Dedication of World War II Memorial
Chapel (in Castro) at Carisbrooke Castle
Thursday 7th November 2024

What started as a conversation between John Matthews DL and the then Lord-Lieutenant, Major General Sir Martin White, resulted in the dedication of a memorial by the Bishop of Portsmouth. The memorial, listing the names of those who died in action during the Second World War sits alongside an existing memorial, created in 1929 which lists names of those who died during the First World War.

In 2017, following a Field of Remembrance Service at Carisbrooke Castle, John Matthews, a Deputy Lieutenant, long-serving Coroner and a keen local historian, suggested the possibility that the names of servicemen and merchant mariners who were killed in action in the Second World War be added to the walls of the chapel.

Exploratory discussions took place with the then Vicar of Carisbrooke, English Heritage, (the charitable trust which manages the Castle and looks after the fabric of the Chapel) and also with the Portsmouth Diocesan Advisory Committee (the statutory authority that advises on works to churches and their contents).

It was concluded that English Heritage could manage the project, including obtaining any necessary permissions from Historic England and seeking clarification from the Diocesan Advisory Committee as to whether or not it would be necessary to apply for a faculty for the proposed work to be undertaken.

John Matthews set about the enormous task of researching existing town and village war memorials and other records to compile a definitive list of the 789 Island servicemen and merchant seamen who had been killed in action during the Second World War.

The then Vice Lord-Lieutenant, Sir Guy Acland Bt, LVO, DL secured funding from various charities, trusts and individuals which together contributed 95% of the total cost, with English Heritage making up the balance.

Once the involved parties had agreed on the size and the font of the print to be used, the colour of the paint, and the wording of the title boards, the scheme was signed off by the Diocesan Advisory Committee. In January 2024, a contract was confirmed with the excellent local specialist decorator Nicola Thwaites and the first dab of paint was applied using stencils prepared by Lyn Karlen, the stencil drafter.

In March 2024 the work was completed. The Lieutenancy is immensely grateful to all those involved in the project for their contribution in providing this significant new page in the Island's history.