WORLD WAR ONE PEDIMENT MEMORIAL
1914–1918
HONOURING THOSE WHO SERVED AND CAME HOME



1 THOSE WHO SERVED IN WORLD WAR ONE





Memorials are not simply remembering the past, they remind us of the cost of war, value of peace and importance of preserving local history for future generations. Many local families today are descendants of those who served. Preserving this memorial helps ensure that their sacrifice is never forgotten and reminds us that they left us the peaceful countryside we enjoy today. At the going down of the sun, and in the morning, we will remember them - from The Exhortation an extract from a poem written by Robert Laurence Binyon called "For the Fallen" written in September 1914.

All Saints Church Plumpton and East Chiltington Church display Rolls of Honour for each village in beautiful calligraphy written by the ladies of the villages. 204 people served in the war. Of these, 29 did not return and are honoured each year on Remembrance Sunday. Thankfully, 175 returned home, but their lives were changed forever. This memorial remembers those equally brave and courageous servicemen and women through this simple and charming tribute.

2 PLUMPTON & EAST CHILTINGTON COMRADES CLUB

The Comrades of The Great War was formed in 1917 to represent and support the rights of former servicemen and women who had served, or had been discharged from service across the Country, during World War One. It was one of four organisations that were merged in 1921 by Field Marshall Earl Haig to form The British Legion, which in 1971 became The Royal British Legion. In 1919 the village collected donations to erect a village hall as a memorial to those who had lost their lives. This became the Memorial Hall, in front of which 29 fir trees were planted to remember the fallen. This was situated at the start of the current East View Fields. There was enough money left to fund the stone cross memorials at both churches. However, the hall committee would not allow the returning heroes to drink alcohol on the premises and loved ones at home could not comprehend what they had gone through in battle. So, as they needed somewhere to enjoy a drink, smoke, play music and billiards and chat about their wartime experiences. Colonel Powell-Edwards from Novington Manor, Captain FR James MC (an Architect) and Chief Gunner RN Frank Gandy created the Comrades Club and made it available to everyone who served. The new Comrades Club was converted from the old grocer's stables and coach house buildings, opposite the village shop.

The opening ceremony was held on 11 December 1920, see photo below left. The wooden plaque of the names of the fallen in the picture, is now in the Committee Room. Local gardener, Vincent Meredith went to war aged 17. Within 6 months he had sustained horrific injuries to his head, arm plus his right leg which had to be amputated. Known in Plumpton as 'Tommy' the soldier rather than Vincent when he returned home, he became the bar steward at the Club, see photo below middle. He retrained as a boot maker and lived in Plumpton until he died in 1974 aged 77.

Many descendants of those who served, are still living in our villages today, including, Richard Wells, Jim Thompson and Jo & Jonathan Taylor. They and their families have an extraordinary connection with World War 1. Richard's Grandfather, Great Uncles and their close family; nine men from the Wells and Middleton families all served. Reg Wells who had been destined to take over the Wells Building firm, and Arthur Middleton were both sadly killed. Brothers Albert, Frederick, Allen and Francis Wells survived, as did George and Herbert Middleton and their cousin Frank Gandy. Frank joined up in 1894 and was invalided out of the Navy in 1918 after a shell exploded on the deck of his ship, Monitor M21. After the war he had a key role in creating the Comrades Club. Jim is related to the seven Higgins brothers who all served in the war. It is difficult to imagine the anxiety endured by their parents and their three sisters, waiting for news from the front. Jack and Gerald died in the war, Arthur shortly after due to his wounds, with George, Frank and Hugh living to a good age, despite their injuries. Frank and Hugh were early active members of the local branch of The British Legion. Below right is the Comrades of the Great War membership card for Jo's Grandfather, Henry Amos Scrase, signed by Colonel Powell-Edwards and Chief Gunner RN Frank Gandy. Henry joined up in 1916 and was wounded that December. He lived in Plumpton until age 86. Herbert, his younger brother, also served and sadly died in September 1918 in a German prisoner of war camp of malnutrition. In 2024, Jonathan visited Herbert's war grave in Germany to pay his respects. These are not simply stories from a distant past. Their descendants still live among us. Please speak to these four villagers to discover more about the courage, loss and profound heartache their families endured, not only during the war, but also for many years after it had ended.







3 THE MEMORIAL PEDIMENT



Charles Wells (1871 – 1946 picture right) a bricklayer from the village building firm William Wells & Co., created the unique triangular plaster memorial above the Club window. This triangular architectural feature is known as a pediment. We now know that Charles plastered directly over the original tile-hung area above the window, creating the memorial in situ.

At a previous restoration, the name in the centre of the pediment was changed to British Legion and for many years it was known as The British Legion Hall. This is how many villagers today will remember it fondly. The hall became the Village Hall in 1965 and later, rescued from demolition, the pediment was relocated to an outside wall of the new Village Hall in 1995, still exposed to the elements.



4 2014 - 2018 CENTENARY EXHIBITIONS

To mark the centenary, the villages held special exhibitions in July 2014 and November 2018, led by Richard Wells, Jean Stewart, Lee Stevens and Nick Beaumont. Annual Services of Remembrance near 11 November, continue to honour those from World War One and Two at our churches with a Scouts parade, reading the names of the fallen, last post, two minute silence, wreath laying and prayers and blessings. Lest we forget.









The 2018 exhibition presented the research of each of the 204 servicemen and women. Summary information is available at plumptonvillagesociety.co.uk - with more detailed information on those that served, available on request. Information was also provided on what it was like to live in Plumpton during the War. At this time, it was noted that the pediment needed significant restoration, with cracks and flaking paintwork. A solution was needed. After 100 years it was at a tipping point in its history to restore or let it fail, physically and emotionally.

5 2026 BBC REPAIR SHOP RESTORATION

In December 2024 an application was made to the BBC Television Programme The Repair Shop to restore the pediment. Graham Peacock and his son Gabriel crafted a video of the story of the Pediment to support the request.

In 2026, The spin off programme, The Repair Shop on the Road, which asks local experts to restore items from communities agreed to take on the Pediment. Their experts Kirsten Ramsay (plasterwork and fine porcelain) and Helen Brady (artist) took on the challenge. The Repair Shop presenter Will Kirk oversaw the project and helped to explain the story behind the Pediment with Lee, Richard, Jim and Jonathan. The heavy Pediment was moved to Kirsten's local workshop, and the plasterwork was fully repaired. Kirsten and Helen painstakingly removed the layers of paintwork, to reveal the original design and colours, to keep the integrity of the original design back in 1920.

The restored Pediment was returned to Plumpton and unveiled on the Village Green on 27 July 2026 and the story of its journey, aired within Series 3 of the programme in early 2027. Unity and Harmony still resonates with us today.



~ THANKS ~

This restoration was only possible due to the tenacity of Lee Stevens and Richard Wells together with the project team of Jim Thompson, Jo and Jonathan Taylor from the local branch of The Royal British Legion, Plumpton Parish Council, Ricochet production team and The Repair Shop experts, plus, local helpers of Graham and Gabriel Peacock, WTP Scaffolding/Webb Plummer, Paul Manville, Fred and Harry Symes, Jake Burton, Tim Honess, Jim Brown, Paul Stevens, Martin Gilbert and Mark Brunt. Thank you all for preserving the Memorial Pediment for generations to come.