Spaldwick War Memorial Research Master

Evidence foundation for the memorial the Roll of Honour and the nine commemorated men

Edition 3 | corrected following independent review | 4 September 2026

This research master brings together the surviving public evidence about Spaldwick War Memorial, the separate First World War Roll of Honour in St James Church, and the nine men named on the stone. It distinguishes verified facts from local accounts and identifies the records still needed before the webpage can be treated as definitive.

Main conclusion. The memorial's form, date, designer, inscriptions and designation are firmly supported, and the casualty identities of all nine men are now assembled in a consistent record. Stuart Dixon's 2012 research has been located, exact service numbers and graves have been added, and stronger evidence now establishes the circumstances of several deaths. The remaining gaps are narrower: the original church Roll, official POW evidence for Leonard Nickerson, the 1922 unveiling, direct war diaries and primary family records.

Research status

Area	Status	Finding
Memorial structure and designation	Verified	Historic England confirms the 1922 sandstone cross, designer W E Ashley, later additions and Grade II listing.
Nine names and service details	Strongly supported	Dates, ranks, numbers, units and places of burial or commemoration are supported by memorial, cemetery and regimental records.
Church Roll of Honour	Verified with discrepancy	It records 38 men, nine from Barham, and marks seven deaths. Only five marked deaths are Spaldwick men; John William Chapman is absent from the transcription.
Individual life stories	Substantially strengthened	Dixon's 2012 compilation and detailed biographies add letters and day-specific accounts, but some family detail still rests on compiled research.
Unveiling and original committee	Open	The year 1922 is verified; the exact date, ceremony, subscribers and committee still require newspaper or parish-record research.
Conservation history	Verified through October 2025	Parish Council minutes now provide a dated sequence, grant decision and contractor quotation figures; consent and completion remain open.

The memorial

Spaldwick War Memorial stands on The Green at the junction of High Street and Stow Road. It is a sandstone Latin cross with a carved wreath, a splayed shaft, square plinth and square base, enclosed by railings. The south face carries the First World War dedication and six names; the north face carries two Second World War names; and the east face records Lionel Watson Goodwin's death in Korea.

Historic England identifies W E Ashley as the designer and records that the memorial was unveiled in 1922. It was listed at Grade II on 1 February 2019 for its historic interest, architectural quality and group value with the medieval cross base, 2 Stow Road and The George.

Historic England's listings and contemporary reporting identify Ashley as the designer of several Huntingdonshire memorials, including Spaldwick, Great Stukeley and Woodhurst. Great Stukeley's Ashley memorial was unveiled in 1920 by Howard Coote of Stukeley Hall, Lord Lieutenant of Huntingdonshire. That provides a useful lead for the Spaldwick ceremony two years later, but does not prove that Coote also unveiled the Spaldwick memorial. A contemporary Spaldwick newspaper report is still required.

Primary authority: Historic England, National Heritage List for England, list entry 1 460 045, Spaldwick War Memorial.

What the inscriptions establish

Conflict	Names	Number
First World War	John William Burton; Arthur Robert Chandler; Percy William Chandler; John William Chapman; Walter Whittlesea Dighton; William Woodham	6
Second World War	Donald Robert Church; Leonard Cyril Nickerson	2
Korean War	Lionel Watson Goodwin	1

The separate church Roll of Honour

The framed Roll of Honour in St James Church is not a duplicate of the stone memorial. War Memorials Online records 38 names, including nine men identified with Barham. A cross marks seven men who died: five associated with Spaldwick and two with Barham. Roger Fuller is annotated DCM.

The five Spaldwick men marked as dead are John William Burton junior, Arthur Chandler, Percy Chandler, Walter Whittlesea Dighton and William Woodham. The two Barham dead are Arthur Read and Wilfred Harold Read. John William Chapman, who is named on the stone memorial, does not appear in the published transcription of the Roll. This difference requires investigation in the original document and parish or committee records; it should not be silently "corrected".

