

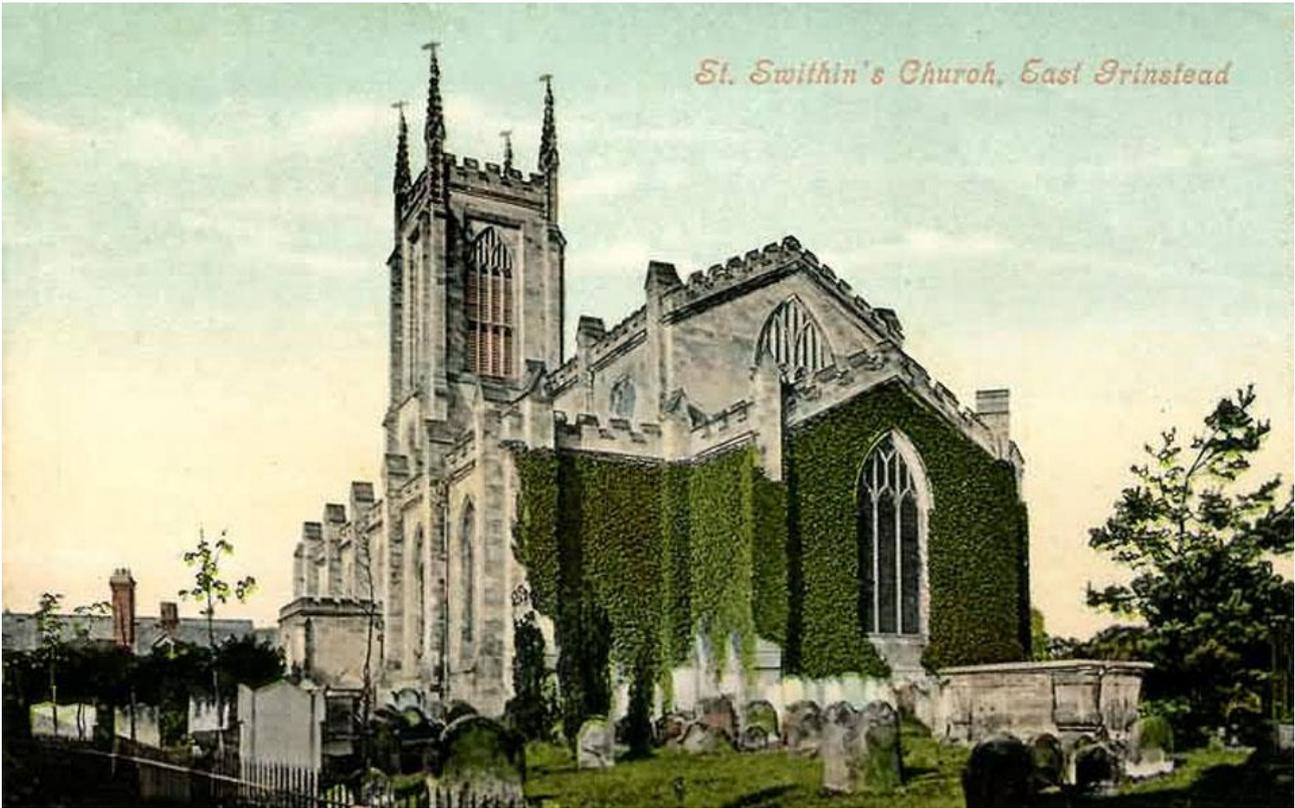
# St Swithun's Church East Grinstead



## A Hundred Years Ago

Please make a small donation to St Swithun's church

July 2014



St Swithun's Church in East Grinstead, circa 1906  
As it was rebuilt after its collapse in 1785



S 5290

ST. SWITHUN'S CHURCH, (INTERIOR,) EAST GRINSTEAD.

