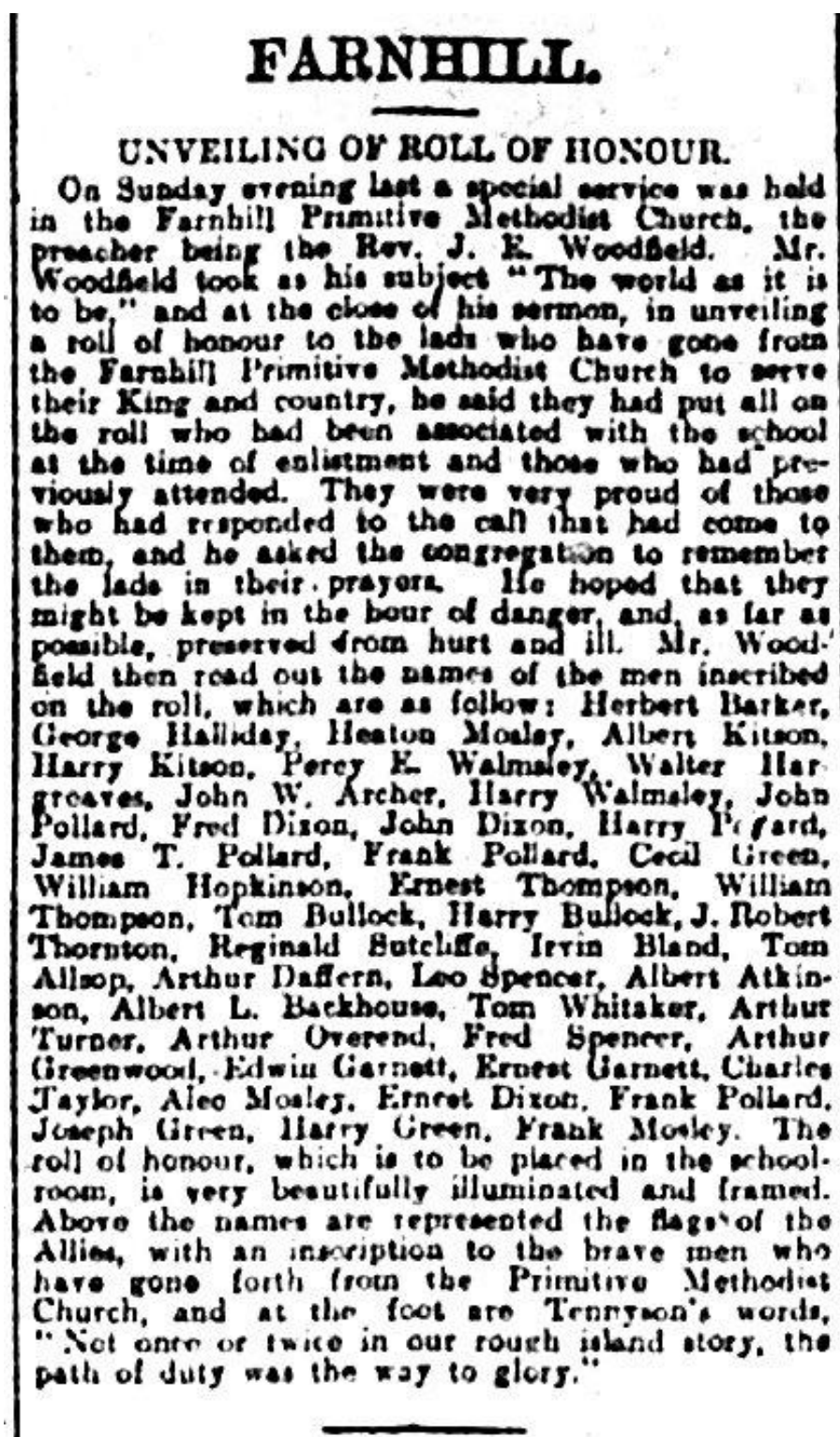


Farnhill Methodist Chapel WW1 Roll of Honour - its discovery, conservation, and restoration

Creation and unveiling of the Roll (1916)

Many of the Farnhill WW1 Volunteers were members of the local Methodist Chapel and, in addition to being included on the Farnhill Parish Council Roll, were also named on the Roll of Honour unveiled in the Chapel by Rev. Woodfield, in July 1916.



