

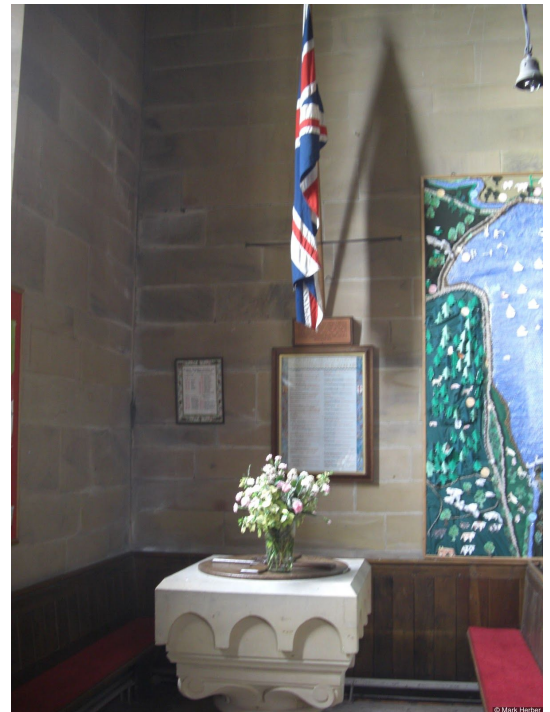
Press Release

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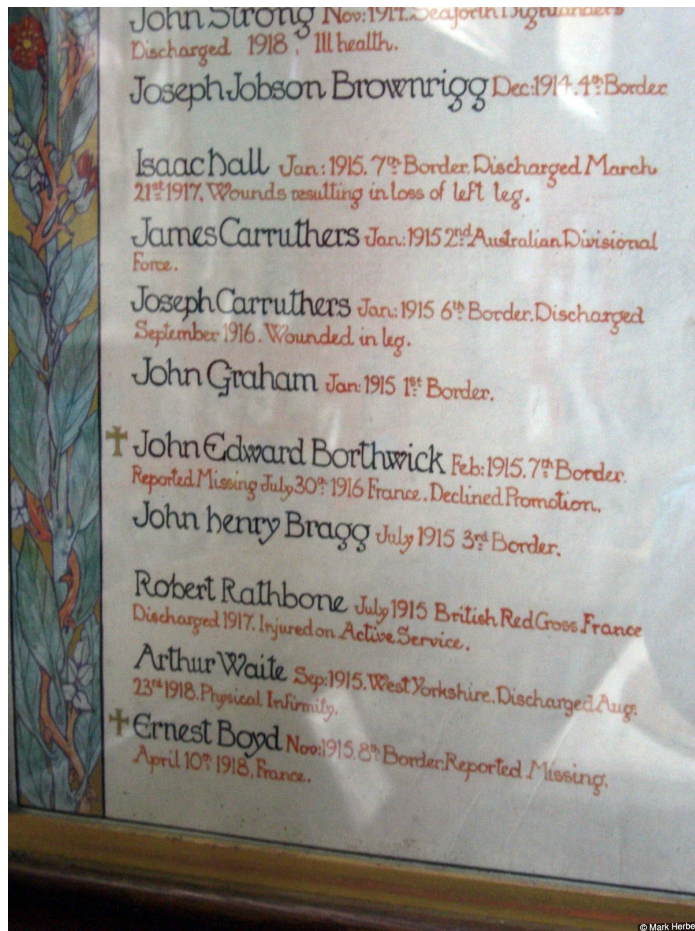
TheGenealogist Launches over 282,000 Parish Records, plus 43,000 New War Memorial Records

The **Genealogist** has added to the millions of its UK **Parish Records** collection with over 282,000 new records from **Essex, Cumberland and Norfolk** making it easier to find your ancestors' baptisms, marriages and burials in these **fully searchable** records covering ancient parishes. Some of the records go back as far as **1672**.

