

# Burwardsley

## Remembers



*Remembrance*

*Awareness*

*Responsibility*

*The Church of St John the Divine, Burwardsley, is an architectural gem and is situated on the Sandstone Ridge.*

*The present Church and its accompanying Churchyard were built in 1730; the area (then) being described with a hedge on three sides and a stone wall frontage to the road. The date '1730' can be seen on a buttress at the southwest corner of the building. The Church was limited in size, seating only 90 adults, and the box pews were described as 'being of oak'. Constructed in local sandstone, there is also a remarkable inscription on the west wall which states '... in the year 1793 this chapel was put in perfect repair by the Rev John Price, the then incumbent thereof ...'.*

*When walking through the Churchyard in the late summer sunshine of 2015, it struck me that there was no War Memorial in the village, nor were there many references to the Burwardsley men who had lost their lives in the conflicts of the two World Wars.*

*What haunted me, in particular, was that shards of sandstone from one particular headstone had simply fallen to the ground and were piled up under a tree in the south eastern corner of the Churchyard. On placing this sandstone jigsaw back together, it revealed that this was, in fact, a headstone relating to Private John*

*Thomas Tydd of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers who had died on 3 November 1914, aged 28, just 3 months into the conflict of The Great War. Moreover, a headstone dedicated to another youngster of that conflict, 23 year old Private Herbert Hodkinson, who had served with both the Cheshire Regiment and the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, was also lying in pieces on the grass in the Churchyard.*

*In the context of remembrance, I have created this booklet on the men of Burwardsley who served and died in the World Wars. Whilst some may not be native to Burwardsley, they all had connections with the village. The list may not be exhaustive but the booklet represents a 'first step' in remembrance, awareness and responsibility.*

*I also hope that it will act as a catalyst in raising monies for the restoration of these headstones and in the creation of a more permanent 'Roll of Honour' dedicated to the men of Burwardsley.*

*Terri Hull  
Resident, Burwardsley Road*

## PRIVATE JOHN THOMAS TYDD

John Thomas Tydd was the son of Edwin Tydd (a General Labourer who was born in Burwardsley) and Hannah Tydd. In his youth, John Thomas Tydd is listed on the Census as a labourer at the Manure Boneworks (presumably in Tattenhall).

Whilst his father was born in Burwardsley, John Thomas Tydd was born in Tattenhall.

John Thomas Tydd became a Private with the Royal Welsh (Welch) Fusiliers (regimental service number 8629).

He died on 3 November 1914, aged 28 Years, just 3 months into the conflict.

He is remembered at the Pont-du-Hem Military Cemetery, La Gorgue, France, on the Tattenhall War Memorial and at St John the Divine Church, Burwardsley.

The British Government insisted that the fallen were remembered as close to where they died in conflict as was possible. Families at home also had the option of placing names on family graves, on local War Memorials which tend to have been erected from 1920 onwards, or having a Commonwealth War Graves Headstone erected in their own Churchyard too. Sometimes, families chose several options.

*The Tydd family headstone (in pieces) within St John the Divine Churchyard*





## PRIVATE ALEXANDER TYDD

Alexander Tydd was the son of George and Ann Tydd of Well House Cottages, Lower Burwardsley. His father was listed as a 'Nurseryman' on the 1911 Census and Alexander was listed as a 'Farm Labourer'.

Alexander enlisted in Chester stating that his preference was to serve in the 14th Cheshire Regiment. His regimental service number was 36326. On the enrolment paper he was listed as a labourer and not married (although his fiancée was Pattie).

He died on 14 April 1917 aged 36 years.

He was awarded the Victory and British War Medals.

He is remembered at the Arras War Memorial. The French handed Arras over to the Commonwealth forces in the spring of 1916 and the system of tunnels, upon which the town is built, were used and developed for the major offensive which was planned for April 1917.

*Arras War Memorial*



## PRIVATE JOHN PEERS

John Peers was the eldest son of John Peers of Burwardsley and the late Prudence Peers.

Private Peers' father, was a churchwarden of the Parish Church and 'one who was held in the highest respect'.