## Introduction

There had been no general war in Europe since 1815, yet by the early 1900s, the Great Powers of Europe were divided into 2 armed camps: the Triple Entente (France, Britain, Russia) and the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy). Europe in 1914 was a powder keg needing only a spark to ignite it. The German and Austro-Hungarian Empires, linked by cultural and racial ties, were ranged against Britain, France and Russia. At this stage, Italy was on the side of Germany, but Italy changed sides in 1915.

King George V was a first cousin on his Father's side to Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany, and a first cousin, through their Mothers, to Tsar Nicholas II of Russia. The Kaiser and the Tsar were more distant cousins, but they were related. Despite this kinship, the Kaiser went to war against his two cousins.

On June 28<sup>th</sup>, the assassination of the Austrian Archduke, Franz Ferdinand, at Sarajevo, led to a chain of events which involved all the major powers and led to the worst war ever known to man. On 4 August 1914, Britain went to war against Germany because of the Treaty of 1839, in which Britain had guaranteed Belgian neutrality. The German Schlieffen Plan involved aiming for Paris by going through neutral Belgium.

Millions of lives were lost. Technology such as tanks and aircraft developed rapidly, yet many soldiers defended their positions in muddy trenches. At the end of the war, the German, Austro-Hungarian, Russian and Turkish Empires were broken up. The Paris Peace Settlement included the Treaty of Versailles which was imposed upon Germany, and contained the seeds of future war.

This war resulted in great social changes, too. The role played by some women during the war contributed to women over 30 attaining the vote in 1918, and the 'flappers' (women 21-30) gaining

the vote in 1928. Many large country houses could no longer find the staff they needed.

A hundred years on, interest in the Great War is undimmed, and has perhaps increased because of the possibility of locating the graves of ancestors through the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website.

Academic interest this year has focused upon the events leading to the War, but also upon the Home Front, the role played by those at home, and even the concept of 'home' in the minds of soldiers, shown in surviving letters.

The Parish Magazines offer us examples of the voices of St Swithun's and the gradual impact of the Great War upon this congregation. These extracts are taken from 1914 to 1915.

### **The Vicar was Wilfred W. Youard, Vicar 1908-24**

#### **1914 August Vicar's Letter**

'My Dear Friends, After years of threatening, years during which we have hoped and prayed that it might be averted, the great catastrophe has happened, and today, practically speaking, the whole of Europe is at War. There are, happily, signs already that the National conscience has been deeply stirred. People who had not darkened the doors of their parish Church for many a long day are finding their way back...there is a general desire to be of use in some way...'

#### **September**

'Among the many testings which we are undergoing just now, perhaps none is more difficult to bear than that of suspense. At the moment of writing, a dark cloud hides the positions of our troops and those of our French allies.'

**Special intercession services** were held on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 8.15 and on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays at noon, with an extra Celebration of the Holy Communion on Tuesdays at 7pm.

‘We are, of course, praying daily for those who are serving their King and country and I am anxious to obtain a complete list of all those from our own parish or congregation who are thus engaged...the list will be kept posted in the south porch...and once a week, it will be read out. I should be glad to know the Christian name or names (not merely *initials*) of the following: Sergt, Hubble, C. Flinders, C. Rice, F. Galloway, C. Longhurst, --Bradley, --Evershed.’

‘Several of our members are serving in the King’s Forces in one capacity or another- Messrs. Pavett, Wren, and Pelling with the Territorials, Mr Lloyd Williams in an important post in the Recruiting Department, while Mr Hazel is now at the Front in a special Motor Cyclists’ Corps attached to the Royal Engineers, and T.M. Potter is on duty with the Church Lads Brigade.

## **October 1914**

‘Much has happened at the Western Front since the last issue of our Magazine, and we have passed through varied alterations of feeling- hopefulness in the days before the great encounter with the enemy on Belgian soil, depression during the long retreat after Mons, intense relief when the news came of the German hurried retirement when almost at the gates of Paris. Now we are watching with calm confidence the issue of the tremendous struggle on the banks of the river Aisne...meanwhile Russia continues her victorious career in the East.