Two of Chapman's brothers, Cecil and Horace, appear elsewhere in the same transcription as survivors. This supports the identification of the Chapman family and makes a simple mix-up between brothers less likely. The Roll also lists Daniel Nickerson, a First World War survivor who should not be confused with the later casualty Leonard Cyril Nickerson.

Authority: War Memorials Online, WMO 154 090, Spaldwick Roll of Honour. The record describes the location, condition, inscription and all 38 transcribed names.

Stuart Dixon's 2012 research

The previously missing document has been located as Spaldwick Roll of Honour, Version 2, September 2012, a 24-page compilation hosted on the Spaldwick website and preserved by the Internet Archive. It is an important local source rather than a primary record. Its particular value is that it reproduces contemporary letters concerning both Chandler brothers, records local testimony about Leonard Nickerson, and supplies a named local source for the Lionel Goodwin family story.

Claims taken from the document should identify Dixon and the 2012 version. Where it reproduces a letter, the document is presently the accessible copy; the original letter or archival holding should still be sought before

extensive quotation. The same caution applies to Dixon's reproduced image of Burton's bereavement card and to the Fusilier Museum London's narrative account of Goodwin's patrol: short factual attribution is appropriate, but reuse of the image or extended passages on the public webpage requires a rights and permission check. Dixon's report that Nickerson was a prisoner of war can now be attributed to local testimony, but no official POW record has yet been found.

Source: Stuart Dixon, Spaldwick Roll of Honour, Version 2, September 2012, https://www.spaldwick.com/wp-content/uploads/Roll-of-Honour-Details.pdf.

The nine commemorated men

John William Burton

Field	Evidence
Rank and number	Private 31 909
Unit	6th Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment
Death	24 April 1917, aged 38
Burial or commemoration	Aubigny Communal Cemetery Extension, France, II D 68

The Cambridgeshire Archives catalogue identifies a surviving photograph. Stuart Dixon's document and a compiled source citing the 6th Bedfordshire Regiment war diary record that he was wounded at Arras on 10 April 1917 and died of wounds and pneumonia on 24 April; the diary itself has not yet been checked directly. Dixon reproduces a bereavement card naming his wife Ethel Burton of Spaldwick.

Research assessment. Identity and grave strengthened; the account of wounds and pneumonia remains dependent on reproduced or compiled evidence until the diary and medical record are inspected.

Arthur Robert Chandler

Field	Evidence
Rank and number	Corporal 9213, C Company
Unit	1st Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment
Death	16 March 1915, aged 25
Burial or commemoration	Perth Cemetery China Wall, Belgium, IV A 2

Born at Spaldwick, son of William and Jane Chandler, husband of Ida Florence Chandler and younger brother of Percy. Contemporary letters reproduced by Stuart Dixon and cited in detailed local research state that he was shot in the neck near International Trench at about 3.30 a.m. and died within ten minutes, shortly before relief.

Research assessment. Core record and day-specific account are strong, but the letters should be cited as reproductions unless the originals are located.

Percy William Chandler

Field	Evidence
Rank and number	Company Serjeant Major 7612
Unit	2nd Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment
Death	28 June 1916, aged 31
Burial or commemoration	Dive Copse British Cemetery, Sailly-le-Sec, France, II A 23

Son of William and Jane Chandler and brother of Arthur. A chaplain's letter reproduced in Dixon's 2012 compilation records that Percy arrived unconscious at the 56th Field Ambulance during the night and died from a head wound at 6.30 a.m. on 28 June. His death preceded the opening of the Somme offensive.

Research assessment. Core record and medical circumstances are strongly supported by a reproduced contemporary letter.

