

Chapel Road, Worthing



War Memorials Trust

Introduction

Worthing World War I and II memorial is a civic war memorial located outside the Town Hall on Chapel Road. It includes the men from the Parishes of Broadwater, Durrington, West Tarring and St Pauls. This memorial is a good example of how memorials were funded through public subscription and also illustrates the problems that war memorials face today.

Design of the war memorial

The war memorial is made from Portland stone and takes the form of a tall, square plinth on a stepped base. At the top of the plinth on each side is a bronze wreath. Above, is a bronze sculpture of a British soldier in full uniform holding a rifle in his left hand and his helmet aloft in his right. The base of the sculpture is covered by the debris of war. The soldier is life size and represents victory. The sculpture is the same as the figure used for the Chertsey, Ebbw Vale, Stafford, Truro and King Edward Street Post Office memorials. The whole memorial is surrounded by a low chain.



Worthing war memorial located outside the Town Hall on Chapel Road © War Memorials Trust, 2018

History of the war memorial

In 1919 the Worthing Gazette (now the Worthing Herald) launched the Worthing War Memorial Gazette Shilling Fund. This campaign was spearheaded by the newspaper after the council's scheme was abandoned. Frederick Adsett, one of the newspaper's Directors, worked tirelessly to raise funds for the memorial and by November 1920 sufficient funds had been raised to instruct the council to proceed with laying the memorial's foundation. The war memorial committee commissioned Whitehard and Sons Ltd to make the bronze figure for £550 as well as 4 bronze wreaths. The pedestal was made and engraved locally by Francis Tate a 'Monumental Mason and Sculptor' of Charrara Marble Works in North Street for £400.



Inscription on the base of the war memorial which highlights that it was erected through public subscription as well as when and by who it was unveiled © War Memorials Trust, 2018

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The memorial was unveiled on 11th April 1921 by Field-Marshal Sir William Robertson, referred to in the inscription. Field-Marshal Robertson also unveiled Chichester's memorial. The unveiling began at 3pm and was attended by at least 7,000 people including many local trades' people who had closed their businesses especially so they could attend the ceremony. The Horsham based 4th Battalion of the Royal Sussex Regiment provided the Military Guard of Honour for the ceremony.

The memorial was originally erected in the garden of Tudor Lodge on the corner of Stoke Abbott and Chapel Road. The building was bought as temporary council offices. In 1933 the New Town Hall was built on the site of Tudor Lodge which resulted in the memorial being moved slightly. After World War II the memorial was raised on a high base to accommodate the addition of the dedication and names.



Rear of war memorial which shows the names at the base which were added after World War II © War Memorials Trust, 2018

Conservation

The memorial has been subject to vandalism in the past, namely graffiti. Local residents and veterans were incensed to find that just hours before the Armistice Day service in 2006 neo-Nazi graffiti had been spray-painted onto the memorial. A large black swastika covered the names of soldiers who fought in the Great War and SS had been sprayed over the World War II inscription. Contractors were called immediately to clean the graffiti from the memorial so that the service could go ahead as planned at 11am. A local newspaper reported that during the Remembrance Day service the Mayor's chaplain, Father Edward Jervis said the vandalism was 'despicable'. Residents also spoke of the mindless actions of the vandal(s) and expressed that the timing of the vandalism was particularly hurtful.

The memorial was listed in June 2017 giving it extra protection. However, in February 2018, it was subject to a further act of vandalism. Large letters spelling Anna were written in pen along with a name which had been added below the list of names on the memorial. Council staff and contractors tried to remove the graffiti and when the Mayor spoke he provided reassurance that specialist cleaners would fully remove the graffiti in the coming weeks. Articles and images for both vandalism cases can be found in local newspapers.

This memorial is a good example of the some of the difficulties facing many war memorials today and highlights the importance of education in ensuring their future protection. It is possible that whoever damaged the memorial did not fully appreciate what it was and the significance to the community. This does not excuse the damage but does highlight the need to ensure that people of all ages are educated about the historical and current significance of war memorials to minimise similar acts of vandalism in the future.

It is worth noting the graffiti should not necessarily be removed immediately if the methods of removal will cause further damage. It is important for custodians to identify what has been used and how to safely remove it. Different substances will require different methods of removal.

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Teaching suggestions

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

- The creation of war memorials: the Shilling Fund campaign that was set up following the abandonment of the council's scheme highlights the strength of community feeling after the Great War that those who were killed should be remembered in some way. Discussions could take place about why there was such strong feelings among local communities around memorialisation and why around two thirds of the memorials in the UK were created in the wake of World War I
- Vandalism to war memorials: the incidences of graffiti on the memorial are an example of the kind of vandalism that affects war memorials and can be used to explore attitudes towards this and the effects of it on the community. War Memorials Trust's lesson plan on ['Why are war memorials important?'](#) could be used to explore and teach these issues using this memorial as an example

Useful links

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

- War Memorials Online record: www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/memorial/122302

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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