

resolution to "allocate from the rates the sum of £15" with an amendment that stated "No money be allotted from the rates for Peace Celebrations". Once again the issue demanded a straight forward yes or a no. But unlike the absence in reports of the 1919 council chamber debate of any reference to discord on the subject, this time was different. There was "a long discussion".

When the dust of verbal battle settled it became clear that the 1945 decision had been as decisive as that of 1919. With the hands raised for the motion counted the clerk of the council could declare it carried. With naturally two against. However messrs. Patterson and Buckle were not quite finished. When a further sum of £10 was moved to provide a "supper for the returned sailors, soldiers and airmen", the record of the vote taken, to no-one's surprise, showed "two against".

#### **Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March 1946.**

The Government followed the example of its predecessor at the end of the previous conflict and sanctioned, through the Ministry of Health "any reasonable expenses incurred for local celebrations". It was an offer enthusiastically taken up by the U.D.C., they agreeing "a grant be made and a Public Meeting be held in the Vicarage Rooms to appoint a Committee to carry out the arrangements in conjunction with the Council".

#### **Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> June 1946.**

#### **"SWAFFHAM DEFIES VICTORY DAY RAIN"**

#### **Carnival and fancy dress dance in Drill Hall.**

The day dawned wet and windy, but no amount of rain was allowed to mar the occasion. "Swaffham townspeople were in carnival mood. The Market Hill decorated in bunting and coloured lights. Additional street lights had been installed".

But first was the serious business of reminding everyone why they were celebrating. "A church parade in the morning, arranged by the British Legion, was disappointingly small, but there was a large congregation at the church for the service by the Vicar, the Rev. R. G. Heawood, the Methodist Minister, the Rev. G. Thomas and the Salvation Army officer". By today's standards the parade would undoubtedly be considered a well represented and attended one as it marched from the Shire Hall to the War Memorial with contingents from "the British Legion;

ex-Service personnel; Urban Councillors; Police and Special Constables; St. John Ambulance Brigade; nursing cadets, Girl Guides and Brownies. Major V.H. Barker took the salute at the War Memorial".

As the day progressed fund raising was entered into with a will. The Town Band played, with a minimum of breaks, throughout the entire day's events.

The sports were attended by hundreds, "the organizers and competitors determined to run", come rain come hailstones. "There was the 100 yds for boys; the 80yds for girls; the ladies potato race; the wheel-barrow race; the boat race, relay and obstacle races and the tug-o'-war". In charge was Mr.B.G.Allen, ably assisted by messrs. E.W.Wigg, C.Wells, H. Willmott, E.Oram, A.Robinson, F.Copsey, R.F.Hudson, P.A.Cooper, John Wilson, J.H. Wootton, J.Thornton and Mr.Thornton. Appreciated by all was the choosing of Mr.W.Tuttle, an ex. prisoner of war, to present the prizes. Almost everyone got a prize that day, certainly all the children.

At the Drill Hall young and old had a whale of a time. "Nearly 300 children had tea in the Drill Hall, each one receiving a shilling as a souvenir". Attending the same venue, that night, "100 people over the age of 65 were entertained to a tea and concert". Jack Howes led the fun and Mrs. V.H. Barker played piano. The vicar, Reverend M.R. Thomas, and the resident Salvation Army officer, joined in the entertainments. The teas were organized by Mr. Knock, chairman, and among the co-opted members were Wilfred Starling, B. Barker, R. Nelson and the chairman of the UDC, [Urban District Council] Mr. M. W. Howes.

#### **'The carnival and dance.'**

"Entries for the evening carnival were judged in the Drill Hall". But before this Mr. Wigg and Mr. Davey, one "on a penny-farthing bicycle, the other mounted on another bicycle about 9 inches tall, amused several hundred people in the street". The Hall itself "was packed, the stewards finding it difficult to clear space for the judging".

