

# FIRST WORLD WAR MEMORIES

As a memorial to the terrible events of the First World War, the Parish Council is publishing personal stories of how the War affected ancestors of present day Scriven residents. More stories are needed so if you have family memories of the First World War please do jot them down and pass to the Parish Clerk or a Councillor for publication in a future newsletter. The events can be on any subject and do not have to be related to Scriven. To mark the centenary, it is hoped that sufficient stories will be forthcoming to publish one in each newsletter until November 2018. Here, the fourth piece in the series describes the circumstances that John Slingsby, the first Scriven man lost in the First World War and now commemorated on the village War Memorial, would have encountered.



John Slingsby was the youngest son of Rev. Charles Slingsby of Scriven Park.

At the outbreak of war in August 1914, after three years at Naval College and aged just 16, John was appointed Naval Cadet to the

battleship HMS Formidable, being quickly promoted to Midshipman a month later.

On December 31<sup>st</sup> 1914 many of the crew had hoped to be celebrating New Year's Eve in the pubs of Portland in Dorset but were ordered to remain on exercise overnight, in the English Channel.

There had been no enemy U-Boat activity reported for a month but that changed at about 2:20am when U-24, who had been tracking them all day, sent a torpedo straight into Formidable's second boiler. The battleship lost all steam and immediately keeled over 20 degrees to starboard.

Sailors remained totally calm as they began to launch lifeboats into the night. Two boats were lowered but one violently capsized and hurled its load of sailors into the cold waters.

45 minutes after the first, a second torpedo struck the number one boiler from only 160m away, rocking the ship back to an even keel but raining debris down on the ship, the men in the lifeboats and the U-boat itself.

The stricken battleship was unable to lower more boats into the sea so Captain Loxley ordered anything wooden to be brought up

on deck for the men to grab hold of when the ship went down. They were also told to break up the decking and even throw the ship's piano overboard although this meant the sailor playing ragtime on it at the time had to stop. This impromptu piano concert was just one of the efforts of the crew to keep spirits up as the ailing warship began to sink.

HMS Topaze, a cruiser in the fleet with Formidable, was trying to pluck men from lifeboats and the water but the task became increasingly perilous as the seas became heavier. Capt. Loxley vainly fired distress rockets before ordering the Topaze away fearing the U-boat would add it to its night's kills.

The men left behind had no choice but to wait for the ship to sink. Over the next two hours, they stood on deck singing and smoking until the Formidable finally gave way. Capt. Loxley gave the order to abandon ship and told them "Lads, this is the last. All hands for themselves and may God bless you and guide you to safety" He then walked to the forebridge, lit a cigarette and with his faithful dog by his side, waited for the inevitable.

Out of a complement of 747 men, 34 officers including Captain Loxley and 513 men were lost in the sinking of HMS Formidable. The majority have no known grave and their names are inscribed on the Portsmouth, Plymouth and Chatham Naval Memorial, most of those lost, including Midshipman Slingsby, are commemorated on the latter. Only 18 bodies were recovered for burial.

JUNE  
2016



## SCRIVEN PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER



### COUNCILLORS

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## PROPOSED NEW WARD BOUNDARIES

The Local Government Boundary Commission is carrying out an electoral review of Harrogate Borough Council (HBC). The aim of the review is to recommend ward boundaries for the district which deliver electoral equality for voters in council elections so that each Borough Councillor represents roughly the same number of voters, whilst also ensuring that the pattern of wards reflect, as far as possible, the interests and identities of local communities, and provide effective and convenient local government. In order to achieve this the boundaries need to be re-drawn across the Harrogate area.

Initially, to more equally distribute voters, HBC thought to propose to the electoral commission that the parish of Scriven should be moved into a rural ward represented by a Councillor from Boroughbridge, along with other village parishes in an area stretching out east of the A1.

Scriven Park Ward Borough Councillor Ivor Fox and Scriven Parish Council (SPC) objected to this suggestion and made representations to support the continued inclusion of the parish of Scriven in a Knaresborough ward. This was on the basis that there are strong links between the communities of Scriven and Knaresborough. More specifically as the village does not have its own community hall, church, school, any health or social service provision, shop or public house,

and is dependent on Knaresborough for these facilities.

It was proposed that a new ward including the parish of Scriven, should be named Scriven and Tentergate which harks back to the original historical name of the Scriven parish area to the north and west of Knaresborough.



*One of the original remaining boundary stones from the parish of Scriven with Tentergate can be found on Forest Lane in Starbeck*

At a meeting attended by Scriven Parish Councillors on 23<sup>rd</sup> March, HBC agreed that the proposal for the formation of this new ward recognises that exact electoral equality is unlikely to be achieved across the district and that in this case, the need to reflect the identities and interests of the Scriven and Knaresborough communities should take precedence. The Parish Council agree and feel that this is the right decision for the future of Scriven.

The four new Knaresborough wards proposed by HBC are:-

**KNARESBOROUGH SCRIVEN AND TENTERGATE  
KNARESBOROUGH CASTLE**

**KNARESBOROUGH EASTFIELD**

**KNARESBOROUGH ASPIN AND CALCUTT**

The Boundary Commission will make their final recommendations in November this year.

## WAR MEMORIAL

The Scriven War Memorial, situated in the shelter overlooking the village green, was built in 1953 to mark the Queen's coronation and commemorates five villagers who lost their lives at war. Midshipman John Slingsby, Private Percy Fryer and Private Harry Smith died in the First World War and Guardsman Arthur Bradley and Private Thomas Cooper in the Second World War.

Some of you may have noticed that the roof is now in poor repair and leaking, with some of the Yorkshire stone tiles either broken or missing. SPC plan to arrange for the War Memorial to be re-roofed using as much of the original stone as possible. Balfour Beatty have kindly offered a donation to the Parish Council following their work on the electricity substation in Lingerfield and transportation of very large generators through the village. It has been decided to use this money towards the roof repair. SPC are also in the process of making an application to the War Memorial Trust who can give grants of up to 75% of the cost of repairs to war memorials.

If anyone has any further information on the history of the War Memorial please let any of the parish councillors know as this would help with the grant application.

## JACOB SMITH PARK

Young trees planted last year in Jacob Smith Park are being given the best chances of

thriving, thanks to a dedicated team of volunteers attending a tree maintenance day in April. The event, organised by The Friends Group, involved clearing the ground around saplings to enable their roots to receive more nutrients.

The Friends would like to thank all who volunteered for their efforts. These events make a really positive contribution to the Park and bring the community together to socialise and share this special place.

Visit [www.jacobsmithpark.co.uk](http://www.jacobsmithpark.co.uk) to keep in touch with the Friends' activities.



Scriven Parish Council meet every two months, at Park Grove Methodist Church Hall, usually at 7.30pm on the second Thursday. All are welcome to attend. The forthcoming meeting schedule is as follows:-

<b>14<sup>th</sup> JULY 2016</b>	<b>15<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2016</b>
<b>17<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2016</b>	<b>19<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2017</b>
<b>14<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2017</b>	<b>18<sup>th</sup> MAY 2017</b>



The Friends of Jacob Smith Park public meeting & AGM at The Commercial Inn, High Street, Knaresborough

**TUESDAY 6<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2016 - 7PM**

**feva** Knaresborough's annual Festival of Entertainment and Visual Arts. **12<sup>th</sup> TO 21<sup>st</sup> AUGUST**

Every summer, the town stages a wonderful array of shows and events. You will find something going on in every corner of the town from street theatre and open air concerts, to live music and the art trail.