The Roll took the form of a pre-printed sheet of paper, produced by W.A. Hammond printers of Holborn, London, onto which names were written by hand. This format appears to have been popular with Methodist Chapels around the country; there are still Rolls of the same design in Wales and Leicestershire, as well as at least one other elsewhere in Yorkshire.

In Farnhill, the paper was stuck to a sheet of wood pulp board and screwed or nailed to a wall in the Chapel. The Roll does not appear to have been framed, which was almost certainly a deliberate decision.

At the time of unveiling, the war was still far from over and the Roll, initially with 51 names on it, would have a further nine added later (these can be seen at the bottom of the roll, written in a different hand). In addition, when a man died in service the details were added to the Roll – five of the 60 men named on the Roll perished in the war: Tom Allsop, Willie Barker, Joseph Green, William Mosley, and Harry Walmsley.

Unlike the Parish Council Roll, which recorded the names of men who were serving or who had volunteered to serve, the Methodist Chapel Roll listed men who had “gone from the Primitive Methodist Church to serve”. This accounts for why some of the names included on the FPC Roll (compiled in February 1916) were not present on the Methodist Roll when it was originally unveiled (in July 1916), but were added later. These men – Eric Green, Rupert Edward Barker, Cecil Baugh, and Willie Barker – had all volunteered but had not been called upon to commence their service.

Where in the Chapel the Roll was originally displayed is not known but much later, well after the end of the war, it is thought to have been kept in the vestry.

How the Roll came to the Volunteers Project

Shortly after it was formed in 2012, the Farnhill and Kildwick Local History Group was given a photograph of the Chapel’s WW1 Roll of Honour. This was a low-resolution image on which it was only just possible to make out the names – and then only when it was examined in conjunction with the original news report. Despite extensive attempts to enhance the image, very little could be done to improve it.

Enquiries were made but there was no information forthcoming about the Roll, and it was assumed to have been lost. This belief was strengthened when, at the time the Chapel closed its doors in 2015, members of the History Group were invited to spend an afternoon in the building taking photographs. Despite extensive searches, no sign of the Roll was found.

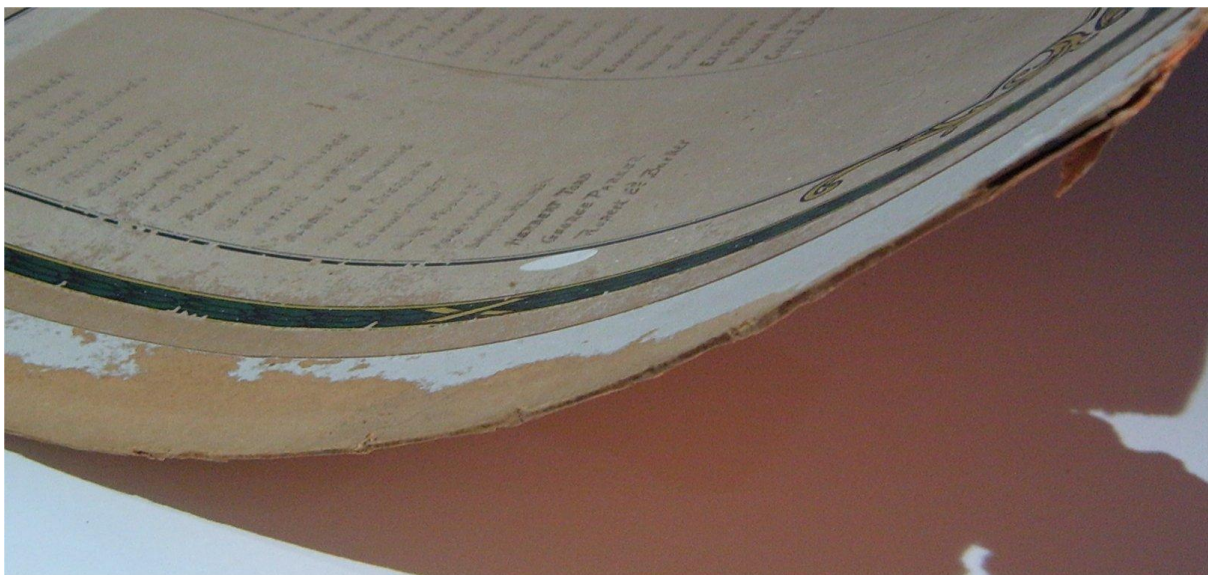
However, at the first public event held by the WW1 Volunteers Project, in February 2017, the Roll was handed over to the project, having been found ready to be discarded prior to the start of the building's redevelopment.

