

QUEST FOR PHOTOGRAPHS OF THOSE FROM THE SWELLS WHO FOUGHT IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR - CAN YOU HELP?

A few years ago the Rev'd Jane Gardner, a retired teacher and formerly assistant priest in the parishes of Stow, Condicote and the Swells became interested in the histories of the young men with a connection to the Swells, who went to war for their country between 1914 and 1918.

'Many times I have stood at war memorials as the names of the fallen are read out and wondered about their lives as sons and husbands, fathers and brothers and the hopes they had for their future and for the families they left behind. We owe it to them to remember not just their names but something of their stories' says Jane.

Soon after beginning this research Jane found in Lower Swell church two framed handwritten lists on which the names of the parishioners on active service had been written.

When added to those who enlisted later in the war and those from Upper Swell the number came to almost one hundred. Of these men 79 were from Lower Swell and 20 from Upper Swell; many being agricultural workers.

12 from Lower Swell and 4 from Upper Swell did not return.

They are commemorated on four War Memorials: 9 at Lower Swell; 4 at Upper Swell; 1 at Lower Slaughter; 1 at Ashburton (New Zealand) - one name has no memorial.

The parish council is very grateful to Jane for being willing to share the result of her research and it is hoped it can be published in time for Remembrance Sunday later this year. But there remains a gap in their story which is where perhaps you the reader can help.

Jane has been unable to locate photographs of these men. So if you have a recollection that one of your relatives of 100 years ago went to war she would very much like to hear from you, particularly if you are in possession of any photographs of them which you would be willing to share.

If you get in touch with me I can confirm the name of the soldier from Jane's information and perhaps her project can then be given the added poignancy it deserves.

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