



**Christ Church
Montpelier
Weston-super-Mare**

**War Memorial
1939-1945**



Christ Church

War Memorial 1939-1945

**Re-dedication 26th October 2014 at the 10.30am
morning service**

Researched by: Roderick Crocker and John Hinchliffe

Written by: Brian Kellock

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**Known, or believed, still to have relatives in the area.*

'They shall grow not old as we that are left grow old;

Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.

Why a new WW2 memorial?

The original World War II (1939-45) memorial commemorates the lives of the men of Christ Church parish who died while serving in the armed forces. It can be seen engraved into the right-hand wall of the oak panelling that surrounds the screened-off baptistry at the west end of the church.

The panelling, which also lists (on the left-hand wall) the names of church workers recognised for their service during the war, was dedicated during Evensong on the 23rd October 1949 by the Bishop of Bath and Wells. The names of the fallen have been remembered on Armistice Day ever since then.

This year (2014), as we commemorate the 100th anniversary of the start of the First World War and the 70th anniversary of the decisive 1944 D-day landings of the Second World War, many schools and individuals will be wanting to see for themselves the memorials in Christ Church and other churches.

The leadership of Christ Church therefore suggested that a new WWII memorial be designed and positioned more prominently beneath the marble WWI memorial in the main body of the church. In addition, the stories of the 22 men listed have been researched and recorded in this commemorative booklet. Though briefly told, they hint at bravery, hardship and endurance - each a life worth remembering.

It is appropriate that the two memorials have now been brought together in one place as a continual reminder of the price of war. They are a tribute to the servicemen of our parish who died. They are also a reminder of the great cost to the many injured who returned from war, as well as to those who lived through bombing raids, rationing and other hardships both here, in Weston super Mare, and elsewhere.

The Revd Keith Hallett

Who were these men?

The amount and type of information we have been able to find varies from man to man. We have been as specific to each individual as possible, but where we have included more general (though still relevant) information, we hope that will also be of interest.

ALLSWORTH-JONES L. Royal Navy. Lieutenant.

Died April 1940. Age 23.

Lewis Allsworth-Jones joined the Royal Navy from Pangbourne Nautical College. He was second in command of the submarine HMS Thistle and died when it was torpedoed and sunk off the coast of Norway. It had been ordered to search for enemy vessels off Stavanger. Through its periscope, it sighted a German U-boat (U4) cruising on the surface and made two unsuccessful attempts to torpedo it. Later, Thistle was in turn seen on the surface, recharging its batteries, and sunk by the U4, with the loss of all 59 officers and crew.

He is commemorated at Portsmouth Naval Memorial. His elder brother, Leonard, was awarded the Military Cross in 1944 while serving with the 17th Dogra Regiment in India.



HMS Thistle

AMESBURY L M. RAF. Flight Sergeant (Pilot).

Died 11th November 1943. Age 25.

Lionel Maxwell Amesbury (initials ML on the baptistry list) was killed while on active service (we have found no record of where or how) less than two weeks after his wedding in Sheffield. He had undergone training as a pilot in Canada, passing out with distinction. Before that, he had been a member of the clerical staff at J J Leavers and Sons in Weston super Mare. He was an ex-pupil at St John's School.

He is buried in Weston super Mare (Milton Road) Cemetery.

BAKER A. Royal Navy. Petty Officer. Motor Mechanic.

Died 7th November 1944. Age 31.

Alec Albert Baker was on board the tank-landing ship LST 420 on its way from Dover to Ostend with four other similar craft. They were carrying trucks and supplies for the RAF. There was a severe storm that night and access to the port was denied, so the convoy was forced to change course and return to the UK. On its way back, it collided with a German mine close to its bow. The explosion broke the ship in two, with the loss of 55 soldiers and an unknown number of passengers. It was the greatest loss of human life on a British landing craft during WWII.

He was the older brother of Leonard (below) and is commemorated at Chatham Naval Memorial.

BAKER CAG. Royal Navy. Engine Room Artificer 4th Class.

Died 8th June 1940. Age 23.

Charles Arthur George Baker served on the aircraft carrier HMS Glorious (a converted heavy cruiser). It was sunk off the Norwegian coast at Narvik, together with two escort destroyers, after they ran into the two German battle cruisers Gneisenau and Scharnhorst. Glorious was hit twice by the Scharnhorst before sinking. These two enemy ships, along with the heavy cruiser Hipper and four destroyers, had sailed from Keil on the 4th June with orders to bombard the British base at Harstadt near Narvik. At the time, HMS Glorious was engaged in helping evacuate forces that had earlier been landed in Norway.

