

Carfax, Horsham



War Memorials Trust

Introduction

The World War I and II memorial situated in the Carfax, Horsham is one of a number of memorials in the town. The memorial occupies a prominent position in the town centre and is Grade II listed. Numerous buildings nearby including the bandstand behind the memorial are also listed. It has an interesting history, is a good example of how decisions about a war memorial are made by the local community and highlights how memorials may change over time to incorporate more recent wars.

Design of the war memorial

The memorial is set within a 12m by 5m area and takes the form of an obelisk made from Hopton Wood stone. It is 17 feet (5.18m) in height. At the top of the obelisk is a large runic design open cross incised in the stone. Attached to the front there is a bronze Crusader's sword facing downwards. The obelisk stands on a plinth which is on a two-stepped base. There is an inscription on the front of the lower base which reads 'In proud and grateful memory of the men of Horsham who gave their lives for their country'. The dates of the two World Wars are inscribed on the north and south sides of the base.

Behind the obelisk is a brick wall with seven tablets set in to it. On the outer aspect of the wall there are a series of ornate metal sculptures by Edwin Russell, each showing a different theme. The words 'In Piam Memoriam' are carved in large letters. The area around the obelisk is surrounded by a low wall with an iron fence on top. The top of the railings depict poppies in various stages of bloom.



World War I and II memorial in Carfax, Horsham taken from different viewpoints © War Memorials Trust, 2018

History of the war memorial

On 8th January 1919 a committee was formed to discuss the erection of a war memorial to remember the 359 local men and boys who lost their lives during World War I. A public meeting took place in the town hall on Monday 19th May 1919 at 7pm to consider a report from the committee submitting a design for the proposed memorial. From a range of suggestions for new projects including a recreation ground, hospital, public hall or YMCA building it was determined that the memorial should take the form of an obelisk and be erected in the Carfax. An appeal was launched for public subscriptions to meet the design and construction costs.

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The initial design created by Mr Arthur Walker was deemed too expensive and dropped. Local architect Mr Claude Kay was chosen by the council to create a similar design. Mr Kay also worked with Lieutenant Colonel Godman to design Horsham's original Capitol Theatre and the town's Drill Hall. Initially the design did not include the 359 names of those killed in action. It was thought the space available would result in the names being so crowded together it would detract from the honour due to them. This caused great division in the community. Many relatives were keen that the names of the fallen should feature. The final design had three panels for names angled over the steps.

The memorial was unveiled by Major General J C Young, Colonel of the Royal Sussex Regiment and dedicated by Reverend Morley Headlam on 13th November 1921. A local newspaper recorded the unveiling explaining the service was quite short. The day was described as frosty but bright and fine weather 'quite unlike gloomy November'. There was a space for dignitaries and the relatives of the men named on the memorial while a regimental band played on the bandstand. After the service the war memorial was formerly handed over by the chairman of the memorial committee to the chairman of Horsham Urban District Council, Mr Hunt, who said, "On behalf of the council may I say we shall ever consider it our bounden duty to always keep and properly preserve this memorial."



Railings surrounding the war memorial in Carfax, Horsham depicting poppies in various stages of bloom © War Memorials Trust, 2018



One of the ornate metal sculptures on the rear of the wall behind the war memorial in Carfax, Horsham © War Memorials Trust, 2018

By 1929 the names on the panels had become weathered. It was decided to inscribe the World War I names on three tablets set into a separate brick wall, built behind the obelisk. This decision was based on a plan by C G Atkinson. Later iron railings were put up to stop dogs fouling. In the early 1990s the memorial was moved from its original position below the bandstand in the direction of Market Square, next to what is now the bus stop, to its current position in the centre of the pedestrianised area of the Carfax. The names of the fallen from the World War II were added and the simple lead plaque which had been put up after World War II was given to Horsham Museum. Research by a local historian highlighted there were a number of missing World War I and II names. The memorial was rededicated in 2010 when the wall was extended and a new plaque with 60 additional names from World War I was added. A plaque with 43 missing World War II names was unveiled on 11th November 2015 replacing one which remembered the allies stationed in Horsham during World War II and had Laurence Binyon's Ode of Remembrance.

The Dancy family

Alfred Jack and Charles Dancy are two names which are recorded on the memorial. They were part of a large Horsham family of six brothers and two sisters. Four of the brothers, Frederick, Hubert, Alfred Jack and Charles, were on active service during World War I. The family lived in a cottage in the grounds of Holbrook Park called The Gardens.

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Frederick, Hubert and Alfred Jack all served with the Royal Sussex Regiment. Frederick received a Military Medal for Bravery in the field and survived the war. Hubert, a Private in the 13th Battalion, was very lucky to survive the war. His battalion was almost completely annihilated at The Battle of Boar's Head. Hubert was seriously wounded while sheltering in a shell hole in No Mans Land. He was picked up by German stretcher bearers and held as a prisoner of war.



Charles and Alfred Jack Dancy (2nd column) named on the war memorial in Carfax, Horsham © War Memorials Trust, 2018

The 1911 census recorded Alfred Jack, aged 19, working as a gardener while boarding with the Marsh family in Rusper near Horsham. Before war broke out he joined the Territorial 4th Battalion of the Royal Sussex Regiment as a Private. In 1915 he was serving in France with the 7th Battalion of the same regiment as a member of the Machine Gun section. Later he served as a Sergeant with the Machine Gun Corps. Alfred Jack was killed in action on 27th March 1918 as British Troops retreated across the old Somme Battlefields at the height of the Ludendorff Offensives. He is commemorated on Pozieres Memorial, France as he has no known grave.

Charles attended the local school in Roffey before becoming a gardener. He joined the army as a volunteer at Guildford, Surrey and became a Lance Corporal in the 8th Battalion of the Queens Regiment. He was killed in action on 25th January 1916 aged 22 and is buried at the Menin Road South Military Cemetery in Belgium.

Teaching suggestions

Information about and photographs of this memorial can be used in sessions with young people about:

- Researching names: this memorial highlights how, with some research, it is possible to find out more about the people commemorated on the memorial and establish if any are related
- Community decisions and changes to war memorials: the debate about the inclusion of names and subsequent changes to the memorial highlight there are no specific rules concerning their creation. Many decisions were made by the community. It may be interesting for pupils to sketch the memorial at different points in its history to highlight these
- War memorial designs: the original memorial obelisk is an example of a traditional memorial type. The ornate metal sculptures are a rather more unusual design. The design in its entirety can be used as a local example of how designs can vary. You may consider asking pupils to design their own series of ornate metal structures which could be added
- Significant battles in World War I: War Memorials Trust's information sheet on the Day Sussex Died, available from www.learnaboutwarmemorials.org, provides more information and suggested activities to learn more about the Battle of Boar's Head

Useful links

The following link may provide additional helpful information about this memorial:

- War Memorials Online record: www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/memorial/185756

Further information can be found at www.learnaboutwarmemorials.org/links which may help with lessons on some of the wider issues suggested here.

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