Private John Peers enlisted in Garston, Lancashire, served with the 13th Cheshire Regiment, died on 20 June 1917 aged 21 and is remembered on the Menin Gate. His regimental service number was 59108 and he was awarded the Victory and British War Medals.

His effects (war gratuities) were sent to his father, John.

The Menin Gate contains the names of 54,389 British and Commonwealth soldiers who were killed in the Ypres Salient during the Great War and who have no known graves.

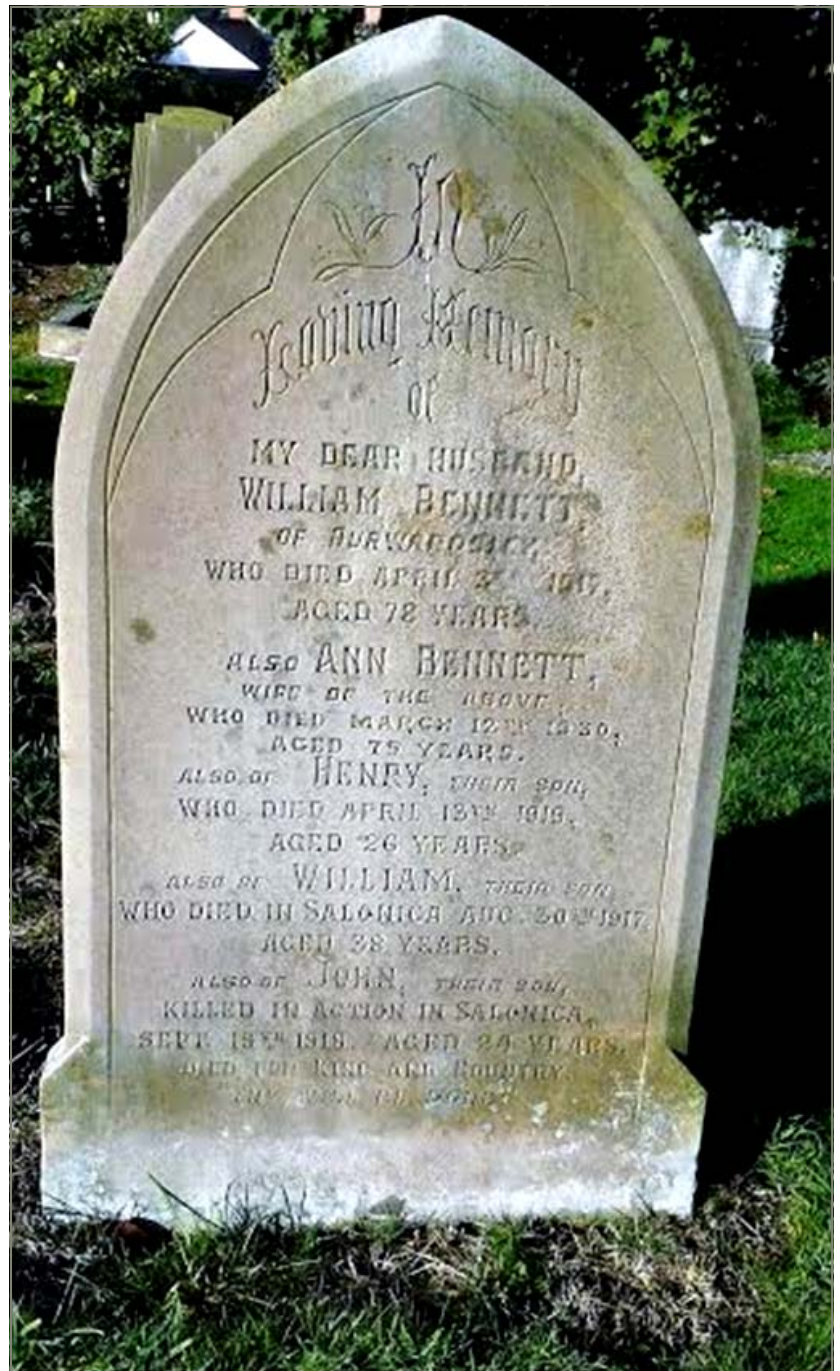
*Menin Gate, Ypres, Flanders*



## THE BENNETT FAMILY

William and Ann Bennett were not born in Burwardsley but they had certainly moved to this area by the date of the 1911 Census, in which William, Head of Household, was listed as an 'old age pensioner/farmer'. William and Ann Bennett were to lose 3 of their sons (William, John and Henry) to the conflict of The Great War.

