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## ST. KEVERNE PARISH

### LIFE DURING THE TWO WORLD WARS



Local Heritage *initiative*



## ST. KEVERNE PARISH

**S**t. Keverne Parish is situated on the Lizard Peninsula in Cornwall and has a population of nearly 2,000. The Parish covers a large area and is bounded by the sea, Goonhilly Downs, Kennack Sands and the Helford River. The main villages being St. Keverne, Coverack, Porthoustock and Porthallow.

The Parish is an active community with events throughout the year. St. Keverne Ox Roast and the St. Keverne Band being known internationally. It is also known for the Cornish Rebellion of 1497 and a statue to commemorate this event is erected on the roadside as you enter the village of St. Keverne

## LIFE DURING THE TWO WORLD WARS

### The First World War

**T**he effect of the war was not felt until 1915 when it was declared that any serving member would not have to vacate his seat on the Council. In that year it was decided to hold a public meeting to see what could be done to raise money for the relief of the distress caused by the invasion of Belgium. This was to take the form of a house-to-house collection. Unfortunately, it became impossible to send it to Belgium and in July 1916 the fund became known as For the Relief of Distress amongst the Allies and was sent to the Helston Union Area Committee.

It was not until January 1917 that the War made a direct impact on the Parish when the Council received a circular from the County War Agricultural Committee and called a public meeting to explain and set in motion the scheme for 'Tilling of potatoes, supplies of seed potatoes, obtaining gardens or plots and keeping pigs'.

A working party was set up and applications invited. 25 people with less than two acres asked for a total of 44½ hundredweight of potatoes while a further 10 with more than that acreage asked for 71 hundredweight. These last claims were passed to the War Agricultural Committee and were not dealt with directly by the Council. A further 26 applicants claimed a further 51 hundredweight.

There were further provisions under the scheme; any uncultivated gardens or land could be bid for by anybody who was prepared to put it to good use. The County War Committee had strong powers of compulsory acquisition and could exercise them if necessary. A total of 6 people applied and the Redruth Brewery were approached about the plots at Chynhalls, Coverack. The provision regarding sanitary restrictions governing pigs was waived and any cottager could keep pigs anywhere.

In November 1917 it was reported that Cllr Bonfield had fallen in battle somewhere in France and the Council sent a letter of condolence to his widow and children.

In July 1918 the Council were asked for information about accommodation for agricultural labourers. The Council replied that owing to the depletion of the population of the Parish, the housing accommodation was quite sufficient for present requirements.

## The War Memorial

The St Keverne Parish War Memorial was built on what at the time was considered to be the most prominent position within the Parish. The centre of St. Keverne village square, following the removal of two cottages, two shoemaker's shops and one cart-house, which had stood on that site for many a long year.

Such was the sacrifice of those from St. Keverne Parish, who laid 'down their lives' for others in the 1914-1918 conflict, parishioners chose this exalted position, as the only worthy position befitting those having 'No known grave'.

Erected in 1920, St. Keverne Parish War Memorial was unveiled by the late Col. Sir Courtenay Vyvyan BART, C.B. C.M.G. at 6.30pm on Wednesday September 22nd 1920. Followed by an open air service conducted by the Right Rev, The Lord Bishop of Truro, assisted by the Reverend E Mortimer and W Tremberth.

During the service, three hymns were sung by the large gathering representing 'Next of Kin' and local organizations. The hymns selected were 'All people that on earth do dwell' 'For all the Saints who from their labours rest' 'O God our help in ages past' followed by one verse of the National Anthem.

Unveiling and dedication of the Memorial was to honour in gratitude and remembrance, those of St. Keverne Parish who paid the supreme sacrifice, by laying down their lives for their country in the 1914-1918 war. An inscription on the east face of the Memorial bears witness to this.

Twenty-five years later, 1945, a further inscription was added to the west face to honour in gratitude and remembrance, yet more of our Parish, who like earlier comrades, paid the supreme sacrifice by laying down their lives for their country, in a second world war 1939-1945.

Pride of place on this memorial will forever be theirs. Greater love hath no man that he lay down his life for his friends.

Fifty years on and in contrast a third inscription has been added on the north face to commemorate 'VE/VJ' Day, Victory for Europe, Victory Japan and the associated years of peace 1945-1995.

The Memorial is constructed in granite, the cross and base structure are all octagonal in plan. The cross has a tapered stem supported on a pedestal which had a moulded top and projecting plinth. The whole is mounted on a three step high base. At road level there is a slightly raised octagonal (on plan) concrete hard standing area, enclosed by low-level iron railings with a gate. The railings are painted black, the verticals being topped by gold painted fleur-de-lys.

The railings and surrounding kerb were installed sometime after the original structure as a precautionary safe guard measure against damage. The original kerb is now non-evident.

Since its construction and dedication, each year large gatherings have assembled to commemorate Armistice Sunday in November, through a Service of Remembrance Two Minutes Silence and wreath laying.

Our Parish Church on approaching and our Parish War Memorial on entering St. Keverne Village Square are undoubtedly the focal point for locals and visitors alike, both handed down from an earlier generation to us the current generation, as part of our history and heritage. As custodians it must be our duty to preserve and hand on to the next generation as good as and if possible better than received.

Many of the names of those who fell are Parish family names and continue to this day

#### 1914-1918 Conflict

Albert Auty	William Bonfield
J Carey	Zoe Bryant Daunt
William Edwards	Thomas J Eustace
Frederick Freathy	Frederick A Freathy
Thomas J Hocking	William J Hocking
Sydney W Lambrick	Charles G Lobb
James H C Pearce	Mark L I Retallack
Archibald Roberts	Frank J Roberts
Ernest Rule	James H Uren

#### 1939-1945 Conflict

Frank Bonfield	Richard Bowden
Thomas Clark	John Cruze
Francis Harvey	Adolphus A Hocking
John Hocking	William T Hocking
Annette Hunter	Robin Kemp
Richard Kevern	Stuart D L King
George Pearce	Richard Retallack
Henry Smitheram	George H White

## The Second World War

This made a swifter impact on the parish and in October 1938 almost a year before war was declared the Council were informed that ARP Officers had been appointed for Helston and Falmouth and they were required to make a sub-warden for St. Keverne Parish. In March 1940 the collection and storage of waste paper, scrap iron, rags and bones were arranged. In June that year the name St. Keverne was removed from all notices and signs. March 1941 collections were made for War Weapons Week.

In 1943 the distribution of ration books through the Parish took place and also the Council felt that fire-watching personnel was adequate.

In March 1944 in response to a request from Kerrier RDC the Council wrote informing them that they needed 30 cottages in the Parish divided among the various villages.

Finally in May 1946 a year after the end of the war in Europe a meeting was held to choose the form of victory celebrations.

This leaflet showing the effects the two world wars had on the Parish has been produced with funding from the Countryside's Access Local Heritage Initiative Fund and Cornwall County Council and is part of the St. Keverne War Memorial Refurbishment Project.

For further information visit our Web site [stkeverneparishcouncil.org.uk](http://stkeverneparishcouncil.org.uk)



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