

COMMEMORATING THE FALLEN.

Not surprisingly after WW1, there was an absolute determination throughout the country that the sacrifices of local men should be remembered. Lakenheath was no different.



Our Village War Memorial.

Almost as soon as the war had ended discussions about the siting of a War Memorial were going on. A Memorial Committee was formed to take suggestions and to make recommendations as to its site. The committee included representatives of the Parish Council, villagers and returning members of the armed forces.

Eventually, and after much deliberation, a site was chosen and details sent to the District Council who objected to the site on grounds of public safety. The County Council had previously suggested a site which was near the village pond on land owned by them and which happened to be very close to the site suggested by the village. The village had already raised £204 towards the cost of the monument but some villagers considered '*that the committee was not acting with sufficient energy*'. Rapid progress was clearly expected.

The Chairman of the Parish Council was Mr. R. Bilsland but he was not present at the meeting called to discuss the siting problem. His absence was viewed with suspicion by some! Dr. Pickworth took the Chair in his absence.

LAKENHEATH WAR MEMORIAL.

THE QUESTION OF SITE.

**SOME STINGING CRITICISM OF THE
DISTRICT COUNCIL.**

‘Mr. W H Gilbey, the Hon. Sec. read a letter from the Mildenhall Rural District Council, which stated that that authority could not sanction the erection of the memorial on the site selected by the Committee as it was unsuitable and the monument would be dangerous to the public.

Dr. Pickworth, acting as Chairman, suggested that as the County Council had sanctioned the erection of the monument, the site be moved a little nearer to the Pond, as if that were done the ground claimed (owned by) by the District Council, would not be touched.

Mr. J H Bullen said that it seemed there had been some underhand work connected with the refusal of the District Council.

Mr. Mitchell enquired how it was that neither of the parish representatives on the District Council were present to explain matters. It looked very strange. The letter was an insult to the parish.

The Rev. W S Cooper remarked that this was not the first time the District Council had refused to give attention to requests from the parish.

Mr. A J Powell supported the Chairman’s suggestion that the memorial be erected on County Council land rather than on the site previously selected by the Committee, the parish thus ignoring the District Council’.

Adapted and edited from The Bury free Press, Saturday, August 23, 1919.

A strongly worded letter of protest to the District Council was agreed unanimously.

The memorial was finally built by Mr. J CRACKNELL, a former resident of the village, on the site owned by the County Council.





The unveiling of the War Memorial.

LAKENHEATH
MEMORIAL TO THE FALLEN

THE MONUMENT
has been Erected by the People of
LAKENHEATH
in Honour of
63 GALLANT MEN
of this parish who laid down
their lives in the Great War of
1914-1919,
as a Lasting Record of their
sacrifice and in gratitude to God
for the Victory achieved.

THEIR NAME LIVETH FOR EVERMORE

UNVEILING & DEDICATION
WITH
SERVICE OF COMEMORATION
EASTER SUNDAY, MARCH 27th, 1921.
AT 3 P.M.

And today:

On each Remembrance Sunday since her marriage, a former village girl, KATRINA MARIE PAPINEAU (nee Austin), who prefers to be called 'Cheenie', has travelled back to the village from her home in America to play 'The Last Post' at our War Memorial service. 2020 was the 16th time she had returned. She learned to play the cornet as a child in the Lakenheath Silver Band.



The Peace Memorial Hall. (Village Hall).

In 1920 a Village Fete began the raising of funds to provide a Village Hall. The Fete was held in the grounds of The Retreat by permission of Mr. W J SALMON and was organised by a newly formed Village Hall Committee. The village turned out in numbers and the Fete was exceptionally well attended.

By 1922 sufficient funds had been raised thanks mainly to the availability of surplus materials which were being sold off at Feltwell Aerodrome, reducing by a considerable amount the estimated cost. However, all had not been 'sweetness and light', with vocal accusations again made by some villagers resulting in letters being written to the Press complaining that money had been diverted to the construction of the War Memorial. Mr. W H GILBEY, Headmaster of the school and Hon. Sec. to both the War Memorial Committee and the Village Hall Committee, refuted the accusations in a lengthy letter to the press.

In his letter he suggested there was '*mischief-making going on*' and that '*spurious attempts were being made to divide the village on sectarian grounds by careless gossip*'. He was able to announce that a tender to build the War Memorial was to be accepted and so work could commence as agreed.

The final build cost was £618, which provided a village hall with no debt remaining to the fund. The building work was undertaken by local builder, Mr. G A SARGEANT, and was supervised by Mr. T

WATTIS, a committee member. Heating was provided by three large, round bellied 'tortoise' stoves which had been donated.

Work must have proceeded rapidly because the hall, named the Lakenheath Peace Memorial Hall, was opened on Remembrance Day 1922.

At the opening, which was well attended by a number of local dignitaries, a further appeal was made to raise funds for the purchase of three to four hundred chairs, some lamps and a piano. As with most, if not all, village events, the opportunity to conclude with a 'Tea' followed by a Concert was not missed.

Dr. Pickworth had the last word to critics in his opening address.

"Referring to the criticism made by correspondents in the 'Free Press' of the management of the Hall and of the policy of the committee he said that they felt it was a pity the writer did not sign his name or make complaint to some member of the committee. They did not in the least mind criticism, but they disliked fault-finding".

Reported in The Bury Free Press. Sat. August 4th 1922

At the following year's Fete Mr. Salmon, paying tribute to the efforts of the Committee, compared them to a 'hive of bees', with himself as the 'drone'. It's almost certain that the land on which the Peace Hall is built was given by Mr. Salmon.

An extract from the Bury Free Press described the occasion of the opening.

' and Dr. Pickworth (Chairman of the Committee was supported on the platform by General FGJ de Lotbiniere (Brandon Hall), Rev. Issac Morris (vicar), Rev. J G M Stretton (a former vicar), Mr. W J Salmon and Mr. W H Gilby, (the Hon. Secretary).

The Chairman said he felt sure that all felt thankful to Almighty God for the blessing of peace. They thought of the glorious dead and also of those who were fortunate to return and for them this Peace Hall would be a great boon. The hard work of the Committee had achieved wonders.

General Lotbiniere, who was cordially received, said he much regretted their member, (Ed. MP?), Colonel Guinness, was unable to be with them. He first heard of their project two

years ago and had often wondered how the scheme was proceeding. The name of their hall had been beautifully chosen, and he congratulated all on the spacious and substantial building which had been secured. He had understood that the cost would be over £1000 but he was pleased to hear that the committee had built the hall for £600. He would be pleased to help them at any time and had great pleasure in declaring the hall open. (Applause).

The hymn, "Now thank we all our God" was sung'

The Bury Free Press. Saturday. November 18. 1922.





The Hall Today

From its opening to the present day the Peace Memorial Hall has been of major importance to the village. Run by villagers for the Village, it depends entirely on voluntary support. Long may it continue. But let's not forget that the Peace Memorial Hall needs workers as well as users!