

## GRANGE WAR MEMORIAL

The Reverend G. Vickars-Gaskell, vicar of St Paul's Parish Church, felt very strongly that Grange should have its own War Memorial to the Fallen. He therefore convened and chaired a well-attended public meeting in the Victoria Hall on the 26<sup>th</sup> February 1920 to consider what form the memorial should take.

Three designs were shown on a screen, courtesy of the Cinema Company:

- (1) A 17 ft high Anglian cross on an octagonal base
- (2) A cenotaph of triangular shape
- (3) A bronze lion on a limestone pedestal.

Also discussed was a design for a lych-gate at the Cemetery and the suggestion of a Cemetery Chapel.

After a full deliberation it was decided by the majority to erect a Cross on Church Hill and it was estimated it would cost in the region of £400 - £500. Arrangements were immediately made to raise this sum, the Rev. Vickars-Gaskell being sure that everyone would gladly contribute towards erecting a worthy monument to the memory of men who had given up their lives for the honour and freedom of the country.

Whilst the eminent ecclesiastical architects, Paley & Austin of Lancaster, were drawing up designs for the Cross, the parishioners of St Paul's were busy fund-raising, the vicar having instructed them to make house to house visitations in order to collect donations.

In June the Parochial Church Council discussed details of the two designs submitted by Paley & Austin, one in Darby Dale Free Stone and the other in limestone or granite. It was felt that both designs were handsome and dignified but it was eventually decided to erect the Memorial in Staintondale limestone as that would be more in keeping with the surroundings and scenery.

In September 1920, the Rev. Vicars-Gaskell published the names of Grange men whose lives were sacrificed in the War to ascertain all the Fallen were included when the names came to be carved on the memorial.

A meeting on the 1st October 1920 was held in the Town Council offices wherein it was decided that there should be some modification to the design and that the back of the cross should be carved as well as the front.

The following month the vicar discussed the inscription to be carved upon the Cross. His personal view was that the purpose of a War Memorial inscription is not the record of the affection of relatives and friends but the splendid achievement of the men whose names are cut upon it. Pride and gratitude are the key notes, not sorrow, and the message of the monument should be, not to sorrowing survivors, but to the youth and manhood of future generations to encourage and hearten them.

His simple and dignified inscription, although slightly modified by the committee, reads:

**PRAISE GOD  
FOR THESE MEN OF GRANGE  
WHO WERE FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH  
1914-1918  
LEST WE FORGET**



When the fund for the Memorial struggled to reach the required amount of £500, the vicar was vigorous in his rallying of the community to dig deeper into their pockets. To those who thought the memorial was too expensive he retorted that was a poor way of showing gratitude to the men who gave up everything for their country, and he would rather drop the whole scheme and leave them without any memorial at all than put up a cheap commonplace one paid for by grudging subscriptions!

Towards the end of the year the vicar was suffering from voice and throat problems and was advised by his doctor to take a complete rest and change of air. He went down to Penzance to recuperate and in his absence the War Memorial Committee decided to change the location of the War Memorial to the ornamental gardens. The money was finally raised and the Memorial was constructed by Mr. A O Thomas of Lancaster and carved by Mr. I Birch of Lancaster and Lindale.

On Armistice Day, 11<sup>th</sup> November 1921, the Rev. Vicars-Gaskell was able to return to Grange to lead the ceremony at which the Memorial was unveiled by Lord Richard Cavendish.

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