

Remembrance: The Horsham War Memorial

Preparation: read the background sheet on Remembrance

The Horsham War Memorial that we see today in Horsham Carfax remembers and shows respect for those who died in both the First and Second World Wars.

The following sources and exercises explore the process Horsham went through in creating a War Memorial.

Learning Objective

To be able to explain the reasons for the creation of the Horsham War Memorial in WW1.

Exercise 1: Source Detectives

Look at **Sources 1-4**. Can you puzzle out the answers to the following questions?

Questions:

1. How soon after the end of the war did Horsham discuss a war memorial?
2. Why was it felt necessary to have a special memorial for the Great War?
3. What was the memorial remembering?
4. What kinds of memorial were suggested?
5. What kind of memorial was finally decided on?
6. Where was the memorial put?
7. When was the memorial finally built?
8. Who do you think the memorial was for?

Exercise 2: Naming Names

In the background sheet you will find that a long argument took place in Horsham over where the names of the fallen should be put. Should they even go on the monument? If they go on the monument, where? Will all the names fit? And so on.

For the families and friends of those who were lost or injured this was a very difficult time.

Sources **5 and 6** show differing points of view from people who lived in Horsham at the time. They are arguing over where the names of the fallen should be recorded.

In your group look at your source and answer the following questions.

- a. Who is the author?
- b. Where do they think the names of the fallen should go?
- c. What reasons do they give?
- d. Do you think **who** they are has affected their opinion? How?

Report your findings back to the class.

WWI



Exercise 3: Moving memorial

War memorials are not **static** objects that never change and neither is how we think about them. The Horsham War Memorial is a good example of how War Memorials can physically change.

Look at **Sources 4** and **7-9** and discuss the following questions as a class.

- What changes has Horsham War Memorial undergone since it was first erected in 1921?





Friends of Horsham Museum

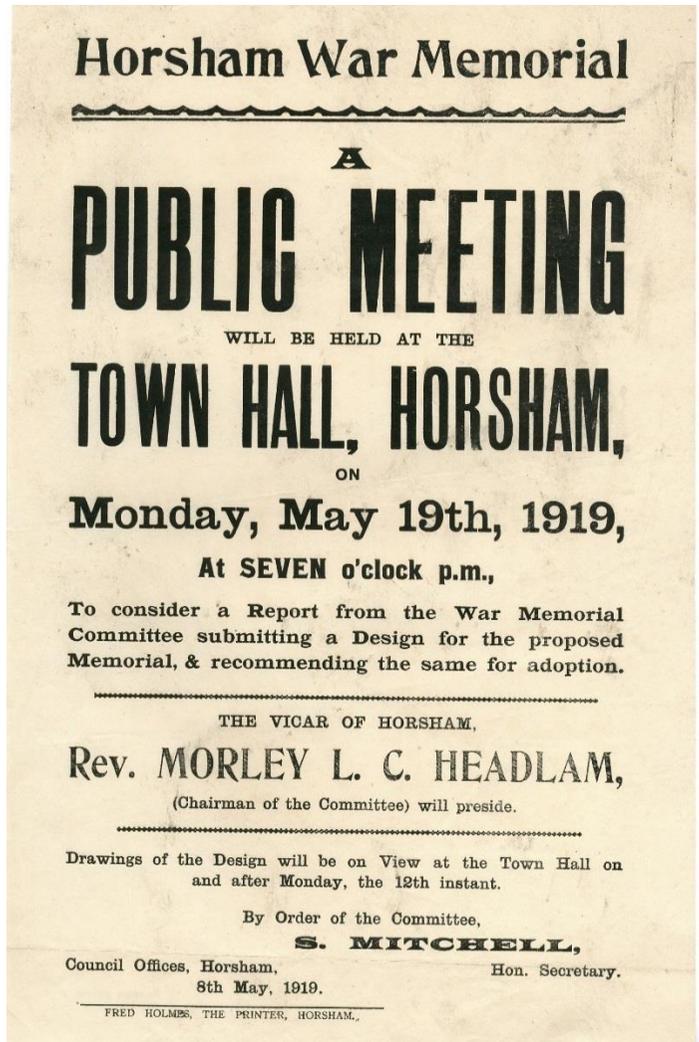


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Source 1

This Horsham Poster was printed in 1919.



Source 2

This is a small section of a West Sussex County Times article written on 23rd Nov 1918.

The Town's Permanent Memorial

A special meeting of the Horsham urban District Council to consider the desirability of taking steps for the provision of a permanent memorial to the men of Horsham who have fallen in the War was held yesterday afternoon . . . the Council were unanimous as to the need of a permanent memorial, and formed themselves into a Committee to consider the best means to be adopted for carrying it out. A public meeting will be called at an early date, and the Committee, which adjourned for a fortnight, will in the meantime formulate some proposals in connection with the matter.

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Source 3

Following the Public meeting and committee discussion the Urban District Council decided on a Carfax Memorial. The following information describes the other suggested memorials.

The information comes from the Council's minutes, the West Sussex County Times and the Parish magazine as quoted in **Knight, J.** 2011 *Horsham's History, 1914-1918 Volume 4.*

The Urban District Council had decided upon a distinctive memorial in the Carfax or the Causeway. Other people suggested:

- A new recreation ground
- A new hospital
- A new public hall
- A new YMCA building

As Mr Trotter a discharged soldier said he was sure the lads themselves who made the great sacrifice would have said "if you are going to raise a memorial in our memory raise something that will be to the good of the community."

