

Animals in War memorial



War Memorials Trust

Introduction

This sheet gives information about the Animals in War memorial. It has been written specifically to accompany War Memorials Trust's primary lesson plan about animals in war, and could be used during this lesson as a resource for older pupils or as background information for teachers to aid planning. This sheet includes a number of further images of the memorial which may aid classroom discussion about it.



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Background information

The Animals in War memorial is located on Park Lane, near Hyde Park in London. It was unveiled in November 2004, to coincide with the 90th anniversary of the outbreak of World War I, and commemorates the contribution of animals to conflicts that happened during the 20th century.

The memorial was designed by sculptor David Backhouse.

The memorial's design

The memorial consists of a curved Portland stone wall dividing two sections, the section in front of the wall being at a lower level than the one behind it. The wall itself is split into two sections with an opening in the middle through which steps lead to the upper level behind the wall. Carved in relief on the front of the left hand side of the wall are depictions of the different animals commemorated by the memorial. On the right hand side the words 'Animals in War' are carved in relief and underneath, in smaller lettering, a dedication and the words 'They had no choice.'

In front of the wall are three steps and, positioned to look as though they are walking up these and through the gap in the wall, are bronze sculptures of two mules. According to the Animals in War memorial website, www.animalsinwar.org.uk, these are designed to appear to be struggling under heavy loads. On the other side of the wall the level of the memorial rises and there are further sculptures of different animals, a horse and a dog, now without the heavy loads and facing forwards to represent hope for the future.

On the back of the wall further information about the memorial is inscribed. This includes some information about the animals depicted on the memorial, why and how they were involved in war. There is also a brief outline of the memorial and its unveiling along with a list of organisations and people involved in its design and creation, including those who made financial donations towards it.

The memorial is designed in a way that intends to involve visitors by enabling them to approach, touch and interact with it. The information carried on the memorial helps to educate the visitor about the role of animals in war. By commemorating the role of animals in the World Wars the memorial reminds us of this sometimes overlooked contribution to the war effort and the impact it had.

General view of the memorial



The animals shown on the memorial



Animals in front of the wall



Animals on the other side of the wall

