



DEATH AND SERVICE NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the first edition of the Death and Service newsletter. In this monthly update, I aim to keep you in touch with the latest news from my graveyard searches, the research being done and progress on upcoming publications.

The first volume of the book is now eighteen months old, but I've not been resting on my laurels since then. I am keen to shed as much light as I can onto the lives of the fallen and with more than 800 graves across Somerset, this is definitely an ongoing project.

Thank you for your interest and best wishes,

Richard

The **Death and Service website** now includes the graves of more than 1000 researched graves servicemen and women from 110 military regiments.

The site is not limited to just Somerset, and includes graves from across ten British counties: from Cornwall to Kent in England and Gwynedd to Glamorganshire in Wales.

Discover more through the link below.

<https://deathandservice.co.uk/>

Did you know?

The 1000+ graves on the website give an insight into the popular names of the late Victorian period. There are 121 men called William, 60 Johns, 58 Fredericks or Freds, and 55 Henrys or Harrys researched. George (50), Albert (44), Thomas/Tom (43), Charles (36), Arthur (36), and Ernest (33) making up the rest of the Top 10.

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Keep in touch:

Web:

<https://deathandservice.co.uk/>

(Join the mailing list
from the front page)

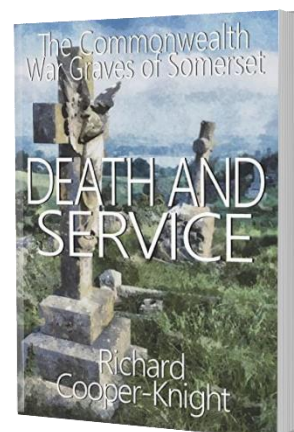
Facebook: [@deathandservice](https://www.facebook.com/deathandservice)

Instagram: [@deathandservice](https://www.instagram.com/deathandservice)

Email:

deathandservice@outlook.com

Death and Service: The Commonwealth War Graves of Somerset is available through Amazon and all good bookshops.



GRAVE OF THE MONTH



Grave Location:

St John the Baptist's Church
Church Road
Peasedown St John
BA2 8AA

Name: Ford, Mark

Rank: Private

Regiment: Royal Berkshire Regiment

Date of death: 28th October 1917

Age at time of death: 36

Cause of death: Died of wounds

Mark Ford was born early in 1881 in Wellow, near Peasedown St John in Somerset. He was the youngest of eleven children, and the son of Thomas and Ellen Ford. Thomas was a coal miner, and this was a trade that his seven sons, including Mark, went into.

The 1901 census recorded Mark as boarding in a house in Abertillery, Monmouthshire, learning his trade. Within a few years, however, he was back in Peasedown St John. In the summer of 1910, he married local woman Emily Tucker and the couple set up home in Wellow, where then went on to have four children: George, Phyllis, Hubert and Ethel.

War was coming to Europe and, while records are scarce, it is possible to build up a picture of the service Mark undertook. He initially enlisted as a Private in the Royal Berkshire Regiment, and was assigned to the 10th (Labour) Battalion. They were sent to France in June 1916, although it is not possible to confirm if Mark went at the same time.

His battalion became the 158th and 159th Labour Companies in April 1917, and it seems that Private Ford transferred to the former and, at this point, can be confirmed as serving in France. That summer, he was wounded in the hip and head by an exploding shell and was medically evacuated to England for treatment.

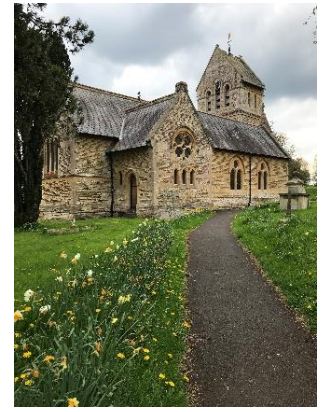
Private Ford was admitted to the Military Hospital in York, where he lay injured for some time; long enough, thankfully, for Emily to make the journey to be with him. Sadly, his wounds were to prove too much: he passed away at the hospital on 28th October 1917, at the age of 36 years old.

Mark Ford's body was brought back to Somerset for burial. He was laid to rest in the churchyard of St John the Baptist, in Peasedown St John.



HIDDEN GEMS

The thing that kick-started the whole project was my love for photography. New to Somerset weeks before the pandemic hit, I used my camera to get to know the county better. This took me to out-of-the-way villages and hamlets, when I first began to find Commonwealth War Graves in the churchyards there.



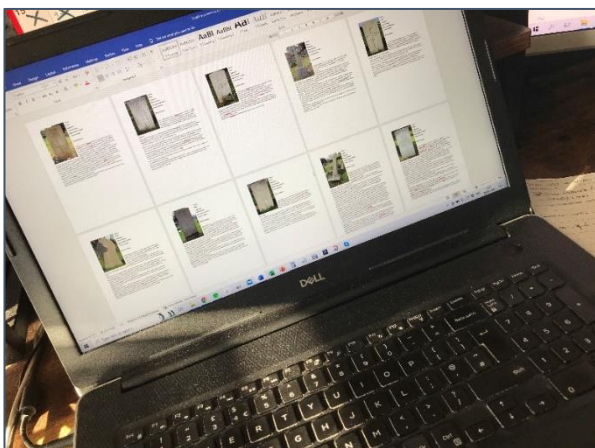
Now, the pleasure in discovering a churchyard off the beaten track is key to what drives me, and hidden amongst the highways and byways, hills and moors are some real gems.

The peace and solitude of a quiet country church adds an additional level of poignancy to commemorating the fallen. While a parish church is often directly connected to a manor or estate, no churchyards are the same, and each have their own individual natures.



From the last couple of months' travelling, here are six of my cemetery and churchyard finds. Clockwise from top left:

Holy Trinity Church, Blackford
St Michael's Church, Monkton Combe
Sutton Mallet Churchyard
St James the Great, Winscombe
Lansdown Burial Ground
St Andrew's Church, Holcombe



DEATH AND SERVICE BOOK TWO

The second volume is well into its development stage now, and features more than 150 more service men and women from across Somerset.

The aim is to release it in autumn 2023, so sign up to the mailing list, or follow the social media feeds to keep in touch with developments.

Thank you for reading this newsletter. If you would like to get in touch, please contact me via the website, social media or email using the links on the front page. If there are things that you want to see included in future editions, or if you have any questions, then please let me know. Until next time...

Richard