John William Chapman

Field	Evidence
Rank and number	Private 74007
Unit	2nd Battalion Devonshire Regiment
Death	31 May 1918, aged 19
Burial or commemoration	Soissons Memorial, France

Born in Spaldwick to Frank and Mary Chapman, one of ten children. Compiled research records that the family later moved to Peterborough and that he was a grocer's apprentice before call-up. CWGC and regimental records use 31 May 1918, while the detailed Roll of Honour biography reports a family bereavement card dated 29 May. Both dates fall within fighting after the 2nd Devons' near-destruction at Bois des Buttes on 27 May and the confused retreat that followed. Dixon's PDF itself uses 31 May and does not contain the reported card. He has no known grave.

Research assessment. Core record verified; use 31 May officially, preserve the unresolved family date, and investigate why he is absent from the church Roll.

Walter Whittlesea Dighton

Field	Evidence
Rank and number	Private 8743
Unit	2nd Battalion Norfolk Regiment
Death	22 November 1915, aged 24
Burial or commemoration	Basra Memorial, Iraq, Panel 10

Born in St John's parish, Huntingdon, son of Alice and Walter Dighton. His father served as police sergeant in Spaldwick. A regular soldier, he served with the 2nd Norfolks in Mesopotamia and was killed at Ctesiphon. Published local research cites three letters reproduced in John Bell's Huntingdonshire Heroes of the First World War.

Research assessment. Core record strongly supported; letters and book should be checked directly before quotation.

William Woodham

Field	Evidence
Rank and number	Private 19540
Unit	8th Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment
Death	18 October 1916, aged 39
Burial or commemoration	Thiepval Memorial, France, Pier and Face 2 C

Recorded as the son of Peter Woodham of Stow Longa and husband of Sarah Ann Woodham of Church Lane, Spaldwick. Stuart Dixon's document places the 8th Bedfords in an attack near Guedecourt from 3.40 a.m. on 18 October, after which Woodham did not return. This is unit context rather than an eyewitness account of his death.

Research assessment. Core record and service number strengthened; retain cautious wording until the war diary and casualty return are checked directly.

Donald Robert Church

Field	Evidence
Rank and number	Lance Corporal 5 827 587
Unit	2/5th Battalion The Queen's Royal Regiment West Surrey
Death	12 May 1943, aged 24
Burial or commemoration	Enfidaville War Cemetery, Tunisia, VII B 26

Son of Herbert and Ruth Pickering Church of Spaldwick and described by Dixon's named informant, Miss Davis, as an only child. The regimental casualty roll confirms his core record. Dixon places his battalion in 169 Queen's Brigade and describes its rapid 3,313-mile movement from Iraq to Tunisia, a march whose exceptional character is supported in outline by the regimental history. Miss Davis recalled that Church was struck by shrapnel after lighting a cigarette while relaxing with his company.

Research assessment. Core record and campaign context strengthened. Treat the cigarette and shrapnel account as attributed testimony until the war diary or casualty file confirms it.

Leonard Cyril Nickerson

Field	Evidence
Rank and number	Trooper 7 944 530
Unit	4th Royal Tank Regiment Royal Armoured Corps
Death	28 May 1944, aged 22
Burial or commemoration	Berlin 1939 to 1945 War Cemetery, Germany, 11 H 14

The Tank Museum and regimental association independently confirm 4 RTR, service number, Middle East theatre and date. Dixon's named informant Miss Davis said Nickerson won a scholarship to Kimbolton School, later worked in Thrapston, probably at Stewart and Lloyds, was taken prisoner and died in a POW hospital. She recalled that his mother was at the Red Cross in Huntingdon enquiring about sending boots when the death telegram arrived.

Research assessment. Military core is corroborated. School, employment, POW hospital and family circumstances are attributable village testimony pending school and official POW records.