‘...We note the deeply significant remark of Mr Winston Churchill the other day that ‘the general situation now far more

favourable for us than we had reason to expect at this stage of the campaign.'

'The Times draws attention to one remarkable feature of the war...viz., that on the Allies side this is to all intents and purposes a teetotal war. Russia has prohibited throughout her vast dominions the sale of the vile spirit vodka; France has forbidden the equally pernicious absinthe, and every British soldier sent to the Front carries with him an appeal from Lord Kitchener to abstain from strong drink during the war. From all one hears, too, this appeal has met with a splendid response from the Army generally.'

A prayer issued by the Archbishop of Canterbury with particular reference to the Navy:

'O Thou that slumberest not nor sleepest, protect, we pray Thee, our sailors from the hidden perils of the sea, from the snares and assaults of the enemy. In the anxious hours of waiting, steady and support those on whom the burdens of responsibility lie heavily; and grant that in dangers often, in watching often, in weariness often, they may serve Thee with a quiet mind....'

## **November**

'Revanche is an ugly word, whether you spell it in French or in English. No reprisals in kind, as regards cruel or un-Christian methods of waging war. Contend for that, fellow citizens!

Amid all the horrors of war there has been one bright spot at home. I mean the dropping for the time of our party politics'. (Cecil H. Martin)

## **December 1914**

The Church Lads Brigade: We in East Grinstead have done our part, for of the list of 272 names given in The Observer, 45 had

passed through our ranks, and we know of others who have left the town and are serving in H.M. Forces...

The rifle range that we erected by Lady Musgrave's kind permission at Hurst-an-Clays last summer was very popular and has become more so since the outbreak of war.

**Christmas** this time will be clouded for all of us in some measure, whether or not sorrow and anxiety have touched our home circle. But the Eucharist will still be the Eucharist, the Thanksgiving for the coming of Christ...Even war with all its destructive power cannot destroy the Christmas good news- that for us men and for our salvation Christ was born.

We should in ordinary circumstances be beginning to think of Christmas Treats. But there is a very general feeling that 'Treats' at such a sad time as this would be out of order. I have been in consultation with St Mary's, St Margaret's Convent and various religious bodies unconnected with the Church and we have come to the unanimous conclusion that treats should be abandoned until happier days...We hope that all children will accept this decision loyally and without any sign of grumbling. If there is any money in the Treats Fund, we intend to give it to the Princess Mary's Fund for providing Christmas gifts for all the sailors and soldiers at the front. We are also inviting the children to contribute to the Fund themselves. (*£1 3s. 3d. was apparently given by the children*).

The bell-ringers, with what I am sure will be recognised as a most commendable spirit of self-denial, have decided not to make their usual house-to-house collections this Christmas.

'So this Christmas let us sing Glory to the New-born King

Wars and tumults soon shall cease while He reigns the Prince of Peace'

## **Christmas 1914**

In a period of wet weather, Christmas Day 1914 will stand out conspicuously as a perfect winter's day. Sharp frost and bright sun helped us all to enter into the Joy of the festival. The services were very well attended all through the day, the Communicants numbering 544. We must thank our Choir and Organist for their share in the day, and our capable band of decorators. The decorations struck us as being in particularly good taste.

## **January 1915**

'In spite of the uncertainties which lie before us in the New Year, I am not afraid to wish you all a very Happy New Year'. Wilfred W. Youard.

And though the New Year dawns darkly and 'we see not yet the bright light behind the clouds', we know ...that there must be in God's good time an ending to this bitter strife among the Nations...meanwhile the Nation's 'business' goes on 'as usual'.

The first Sunday in the New Year has been set apart by the Archbishop as 'the Day appointed for Humble Prayer and Intercession on behalf of our Nation and Empire in this time of War.'

