

Commemoration and Remembrance

On August 4th 2014 Britain and other countries will mark the centenary of the outbreak of World War One with a programme of commemoration and remembrance. But remembrance of those who fought and died began even before the war ended.

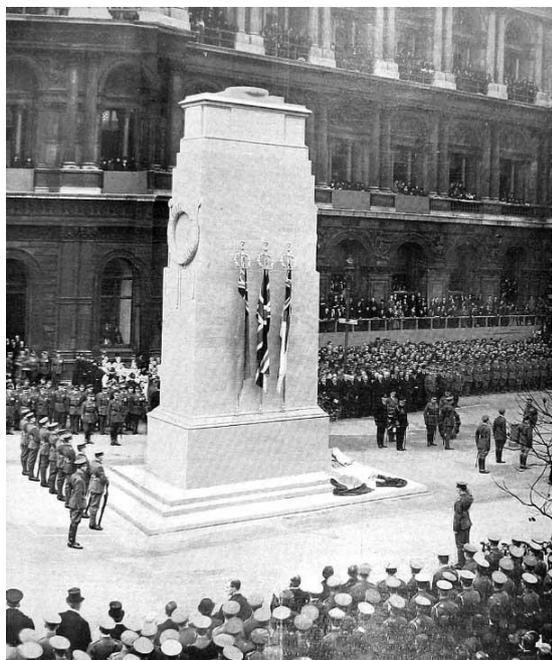
Memorial and Commemoration during World War One

World War One is seen as a turning point in how we memorialised wars. Before World War One most memorials and events were in celebration of victories or focussed on important individuals.

But in World War One there was a huge number of casualties, more than ever before. For the first time these casualties were not repatriated and were buried overseas.

During the war Sir Fabian Ware began to identify and record these graves of British soldiers overseas so their information could be sent home. In 1915 the government created an official Graves Registration Committee to continue this work which later became the Imperial War Graves Commission (IWGC) in 1917.

Before the war ended the IWGC appointed Sir Edwin Lutyens, Sir Herbert Baker and Sir Reginald Blomfield to consider how to commemorate the war dead. They later designed monuments in France, Belgium and the UK. By the 1930's the IWGC had 918 cemeteries on the Western Front with graves for 580000 named and 180000 unidentified British soldiers. They also set up further cemeteries in Italy, Balkans at Gallipoli, Iraq and Palestine.



Unveiling of the Cenotaph in 1920.
Photograph by Horace Nicholls, The Graphic.

Following the War 54000 memorials were built in the British Isles. As most were locally designed for communities there were many different types. From plaques to rolls of honour to permanent sculptures. Today two thirds of all war memorials in the British Isles are still connected to the First World War. Most were built in the 1920's.

1920's National Remembrance

Following the war Britain had a National monument designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens called the Cenotaph. This sculpture was of an empty tomb. It was originally a temporary structure made for the Armistice celebrations. But in 1920 a permanent version of the sculpture was made out of Portland stone as a focus for Commemorative events on November 11th. Thousands of people came to lay wreaths.

www.horshamposters.com

It was also on November 11th 1920 that the Unknown Warrior was buried in Westminster Abbey. This single burial symbolised the ordinary soldiers buried overseas many of which have never been identified. In the week following this burial up to 1 million visitors came to pay their respects.

The tradition of a two minute silence for the whole country also began following World War One. The Australian journalist Edward George Honey wrote an article suggesting the idea. The King was shown the article and decided it was a good plan. However, the British Government also received the suggestion of a silence to 'salute' the dead from the former High Commissioner of South Africa. He had watched daily silences held in Cape Town throughout the war. The first silence was held on November 11th 1919. The beginning of the silence was signalled by bell-ringing and gunfire. It was very popular and demand made it an annual event.

Another national type of remembrance today that began in the 1920's is the poppy appeal. In 1921 the British Legion first began to sell poppies to raise funds for disabled soldiers. The British Legion formed that year based on the idea of Lance Bombardier Tom Lister. Lister felt that the government was not doing enough to support unemployed and disabled ex-servicemen and their families. The aim of the British Legion is to support the soldiers and their families by raising money with the poppy appeal. The appeal is also meant to raise awareness of the cost of war and campaign for peace. They chose poppies as their symbol as it was one of the few flowers to grow on the devastated ground on the Western Front. It had also become a symbol of the devastation of war in the poem 'In Flanders Field' by John McRae.

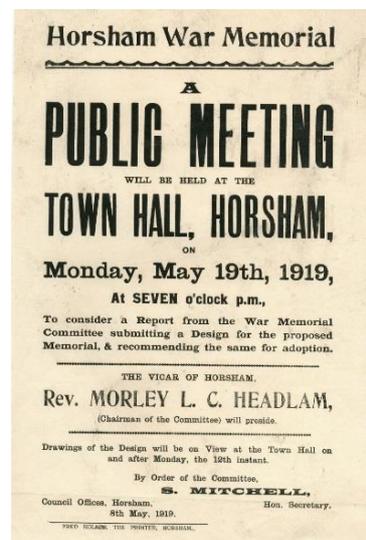
In the 1920's some ex-servicemen interrupted commemoration services because they were unhappy with their treatment since they returned from the war. And for a few years young people held celebrations on the anniversary of war instead of remembrance.