The reappearance of the Methodist Roll caused something of an issue for the Project. No money had been allocated from the project's budget for the conservation of the Roll – as it was thought to no longer exist. Clearly however, once the Roll had been rediscovered something had to be done with it.

The cost of conservation and restoration of the Roll was examined and then the matter was taken to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), who had provided the project with its grant. The HLF agreed that some of the grant could be used towards the cost; the rest was raised through a public appeal, which quickly reached its target.

The condition of the Roll

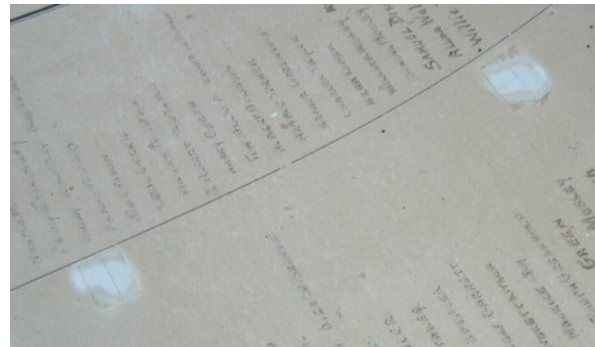
By the time it was handed over to the project, the Roll was showing signs of age and in obvious need of professional attention.



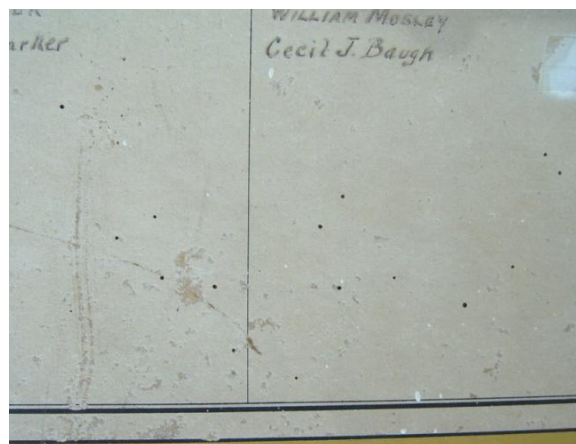
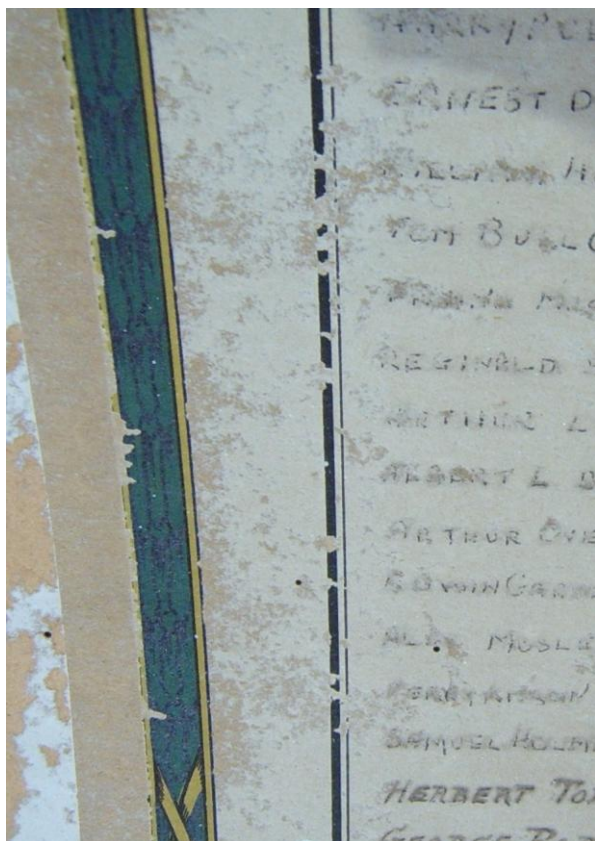
It was bent out of shape and could not be flattened.