The family headstone is located in Burwardsley churchyard, on which all 3 sons are remembered.



*The Bennett Family Headstone*



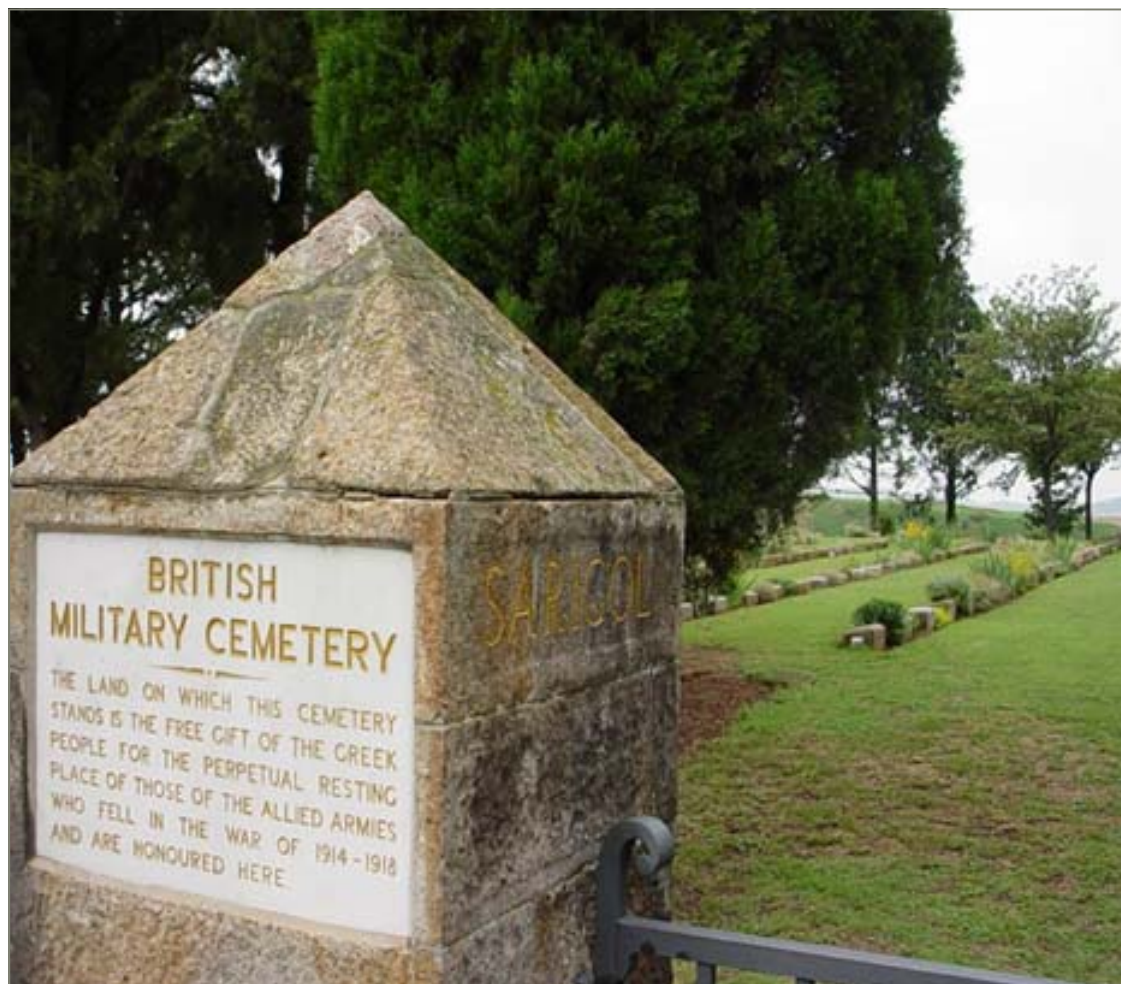
## PRIVATE WILLIAM BENNETT

Private William Bennett served with the Cheshire Regiment. He was 39 and died on 31 August 1917 of Malaria Fever in Salonica (now known as Thessalonica).