#### **'Bonfire and fireworks'.**

The fitting end to such a day was unfortunately delayed by persistent rain for forty-eight hours. But then, triumphantly, it "took place in the Campingland on the following Monday". The organizers had thought of everything, even how to ensure the town knew when the show in the sky was

to start that darkly clouded Monday evening. "A trial rocket brought large crowds, where the fireworks, costing £25 provided a grand display. Almost everyone had contributed something to the bonfire. It was a splendid finish to Swaffham's VE - Day celebrations which had attracted the largest crowd seen in the town in recent years. As a finale 15 rockets were fired simultaneously". During that day it was also noticed, by "bills now prominently displayed" that another then active and well supported organization, 'TOC H', had also been busily at work on the finance front. The people of the Town were made aware of a "the number of prizes to be won", they being displayed in Messrs. Salter and Salter's window, "for which a ticket had to be purchased". [The existing Children's Charity shop in Market Square, facing the Memorial, was Salter & Salter's Shoe Shop].

#### **Thursday November 5th 1946.**

#### **The Town's War Memorials back firmly on the agenda.**

The "Urban Council called a public meeting in co-operation with the British Legion, to inaugurate a fund to provide the means of perpetuating the memory of Swaffham men who fell in the last war".

One word, "disappointing," was used to describe the response. An attendance of just 25 brought forth from Cllr Fred Rowe his measured opinion, "disgusting", and the reporter, from whose article this is taken, wrote "there are many who will share his view". But in typical British bulldog fashion Fred would not accept defeat, "I refuse to believe that Swaffham people, any more now than in the war, are unmindful or forgetful of the sacrifices made by the serving men and especially those who gave their lives". No shilly-shallying would he allow, "The first move is to get the names of the Fallen inscribed on the present war memorial", he declared, and to make that possible a target, he confidently predicted, of "£1,000 will be achieved." there would be no raiding of the General rate fund. The money would, he promised, be "donated, as during past years £2,000 had been". There would be "an appeal" and the "holding of events" to raise the needed cash. The inevitable committee was elected with Mr. P. A. Cooper its secretary. The original prioritizing of activity to achieve a new plaque on the Memorial with the inscription 1939-45 was broadened "to have the names of the fallen inscribed on the present war memorial, and to purchase a playing field". The acquisition of a 'playing field' was never achieved, but the names of the 25 young men of Swaffham, on a suitably matching plaque, are inscribed on our War Memorial today.

#### **1947 : February 2nd**

A small sub-committee of the main War Memorial Committee was appointed, to arrange for a plaque to be purchased and inscribed with the names of the 25 Swaffham men who fell in the conflict, and then to be affixed to the column. An estimate for this was agreed, to include repairs to the four posts at the base of the column. The intrepid Councillor F P Rowe went a step further, and that February night the Urban District Council met, and with the support of Cllr Hellicar, Fred successfully proposed that the Council take responsibility for the future upkeep of the memorial.

#### **1947 : Consecration and unveiling of the Memorial.**

There is a dearth of pictorial record for many of the events which took place involving the outside Memorial, and this one in 1947 is no exception. After I failed, the Eastern Daily Press [E.D.P.] very kindly carried out an exhaustive search of their archives, reporting that they could find nothing. The original notice shown here is the only printed indication of the activities involved in the Dedication Ceremony at the Memorial I can find.

"May them watch eye on joy and felicity."

#### **WAR MEMORIAL.**

The consecration and unveiling of the Memorial will be at the Parish Church, on Sunday, the seventh day of December, 1947, at Morning Service, 11 a.m.

The Vicar, the Rev. R. S. HAWKINS, will officiate, and the unveiling will be by WILLIAM TURNER, late Norfolk Yeomanry, one of seven Brothers and Sisters who served.

#### **COPY INSCRIPTION ON MEMORIAL.—**

In honour and grateful remembrance of 25 men of this Parish who died serving their Country in the World War 1939-45.