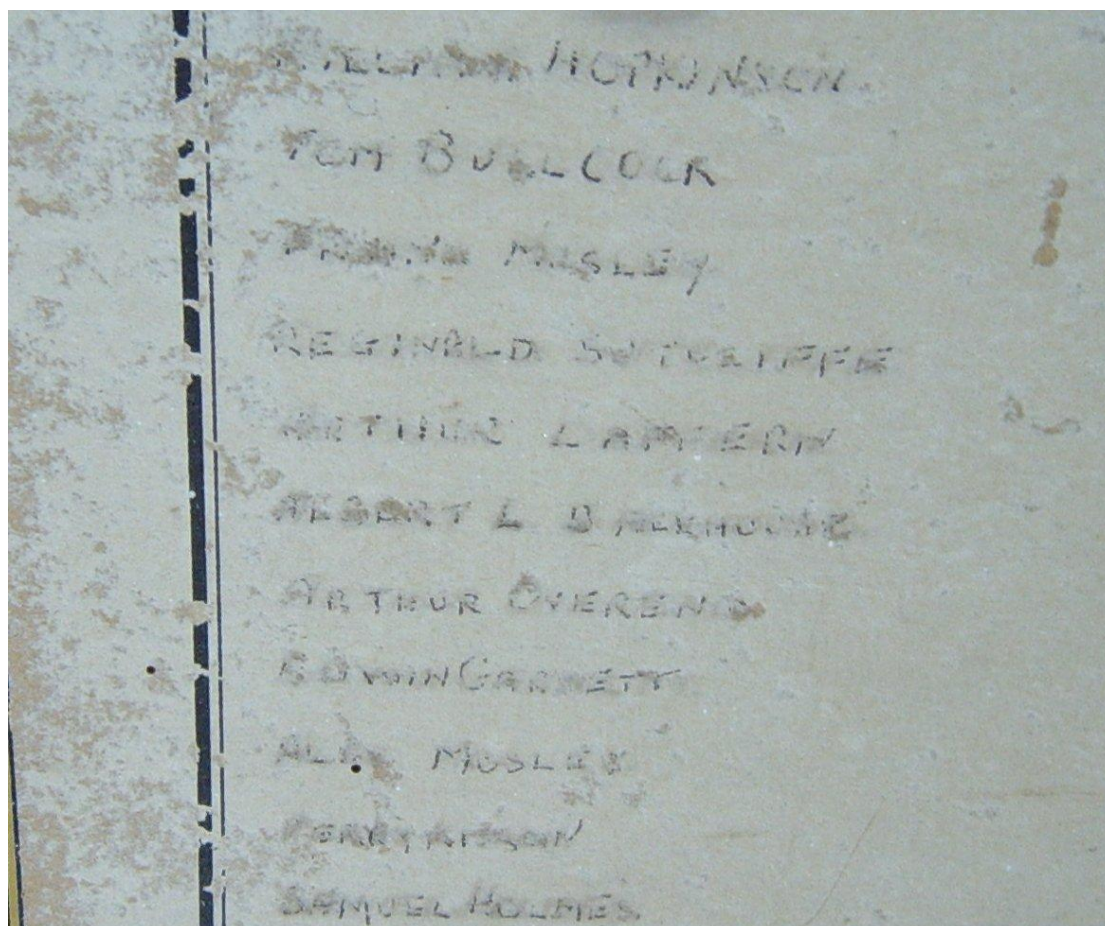
The backing was crumbling.