## **Military Camps**

A very urgent appeal has been issued to the Diocese on the subject of the spiritual needs of the soldiers quartered at various large centres like Shoreham and Seaford. There are about 60,000 men in Sussex at the present time, and for about half of these there is no provision whatever. The War Office says it can do nothing in the matter and the Chaplain-General recommends the Bishop to take steps himself to supply the needs. About £5,000 is required to build rooms which can be used for Church Services and other purposes, and at the Bishop's suggestion, the Collections on

Sunday, Jan. 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Day of Intercession, will be given to the Fund which is being raised for this purpose.

**The Church Lads Brigade:** since our last report we have lost the services of Staff Sergeant Stripp, so that the full responsibility for the Company has fallen upon Lieut. Potter, but he is being helped in the drill by Sergt. Copp, who has done so much for the Company, and we are going well and have recently had several recruits. Staff Sergt. Stripp joined the Cycle Battalion of the Royal Sussex Regiment and has already been promoted to full Sergeant. His promotion has been as rapid as that of Colour Sergt. W. Bright, another old member of the Company who is in the same Battalion. We are proud to know that both of them, like others, owe their success to the training of the Church Lads Brigade. On account of the War, it was decided not to have our Christmas Gathering this year, but although there will not be the usual prizes for shooting, this has not deterred us from continuing our rifle practice, and we are arranging to hold the first Cup Competition shortly. L.S.W.

## **February 1915**

The Great War pursues its dreary way, and so far as one can see, the end is still far off. Great things are expected of the general advance which the Allied forces are to make in the West before long, and the assurances of those who are in a position to know are in a most sanguine vein. That they may prove true prophets will be the heartfelt prayer of all of us.

So far, East Grinstead has been fortunate as regards losses in the War, but of late several of those who are on our Prayer list have given up their lives for their King and Country, viz: Montague Rundall, Lionel Rundall and Lewis Victor Gasson. Their names are not removed from the list, and we still remember them in our

prayers, although they are now out of the fight they are numbered among the living in that other part of God's Church behind the veil.

Several of our 'fellows' have come home wounded, too, and we pray they may have a speedy recovery. Among them is Ray Payne, one of our bellringers.

The shabby and dilapidated condition of the inner porches at the North and South doors of our Church have long been an eyesore and a reproach. And in spite of it being War time, I really think we ought to tackle the question.

## An eccentric entry in May 1915

'Mrs Youard wishes to thank an anonymous donor for a useful parcel of underclothing sent in response to an appeal after a C.D.P. A. meeting some time ago'.

And finally, **a hint of the hardships on the Home Front** is given in this entry:

The Vicar noted that a hen had strayed into the Vicarage garden 'without giving an account of itself', and that, given the scarcity of available food, if the owner did not come to retrieve the hen quickly, he could not guarantee its survival.

## Some Extracts from 1914 Parish Magazines

Town Organisations, &c.	
Clothing Club .. .. .	Hon. Sec., Miss Pearless
Coal Club .. .. .	" The Misses Moir
Blanket Lending Society .. .. .	" Miss Tomkins
District Nurses, 55, Queen's Road .. .. .	" Mrs. Mason.
League of Pity .. .. .	" Miss Ridley
League of Mercy .. .. .	"
National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children .. .. .	" Mrs. C. Turner
Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, .. .. .	" Miss Evelyn Crookshank

## TO WOMEN AND GIRLS.

May I call your attention to a Meeting which will be held in the Queen's Hall, at 8.15 on December 8th, to form a branch of the "League of Honour." This League has done much all over England to help our Women and Girls to behave with quiet self-control and also to have a good influence over the soldiers with whom they may be thrown.

The League has the warm approval of all the Churches in the town, and I would ask for the help of the Mothers, by encouraging their daughters over 14 to join, and by helping them to carry out in their lives the ideals which it sets before them. Full particulars will be found on the posters and leaflets which will be circulated in good time.

