



Tunisia - 20 July

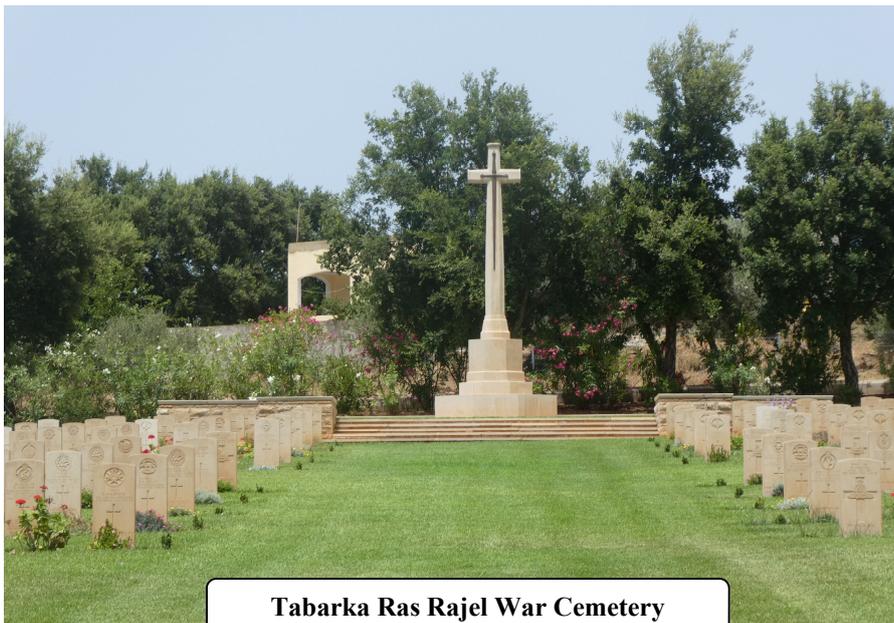
Catherine Jones

Of the remaining crosses that needed delivering, three of them were in Tunisia so Ian and I decided to book a fly-and-flop holiday to Hammamet so we could do this. We vaguely thought about hiring a car to get us to the cemeteries but the journey from the airport to our hotel convinced us that driving in Tunisian towns and cities is not for the faint hearted - traffic lights and stop signs are treated as 'advisory' rather than mandatory, as are no over-taking signs and one-way streets. As we had to negotiate the centre of Hammamet itself plus Tunis and several other towns en route we hired a taxi for the day to take us on the 300-mile round trip - it cost surprisingly little and saved huge amounts of angst.



The drive from the coast into Tunis was fairly humdrum once we'd escaped the manic roads of Hammamet. A reasonable motorway, which passed by some shabby-chic villages and any number of vineyards, olive groves and orchards and the low foothills of the Atlas Mountains on our southern side took us to the outskirts of Tunis. The journey for the next twenty miles or so could then either be described as exciting or hair-raising depending on how

sanguine you are on white-knuckle rides. At somewhere like Alton Towers I always reassure myself with the knowledge that the owners tend not to want to kill the punters - I wasn't so sure about Tunisian taxi drivers. Finally we got out of the city - alive and unscathed - and headed out on a relatively peaceful country road towards



Tabarka Ras Rajel War Cemetery

Crosses Recently Delivered

1 July 2018

Flying Officer

Ernest Thomas G Harris

Royal Air Force

Tim Jones

Hanover War Cemetery,
Germany

7 July 2018

Lieutenant

Richard Tuckey Hower

Berkshire Yeomanry

John Howell MP

Jerusalem War Cemetery,
Israel

17 July 2018

Sergeant

Frank Wood

Royal Air Force

Kristian Winslade /
Tom Bowen

Lemvig Cemetery, West Jutland
Denmark

20 July 2018

Private

William Freeman

Royal West Kent Regiment

Ian Jones

Tabarka Ras Rajal War Cemetery,
Tunisia.

