

## Mountfield's Second War Memorial

Trish Jones

It is often forgotten that besides the war memorial in the church, Mountfield has a second war memorial at the school. The memorial itself is actually the top playground, the land for which was donated in July 1920 by Lord Ashton of Hyde, who lived at Vinehall, in memory of the men of Mountfield who had lost their lives in the First World War.

The playground was accessed by a set of wide stone steps which were adjacent to the road, but behind a high yew hedge. On the left, at the top of these steps was a Portland stone monument, resembling a gravestone, dedicating the playground to the 'Mountfield Men who fell in the Great War'. After its construction, the school children would hold a Remembrance Day service there each year. In November 1927, a local newspaper reported that:

"At the Mountfield and Whatlington school, a huge cross made by the teachers from flowers brought by the scholars, was placed on the memorial stone in the playground. After two minutes silence, the children marched past the stone and saluted in memory of the fallen. The National Anthem was sung and also hymns. In the afternoon, the Mountfield and Whatlington branch of the British Legion entertained nearly 140 children to tea at the school. A splendid feast was followed by an afternoon of entertainment which included a ventriloquist and 'living marionettes'."

When the A21 road layout changed in the 1960's, the hedge between the playground and the road was removed and replaced by the present brick boundary wall. The memorial stone in the playground was cut down to its present size and incorporated into the new wall. Over the intervening years the stone had discoloured and weathered badly, the writing becoming less clear. On 30<sup>th</sup> September this year, whilst in Mountfield to carry out work on the war memorial in the church, Arthur Towner's stonemasons thoroughly cleaned and renovated this memorial stone, the cost of the work being met by Mountfield Heath School.



*The old road layout and the yew hedge by the school*



*Before and after cleaning*



*Mountfield Heath School's headteacher, Lyndsey Jeffries and Office Manager Emma Tucker Gould with the newly restored memorial*