

WHY ARE NAMES MISSING FROM SOME MEMORIALS?

The placing of names on memorials was not obligatory. The authorities left it to local communities to organise their own memorials, to raise funds for their erection and for their upkeep in the future.

Usually local War Memorial Committees were set up and they organised the fund raising and collection of names. Local newspapers, parish magazines, school journals and similar publications carried advertisements listing names collected so far and asking for any others. The War Memorial Committees tried very hard to ensure that as many names were included as possible.

As well as on outdoor monuments, names can be found on memorials at their residence, their schools, their churches and chapels, their places of work and where they played cricket, rugby, football, Working Men's clubs, and so forth. What is important to remember is that usually there was an interval of a few years between the end of the war and the creation of a memorial, and many things could have happened in that period of time.

A family might not want to have the name added, because they simply wanted to put the past behind them and get on with their lives.

A mother might say that her son needed no memorial as his name was engraved on her heart.

The dead man might have left a widow and children, and these might have had to move away in order to survive. She might, for example, have been forced to leave a tied house.

The dead man's widow might have married again and wanted to put the past behind her.

The casualty may have been an orphan or, if an only child, his/her parents might have died in the interval, leaving no family to propose his/her name for inclusion on the list.

The casualty may have been of a differing religious denomination, and was therefore excluded if, for example, Non-Conformists and Roman Catholics were not to be listed on a "Parish" Memorial which would be located in the parish church. These churches might well have provided a memorial for their own members.

Some families refused to accept that their loved one was dead and went to their own graves still hoping for a safe return. To add his name to the memorial meant accepting the unthinkable.

Some men may have changed their names to escape criminal justice, or to sign up without their parents' knowledge, and their real name, and fate, was not known.

If the man had been shot at dawn, the family or the local population might not want to include his name. This would be a local decision, because there was never any decree from the authorities that their names should not be added.

In the case of the Second World War – with fewer casualties – there was some reluctance to fund additional names on an existing Memorial.