He is remembered at Sarigol Military Cemetery, Kriston, Greece.

Interestingly, the family headstone in the Churchyard of St John the Divine, states that Private William Bennett died a day earlier (30 August) and that he was a year younger in age (38).

*Sarigol Military Cemetery*



## PRIVATE JOHN BENNETT

John Bennett also served with the Cheshire Regiment; his regimental service number was 36484 and he enlisted in Chester. Private John Bennett served in various units of the Cheshire Regiment. Just 7 months into active service on 2 September 1916, he was recorded as being transferred to a 'sick convoy' and to 'No. 4 Ambulance Train'; diagnosed with 'diarrhoea'.

He died in the Theatre of War known as 'The Balkans', Serbia, on 19 September 1918 aged 24 years old.

He was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

He is remembered on the Dorian Memorial, Greece. The 3rd Battle of Dorian was fought on 18-19 September 1918 with the Greeks and the British assaulting the positions of the Bulgarian Army. The Bulgarians were able to repulse all attacks.

*Dorian Memorial, Greece*





## PRIVATE HENRY BENNETT

The third Bennett boy also served with the Cheshires (regimental service number 36476), having signed up for war in Chester in 1916.

Private Henry Bennett was captured 'unverwundet' (unscathed and unwounded) at Ploegsteert on the Western Front in Flanders. Private Henry Bennett (36476) is listed in German POW (Prisoner of War) Records, entry No. 75, his place of birth was recorded as 'Malpas' (confirmed in the 1901 Census), and his 'next of kin' were listed in Burwardsley. There is no date attached to his capture. That said, all those individuals that were listed before entry No. 75 in the POW records, were captured in April 1918.

Records also confirm that Henry Bennett was transferred to the Chester War Hospital.

He died on 13 April 1919, less than 6 months after the Armistice (ceasefire).

He was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

He was 26 years old at the time of his death and he is remembered on the family headstone in Burwardsley Churchyard.



*St John the Divine Church,  
Burwardsley*

## PRIVATE HERBERT HODSKINSON/HODGKINSON/HODKINSON

The spelling of the surname of this Burwardsley lad has caused much confusion. Categorically, however, whether the reference is to 'Hodskinson' or 'Hodgkinson' or 'Hodkinson' – it is the one and same individual since his service numbers accurately correspond.

Enumerators on the Census made errors in their handwritten transcripts and we can only presume that the military and local stonemasons did so too!

However, on the 1901 Census, Herbert 'Hodskinson' is recorded as living with his parents in Burwardsley and it is also recorded that he was born in Burwardsley. He was the son of Charles 'Hodskinson' who was a 'joiner in wood' and Ann ('Annie') 'Hodskinson'. On Census night 1901 the family are recorded at home with Herbert and his older sister 'Maggie'.

Private Herbert 'Hodskinson' served with both the Cheshire Regiment (Private 26007) and then with the Royal Welsh (Welch) Fusiliers (Private 56372). His Medal Card is held by the National Archives at Kew. Herbert 'Hodgkinson' is recorded as having been killed in action on 22 April 1918 in the 'Western European Theatre' which is a reference to France and Flanders. It is listed that he was 23 years old albeit that the family headstone states '22 years'.



*The Hodskinson Family Headstone (in pieces) in the Churchyard*

On the 'Grave Registration Report', Herbert's name has been amended to read 'Hodgkinson'.

Private Herbert Hodskinson also has a known grave in Martinsart British Cemetery, north of Albert in the Somme. Martinsart was close to the Allied front line until September 1916 and then again from March to August 1918 (i.e. at the time of Private 'Hodgkinson's' death). He is also remembered on the family headstone in the Churchyard at Burwardsley.

The French cemetery in which this Burwardsley lad is buried is unusual in that the graves are marked by stones made from red Corsehill or Locharbriggs sandstone, rather than the more usual Portland stone

*The red headstones of Martinsart British Cemetery, the Somme, France*





## RIFLEMAN ARTHUR HUMPHREYS

Arthur Humphreys was the son of Elizabeth Humphreys who was born in Burwardsley. Military records state that Arthur Humphreys was also born in Burwardsley and that he enlisted in Chester with the King's Royal Rifle Corps (his regimental service number was R/5423).