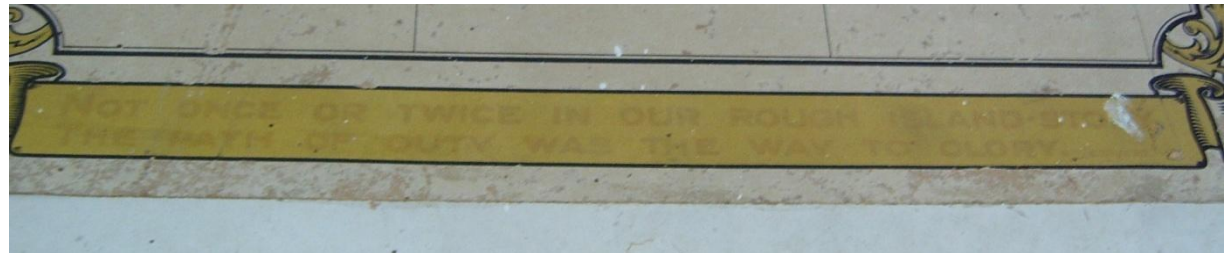
The surface had paint splashes.



Insects had eaten away the ink and bored through the paper.



Inked-in names had deteriorated – with some nearly impossible to read.



A lot of the colour had faded, with some colours lost altogether. In the upper image, for example, the flags are those of the Allied nations; the red in all the flags had disappeared – the one second from left, for example, is the flag of Japan.

Conservation and restoration

The Roll underwent a long process during which the original was conserved and a digitally-restored copy created.

Conservation – preserving what we have

Conservation was carried out by an accredited conservator, with specialist facilities, based near Ripon.



Members of the Farnhill WW1 Volunteers project handing-over the Roll to Richard Hawkes of Artworks Conservation

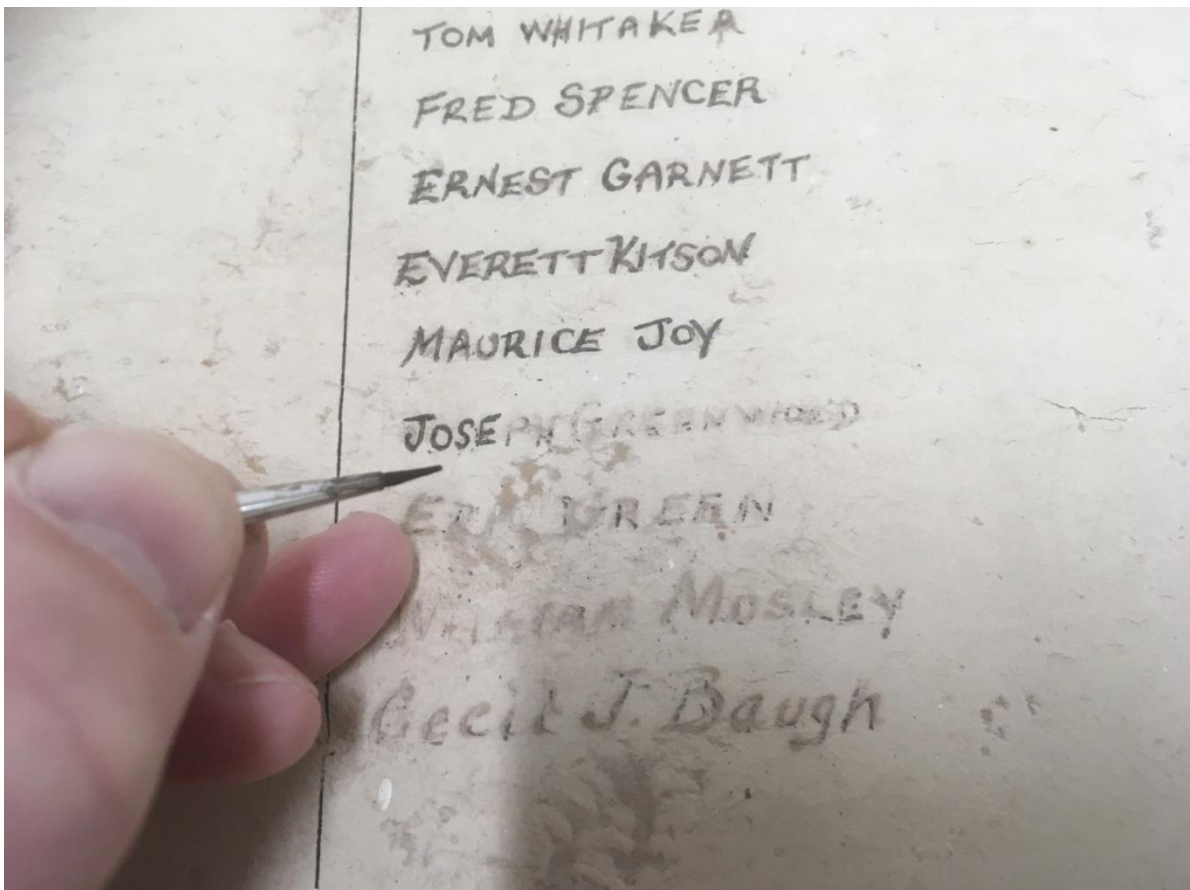
The paper Roll was carefully removed from the decayed backing.



