

Unveiling of War Memorial and Tablet in Memory of Mr. J. Mansell – 1950

CHESTERFIELD SCHOOL WAR MEMORIAL

TABLET TO THE MEMORY OF MR. J. MANSELL

UNVEILED BY AIR MARSHALL SIR P. WIGGLESWORTH



Left to right: Dr. J. B. McKay, -, Mr. J. Jackson, Mr. J. H. Dronfield, Mr J. K. Swallow, Mr B. Gaunt, Mr D. Turner, Mr. E. Mitchell, Mr. C. Proctor, Air Marshall Sir P. Wigglesworth, Mr. W.E. Glistler, Mr. H. C. Day, The Mayor, Mr. H. Birkin, Mr. R. Varley

"THEY died 'fighting a good fight, fighting with all their might.' We think of them with measureless gratitude and pride," said Air Marshal Sir Philip Wigglesworth, K.B.E., C.B., D.S.C., when at Chesterfield School on Sunday, he unveiled a Memorial to the 66 old boys who lost their lives in the last war.

Old boys, and the parents and friends of those who fell, attended a special service in the School Assembly Hall, during which Sir Philip also unveiled a memorial to the late Mr. James Mansell, Headmaster of the school from 1894 to 1921. Sir Philip, who has attained the highest rank in the Services of any old boy, left the school 38 years ago.

Although five years had passed since the end of the war, time could not dim the memory of the old boys of the school who had fought so valiantly. It was fitting and due to them that their deeds should be perpetuated, so that those who followed after should also know of them and their fine example, Sir Philip said.

They were men who had earned renown for their bravery and leadership in the field or for some special devotion to duty in other spheres of the national war effort. They will expect that we who are left behind, and for whom they died, will prove by our future conduct and thoughts that their supreme sacrifice was not in vain," Sir Philip added.

Unveiling the memorial to Mr. Mansell. Sir Philip said that the late Headmaster was a man of deep understanding, who brought to his duties high example, great dignity, patience and character. He had sought to inculcate into the minds of those entrusted to his care these qualities which to-day were needed more than ever if we were to have a nation of responsible and worthy citizens, prepared, if necessary, to fight for their Christian principles.

“The late Headmaster’s profound scholastic knowledge and wide experience of teaching were devoted to ensuring that his boys not only received a sound basic education but also to ensuring that when they left school they were equipped mentally, morally and physically to embark upon an honourable career in civilian life or in the Services,” Sir Philip said.

He added “If the late Headmaster had a motto; it would have been ‘I serve.’ This memorial is to a great schoolmaster, a wise counsellor, a true friend and a fine gentleman.”

The service was conducted by the Archdeacon of Chesterfield (the Ven. T. Dilworth-Harrison), and the lesson was read by Mr. R. Varley, second master and also President of the Cestrefeldian Society. Outside the school, Sir Philip was met by 16 members of the Combined Cadet Force, under the command of Major J. R. Owen, which formed a guard of honour.

Members of Mr. Mansell’s family present were his son and daughter, Col. R. Mansell and Miss M. H. Mansell, and two grandsons, Mr. P. F. Mansell, who was accompanied by his wife, and Mr. H. Sharpe, (representing his mother, Mrs. E. M. Sharpe, the elder daughter of the late Headmaster).

Others present included the present Headmaster (Mr. W. E. Glister), the Mayor of Chesterfield (Ald. J. E. Bird), Ald. H. Cropper (Chairman of Governors), Mr. Edward Mitchell and Mr. T. E. Swain (Joint Secretaries of the Old Cestrefeldian Society), and Coun. H. C. Day (Society Treasurer) and a large number of old boys of the school.

Both memorials have been erected at the instigation of the Old Cestrefeldian Society in conjunction with the school and the local education authorities. Members of the staff and pupils have also contributed towards the cost. The practical work has been undertaken by Mr. Bernard Gaunt, an old boy.

Courtesy of the Derbyshire Times, April 7th, 1950