Rifleman Arthur Humphreys was killed in action in Flanders on 4 July 1915, aged 27. He has a known grave at Hooze Crater Cemetery, Flanders.

His widowed mother, Mrs Elizabeth Humphreys moved to Hetherstone Green, Bickley, Malpas and in the Index of Wills and Administration dated 1916, his effects were listed as £52 2s 7d and were left to his widowed mother.



*The known grave of  
Rifleman Arthur Humphreys  
at Hooze Crater Cemetery, Flanders*

## DRIVER FRANK MULLINER

Frank Mulliner was a Driver with the Army Service Corps and he died on 31 October 1918 aged 34 (at home). His regimental Service number was T/356027. His birthplace was Liverpool, he is remembered at the Kirkdale Cemetery in Liverpool but he was the late husband of Elizabeth B Mulliner of Ridding Bank, Burwardsley.

Whether he ever lived in Burwardsley is an unknown.

That said, he has a connection with the village and should be remembered in that context.

*Frank Mulliner is remembered on the Kirkdale Cemetery War Memorial, Liverpool*



## CORPORAL JOHN JOSEPH BOWKER

The story of this young man is unique in the sense that he is the only Burwardsley casualty of the Great War for whom we have both a photograph and personal artefacts.

John Joseph (known as 'Jack') Bowker was the only son of Mary Bowker (nee Dodd) and John Bowker who was a farmer. They lived at the Hall, in Burwardsley. This was Mary's second marriage (Mary had several children with her first husband).

By the 1911 Census and just before The Great War, John Joseph ('Jack') Bowker was living with his mother Mary (by then widowed) at Church Street, Burwardsley. On the 1911 Census, John Joseph Bowker was aged 14 years old and his occupation was listed as a 'groom/domestic'.

In the first instance, John Joseph Bowker enlisted in Bisley aged just 19. He enrolled for 'general service' and at the time of his enrolment, his profession was listed as 'Manager of a Cycle Shop'.

John Joseph Bowker was posted to the Machine Gun Corps in 1916 – his regimental service number was 32485.

He then transferred to the Tank Corps and his regimental service number was 201461.

He was demobilised by February 1919 and he was awarded the British and Victory War Medals.

He died on 17 April 1920, aged 23 years of age (ie after the conflict). On the night before his burial, he was laid out in an open coffin in Burwardsley Church and it is said that his fiancée, Mary Wharton,



*Image of John Joseph Bowker in uniform who enlisted at just 19 years of age.*



held his hand and remained with him throughout the entire night. It is said that the war affected him greatly but the exact cause of his death is unknown.

His service record shows that his widowed mother was considered for a pension. He is buried in the Churchyard of St John the Divine.

Members of the Tank Corps did not wear the conventional WWI Brodie Helmets. They were issued with protective face masks (above right). The mask was designed to protect the tank crew from 'splash' or flying metal splinters caused by the impact of bullets which hit the hot steel plating of the tank's body. During action, hot steel began to fly and bullets hitting the armoured plates also caused melting and splash, as in steel factories. Since the eyes were always vulnerable,

*Corporal John Joseph Bowker's  
Tank Mask.*



the face mask was made of thick reinforced leather with metallic eye pieces and chain mail which extended from the bottom to cover the



mouth. Tank masks were attached to a protective reinforced leather helmet as shown above (image reproduced from the Imperial War Museum collection).



*Other personal artefacts belonging to Corporal John Joseph Bowker - his kit bag; his water canteen (although the design of this water canteen appears to be German); and a further essential part of his mess kit, his crushed drinking cup.*

The table below has been constructed from military records.  
 It lists men from Burwardsley who also served in The Great War.  
 All were native to Burwardsley, Cheshire.  
 This list may not be exhaustive.