Eggs of the insects that had bored into the Roll were found within the board – some of them still alive.



The Roll was cleaned and preserved by soaking in a chemical bath for several days.



Paint splashes were removed from the surface, where possible, and the hand-written text then carefully re-inked. The Roll was then remounted on an acid-free backing board.

The conserved original is now held on permanent loan at the North Yorkshire County Archive, in Northallerton, where it can be viewed by appointment.



Restoration – recreating the original (or getting as close as possible)

This was a multi-stage process:

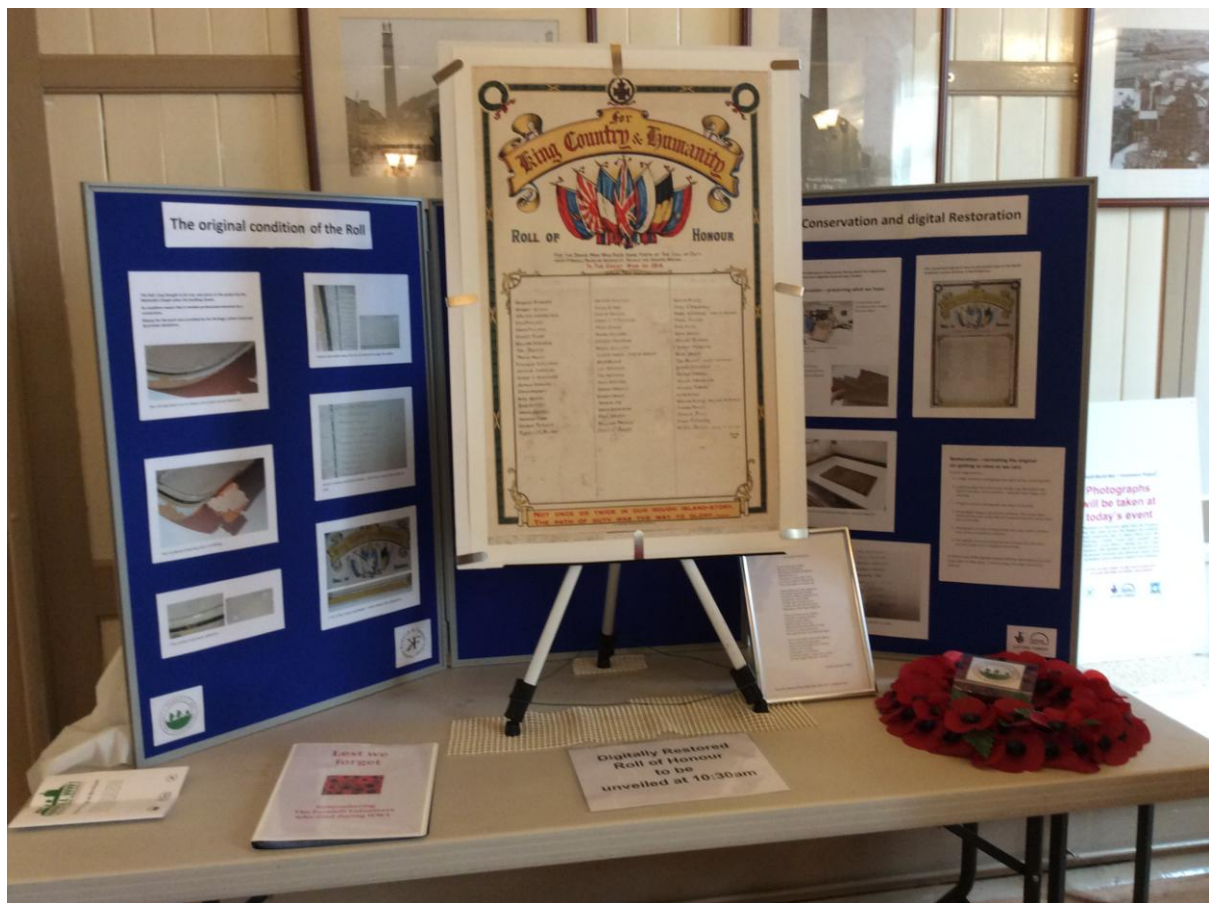
- A high-resolution photograph was taken of the conserved Roll.
- A good-quality Roll of the same design was identified in the North Yorkshire county archive – originally from Snape, near Leeming.
- A high-resolution photograph was taken of this Roll.
- Using digital image manipulation software, the names were removed from the Snape Roll and replaced with the names from the Farnhill Roll.
- Photographs of other archived Rolls were also used to achieve exact colour and pattern matches.
- The digitally-restored composite was printed, full-size, onto acid-free paper.

Unveiling the digitally-restored Roll

A copy of the digitally-restored Roll was unveiled at the project's "From Farnhill to the Front" exhibition, on November 10th 2018.



Members of the Farnhill WW1 Volunteers project unveiling the digitally-restored Farnhill Methodist Chapel WW1 Roll of Honour

