Sir Amyatt Hull, K.C.B., commanding the Wessex Division, in the presence of a large number of parishioners. The cross, the work of Mr. Herbert Read, of Exeter, is erected on an elevated site, and cannot fail to attract attention and admiration. Placed at the base of the memorial were two laurel wreaths – one by Mrs. Fell-Smith and the other by the school children. The inscription running round the bottom portion of the cross is as follows:- “In memory of the men of this parish who gave their lives for King and country in the Great War, 1914 –1919, whose names are recorded in the church. Their name liveth for ever more.” The memorial has been erected by public subscription, the secretarial work in connexion therewith being undertaken by the Rector (the Rev. E. Ravenscroft).

Among those present at the proceedings, in addition to Sir Amyatt and Lady Hull, were Sir James and Lady Monteath, Colonel and Mrs. Mackintosh, Mrs. Weldon, Mrs. Bishop, Mr. And Mrs. Fell-Smith, Mr. And Mrs. C. W. Wood, and the school children (under their assistant teachers). The ceremony opened with prayers, offered by the Rector, who included a special petition for those “in whose memory this wayside cross is erected, that they may find peace with Thee.”

Sir James Monteath said they met that day for the purpose of unveiling a memorial to the men from the parish who had died that they might live. The parish was a small one; the population was not more than about 190. Of this number 27 had served in his Majesty's forces, or in other words about 14 per cent. of the population. That, he thought, was not a bad record. Seven of these had made the supreme sacrifice, viz. :- Pte. Mark Tidwell, Devon Regiment, fell January 19th, 1916: Major Francis Howard Lindsay, London Scottish Regiment, July 1st, 1916; Pte. Ernest John Tidwell, R.M.L.I., September 6th, 1916; Capt.

(acting Major) Matthew Rodney Wood, M.C., Lancashire Fusiliers, October 22nd, 1917; Pte. Fredk. Hurford, Machine Gun Corps, March 24th, 1918; Lance-Corpl. Albert Tidwell, Devon Regiment, April 13th, 1918; and Lieut. Theodore Paynter, Royal Navy, April 26th, 1918. Major Lindsay and Lieut. Paynter, proceeded Sir James, did not actually join from that parish, but belonged to families which had long been connected with it through ownership of land. Captain and Acting-Major Wood gained rapid promotion for his efficiency, and won the Military Cross for his valour. There was testimony that all faced the foe in a manner worthy of this great nation, and what more could be said? It was impossible to over-estimate the debt we owed them, and men like them, for what they did for us during the years of the war. We knew what had taken place in Belgium, and were well acquainted with all the cruelties and abominations which the Germans practised, and the manner in which they devastated every part of the country they occupied. Had they been the conquerors we should have suffered possibly even more, for the Germans hated us with a hatred greater than they had for Belgium or France, because they regarded Britain as the greatest obstacle to the attainment of their arrogant end – the domination of the world. For a small parish Sir James thought all would agree with him that the memorial erected was not unworthy of the men who had died. It had been designed, constructed, and erected under Mr. Reads's supervision, and was worthy of his skill. That day they had the good fortune to have with them General Hill. Nobody knew better than he did the sufferings and terrible discomforts which the men had experienced, and the patience, and even cheerfulness, with which they bore them. They faced the foe, as he had said, in a manner worthy of their country with dogged determination and valour, qualities which had won the admiration of the world. The memorial, together with the brass tablet to be erected in the church, would serve to keep their memories green for many generations. (Applause)

Major-General Hull then performed the unveiling ceremony, after which Mr. C. W. Wood moved a hearty vote of thanks to Sir Amyatt for his kindness in coming there that day. He had had many years service in the Army, and a very distinguished career, and they hoped the country would continue to have the benefit of his help and guidance in all military

matters in the future. But it was, he thought, the wish of all present that his services would never again be required in such a war as we had lately gone through.

The Rector seconded and the vote was carried with acclamation.

Major-General Hull, in reply, said he felt it a great honour to be present that day, as it was the first memorial of its kind that he had had the pleasure of unveiling. To do so in a Devon village afforded him additional pleasure. Devon was his own county, he was glad and proud to say, and anything which had to do with Devon men was of great interest to him. Sir James Monteath had told them of the records of the noble men to whose memory the cross had been erected. He did not know until he heard the names read out that the list contained one with whom he was personally acquainted and who was in the Division which he had the honour to command. He referred to Major Lindsay, of the London Scottish. He was an extremely brave man – one who was looked up to by his regiment; and when he fell it was felt that they had lost not only a good, brave soldier, but a first-class friend. One point he would like to emphasise that day about the British Army in the late war was the fact that it had brought out tremendously the spirit of comradeship and friendship among all classes. Officers and men in the Regular Army before the war had much in common, and saw a good deal of each other. But the Great War had brought out the strength of the nation. Men who had never thought about fighting before – men who had got their businesses to look after – at the call of their country came together to fight the enemy. That meant, naturally, bringing together all sorts of people; but it was extraordinary how quickly the spirit of comradeship grew up among them, and there was not the slightest doubt it was that which had carried them through. Personally, he had the honour of starting fighting at Mons and was all through that retreat, where the spirit of comradeship was more to the fore than he had ever seen it. Total strangers became friends in a moment; every man became imbued with the one desire to help his neighbour. That was the spirit which carried everything before it, and if we, now that the war was over, could continue to show that same quality then England would

never look back. (Hear, hear.) The courage of the men was the courage of the English-men which Napoleon in his time always said he could not understand. He said he could beat the English as often as he liked, but they never knew when they were beaten, and that was what finished him in the end. That was the courage and the feeling which had [permeated the whole of the British nation and the soldiers who had fought for England. One had good times as well as bad times: “but however bad the times were,” said Sir Amyatt, “you never saw the men the least bit downhearted. Dog-tired you might have seen them, it is true, but through it all they always had a bit of a smile on the face or a joke on the tongue.” He could honestly tell them, having been through the whole of the war, that they heard a lot of grumbling – it was the Englishman’s privilege to grumble and grouse – but that took place at times when they were really comfortable – when the men were well off so far as was possible in regard to food and shelter. When the times were bad, and the mud was up to their knees, and everything was perfectly beastly, then there was never any grumbling or grouching. That was the spirit which took the Englishmen forward. “Many went out from England,” Sir Amyatt proceeded, “and from this parish a very large percentage went. Some did not return, but these men will never be forgotten in their own village or where they fell.” The graveyards out there were being carefully looked after. Before he left he saw some near Mons: the graves of the men who fell in 1914 had been finished by the Belgians and most beautifully done. The same thing had been done all over France, and these graves would be a lasting memorial not only for England, but the Allies. There was no doubt, the General said in conclusion, that the Belgians and the French had enormous respect now for the British nation, much more than before, when, perhaps, they were looked upon rather as the wild men of the hills. They looked upon us now as comrades, and that was all to the good. (Applause.)

The proceedings closed with the singing of a verse of the National Anthem, led by the school children.