Name	Service No.	Regiment	Event Year
Oswald Blything	T4/040144	Army Service Corps	1915
George Dawson	37159	Royal Berkshire Regiment	1914
George Dawson	301992	Tank Corps	1914
William Forster	TF/1829	Cheshire Regiment	1914
Albert Manley	378716	Rifle Brigade ( <i>Prince Consort's Own</i> )	1915
Percy Nield	223426	Royal Engineers	1917
Fred Parsons	644276	Labour Corps	1919
Charles Povall	T4/107997	Army Service Corps	1915
Charles Fewton Spencer	948	Royal Fusiliers	1914
Tom White	M2/203558	Royal Army Service Corps	1916
Robert Woolley (spouse Louisa Woolley)	AIR79/2253	Royal Air Force	1918

## A SOLDIER'S STORY

This letter was published in the Chester Chronicle on Saturday 9 February 1918. The letter relates to 'Christmas with the Eastern Army' in Turkey.

It was written by the son of a Burwardsley resident, Mrs E Badrock, who lived at The Mount, Burwardsley. Her son (Ernest Badrock) wrote this on 30 December 1917 – he was serving in the East with the Yeomanry.

There is evidence that the letter was censored .....

The letter states that they were all *'going on fine'*. It continues: *'I am feeling in the best of health, and as fit and contented as a king. We have been working all morning shoeing, a lot of mules had lost shoes during the last two days in the rocks. My division has done very well this last few days, pushing the Turks back from three to four miles. The positions he held were terrible and how he was got out goodness only knows! The Turks did not half get a 'bashing' either, as testified by their dead who are lying in scores on the hills. Our artillery did some marvellous work' ... About 4 days before Christmas, Captain ---- -- managed to get us some canteen stuff through consisting of two tins of potted meat, two sardines, one salmon between three men, also a box of cigarettes. We were encamped under our little bivouacs in*

*a gully. The guns were up on the line, and I was at Company Headquarters. No mails or parcels came through. On Christmas Eve it rained in torrents ... We had breakfast of bully beef and biscuits with a tin of sardines which we had saved for the day. It was teeming with rain, and the order came up to move, as we were attacking next morning.'*

The letter goes on to describe the dreadful state of things due to the wet. On finding the new camp, they had some tea and more bully beef and biscuits with a tin of potted meat. As everywhere was a sea of mud, they cut a lot of furze, and after shaking the wet from it *'got down in it'*. It was still raining and they were soaked to the skin. The next morning the rain ceased after falling for 36 hours and they were able to dry themselves. Their Christmas was spent under these conditions and on half rations of bully beef and biscuits. He saw no pudding.

Whether Ernest Badrock was born in Burwardsley or actually lived in Burwardsley is unknown, but his mother did.

Letters like this allow us to empathise with conditions during The Great War and are evidence of the reality of war – a war which was supposed to be over by Christmas 1914.



## PRIVATE JOHN THOMAS TYDD

John Thomas Tydd was a Private with the 7th Battalion of the Cheshire Regiment; his regimental service number was 4127927.