He is commemorated at Plymouth Naval Memorial.



HMS Glorious

BAKER L F. Royal Navy. Ordinary Seaman.

Died 15th November 1942. Age 19.

Leonard Frank Baker (younger brother of Alec Baker above) served aboard aircraft carrier HMS Avenger. She was sunk following her second official active operation - the Operation Torch troop landings in North Africa. She had stopped in Gibraltar on her way home and, on the 14th November, left there heading for the Clyde. During the night, she was torpedoed by a U-boat (U-155 Piening). Her bomb room exploded, the ship broke in three and she sank in two minutes. There were 12 survivors.

He is commemorated at Chatham Naval Memorial.

BROOKLING M. Royal Navy. Petty Officer. Telegraphist.

Died 5th January 1943. Age 25.

Malcolm Brookling served on the submarine HMS P48, which was sunk on the 25th December 1942, but not declared overdue until the 5th January 1943. She was sunk in the Gulf of Tunis by depth charges from the Italian torpedo boats Ardente and Ardito north west of Zembra Island while attacking an Italian convoy making for Tunis. He joined the Navy on leaving Weston County School and had won the Saint George's prize while training at Gosport. He served for several years on the cruiser HMS Dorset which played a role in sinking the Bismark. His father (a widower) was an ex-Chief Petty Officer.

He is commemorated at Plymouth Naval Memorial.

BROWN L N. RAF. Sergeant. (Observer) with 248 Squadron.

Died 8th February 1942. Age 21.

Leonard Newall Brown was buried in Kiel War Cemetery. Most of those buried here were airmen lost in bombing raids over northern Europe. Their graves had been brought from cemeteries and churchyards throughout Schleswig-Holstein, the Frisian Islands and other parts of north-west Germany.

The 248 Squadron was formed as a night fighter unit flying Blenheim IFs. With no radar, the Blenheims were ineffective as night fighters, so in February 1940 the squadron was transferred to Coastal Command, at which date it was equipped with seven Blenheim VIs. This first period with Coastal Command was short-lived. The squadron moved twice, before rejoining Fighter Command at Dyce and later moving to Bircham Newton, where it converted to the much more capable Beaufighter. When operations resumed, the squadron combined convoy patrols with anti-shipping strikes off the Dutch coast.

CHANCE C.J. Royal Navy. Petty Officer.

Died 19th December 1941. Age 33.

Cecil James Chance served on the destroyer HMS Stanley. The ship was escorting a convoy of around 30 merchant ships across the Atlantic when attacked by a U-boat pack and Focke-Wulf bombers during the five days 17th to 21st December. On 19th Dec 1941, the HMS Stanley was hit by two of three torpedoes from U-574, while on station astern of the convoy. It immediately sank about 330 miles west of Cape Sines, Portugal with the loss of 11 officers and 124 ratings. The U-boat was sunk 12 minutes after the attack by another ship, HMS Stork, which later picked up the survivors from HMS Stanley.

He is commemorated at Plymouth Naval Memorial.



HMS Stanley

COUNSELL S. Royal Navy. Able Seaman.

Died 27th August 1944. Age 18.

Stanley Seaward Counsell served on HMS Hussar, one of two minesweepers sunk by 'friendly fire' three months after the Normandy Invasion. Ships of the British 1st Minesweeping flotilla, operating out of the Mulberry Harbour at Arromanche, were sweeping a channel through enemy-laid mines off Cape d'Antifer. This was to enable the battle ship Warspite to get closer to the French coast to bombard the port of Le Havre - still in German hands. The fifth day of mine-sweeping began on 27th August, a beautiful day with a duck pond sea. Sixteen RAF rocket-firing Typhoons, accompanied by a Polish squadron of Spitfires, swooped down and attacked the flotilla. She was sunk

in just over ten minutes. Men swimming in the water were subjected to shelling from the German shore batteries. Stanley Counsell was one of 56 men on the Hussar to be killed that day.

He is commemorated at the Plymouth Navy Memorial.

ELLIS C D. Royal Army Service Corp. Sergeant.

Died 19th June 1943. Age 28.

Charles Donald Ellis served with the 463 Water Tank Company and took part in the Battle of Tunisia, which was part of the North Africa campaign that saw the defeat of the German and Italian Axis. He came through a good deal of hard fighting without injury, but died as the result of a traffic accident. The youngest son, Charles assisted in his father's floristry business after leaving school and joined the RASC near the beginning of the war.