Lionel Watson Goodwin

Field	Evidence
Rank and number	Fusilier 22 610 183
Unit	1st Battalion Royal Fusiliers City of London Regiment
Death	29 April 1953, aged 19
Burial or commemoration	United Nations Memorial Cemetery in Korea, grave 3385, current location 38 7 1

Born 16 June 1933, known as Bill, youngest child of Harry and Ada Goodwin of West Lodge, Spaldwick; Dixon names his sister as Jean Bradshaw. The Fusilier Museum's regimental account establishes that he served in a D Company patrol of one officer and 15 other ranks sent to lay an ambush near Point 159 on the night of 29 to 30 April 1953. The patrol met a much larger Chinese force; Goodwin, 2nd Lieutenant Robin Ruhemann and Corporal Smith of 2nd Royal Australian Regiment were killed. L Cpl Whelan, who wrote the account, was captured and released in September. Dixon's named informant, Miss Davis, and the UN cemetery biography preserve the story that Goodwin's mother had baked a cake for his expected return.

Research assessment. Unit, action and named participants are independently established by the regimental account; publish family details and the cake story with attribution.

Evidence issues and corrections

Issue	Assessment	Treatment
Arthur Chandler's death date	Verified as 16 March 1915.	Retain the corrected date and avoid older erroneous wording.
John Chapman's death date	Official and regimental records give 31 May 1918; family material reportedly gives 29 May.	Use 31 May in the main record and explain the family-source discrepancy.
Roll versus stone memorial	The Roll marks five Spaldwick dead; the stone names six WWI dead. Chapman is absent from the Roll transcription.	Treat as a genuine historical question and inspect the original Roll.
Second World War "died in action" wording	Burial and date do not by themselves prove killed in action.	Use neutral "died" unless a casualty record establishes the category.
Nickerson as prisoner of war	Dixon attributes the claim to a local informant, but no official POW record has been located.	Publish only as an attributed village account; seek casualty list, camp record, death registration or other official POW evidence.
Goodwin homecoming cake	Recorded by UNMCK and by Dixon, who attributes the village recollection to Miss Davis.	Publish with attribution to Dixon's informant and the UN cemetery biography rather than as independently proved family detail.
Memorial designer terminology	Historic England's "designed by" terminology is corroborated across Ashley's Huntingdonshire memorials; only one compiled site uses "builder".	Treat this as resolved in favour of "designed by W E Ashley". Continue researching the commission and unveiling.

Conservation and stewardship

Spaldwick Parish Council records the memorial among the village assets in its care. Its published minutes now provide a chronology through October 2025. On 20 March the Council awaited further contractor quotations and a decision on the Woolley Hill Wind Farm grant. The extraordinary meeting of 6 May recorded approval of that funding. At the Annual Parish Meeting on 15 May, the Council said the next stage was planning approval and hoped to arrange the work before year end.

By 19 June a second contractor quotation had been received and a separate War Memorials Trust application was progressing. The 17 July minutes recorded two options: £8,400 net to replace the laurel wreath and plaque, and £4,200 to clean and re-carve; a third quotation was still sought. On 18 September the decision remained deferred, and on 23 October a final contractor quotation and the War Memorials Trust application were still in progress. No planning or listed-building consent reference or completion record was found in the minutes reviewed.

Because the memorial is Grade II listed, cleaning, re-carving and replacement need an appropriately conservative method and the necessary listed-building or planning advice. Later editions should add the formal consent, chosen specification, contractor and completion record when these become available.

Sources: Spaldwick Parish Council War Memorials and village assets page; Parish Council meeting records; approved extraordinary meeting minutes, 6 May 2025; Historic England list entry 1 460 045.

Integration of the further research findings

The commissioned further-research report was reviewed against its cited sources before incorporation. Its strongest additions are Dixon's recovered compilation, the Royal Fusiliers' account of Goodwin's final patrol, the consistent casualty summary and the Parish Council chronology. Claims based only on testimony or secondary compilation remain explicitly qualified.

