

The Research

Membury History Society has undertaken research into the men from the parish who served in the First World War.

In Membury Church there is memorial plaque to those who died. In addition, in Membury Village Hall there is a framed list of the men who served. This list is interesting in itself. It is hand written, and starts with men being listed neatly in alphabetical order. We assumed that these were men who were already in the forces, or in the reserve, or who volunteered in August 1914. Then, particularly for the army, there are names in any order. And at the end another alphabetical list. These we assumed were the men who were conscripted.

It is not clear why some men were listed and others not. It was probably if they had close relatives in the village. For example, Reginald Denslow was not on the list, but he was born in Membury. Conrad Rocket is on the hall list, but when he was killed he didn't make it amongst the names recorded as killed in action in the Church. He does, however, appear on Chardstock's war memorial.

The Village Hall list was used by Membury History Society as the starting point of the research. The genealogical research was done by Diana Collar of Kinders, Membury. She researched all the men through the internet with various family history providers. For some men she managed to find quite a bit of information. For others, she was unable to establish which man of a particular name was the right one, and there were some who did not seem to have any connection with Membury. However 1911 was the last census that was available and so it is possible that the person had moved into the village before volunteering or being called up. Robbi Robson, of Kinders Cottage, wrote up the results of her research.

Most of the men would have gone into the Devonshire Regiment, enlisting in Axminster. But those in the north of the village would have found it easier to get to Chard, and therefore went into the Somerset Regiment. The records of the Devonshire Regiment were kept in Exeter and were bombed and lost in the 2nd World War. However the records of those in the navy are held at the National Archives in Kew. Robbi visited Kew and got those that Diana couldn't get off the internet.

The Australian Army have very good records and so Ernest Horner, who emigrated to Australia has extensive records, including the testimony of those who were with him when he was killed who wrote about what happened, in response to his widow when she asked the Australian authorities.

The information on this website is also kept in two files in the History society's archives, together with their records and relevant photographs where we have them. By being on the web, the basic information is available to anyone in the world who is trying to find their relatives. If anyone wishes to see the research papers, please contact an Officer of the Society to arrange it.

By making this information available, Membury History Society hope that more information will come to us about the men from our quiet corner of Devon, who fought in the First World War.