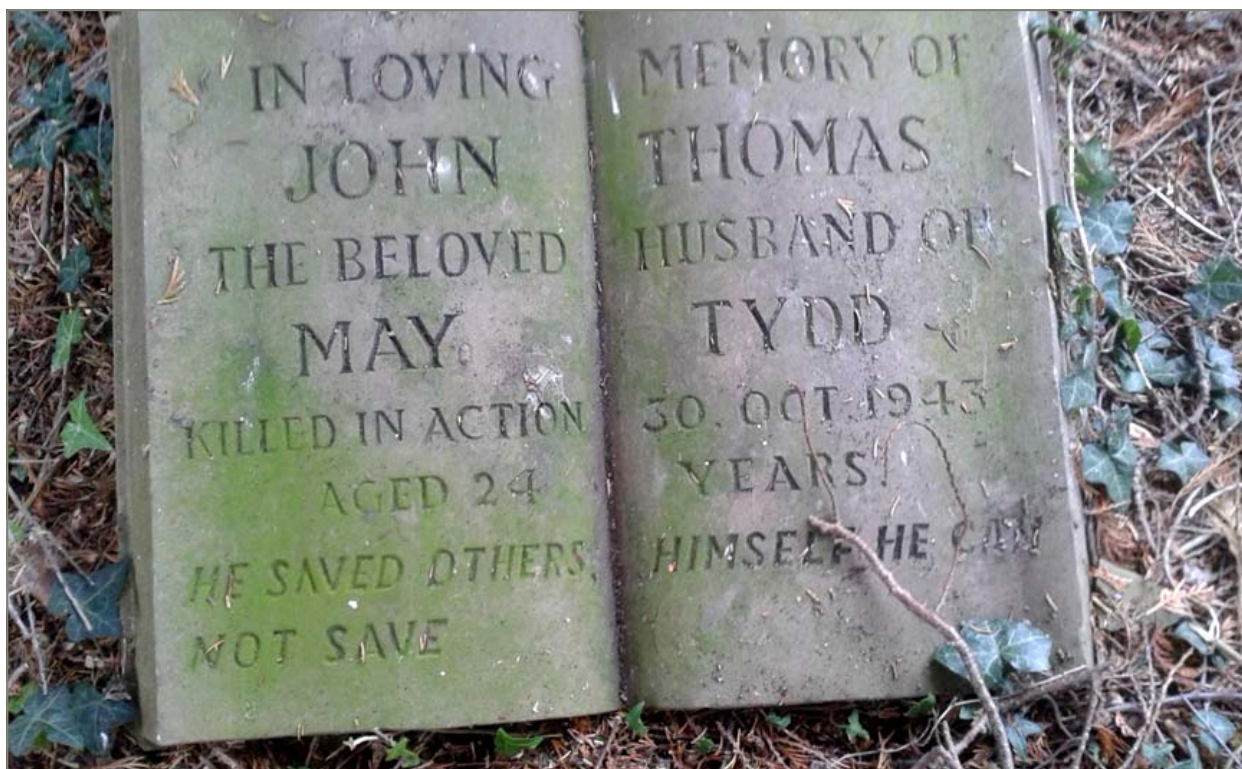
Whilst the headstone shown below has been placed in St John the Divine Church, Burwardsley, his widow is then listed at Fordcombe, Kent.

He died on 30 October 1943 and was 24 years old.

He was the beloved husband of May Edith Tydd.

He is remembered at Cassino War Cemetery, Italy and in Burwardsley Churchyard; 'He saved others, himself he cannot save'.

*The family headstone dedicated to John Thomas Tydd, KIA, 30 October 1943, St John the Divine Church, Burwardsley*



*There are a number of villages in the country that are known as 'Thankful Villages'. These represent villages where every individual who served in the two World Wars returned. Regrettably, Burwardsley was no such village.*

*This booklet represents a 'first step' in piecing together the individual stories of young men who left this beautiful village on the Sandstone Ridge.*

*It is not exhaustive, of that I am sure. That said, it is hoped that you will appreciate the rich and varied tapestry that contributes to the history of a settlement, the size of Burwardsley.*

*A short term vision is to:*

- *restore the existing headstones of the soldiers who died in the conflicts*
- *display a more permanent 'Roll of Honour' within the Church itself*

*This will require fundraising and approaching various institutions to provide the necessary planning and financial support.*

*It is hoped that in taking one of these booklets, that you would wish to make a donation to that future vision.*

*Sources:*

*Imperial War Museum  
Commonwealth War Graves Commission  
Census 1881-1911  
Chester Chronicle archive  
Prisoner of War Records ([grandeguerre.icrc.org](http://grandeguerre.icrc.org))  
National Archive Records held at Kew  
Forces War Records  
Find My Past Military Records  
Ancestry Military Records*

*This booklet has been produced by Terri Hull who is not only a Burwardsley Road resident but also manages the 'Tattenhall and District Local History Website' which is dedicated to celebrating and sustaining our local history. A copy of this booklet will be placed on that website.  
[www.tattenhallhistory.co.uk](http://www.tattenhallhistory.co.uk)*

*Particular thanks in the production of this booklet to:*

- *Delia Dutton - Corporal John Joseph Bowker would have been Delia's Great Uncle. The photograph of this young Corporal together with photographs of his personal artefacts have been reproduced with Delia's kind permission.*
- *John Stoneley - the cover postcard of St John the Divine Church, Burwardsley, belongs to John and we thank him for allowing us to reproduce this for use on our front cover.*

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