20 July 2018

Captain

Colin George P Cuthbert

Royal Tank Regiment

Ian Jones

Medjez-al-Bab Cemetery,
Tunisia

20 July 2018

Sergeant

Eric Arnold

Royal Artillery

Catherine Jones

Medjez-al-Bab Memorial
Tunisia

Medjez-el-Bab cemetery where Sgt Eric Arnold RA is commemorated on the memorial and Capt Colin Cuthbert RTR is buried. The drive was stunning - the countryside was astoundingly green, with fields of wheat, sunflowers, water melons and tomatoes. It was open and rolling and back in 1942-3 when the Allied powers locked horns with the Axis forces one can see how it was the perfect landscape in which to conduct the massive tank battles that took place as we finally defeated Rommel in North Africa. We passed lakes and an immensely impressive



railway viaduct before we arrived at our destination where the gardener was delighted to greet some visitors and to show off his immaculate graveyard. After we'd laid the cross and the wreath and explained to the gardener about Thame Remembers he showed us the graves of five sailors from the First World War who were buried after the sinking of their ship and, presumably, moved to this cemetery later to rest alongside other fallen heroes.

Then it was back in the car - it was wonderful to get out of the 40+C heat -

and off to Tabarka Ras Rajel Cemetery out towards the Algerian border. Again this was a lovely resting place for the Commonwealth war dead and the gardener this time came rushing over to bring us the register and to greet us. Here we laid a cross at the grave of Pte William Freeman of the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment. The gardener was delighted to show us his shed - opened by two of the biggest keys I have ever seen and which contained a very smart ride-on mower. No wonder the grass was so wonderful. Finally we headed back towards Hammamet, through the madness of Tunisian traffic in the evening rush hour, to the calm of our seaside hotel.

I am so glad we did this trip as we saw vast tracts of the Tunisian countryside which are probably completely off the normal tourist route but which were unforgettably lovely and also we tipped our hats to men who receive precious few visitors.

Crosses Recently Delivered

22 July 2018

Dresser

James Lawrence Castle
South African Veterinary Corps
Hutson family
Oxfordshire Hussars Memorial,
National Arboretum
Staffordshire

22 July 2018

Private

Harry Eele
Hickman family
Machine Gun Corps/Wilts Regt
Wiltshire Regiment Memorial,
National Arboretum
Staffordshire

22 July 2018

H T Wilson

Unit not known
Roger Mackriell
Light Infantry Memorial,
National Arboretum
Staffordshire

Ten Tommies From Thame



Thame Remembers

present
in collaboration with Thame Players

**"Ten Tommies
from Thame"**



Friday 9th and Saturday 10th November at 7.45pm

The Players Theatre, Nelson Street, Thame
Tickets £6 from Spear Travels, Greyhound Walk, Thame,
Tel: 01844 217228 or online from www.thameplayers.co.uk

Thame Remembers is a commemoration project within Thame Museum Trust, a registered charity.
Thame Players is an amateur company and a registered charity.

We are delighted to announce details of our upcoming revue at Thame Players theatre, to take place in the build up to Remembrance Sunday which this year also marks the centenary of the Armistice.

At the end of August 1914 the Thame Gazette carried an article recording how ten men from Thame, all reservists, took themselves off to Cowley Barracks to report for active service.

Research by the Thame Remembers team has filled in a lot of background, enabling us to present their subsequent experiences, and individual fortunes, into a stage play which explores the impact of war on them and on their families back in Thame.

Conceived by and written as a collaboration between Mike Dyer and local author Catherine Jones, the production will feature some of our own volunteers amongst the cast. 'Ten Tommies from Thame' will appear for two nights only, Friday 9th and Saturday 10th November.

Tickets at £6 each (no concessions) are available from Spear Travels in Greyhound Walk or through the website www.thameplayers.co.uk.

We are expecting take up to be fairly brisk so do get in early.