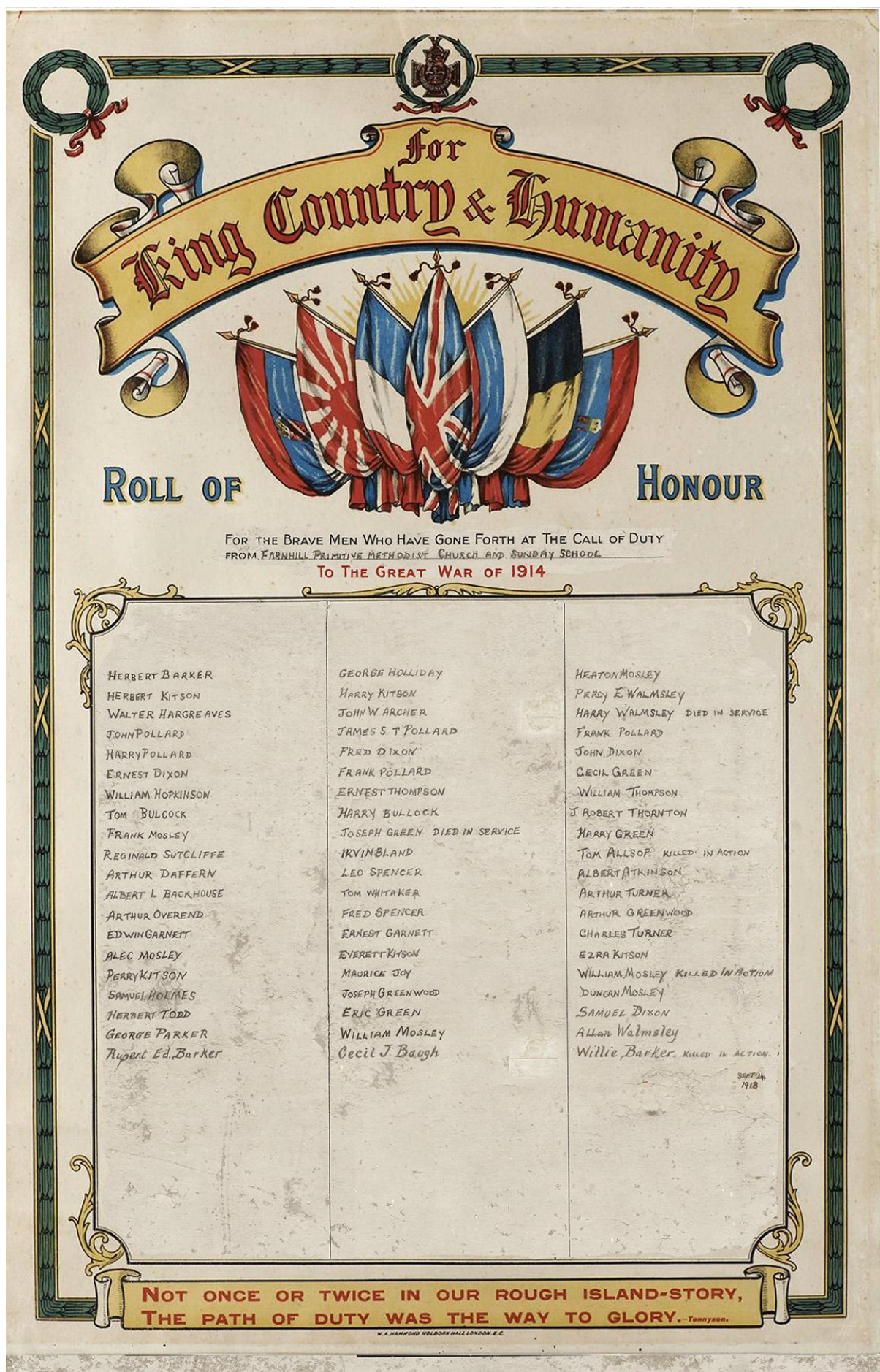


The digitally-restored Farnhill Methodist Chapel WW1 Roll of Honour
on display as part of the "From Farnhill to the Front" exhibition

The digitally-restored Roll, framed in oak and mounted under UV-filter glass, is now on permanent display in the Main Hall of Kildwick and Farnhill Institute.



Members of the project in front of the framed Roll in the Main Hall of Kildwick and Farnhill Institute



The digitally-restored Farnhill Methodist Chapel WW1 Roll of Honour

Why it was important to do this

The importance to the project of conserving and restoring the Methodist Roll is summed up in the words of the Shipley poet Estelle Lancaster, one of the many contributors to our funding appeal, who has herself been involved in the continuing search for a lost Roll of Honour bearing the name of her grandfather.

SO NONE FORGETS

In towns and quiet villages,
Wherever men had gone,
Old friends and shadowed families
Wanted to pass on
The memory of those they'd lost
To all who walked in freedom, lest
We should forget to count the cost.

Small children gave their tuppences;
Poor people gave their shilling.
For pals, for fathers, husbands, sons,
Communities were willing
To make some sacrifice to give
To those who had supremely given
Memorials so their names might live.

They raised fine crosses, obelisks
And rolls. In schools and halls,
In stations and in offices —
Wherever there were walls —
They carved the ordered lines of dead
So all of us could one day read
How great the loss, how marked the deed.

Now we must hold in trust these plaques,
These paintings and park gates,
These stones and stained glass windows,
All that commemorates
A time apart, a world afraid,
Good lives undone, young widows made,
So none forgets what price was paid.

Estelle Lancaster (2001)

