

Wits of local historians being sharpened

The old saying, muttered by many a member of the older generation during the middle part of last century, was that "civilisation ended in 1914": so great were the social changes the Great War wrought.

Certainly its centenary next year has sharpened the wits of Oxfordshire local historians, including Deddington resident Michael Allbrook, who has researched the origins of about 50 war memorials and the names of those who appear on them. War memorials in villages and towns up and down the country were paid



Deddington Church

for by local communities and are therefore completely separate entities to war graves. Money to build them was raised after the decision was taken in 1916 not to

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repatriate the bodies of those killed in action. It was widely felt they should be remembered in their home neighbourhoods.

Mr Allbrook, who founded the website TheyGaveTheirToday.com to help historians discover more about the lives and deaths of people listed on their local war memorials, said: "I just thought it a pity that so often we know so little about them when we say the words 'we shall remember them:'"

He has brought to light the fact that the names of 25 men from Deddington never appeared on the war memorial there.

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He discovered this piece of information through researching the stories of about 700 men and women who served their country in wars and battles from Waterloo to the Second World War for the self-published book *A Parish at War — A Military Record of Three Oxfordshire Villages* (£12.50 from Amazon.com)

Now a new memorial in the church at Deddington, which includes the 25 missing names has been dedicated by the Bishop of Dorchester, the Rt Rev Colin Fletcher at a ceremony that brought together members of the families of some of those commemorated.

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