The new release of War Memorial records means there are now over 350,000 searchable records. This latest release includes war memorials from **London**, along with further English counties including **Cumbria, Berkshire, Warwickshire and Suffolk**. The collection also stretches across the globe to encompass new War Memorials situated in **Perth, Australia** and the Province of **Saskatchewan in Canada**. Fully searchable by name, researchers can read transcriptions and see images of the dedications that commemorate soldiers who have fallen in the Boer War, WW1 and various other conflicts.



In amongst these newly published War Memorial records are those from St John's Church in Bassenthwaite, Cumbria. This is a fascinating WW1 roll with men who died or served and includes information such as that for Louis Willis Bell who died in Rouen as a result of poison gassing. Another notable entry is that for Isaac Hall. This soldier enlisted in January 1915 in 7th Border Regiment and was discharged on the 21st March 1917, because of wounds resulting in the loss of his left leg.



Example:

Parish Records can sometimes unearth fascinating stories

We are all aware that parish records give us those all important dates and names for our ancestors - but in some cases they reveal interesting stories as well. When a vicar, or parish clerk, feels the person they are entering in the register needs an extra explanation, over and above the date and name of the person, then some fascinating historical details can emerge for researchers to read.

As an excellent example of this we can look in the parish records for All Saints Church, in Maldon, Essex. Here we find the burial of one Edward Bright in the year 1750. Edward, a Tallow Chandler and Grocer, who died when he was in his late twenties, had an unusual claim to fame.

The entry in the parish register on TheGenealogist reveals that he was an extremely large man, weighing 42 stone (588 pounds) and was in fact believed to be the fattest man in England at the time.



Edward Bright by David Ogborne (<http://www.itsaboutmaldon.co.uk/edwardbright/>) [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

The notes for his burial on the 12 November 1750 in the parish register explain that Edward had to be buried in a special coffin as he was so large. To remove the casket from his room above his shop, special provisions were needed requiring structural modifications to the wall and stairs to aid his final journey to All Saints.

Having arrived at church on a carriage, more unusual procedures were used to get the deceased to his final resting place. Edward's coffin would have been far too heavy to be borne by pallbearers up the aisle to rest before the congregation during the funeral service. Also it would have severely taxed the muscles of those men who would have normally lowered it manually into the grave. The logistics, in this case,

needed rollers to be used to slide the coffin up to a brickwork vault and then a triangle and pulleys were used to lower poor Edward into his grave.

The parish register entry did, however, not just dwell on the problems of burying a man of such large proportions. It went on to also record a number of positive attributes that Edward Bright had - so giving us a picture of the man that he was. We can see that he was well thought of by the vicar and community of this 18th century Essex parish. The register tells us that he was: "... A Very Honest Tradesman. A Facetious Companion, Comely In His Person, Affable In His Temper, A Kind Husband, A Tender Father & Valuable Friend."

Parish » Parish Transcript Burials » Full

Burial Record For Edward Bright
In the Parish of Maldon All Saints & St Peter

Name	Edward Bright
Age	29
Profession	Tallow Chandler & Grocer
Date of Burial	12th November 1750
Abode	All Saints
Parish	Maldon All Saints & St Peter
County	Essex
Event	Burial
Notes	He Weighed Upwards of 42 Stone, Horseman's Weight, His Coffin Was Three Feet Six Inches Over the Shoulders, Six Feet Seven Inches Long and Three Feet Deep. A Way Was Cut Through the Wall and Stair Case To Let It Down Into the Shop; It Was Drawn Upon A Carriage To the Church, Slid Upon Rollers To the Vault Made of Brickwork; and Interr'd By the Help of A Triangle and Pulleys. He Was 29 Years of Age the First of March Last; Has Left A Widow Now Big With Her Sixth Child. He Was A Very Honest Tradesman, A Facetious Companion, Comely In His Person, Affable In His Temper, A Kind Husband, A Tender Father & Valuable Friend

As we have seen here, sometimes a parish register can give you so much more than just the date that your ancestor was baptised, married or buried.

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