E. C. YOUARD.

## PARISH MAGAZINE

The Harvest Thanksgiving will be on Sunday, October 4th. The collections will be, as usual, for the Bishop of Chichester's Diocesan Fund, and in response to the appeal of the Belgian Ambassador on behalf of the many starving Belgians unable, for various reasons, to leave their own country, we have decided (*i.e.* myself and the Church Wardens) to consign to him for their use all gifts sent to the Church of an imperishable character, *e.g.* flour, potatoes, wheat, jam, coffee, groceries, etc. (*Not* tea, as the Belgians do not care for it.)

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Field or Ward.

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TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND IN EVER GRATEFUL MEMORY OF THE MEN  
OF EAST GRINSTEAD WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN THE GREAT WAR 1914-1919

HARRY R. ADAMS  
FRED ALLIN  
HENRY ARGENT  
EDWARD ARNOLD  
HENRY ARNOLD  
MAURICE J. H. BAGOT  
FRANK E. BECK  
WILLIAM J. BEADLE  
JOHN BENNETT  
HERBERT BOYLETT  
JOHN BREWER  
VICTOR G. BROOKER  
RAYMOND J. C. BROOM  
WILLIAM R. BUCKLAND  
GEORGE BUDGEN  
PERCY C. BURGESS  
JOHN T. CARTER  
EDGAR H. COLLINS  
ALBERT COOMBER  
G. HAROLD COOMBER  
GEORGE A. COOPER  
HARRY V. COOPER  
PERCY CURTIS  
WILLIAM G. DEACON



GUY F. O. DEVITT  
WYNDHAM H. DICKINS  
W. ROBERT DIXON  
CHARLES DRAPER  
THOMAS J. DRAPER  
GEORGE ELLIS  
FREDERICK ELPHICK  
LEWIS FARRAR  
WILLIAM G. FOLLINGTON  
JOHN E. FOSTER  
LEWIS V. GASSON  
ALEXANDER H. GODWIN  
J. HENRY GODWIN  
BENJAMIN G. GODWIN  
ALFRED GREENAWAY  
PHILIP E. R. HARDY  
ARTHUR HARMAN  
GEORGE H. HEASMAN  
WILFRID HOSKEN  
SIDNEY G. HUGGETT  
CHARLES HUMPHREY  
GEORGE C. INGRAM  
SIDNEY JOHNSON  
ALFRED T. KEMP

"THEIR NAME LIVETH

CHARLES H. KNIGHT  
FREDERICK KNIGHT  
HORACE KNIGHT  
MORDEN E. LAWS  
CHARLES LEDWORD  
HERBERT F. LEPPARD  
CECIL LUFF  
ERNEST W. LUFF  
WALTER MARTIN  
ARTHUR J. MASSER  
CECIL C. N. MIGHALL  
KENNETH E. MONRO  
HERBERT MUSGRAVE  
ROBERT PANKHURST  
ALFRED PANNILL  
FRED GAMMEL  
CLARENCE E. PEARSON  
WILLIAM PELLING  
LESLIE D. H. RAWEN  
CHARLES RICE  
ERNEST RICE  
BENJAMIN ROWE  
WILLIAM J. RUSSELL  
HARRY SANDERS

FOR EVERMORE"

FRED SANDERS  
ALBERT E. SAVAGE  
HARRY SKATES  
JOHN L. SMEED  
WILLIAM STENNER  
ALBERT J. STRIPP  
THOMAS S. SYMONS  
OWEN THOMPSETT  
JOSEPH TITE  
W. STANLEY TIZZARD  
THOMAS F. TRUCKLE  
ARTHUR WALDER  
EDWARD WALDER  
EDWARD P. WALLIS  
FREDERICK WESTGATE  
ALBERT W. WHITTINGTON  
REGINALD C. WINKWORTH  
WILLIAM J. WINKWORTH  
FREDERICK A. WINSER  
HERBERT L. WOODLAND  
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