Question	Further research result	Current judgement
John Chapman's death date	The detailed Spaldwick biography acknowledges both dates and explains that Commonwealth War Graves Commission and regimental records use 31 May 1918, while family material gives 29 May. It also documents fighting on both dates.	Use 31 May as the official date. Preserve 29 May as a clearly attributed family-source discrepancy; it cannot be resolved from open sources.
Leonard Nickerson's POW history	Two independent regimental collections confirm 4 RTR, number 7 944 530, Middle East and 28 May 1944. No accessible record found in this pass identifies a camp, capture date, cause of death or POW status.	Do not yet publish POW status as fact. This now requires a named archive record.
Lionel Goodwin's service and death	The Royal Fusiliers' regimental account identifies 1st Battalion, D Company and the patrol action of 29 to 30 April 1953. UNMCK confirms burial details.	His unit and action can now be stated. The cake story remains attributed to Dixon and UNMCK.
Donald Church's casualty details	The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Association casualty roll independently confirms his full core record.	Treat identity, family, unit, date and grave as well supported. Keep cause of death neutral.
Original church Roll	No new high-resolution image or independent transcription was located.	Physical inspection remains essential, especially to verify Chapman's absence and the cross marks.
1922 unveiling	No report establishing the date, ceremony, committee, subscribers or cost was found.	This remains a newspaper and local-archive retrieval task.
Stuart Dixon research	The 24-page Version 2 document dated September 2012 has been located on Spaldwick.com.	Use as a named local compilation and route its reproduced evidence back to original records where possible.

Priority research plan

Priority	Record or action	Purpose
1	Inspect and photograph the church Roll of Honour at high resolution	Confirm every name, cross mark, wording and whether Chapman is genuinely absent; this cannot be settled remotely.
2	Save the nine direct CWGC casualty pages	Create a durable primary-record pack and

Priority	Record or action	Purpose
	or certificates	verify casualty categories as well as core details.
3	Search British Newspaper Archive and local papers for 1921 to 1923	Find the unveiling date, ceremony, committee, subscribers and W E Ashley commission.
4	Check the relevant battalion war diaries directly	Verify Burton, Woodham, Chapman and Church circumstances against contemporary unit records. The Queen's Royal Surreys Tunisian-campaign pages block automated access and require a direct browser visit.
5	Check census, civil registration, parish, pension and probate records	Move family and civilian biographies from compiled research to primary evidence.
6	Check official POW records for Leonard Nickerson	Confirm capture, camp, hospital, cause, place of death and original burial.
7	Locate originals or archival copies of the Chandler letters	Confirm the reproduced texts, dates, authors and custody before extensive public quotation.
8	Track the memorial conservation project to completion	Add consent reference, chosen specification, contractor, grant outcome and completion record.

Recommended public page structure

The current replacement-page draft is a strong public-facing foundation, but the research suggests a clearer layered structure: a short answer and current photograph; the nine names; the story and design of the memorial; individual biographies; the separate church Roll of Honour and its differences; remembrance and conservation; then sources and research acknowledgements. Longer family or campaign material can sit in expandable sections so the page remains easy to scan.

Until the priority records are checked, the public copy should distinguish three levels: verified fact, attributed local account and open research question. That will allow the page to be engaging without presenting inherited stories as settled evidence.

Source register

Holder	Record	Link and use
Historic England	Spaldwick War Memorial, NHLE 1 460 045	https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1 460 045 Primary authority for designation, description, date, designer and significance.
War Memorials Online	Spaldwick Roll of Honour, WMO 154 090	https://www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/memorial/154 090/ Transcription, count, location and 2013 condition of the church Roll.
War Memorials Online	Spaldwick War Memorial, WMO 154 096	https://www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/

