

## Francis Reginald Palmer (1894-1917)

**Character in the Sherborne Pageant:**  
Maypole Dancer

### Episode 11: Children Dance around the Maypole

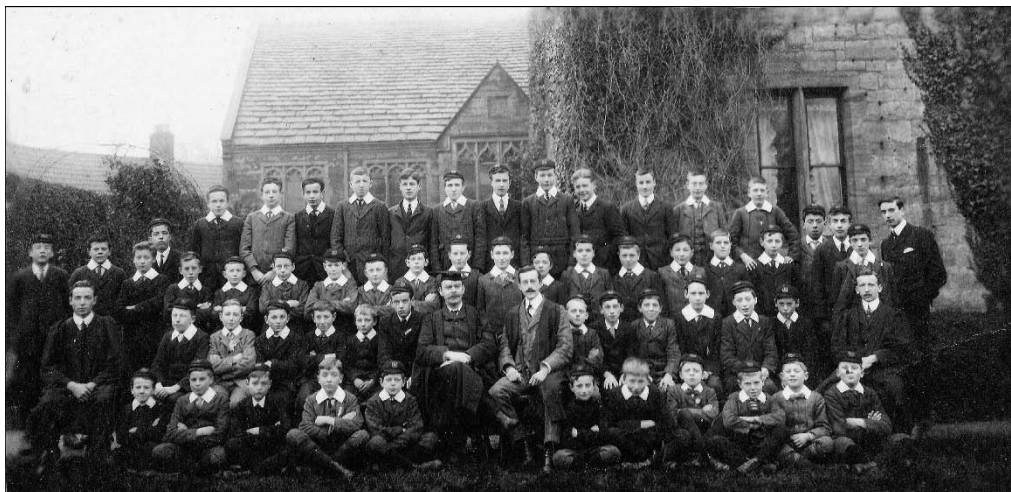
In the closing stages of Episode 11 the chorus sings the Triumph Song, which details the 'good ship Sherborne' travelling through history, ending: *'With the tribute of our praises, words of worship and of love, Though not half be said or sung for her that in our breast we bore, With twelve hundred years beneath her, and the bend of heaven above, Down the ocean of the ages lo! We launch her forth once more!'*

During this song a Maypole is set up and, as the chorus sings *'With a laugh as we go round'* from Sir Sterndale Bennett's 'May Queen', the children dance around the Maypole.

Francis Reginald Palmer, known as Reg, signed his name Reggie in the pageant album. He was born in Stoke-sub-Hamdon the only child of Annie and Arthur Palmer. Arthur was caretaker at Sherborne Girls' School. Reg was a bright and talented boy and he won a scholarship to Foster's School and then went on to Bristol University. He is remembered in the family for his party piece which was playing the piano with a glass of water balanced on the back of each hand. He enlisted in 6th Battalion Dorsetshire Regiment and was sent to France to fight. He sent several very poignant letters back to Foster's school and they can be found recorded in the bound copies of the school magazine held by Sherborne Museum. He was killed during the battle of Arras on 23 April 1917. He was church organist at Osborne and he is commemorated by a stained glass window in St Cuthbert's church. His distraught parents donated an honours board which hung in his old school (and now hangs in the Gryphon school) and when the new school was built, in 1939, his mother made a donation in her will enabling the library to be panelled in his memory. Reg is pictured in the Foster's School photo taken in 1910—he is 5th from the left in the back row. Could that possibly be him second from the right, standing with his fellow maypole dancers, in the photograph taken by J Benjamin Stone?



Photograph by J Benjamin Stone



1910 Foster's School photograph by kind permission of Sherborne Museum