He is commemorated at Medjez-El-Bab War Memorial, Tunisia.



HOOK S F. Home Guard. Company Quartermaster Sergeant. 8th Somerset (Weston-super-Mare) Battalion,

Died July 1942. Age 48.

Stanley Follett Hook had previously served in the First World War in Palestine, Egypt and Gallipoli and was among the first to join the local Home Guard the second time

round. He died from injuries received in an air raid on Weston. The town suffered badly from bombing raids throughout the war. One raid across the town, on the night of 27th/28th June 1942, resulted in the deaths of 22 civilians and 12 servicemen.

He is buried in Weston super Mare (Milton Road) Cemetery.



HURMAN RWT. Private. Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry. 5th Battalion.

Died 11th July 1944. Age 19.

Rex William Thomas Hurman is buried at the Banneville-La-Campagne War Cemetery in France. The Allied offensive in north-western Europe began with the Normandy landings of 6th June 1944 and most of the men buried in this cemetery were killed between the second week of July (when Caen was captured) and August 1944, when the Falaise Gap had been closed and the Allied forces were preparing to advance beyond the Seine.

LEWIS KE. Royal Army Medical corp. Private.

Died between 13th and 14th February 1942. Age 24.

Kenneth Everett Lewis died the day before the fall of the British colony of Singapore and its occupation by the Japanese on the 15th February 1942. He is buried at Kranji War Cemetery. Kranji had been a military camp and, at the time of the Japanese invasion, was the site of a large ammunition magazine. On the 8th February, the Japanese landed at the mouth of the Kranji River. Following fierce fighting, much of it

hand to hand, the British were forced to withdraw.

PALMER E.J. Royal Navy. Chief Petty Officer. HMS

Drake. Died 14th February 1943. Age 53.

Edward John Palmer was based at HMS Drake - the name given to the shore barracks at Plymouth after the last seagoing HMS Drake was sunk in 1917. Drake played a crucial role in naval training and, along with the city of Plymouth, suffered major enemy attacks. It has been said that many of the shore-based personnel at Drake saw more enemy action than some deep sea sailors!

He is buried in Weston-super-Mare (Milton Road) Cemetery.

POOLE F.J. RAF Volunteer Reserve, 83 Squadron.

Warrant Officer. Died 1st January 1945. Age 31.

Francis John Poole served with the 83 Squadron and was awarded the DFM (Distinguished Flying Medal). He was killed when the Lancaster bomber on which he was aircrew and bomber was shot down and crashed in Oslo fjord following a night fighter attack. Lancaster PB 1 34 was the only aircraft not to return from this mission, which left RAF Coningsby, Lincolnshire on New Year's Eve to bomb two German navy cruisers - Emden and Koln - in the fjord.

He is commemorated at Runnymede Memorial.



PRICE G.R. Royal Engineers. Sapper. 41 Fortress Coy.

Died 12th September 1944. Singapore. Age 25.

Gilbert Riley Price was captured by the Japanese at the fall of Singapore and had been

posted as 'missing at sea' following (according to the Weston Mercury 17th March 1945) the sinking of a ship transporting prisoners from Thailand to Japan. Notification had come from Japanese authorities who did not give the date of the sinking. He had been sent to Thailand after being captured at Singapore. He was a Saint John's old boy. He was also in the Christ Church choir as well as being a member of its Scout Troop.

He is commemorated at the Singapore Memorial in Kranji Cemetery on Singapore Island.

SIMPSON H.A. Middlesex Regiment. Private.

Died 25th March 1945. Age 25.

Henry Allan Simpson is recorded as having died 'at the Western European Campaign' which began with the D-day landings on 4th June 1944. Allied forces entered The Netherlands on 12th September 1944. He is commemorated at the Groesbeek Memorial which is situated within the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery in The Netherlands. This memorial commemorates, by name, more than 1000 members of the Commonwealth land forces, who died during the campaign in north-west Europe between the time of crossing the Seine at the end of August 1944 and the end of the war in Europe, whose graves are not known.

STUCKEY J.L. Royal Army Ordnance Corps. Private.

Died 2nd September 1942. Age 26.

John Lewis Stuckey died of pneumonia while serving with the RAOC in West Africa, where they had been sent three months earlier. He is buried at the Fajara War Cemetery (in Gambia). During the second world war, the four territories in West Africa (including Gambia) became bases for recruiting and training men for the armed forces, and their ports and harbour were used by convoys bound for the Middle East, India and South Africa. He was educated at Christ Church School and for many years was in the church choir. He was said to have taken a great interest in parochial activities. He had worked for his father in his bakery.