Arboretum Trip

Diary dates



Our coach trip to the National Memorial Arboretum on Sunday 22nd July promised to be a scorcher in keeping with the rest of the summer, however when we arrived there was a frantic dive for the cardigans as it was only 21°. The overcast skies with little sun made it a very pleasant morning walking around. Many of the party headed to the chapel to take in the Remembrance Ceremony that is held every day at 11am, whilst we sought out the site for our first Thame Remembers event at the Yeomanry Avenue to find the memorial for the Oxfordshire

Hussars.

Here we laid a Thame Remembers Cross to Dresser (Private) James Lawrence Castle of the South African Veterinary Corps. We have been unable to trace James after he joined the SAVC in 1915 and not even found his death, although he is recorded on the War Memorial in Thame. As he served with the Oxfordshire Yeomanry in the Boer War we thought it appropriate to remember him here.

The National Arboretum is truly inspiring with so many different memorials. One surprise was a small tribute to a former



Mayor of Thame, Mike Welply. We were all moved by the "Shot at Dawn" memorial and stunned at the senseless loss of life that it portrays. New memorials are added regularly and earlier this year saw a new Pegasus Bridge Memorial portraying three Horsa gliders.



After lunch we found the Light Infantry Memorial and there Roger Mackriell, current chair of Thame British Legion, laid a Thame Remembers Cross to H T Wilson whose name also appears on Thame War Memorial. Despite trying for five years we have been unable to discover anything about him (or her) other than the name. Nevertheless he was still due to be honoured with a Thame Remembers Cross, but where? It is most likely that he would have served with our local regiment and so a Thame Remembers Cross at the Light Infantry Memorial was considered most appropriate.

Our final stop was to honour Private Harry Eele who had died in India and is remembered on Karachi War Memorial. Staff at the Commonwealth War Graves



The Pegasus Bridge Memorial unveiled in May 2018

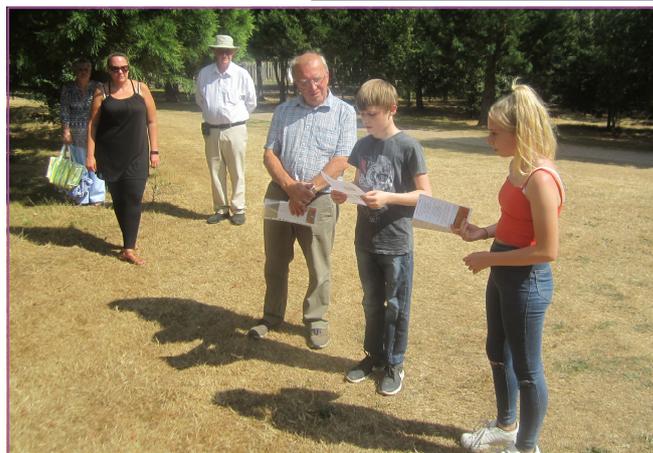
11 Aug to 19 Dec '18
Thame Remembers
Exhibition
Thame Museum

11 to 15 Sep 2018
'O What a Lovely War'
Players Theatre
Tickets available from
Thame Players & Spear Travels

21 Oct 2018
Thame Remembers
Book Launch
5pm. Barns Centre

9 & 10 Nov 2018
Thame Remembers
'Ten Tommies from
Thame'
Players Theatre
Tickets available from
Thame Players & Spear Travels

11 Nov 2018
Remembrance Sunday
11am
Remembrance Service
7pm
Beacon Lighting



Commission had kindly sent a Thame Remembers Cross to Karachi, but our aim was for someone from Thame to place a Thame Remembers Cross at an appropriate memorial and this still had to be done.

Allan Hickman and two of his grandchildren, Thomas Shotliff and Lily Watford performed the ceremony at the Wiltshire Regiment Memorial.