Holder	Record	Link and use
		memorial/154 096/ Community memorial record and photographs.
Imperial War Museums	War Memorials Register 369	https://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/369 National memorial catalogue record; access was restricted during this pass.
Roll of Honour	Spaldwick memorial and biographies	https://www.roll-of-honour.com/Huntingdonshire/Spaldwick.html Detailed compiled account; valuable lead source, not a substitute for cited primary records.
Cambridgeshire Archives	Photographic collection KPH 73	https://calm.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/TreeBrowse.aspx?field=RefNo&key=KPH%2F73&src=CalmView.Catalog Catalogue confirms photograph of John William Burton.
Bedfordshire Archives	Bedfordshire Regiment monthly casualty histories	https://bedsarchives.bedford.gov.uk/CommunityHistories/Roll-of-Honour/March-1915.aspx Independent regimental-context source for Arthur Chandler and other Bedfordshire casualties.
Commonwealth War Graves Commission	Find War Dead	https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/ Authoritative casualty database; direct individual records should be saved in the next pass.
Spaldwick Parish Council	War memorials and meetings	https://www.spaldwickparishcouncil.org.uk/assets/war-memorials/ Council stewardship and conservation evidence.
Spaldwick.com	One hundred years of Spaldwick	https://www.spaldwick.com/information/history/100-years-of-spaldwick Local chronology and context; claims require independent checking where possible.
Spaldwick.com	Stuart Dixon, Spaldwick Roll of Honour, Version 2, September 2012	https://www.spaldwick.com/wp-content/uploads/Roll-of-Honour-Details.pdf Recovered 24-page local compilation with reproduced letters and attributed village testimony.
Fusilier Museum London	The 1st Battalion Royal Fusiliers in the Korean War 1952 to 1953	https://www.fusiliermuseumlondon.org/download?id=12 387 Regimental account identifying Goodwin in the D Company patrol action of 29 to 30 April 1953.
The Hunts Post	Protected status granted to village war memorial	https://www.huntspost.co.uk/news/22 971 323.protected-status-granted-village-war-memorial/ Independent reporting on Ashley's other

Holder	Record	Link and use
		memorial work and the 2019 listing programme.
Historic England	Great Stukeley War Memorial, NHLE 1 439 208	https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1 439 208 Corroborates Ashley's design role and records Howard Coote unveiling the Great Stukeley memorial in 1920.
Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Association	The Longest Approach March In History	https://www.queensroyalsurreys.org.uk/ww2/middle_east/qme024.html Regimental context for 169 Queen's Brigade movement from Iraq to Tunisia; detailed figures still need direct checking.
Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Association	The Queen's Second World War CWGC roll	https://queensroyalsurreys.org.uk/monuments-and-memorials/cwgc/the_queens_ww2.pdf Independent regimental casualty roll confirming Donald Church's core record.
Tank Museum	Royal Armoured Corps Roll of Honour	https://tankmuseum.org/31 040-2/ Independent listing for Leonard Nickerson, 4 RTR, Middle East, 28 May 1944.
4th and 7th Royal Tank Regiment Association	Annex F Second World War Roll of Honour	https://4and7royaltankregiment.com/annex-f/ Second regimental listing for Leonard Nickerson; does not establish POW status.
United Nations Memorial Cemetery in Korea	Burial record for Goodwin L W	https://vr.unmck.or.kr/kor/04_memory/?country=UK&mcode=0 404 020 000&mode=2&no=2061&page=29 Official cemetery entry confirming service and burial details and recording the family cake story.
Roll of Honour	John William Chapman detailed biography	https://www.roll-of-honour.com/Huntingdonshire/SpaldwickChapman.html Compiled narrative explicitly documenting the 29 and 31 May date conflict and the operational context.
Commissioned research report	Spaldwick War Memorial Further Research Findings, 4 September 2026	Project Research masters folder Structured evidence review used to identify and evaluate additions for Edition 3; underlying sources are cited separately.

Scope of this edition

Edition 3 incorporates the commissioned further-research report and the subsequent independent review corrections. It adds the recovered Dixon compilation, a consistent nine-man casualty summary, the Royal Fusiliers account of Goodwin's final patrol, stronger accounts for Burton and both Chandler brothers, the Ashley and Great Stukeley evidence, and the 2025 conservation chronology. It does not convert attributed testimony into fact. The principal remaining work is the original church Roll, direct casualty certificates, official POW evidence, the 1922 unveiling, contemporary war diaries and primary family records.