The council's recommendation was "that the proposed memorial be in the form of an obelisk or similar permanent erection, to be placed on the Carfax as a suitable memorial to the Horsham men who have given their lives for their country during the war."

Source 4

West Sussex County Times article about the final design.

As quoted in **Knight, J.** 2011 *Horsham's History, 1914-1918 Volume 4.*

The memorial 'consists of an obelisk, with incised Runic Cross, and large bronze Crusader sword superimposed. The memorial inscription, with lettering in applied cast bronze, is as follows: - "The Great War 1914-1918 In proud and grateful memory of the men of Horsham who gave their lives for their country." The entire erection is 17ft high, the obelisk standing upon a square base with three wide steps. Three panels arranged at an angle over the steps contain the names of the 359 men of the town who made the supreme sacrifice. The steps are of local stone, but the remainder is of Hopton Stone.'

Source 5

1920 Mrs Pierce, 56, Queen Street

As quoted in **Knight, J.** 2011 *Horsham's History, 1914-1918 Volume 4.*

I learn that the War Memorial committee has decided not to record the names of the fallen heroes of the Great War on the Memorial. I as the mother of one of the dearest boys that laid down his life for his Country, do strongly object that his name Harold Pierce, should be recorded on anything except the War Memorial which is the proper place and no other.

I can't think that the War Memorial committee can realise what the dear boys did for them, for me, for the whole country, and I think it disgraceful that the feelings of the bereaved should be treated so trivially, and that their last wish in regard to their loved ones can't be granted. I am one-of the mothers who signed the petition of 311 for this to be done.

Source 6

1920 Letter from Morley Headlam – Chairman of War Memorial Committee

As quoted in **Knight, J.** 2011 *Horsham's History, 1914-1918 Volume 4.*

“Every member has given his best time and thought to making the War Memorial as worthy as possible of the noble men who gave their lives in the Great War.

. . . The remaining question of the inscription of the names has presented considerable difficulty.

Everyone agrees that it is very right that the names of those who have given their lives should be inscribed in a public place and in an honourable manner. Everyone agrees that it is very suitable that the names should be on the public memorial if they can be inscribed on it so as to do honour to the names and not detract from the dignity of the men's own memorial. The committee have had to decide whether or no on the particular memorial which the public have selected, the names could be inscribed with due honour.

They have taken the greatest trouble to estimate if the effect if the names be inscribed on the only place on the monument where they can reasonably be placed. By a large majority they have come to the conclusion that the names though legible by a person standing near would be so crowded together they would detract from the honour due to them.

. . . Nor could I plead that the Committee placed their names there because ‘the townspeople emphatically desired it’, and because it was in accordance ‘with the express wishes of those most anxious to commemorate the honoured dead’ (I am quoting words from Mr Charles Rowland letter to the Urban Council electors) . . . The Committee know perfectly well that there is considerable division of opinion on the subject amongst those most nearly related to the honourable dead; the Committee know also that when a public meeting was called for the express purpose of voicing the desire for the names to be on the memorial . . . those present did not equal in number even one quarter of the number of noble names to be inscribed. It is right that the Committee should consider the wishes of the representatives of the men who form the other three quarters of the list of honoured dead.

Most of all the Committee are perfectly confident that when the Memorial has been erected with its simple inscription on one side, telling of the men's honours and our undying gratitude. And on the other side ‘during the course of the great war over 300 Horsham men gave their lives for their country. Their names enshrined in the hearts of their fellow townspeople are honourably inscribed on the Town Hall of Horsham.’

And the names inscribed for all to see and read on the two panels on the main front of the Town Hall, nearly everyone will agree that the greater honour will have been done to the men who gave their lives for us in the Great War.”

Source 7

1920's photograph showing the War Memorial in its original location in the Carfax near the bandstand. Part of the Cramp photograph collection held at Horsham Museum.



©Horsham Museum and Archive

Source 8

2013 photograph of the Horsham War Memorial in its newest location showing the WWII additions.



Source 9

West Sussex County Times article from 10th Nov 2010.

Missing names are being added to Horsham War Memorial after research by local historian Gary Cooper and the Royal British Legion.

A key part of town memorials are the names of those who made the ultimate sacrifice, yet an element we today think is obvious very nearly didn't happen.

Horsham War Memorial very nearly didn't have the names. Even today some of the names that should be on the memorial are missing and Horsham District Council is, with the support of Gary and the Royal British Legion, making that right over the next five years.

Today, thanks to instant media, we know the names of the service men and women who die. Ninety years ago no list was made, the local press originally had a roll of honour, but that only listed those who volunteered, not those who died.

Nor was there any tradition of war memorials, after all most soldiers who died on a foreign battlefield were brought home.

But that changed during World War One when the slaughter was so great, and so thousands were buried where they laid. After the war, the bereaved wanted their loved ones recorded on a memorial in Horsham after all they didn't have a grave stone, other than in a foreign field. So, in Horsham there was open debate between those who wanted a memorial without names and the families who did. Eventually in 1921 the conflict was resolved and the known names were included.

Still names are missing and 25 years ago Gary Cooper, a keen military historian, started to write up the life stories of those servicemen who were listed on the memorial.

He started with World War One. Last year, when his monumental book was published, he discovered over 55 names were missing.

Within the next five years Gary will have researched the more accessible World War Two records and identified those names missing.

The names will then be engraved on the Memorial stones in the Carfax.

[These names were added in 2013]