Horsham War Memorial

The War Memorial in Horsham was built in 1921. A memorial had first been proposed as early as November 23rd 1918 according to the West Sussex County Times. A committee was formed to lead the discussions. There were no rules about what the monument should be like and a whole range of ideas were suggested;

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

The Committee settled on a monument in the Carfax to remember the dead. But there were many questions to answer before the monument could be built; what would it look like? How much should it cost? What should the dedication say? Should the names of the fallen be put on the monument?



Poster: 1998.1085 © Horsham District Council's Horsham Museum & Art Gallery

Horsham poster advertising a public meeting to discuss the committee's proposals for the War Memorial.



www.horshamposters.com

The first designs raised questions over funding. It was suggested that the villages around Horsham should contribute money as they might want to be included on the monument. In the end though the focus was on Horsham.

The biggest argument was over the names of the fallen. The West Sussex County Times had published an Honour Roll in the paper from the start of the war. But in the first years this Roll named those who volunteered, not those who died. It soon changed to list the dead as more men were lost. By the end the West Sussex County Times named 359 Horsham boys who had died.

The argument began over whether these names should go on the monument itself. Some felt the names could go on a roll of honour board on the Town Hall rather than on the monument. Others who felt squeezing the names onto the monument would be disrespectful because you wouldn't be able to read them. And some families who were angry that not putting the names on the monument was even being considered.

In the end in 1912 Horsham built its monument described by the West Sussex County Times as consisting of:



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

'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.'

The memorial was and is the focus for remembrance events. It has not been static either. It has been moved and added to over the years. After World War Two the memorial was extended to include remembrance for the losses of World War Two. The monument will also be altered in the future. Following the work of Gary Cooper and the Royal British Legion over 55 names of Horsham lads that fought in WWI were found to be missing from the monument and will be added.

20th Century National remembrance

During the Second World War remembrance events for World War One declined as the focus moved to the new war. Following the end of WWII in 1945 both World Wars were commemorated on the



www.horshamposters.com

Sunday closest to November 11th. The events were focussed on remembrance church services. This meant that remembrance was less a part of everyday life and the events grew less important.

At the end of the 20th century interest in commemorating World War One picked up again. This was for a number of reasons. There was a declining number of veterans. There were a number of new books written on the matter. New world conflicts had brought war back to the people of Britain. And learning about both World Wars became part of the National Curriculum. In the 1990's remembrance events like the two minute silence were held once again on November 11th no matter what day of the week it was.

The Centenary

The centenary of World War One will be a focus for commemoration and reflection. All across the country local communities and national organisations will remember the events of the war with respect. Events will focus on educating people about the War, reflecting on the impact it has had and remembering those who were involved. For example the Imperial War Museum has renewed its exhibitions on the First World War and the BBC has produced new programmes on the topic. Locally on 4th August 2014 Horsham commemorated the outbreak of war. The focus was not on remembrance of the dead but on honouring all those who had served from 1914-1919.

Glossary

Centenary	- The hundredth anniversary of an important event
Commemoration	- When you remember and show respect for someone or something.
Remembrance	- The action of remembering something
Memorialised	- Preserved the memory of
Repatriated	- When someone is returned to their own country
Temporary	- Not meant to last, only for a short time
Armistice	- The agreement between the fighting armies in WW1 to stop fighting for a set amount of time. It ended up being the end of the War.
Symbolised	- Stood for, represented.
Annual	- Once a year
Devastated	- Destroyed, ruined.
Dedication	- a phrase that dedicates the monument to something (in this case the dead)
Honour Roll	- a list of names of people honoured for something
Static	- doesn't change, stays the same
Veterans	- men who had served in the war as soldiers



Find out more

About Horsham War Memorial:

- **Knight, J.** 2011 *Horsham's History, 1914-1918 Volume 4* Horsham District Council

About War Memorials:

- **The War Memorials Trust**, <http://www.warmemorials.org/>

About the Centenary events:

- **First World War Centenary** website <http://www.1914.org/>
- **The Imperial War Museums** at <http://www.iwm.org.uk/>

References

- **BBC** 2008 'Two Minute Silence' 1918-2008 *Ninety Years of Remembrance* <http://www.bbc.co.uk/remembrance/how/silence.shtml>
- **Cooper, G.** 2009 *Horsham's Heroes of the Great War 1914-1919: "That His Name be Not Forgotten"* Horsham Museum Society
- **Knight, J.** 2011 *Horsham's History, 1914-1918 Volume 4* Horsham District Council
- **Mitchell, J. and Vaughan, E.** 2008, *We'll Keep the Home Fires Burning: Horsham During World War One*, Horsham District Council
- **The Royal British Legion** 2014 *Our History* <http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/about-us/who-we-are/our-history>
- **Tudor, S.** 2014 'Britain and the First World War: Parliament, Empire and Commemoration', *House of Lords Library Note*
- **The War Memorials Trust** <http://www.warmemorials.org/>

Images

- Posters from **Horsham Museum**, Albery Poster Collection www.horshamposters.com
- Horsham War Memorial photograph is copyright of Horsham Museum.
- Photograph of the cenotaph, photographer Horace Nicholls, first published in the *Graphic*, 20th November 1920. In public domain and unaltered. Accessed via http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cenotaph_Unveiling,_1920.jpg

