

The Gardner Memorial



On 4th April 1916, The Newcastle Morning Herald in Australia, reported that there was a large and solemn assembly outside the Post Office in Hunter Street Newcastle to mark the laying of the foundation stone of a memorial drinking fountain and roll of honour, presented to the City of **Newcastle** by **Commander Frank Gardner, V.D.**, in memory of **district soldiers killed in World War 1.**

Commander Frank Gardner, or Mr Newcastle as he was locally known, was born in the **Bell and Bowling Green Inn** in **Tewkesbury** England in 1842. He was the son of **George Gardner** who was landlord of the Bell from 1831 to 1852 and grandson of **William Gardner**, landlord of the **Chequers** in **Church Street** **Tewkesbury.**

From Woodard Database

Church Street – West Angell Inn/ Bell Hotel

1696 "I.K." = Isaac Kenelm/ Kemble?; then linked with Bull Hotel in Crescent by a row of cottages; 1796 new main road to left; 1800 "Ring of Bells"?; 1854 Bell sold for £920 (£33,285.60p in 1996); 1973 loss of Bowling Green due to "exorbitant rent rise" replaced by a row of houses; BOWLING Green site of Regatta Ball until 1921; 1992 price c £500,000

1774-1797 John Founes (Fownes)

1797-1813 John Brown

1813-20 Richard Blakeway

1820-(22) Bramwell Whitmore

1822-30

1831-52 George Gardner

Linnell: Tewkesbury Pubs 1996 Edition pp36-39

1831: March 26 Local Memoranda: **Fire At The Bell Inn, Occupied By George Gardner**

J. Bennett " Register & Magazine" Volume I p47 (Town Library)

P329/1 OV 1/10 Gloucestershire Archives November 1836 1057 Bell Hotel?

George Gardner

George Gardner

House; Garden and Bowling Green and stock

CHURCH STREET

Rental: £65-0s-0d + £32-10s-0d

Poor Rate £1-12s-6d + 6d stock Paid Jan 23rd

Wendy Snarey

1841 Ref- HO107/380/6 **Church Street (Bell Hotel)**

George Gardener; Male; 49; Innkeeper; Born In Gloucestershire.

Mary Gardener; Female; 39; Not Born In Gloucestershire.

Henry Gardener; Male; 7; Born In Gloucestershire.

William Gardener; Male; 3; Born In Gloucestershire.

Charles Gardener; Male; 1; Born In Gloucestershire.

Cordelia Hartshorn; Female; 15; Not Born In Gloucestershire.

Frederick White; Male; 14; Male Servant; Born In Gloucestershire.

Thomas Greenfield; Male; 18; Male Servant; Born In Gloucestershire.

Mary Kear; Female; 15; Female Servant; Born In Gloucestershire.

Sarah Wall; Female; 18; Female; Servant; Born In Gloucestershire.

Giles Carter; Male; 35; Farmer; Born In Gloucestershire.

William Hobb; Male; 15; Smith; Born In Gloucestershire.

1851 Ref- HO107/1974 Church Street

George Gardner; Head; Married; Male; 59; Stonemason & Innkeeper; Born Tewkesbury Glos.

Mary Gardner; Wife; Married; Female; 49; Born Hereford.

Henry Gardner; Son; Single; Male; 17; Born Tewkesbury Glos.

William A. Gardner; Son; Male; 12; Born Tewkesbury Glos.

Charles Gardner; Son; Male; 11; Born Tewkesbury Glos.

Francis Gardner; Son; Male; 9; Born Tewkesbury Glos.

Ann Dudfield; Visitor; Married; Female; 70; Born Broseley Shropshire.

Jane Wise; Servant; Single; Female; 23; General Servant; Born Londonderry Ireland.

Mary A. Howes; Servant; Female; 13; General Servant; Born Forthampton Glos.

John James; Servant; Single; Male; 27; Hostler; Born Tewkesbury Glos.

George Gardner; Son; Single; Male; 19; Draper; Born Tewkesbury Glos.

Frank's obituary in 1926 told of a very full life and one which seemingly was dominated by marine activities.

He told, in his reminiscent moods, of the fishing and boating on the Severn and **going to sea at the age of 14 years [1856]**. His first voyage was to the Crimean Peninsula, where he assisted in the evacuation after the war, this was followed by blockade running on voyages from Liverpool to America during the American Civil War and even some gun running!

He settled in Australia in 1862 joining the ranks of the Newcastle Naval Brigade and rising to post of Commander. Retiring from this post after 40 years' service he was one of the oldest officers in the Australian Naval Reserve, a founder member of the Naval and Military Association, the Newcastle Sailors' Home and the Shipwreck Relief Society. He was Committee Secretary of the New Year's Day Regatta on Newcastle Harbour and in 1897 was appointed to the local Marine Board

Marine activities aside, Frank Gardner was an Auctioneer and Insurance Agent setting up business beneath the old School of Arts building in Hunter Street but this was destroyed in a fire in 1870. He set up business again in Bolton Street but in less than a year fire destroyed it and, owing to a lack of fire appliances, nothing of value was saved.

In 1881, Gardner undertook the reorganisation of the city fire brigades to ensure other unlucky citizens didn't have to go through the same pain as he did and having to rebuild lives afresh. He retained the role of honorary fire superintendent until 1910 and his efforts were officially recognised by the Town Hall who presented him with a gold medal to acknowledge greatly improved fire-fighting practices.

But perhaps his most generous gift to the City was the unusual WWI statue memorial outside the old Hunter Street post office. In a letter to the Council 19th July 1915 he asked the Council *“to accept and undertake to be custodians of a drinking fountain, which he was prepared to donate, to commemorate those belonging to this district who may fall doing their duty upholding the British Empire”*

The offer was accepted with thanks

The October 1915 minutes record a letter stating the site selected for the Memorial to be on the footpath off the Post Office – which was approved and carried

The Memorial was to be 18 feet high. A square base of stone, upon which will be set marble tablets, inscribed with the names of fallen of Newcastle district soldiers and particulars of the donor. It was to be surmounted by a life size Italian marble statue of a soldier, with reversed rifle. The architect was Mr Ernest Tingle and contractor Mr T. Brown of West Maitland

The foundation stone was laid by the Mayor on the 5th April 1916 less than one year after the landing at Gallipoli and it was unveiled on 16th September 1916. It was believed to be Australia`s first memorial to World War One that incorporated a soldier-statue.

The years, as for most memorials, took its toll and by 1988 the Council were discussing the move of the memorial to Civic Park because of the vandalism. Heated discussions took place as to the removal of the monument, one member stating that “if any more memorials were moved to Civic Park it should be renamed Cemetery Park”

It was eventually decided not to resite the memorial but to carefully remove, clean and restore it and to have it back for ANZAC day 1990

In 2016, in Newcastle, standing outside the old Post Office (which is no longer in use) is the restored memorial, looking very pristine. It is a credit to the city and to the Tewkesburian who paid for it.

We here in Tewkesbury should feel very proud.

Wendy Snarey