

"Suffolk Remembers" Day

21st June 2018

Barbara Shout honours ~The Fallen of Trimley

Part 1



Sunset over Morston Hall Crossing 21st June 2018

Earlier this year, shortly after the heavy snows had fallen and melted away, I arranged to meet Barbara Shout, family historian, in Trimley St. Mary's Stennets Café. Barbara's family has lived in Trimley for over a hundred years, which has granted her a clear understanding and feeling for the villages' community and people. Her knowledge and interest made her the ideal candidate to record the story of those who lost their lives in the service of their country since The Great War of 1914 - 1918.

We met so Barbara could explain to me how she came to compile the remarkable and weighty work, "In Memory of the Trimley Villages Fallen". The compilation details men with Trimley connections and has enabled Barbara to give a voice to, *"...those who are no longer here to speak for themselves..."*.

Each individual entry calls upon a range of sources to create a profile the lives and military experience of the men. There is an entry for all the people engaged in the conflicts of the First and Second World Wars as well as in Northern Ireland. In some instances, a man's military career may have begun before 1914 and if documents have survived for this earlier period then they too have been included. But the profiles are not confined to purely military lives. They may also include the peace time occupations of the men and details of their individual families. Such information has come from Census entries, births and marriages records. Sometimes Barbara found it was possible to follow the lives of the widows and their lives after their bereavement. Each entry is as thorough as was possible at the time Barbara conducted her research.

I was interested to know when work on this document started and how long it has taken. Barbara told me it began in 2005, when she and Rosemary Gitsham, the former St. Martin's Recorder, planned the research project together. This was well in advance of any proposed national commemoration of the First World War. Circumstances and events meant Barbara became solely responsible for the project after a certain length of time, although Rosemary has always maintained an interest in the research. Why did Barbara feel drawn to investigate this subject? Her answer was brief and to the point.

"Because nobody had ever done this before...",

was the firm reply and those working on their own Family History will understand the focus such a subject may excite.

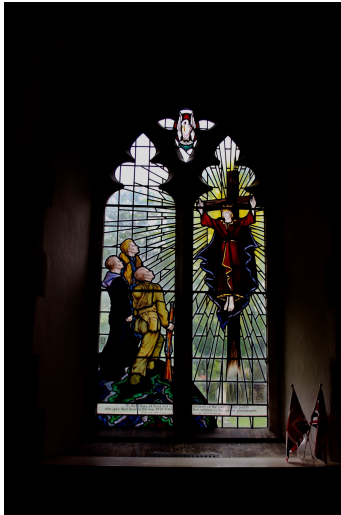
As a dedicated family historian Barbara has considerable experience in finding out about the lives of those who came before us. This particular project expanded her research skills and expertise as she followed the course of each individual's military life. She was aware the memorials in the two churches do not represent all the men who died in the two World wars or indeed, other conflicts. One of the actions Barbara took was to advertise in the Felixstowe Flyer and to make contact with Trimley St. Mary's Women's Institute who also helped to provide contacts and spread the word. Many of the photographs came from the East Anglian Daily Times as Barbara had a personal contact in the organisation. Gradually information began to accumulate and as people became more aware of Barbara's work offers of information and photographs began to increase. Other people became involved in the production of this work and provided help; Susan Claydon helped in the research process and the photographs were taken by Martin Biddle.

Speaking to Barbara it is obvious this work was a labour of love, respect and honour; her warmth and empathy for these long dead men came to the fore as she talked. The men are "my boys" and her respect for their memory is not confined simply to the printed page. As her interest and understanding has grown, Barbara found herself involved in historical battlefield tours and visited many of the war grave sites. Places such as Kranj in Singapore, Gallipoli and Thiepval have all borne witness to her presence and actions. If a Trimley man is buried where she visits, Barbara always ensures she leaves a poppy on their memorial or grave. I believe her ultimate goal is to visit all the graves of those buried overseas.

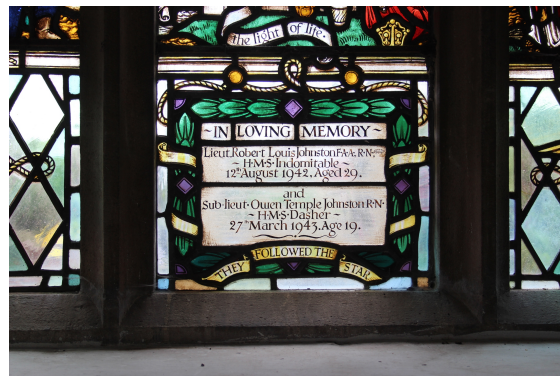
The Project records in excess of 67 people. I should make it clear the research is not a published book but a substantial ring binder which is not for sale. Copies of the completed work have been deposited at Landguard Fort, The Ipswich branch of the Suffolk Record Office and Felixstowe Family History Society. Barbara has also given me a copy to hold for the use of those researching the men of Trimley. If you are interested in looking at the document, please contact any of the above people. If you are reading this but your Military family connections are not based in Trimley, you may be interested to visit the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website:

<https://www.cwgc.org>

But if you do have Trimley connections then maybe you and your family may have cause to be grateful to Barbara for the work she has done on recording The Fallen of the Trimley Villages. It is an excellent production and a worthy tribute to those she sought to recognise. If any further names come to light, they will be added to the binder and if you have any information then please do make contact with Barbara, who will be delighted to hear from you.



The Second World War window in Trimley St. Martins' Church commemorating those died in the Second World War



Detail of a specific memorial to Lieutenant Robert Louis Johnston in St. Martin's Church



Further detail from the memorial to Lieutenant Robert Louis Johnston.



The War Memorial in Trimley St. Martin Churchyard



The 1939 – 1945 War Memoria window in Trimley St. Mary's Church



The Trimley St. Mary Roll of Honour

*"Never such innocence,
Never before or since,
As changed itself to past
Without a word – the men
Leaving the gardens tidy..."*

"MCMXIV" by Philip Larkin