

St Mary's Churchyard: War Graves Sign

Many of you are aware that our churchyard contains the graves of two soldiers with headstones erected and maintained in perpetuity by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. These are the graves of Captain F J N Dunne (WWI) - son of a former Vicar of St Mary's - and Sergeant B.F Cornhill from WW2. Sadly these two graves are rarely, if ever, visited by friends or relatives and visitors to our church and churchyard are not made aware of them.

This is now about to change. As part of the centenary of the First World War, our Diocese is working on a project to erect Commission signs at as many sites as possible that contain war graves. The aim of the initiative is to increase awareness of war graves in the United Kingdom and to remind the public that they need not travel abroad to find Commonwealth commemorations. This could result in encouraging a greater interest in churchyards and church buildings in general and to increase visitor numbers to them. All signs will be installed, paid for and maintained by the War Graves Commission on a permanent basis.



Installation of such a sign at St Mary's churchyard required permission from us. Our Parochial Church Council gave its unanimous approval some time ago and we expect the sign to be installed this Spring. The location of the sign, which is of a standard size and text, is on the left brick wall as we walk up the path from the car park. It will be clearly visible and we will make sure that the sign never becomes obscured by foliage.

As we continue our WWI centenary celebrations, I encourage all our readers to visit our war graves, lay a flower on them and reflect on them with pride and gratitude.

Chris Hjelt