*National Memorial Arboretum, Croxall Road,
Alrewas, Staffordshire. DE13 7AR.*

MP lays a Thame Remembers Cross

Our Member of Parliament, John Howell, laid a Thame Remembers cross in Jerusalem on Saturday 7th July at the grave of 2nd Lieutenant Richard Hewer who was killed on 21 November 1917. Richard had taken part in heavy fighting up to and just after the fall of Jaffa and died in front of Jerusalem while observing for the artillery.

John Howell said: *"It was a great honour and privilege to be asked to commemorate*



Richard Hewer on behalf of the project. It is very important that we remember all those who fell in conflict and it gave me a great feeling of community to acknowledge Richard's sacrifice." The MP was in Jerusalem to attend an international conference looking into the situation with Iran, the Israel-Palestinian conflict and the role of the media.



This newsletter is printed and published by Thame Museum Trust and distributed free to all

This paper is intended as a digest of news items about the Thame Remembers project to keep the people of Thame up to date with what is happening.

Thame Remembers
79 High Street
Thame
OX9 3AE

01844 212801

Dive to the hospital ship Glenart Castle

From the outset we recognised that most of our naval casualties went down with their vessels and would have no grave other than the ocean where they served. We have, of course, commemorated them all at the naval memorials at Plymouth, Chatham, Tower Hill, and a very special day at Portsmouth which received coverage on BBC South, but we have always wanted to achieve something a little more challenging.

We were very grateful to JSSADC (Joint Services Sub Aqua Diving Club) when they placed a wreath on our behalf above the wreck of HMS Vanguard in Scapa Flow, and Wendy Townsend secured the full cooperation of the captain and crew of the liner Queen Mary 2 in enabling her to lay a wreath above the Branlebas in the Western Approaches. The one thing still eluding us was the desire to actually get down to a wreck site. Detailed preparations had been made by local diver Cliff Newcomb to achieve this with HMS Formidable but our hopes were dashed when, after nearly two years correspondence with the Ministry of Defence and Naval Heritage, we were refused permission on safety grounds.

Then out of the blue, as we were beginning to accept defeat, we were approached by Henrietta Poon, who had been a member of the JSSADC team at Scapa Flow. She told us of a venture to dive HMHS Glenart Castle in the Bristol Channel and asked whether she could do anything for Thame Remembers? You bet she could, and we grasped at the opportunity.

Then on Saturday evening, 21st July, Mike received an email *"Great news. We did it! Will send pics. Now on the boat on our way back"*.

You will have to wait for the next newsletter, after we have received the pictures and hopefully some words from Henrietta, for the full story of how the dive came about and the demise of the Glenart Castle.

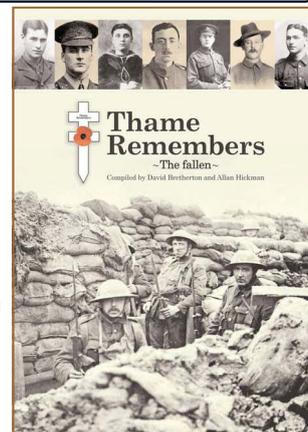
Thame Remembers Legacy Book

With nearly all of our 212 Cross deliveries now made the Thame Remembers legacy book is nearing completion. The book records how the project came about and how it has progressed, some general contextual background about the conflicts, a report on every man remembered in Thame, details of each Cross delivery, and much more.

We will be publishing the 260+ page book with many photographs in full colour on glossy art paper and hope to go to print early in September.

We are still on target for our formal launch at Thame Arts and Literary Festival on Sunday 21st October, 5pm at the Barns Centre. David and Mike will be on stage in conversation with Dr. Ann Barrington.

The book is available to pre-order at the discount price of £20 instead of £25. Please contact David for more details 01844 215178.



Thame Remembers is a project of Thame, Oxfordshire to commemorate the centenary of World War One by researching those from Thame who fell in all conflicts worldwide, and remembering them by placing a Thame Remembers Cross on their grave or memorial wherever in the world that may be. If you feel that you can help please contact Dave on 01844 215178.