

## WW1 in Wiltshire – Community commemoration

As part of remembering 100 years since the commencement of the First World War a county-wide commemorative event will be held on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> July (venue tbc) to recognise the sacrifice of all those who gave their lives. All communities of Wiltshire are invited to contribute to this event by joining in with research and remembrance of the impact the war had on the people of their community. Each community area is invited to commemorate those who fell from their parishes by:

### **1. Finding names on your war memorial**

Visit your local war memorial(s) and identify the names of those remembered from the First World War. If you do not know where your local war memorials are you can carry out a search at <http://www.ukniwm.org.uk/server/show/nav22> the War Memorials Archive maintained by the Imperial War Museum. Each name will be remembered with a commemorative cross or marker. The war memorials may not provide a complete list of those who fell and you may identify additional people you wish to commemorate.

### **2. Find out more about the people named**

Who were those people recorded? You can research as much as you like but you may want to find out information such as: Where were they from, how old were they, which regiment they served with? Depending on the size of the memorial and the time you have available you may wish to focus on researching the lives of just a selection of names.

Good places to start your research are:

[www.wiltshiresoldiers.co.uk](http://www.wiltshiresoldiers.co.uk) This website records the details of over 12,000 servicemen from and related to Wiltshire.

<http://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead.aspx> The Commonwealth War Graves commission hold details of where soldiers are buried.

The Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre (WSHC) in Chippenham holds a wealth of materials relating to the First World War. Census returns and local newspaper obituaries are particularly useful for finding out more about the life of those on the war memorial.

Visit your local library where you can access the website [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk) for free, which holds information such as WW1 service records.

There will also be good local knowledge within your community – ask around. There may already be a project happening in your area that is doing some of this research.

### **3. Find out more about your community 100 years ago**

Whilst researching at the WSHC it may help to get a wider feel for what the community was like 100 years ago. Maps, parish records and photographs can all help with this. This wider research may also pick up on the stories of those who fought and returned from the front as well as those who supported the war effort at home. You will be able to share the stories you discover through a range of activities being planned over the next few years. Sign up to follow the Heritage in Wiltshire blog to be kept informed

[www.heritageinwiltshire.wordpress.com](http://www.heritageinwiltshire.wordpress.com)

#### **4. Make and present your commemorative markers**

Using the information you have researched, each community area will be invited to provide a commemorative cross or marker for each person who fell from their community. A range of markers will be available to reflect different faiths. These will be presented at the county event on the 30<sup>th</sup> July, showing the sacrifice made by people from across Wiltshire. Further details on the format and organisation of this event and how to obtain your markers will be available at a briefing on the 1<sup>st</sup> May at the Garrison Theatre in Tidworth.

It is up to each community area to decide how it wishes to carry out the project. You may wish to work with a local school, museum or community group, or perhaps form a small working party to carry out the research. You may wish to include this work within other commemorative events that are happening within your community or to have a special exhibition of your research.

Through the local Area Boards each community will be offered expert advice from members of the Wiltshire's Great War steering group to guide their research and produce their commemorative cross or marker. We know that in most community areas there are already lots of commemorative activities being planned for 2014 onwards. This project will hopefully sit neatly alongside this work locally and provide an opportunity for the whole community to come together.

#### **What you need to do next?**

1. Form a group within your community area (if one does not already exist) to co-ordinate the undertaking of research and the production of the commemorative cross or marker.
2. Register your group and which community area it represents with the Steering Group by sending an email to [heritage@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:heritage@wiltshire.gov.uk) You will then be invited to attend the briefing session on 1<sup>st</sup> of May.
3. Talk to your Community Area Manager to tap into local networks and let other people in your community know what you are doing and how they can get involved.
4. Register with [www.heritageinwiltshire.wordpress.com](http://www.heritageinwiltshire.wordpress.com) to receive further information on this project and other world war related programmes and projects.