URCH C. Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (his grave stone states Royal Army Medical Corp). Private.

Died 21 st June 1944. Age 42.

Clifford Urch is buried in Weston-super-Mare (Milton Road) Cemetery and was the brother of Thomas Urch, who died while serving in WWI. Unfortunately, at this time, nothing more is known about Clifford except that (according to the War Graves Commission) he is remembered with honour. Also, his service number was 4356171.

WALKER E H. RAF. 36 Squadron. Flight Sergeant RAFVR.

Died 5th September 1943. Age 25.

Henry Edward (according to CWGC records) Walker flew with 36 Squadron. This was originally formed in 1916 for the defence off the coast between Newcastle and Whitby against Zeppelin raids. It received its first Wellingtons in mid-December 1942 and was moved to Algeria on 7th June 1943, where detachments operated from various bases on anti-submarine patrols.

He is buried in El Alia cemetery in Algeria.

WHITEHEAD L H. Royal Navy. Chief Engine Room Artificer.

Died 23rd October 1943. Age 28.

Leslie Henry Whitehead died (along with most of the 600 crew) aboard the cruiser HMS Charybdis when it was torpedoed and sunk, along with the destroyer HMS Limbourne, off the coast of France. The German cargo ship MV Munsterland was approaching Brest with a full cargo, guarded by the 4th German E-boat flotilla. The RAF launched an unsuccessful air strike to sink it. The two British ships then arrived, but within two minutes were sunk. The Charybdis was located in 1993 at a depth of 83 metres.

He is commemorated at Plymouth Naval Memorial.

WRIDE W G. Royal Engineers. Sapper. 751 Field Coy.

Died 5th August 1944. Age 23.

William George Wride served in North Africa as a 'Desert Rat' before going over to Italy, where he was a dispatch rider with the Royal Engineers. His youngest brother, Vernon, tells us that, on the night of 4th August, he was out on his motor bike and was involved in a head-on collision with an army truck. He was taken to a field hospital with serious head injuries and died the next morning. He was a Saint John's School old boy.

He is buried in Bolsena War Cemetery in Italy.

It is also worth recording the list of names of those of the parish listed on the church workers' memorial in the baptistry which states;

'To the glory of God and in the grateful memory of the following church workers of the parish'

James Callow
Laura J Darch
Edgar H Dibben
Edgar J Dowding
F Charles G Freke
Charles Gooding
John J Jackson-Barstow JP DL
John J Lovell
Lilian J Morris
Catherine Naish
Eleanor B Nicholl
George T Nicholl
Frank E Pople
Emily F Price
Charles N Say
Edward E Smith
Gilbert Stokes
Robert W Vale
William H Vickery FRCS
Jane O Wright

'His servants shall serve Him and they shall see His face'

Revelation 22: verses 3 and 4.

Designation of shields in the baptistry

The front cover shows the shields carrying badges representing:

North Somerset Yeomanry
Somerset Light Infantry
Somerset County Council
Weston Borough Council
Air Force
Army
Navy
Saint George of England

The shields below, carrying two more badges, represent the coats of arms of the

Province of Canterbury
and
Diocese of Bath and Wells

(Extract from Weston Mercury - Saturday 8th October 1949)

CHRIST CHURCH WAR MEMORIAL

OAK PANELLING TO BE DEDICATED BY BISHOP

Memorials to be dedicated on Oct. 23 will make the baptistry at Christ Church, it is claimed, one of the most beautiful in Weston.

At morning prayer on that day, the Vicar of Emmanuel (Preb. R.A. Down) will dedicate an oak screen erected to the memory of a former Vicar, the late Rev. T. E. Roberts. Preb. Down was a close friend of Mr. Roberts for many years.

At evensong, the Bishop of Bath and Wells will dedicate oak panelling around the baptistry, inscribed with the names of former church workers, and of the fallen in World War II. Included in the decorative work are ten shields, bearing badges, representing the Royal Navy and Merchant Navy, Army, Air Force, Somerset Light Infantry and North Somerset Yeomanry and the arms of the Province of Canterbury, the Diocese of Bath and Wells, Somerset County Council, Weston Borough Council and George of England. The Mayor (Ald Harold Dodgson) and members of the Corporation will attend evensong, and trumpeters from Locking R.A.F. Station will participate in the service.

The Christ Church WWI Memorial



New WWII Memorial

