

# Peace Garden, Patcham



## Introduction

One of the war memorials in Patcham, a South Downs village which is now an area within the city of Brighton and Hove, is a Peace Garden. It is an example of a war memorial which is seen to express hope that a better, more peaceful world would result from the carnage and devastation of World War I. A memorial cross in All Saints Church, Patcham remembers those from the parish who gave their lives in World War I and II.

## Design and history of the war memorial

In June 1928 an area of open downland was purchased by the city council from the Abergavenny estate to create a memorial to peace following World War I. The purchase was mainly due to the efforts of Herbert



Sunken rose garden section within Patcham Peace Gardens. © War Memorials Trust, 2018

Carden who worked for Brighton Council for over 40 years. He was considered a visionary and known as the 'maker of modern Brighton'. There had been plans to build a petrol station on the site but Herbert Carden saw the need to preserve the surrounding downland to protect the water supply and to provide recreational facilities in the countryside for residents of the town.

2.7 hectares was set out as a public garden and split into two halves<sup>1</sup>. The southern garden was laid out as a sunken rose garden with a small Doric Temple decorated with fruit motifs and figureheads and a Tuscan pergola. Both items were purchased from the 1924 Wembley Exhibition by Captain Bertie Hubbard MacLaren who was Superintendent of Brighton Parks Department from 1920 to 1951. Statues from the old aquarium were relocated to the garden. A raised walkway with benches at intervals surrounds the sunken garden. There was a polygonal pool in the centre which has since been replaced by a circular hedge. The northern half of the garden was set out as a simple grassed area and intended to be used as a recreational ground.

## The memorial today

Since 2012 the local U3A have worked to improve the overgrown section at the south end of the formal garden. The group are keen to ensure the garden continues to be of value to the local community. The gardens became Centenary Fields in 2016, recognition from Fields in Trust to mark World War I. This award provides the gardens with additional protection and ensures local people have access to free outdoor space for sport, play and recreation.

Unfortunately the gardens have been subject to several acts of vandalism in recent years. The original trees have been replaced many times. Only 4 of the 9 trees still exist as a result of the cost involved with continually replacing them.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Fields in Trust, 2017

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In July 2016 thieves caused around £5,000 worth of damage. They removed a roadside barrier to get onto the site to rip up and steal some of the York stone paving. Some of the stones were left stacked up on the site which indicated the thieves intended to return and remove these at a later time. The council acted quickly to relay the stones to prevent those that had been piled up from being stolen as well. Replacements for the stolen stones were sourced from local suppliers.



In October 2017 the Doric Temple was vandalised twice in a week, on consecutive nights. Vandals smashed out some of the curved stone blocks to the rear of the temple. The dislodged blocks were salvaged but when repairs were undertaken they were too badly damaged to be re-used. After the vandalism, the temple was in need of urgent structural repairs so was cordoned off and temporarily secured with fencing. Works using the council's reactive maintenance budget were carried out quickly to discourage further vandalism and to maintain the structure. Both incidences of vandalism were reported in the press.



Recreation area (top) and Doric Temple (bottom), both in Patcham Peace Gardens  
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This memorial is an example of difficulties facing war memorials today. Whoever damaged the memorial may not fully appreciate what it is and its significance to the community. While this does not excuse their actions it does highlight the need to ensure people of all ages are fully aware of the significance of war memorials. Through education it is hoped the next generation of custodians recognise their importance and thus minimise similar acts of vandalism in the future.

### Teaching suggestions

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

- 'Functional' war memorials: many young people conjure up the image of a stone monument or cross when thinking of a war memorial. Patcham Peace Garden challenges this idea and reinforces the idea that war memorials can be any object by using a local example
- Vandalism to war memorials: the recent damage to the memorial is an example of vandalism that affects war memorials. It could be used as a local example to explore attitudes towards this and the effects of it on the community. These issues can be explored using War Memorials Trust's lesson plan, [www.learnaboutwarmemorials.org/primary/pri-lessons/why-are-war-memorials-important](http://www.learnaboutwarmemorials.org/primary/pri-lessons/why-are-war-memorials-important).

### Useful links

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

- War Memorials Online record: [www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/memorial/238563](http://www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/memorial/238563)

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

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