

THE  
HAGLEY  
WAR MEMORIAL

BY  
DON FREETH  
2009

## FORWARD

Hagley's War memorial stands at the junction of the A456, A491 and Park Road. Thousands of people pass each day without much thought of the young people named for their sacrifice, unless they happen to be a relative.

Before all memories disappear, it is the aim of Hagley Historical and Field Society and in particular the author, to discover and publish details of the short lives and premature death of these Hagley residents.

I congratulate Don Freeth on his efforts over many years. Here is a painstaking piece of research, continually enhanced and improved during its construction, as the author's tireless efforts reached out to those who could contribute further.

Irene Oliver  
Chairman Hagley Historical & Field Society 1998-2007.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My grateful thanks to all who have contributed to the information here or its presentation.

Don Freeth

# THE HAGLEY WAR MEMORIAL

## A brief survey of the facts leading up to the construction and dedication of the memorial in 1922

In the early part of 1922 a committee was formed, under the chairmanship of Mr J F Pearson, to launch an appeal for funds and to authorise the construction of a War Memorial in Hagley when a suitable site had been located.

At this time the present Kidderminster Road between the 'Spencer's Arms' and Park Road (sometimes referred to as Park Lane), was in the process of being constructed and this work created a new intersection of roads. It was at this junction with Park Road that a piece of land was generously given to the war Memorial Committee by Viscount Cobham for the purpose of a Memorial.

Subscriptions were collected by the Hon Secretary, Mr W H Palmer of West Hagley. The amount raised at the time of the unveiling was £250, about half of the total required to carry out the work.

Work commenced in April 1922 and was completed for the Unveiling and Dedication on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> May, 1922.

After the Second World War of 1939-1945 names of the fallen from that conflict were added to the plaque and were unveiled at a ceremony on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> July 1947.

In 1964 the Memorial was dismantled and re-erected about 40 yards to the west of the original site to make way for extensive road improvements at this junction. This work was skilfully carried out by Harris and Millward of Kings Heath.

# THE COUNTY EXPRESS

13<sup>TH</sup> MAY 1922

## TOMORROW'S UNVEILING AND DEDICATION

The handsome war memorial which has been erected at Hagley to the memory of the men of that parish who fell in the Great War will be unveiled to-morrow afternoon at 3 o'clock by Major the Hon. J C Lyttelton, and will also be dedicated by the Bishop of Worcester.

Every effort has been made to ensure that the service shall be representative and impressive as befits the occasion. It is announced that Park Lane will be closed to traffic at 1.30; the school children, scouts, ex-service men and general public are respectfully asked to form up in queues in Park Lane ready to take their appointed places round the memorial; the committee hope all ex-service men will attend wearing medals or ribbons and extend a hearty welcome to any ex-service men in the parish to be present.

The programme of the service shows that after the opening hymn an address will be given by Mr J F Pearson, the chairman of the Committee. The unveiling and dedication follow, and then the "Last Post" will be sounded, and will be followed by two minutes' silence. Another hymn will be sung, then Major Lyttelton will give an address, in which he will formally hand over the monument to the keeping of the Parish Council. Mr W Hand as the chairman of the Council will formally accept the charge. An interval is arranged during which relatives and friends may place wreaths on the steps of the memorial, and then the ceremony will close with a hymn and the benediction.

## THE MEMORIAL

The designer of the cross Mr Scott Davies, and the firm who have executed the work, Messrs Davis and Son of Old Hill, are to be congratulated upon their success. The estimated total cost of the erection of the cross was about £500, and the committee issued an appeal for the necessary funds. The cross is poised on a series of two narrow steps immediately under the base. It is a simple, but strikingly imposing and well proportioned monument in the form of an irregular octagon, except at its lowest point, where it assumes the form of a rectangle. On the two principal faces at the junction of the arms of the cross is carved a sword, the emblem of Victory; across this is placed a crown symbolising Glory. On the four vertical faces, immediately above the base, are spray wreaths of laurel and olive leaves in bronze. The laurel leaf is the symbol of

Atonement, of the Conqueror and of Glory; while the olive leaf symbolises Peace, the prize of victory. These symbols are most appropriate and together with the cross itself (symbolising Sacrifice) make the attributes of our “gallant dead” complete. The names of the fallen heroes are commemorated on the two side faces of the base and the inscription is on the main face. The general ensemble of the cross is convincing and its general proportions are greatly helped by its well-chosen offsets and moulding. The aim has been to produce a simple yet dignified and symbolic memorial and this has succeeded admirably.

Viscount Cobham took a very great interest in the selection of the stone to be used, and, after exhaustive enquiries throughout the country, a red sandstone of very fine texture was chosen. This stone was brought from Annan in Dumfriethshire and works up to a very fine surface almost equal to marble. The characteristics of it are freedom from lime (a great advantage) and the fact that it tends to harden with exposure. The Committee feel quite convinced that they have a memorial that will stand for centuries.

### **THE UNVEILING**

“O God our help in ages past” was first sung by the gathering, led by the Choir.

Mr Pearson said he wished to take the opportunity of thanking every member of the Council and the Secretary for their great help in the scheme. He also wished to thank Mr Scott Davies (the Architect), and Lord Cobham, (whose inability to be present in consequence of illness, they all very much regretted), for his gift of the excellent site for the Memorial. He also thanked the Bishop of Worcester for his great kindness in coming to dedicate the Memorial, and asked Major Lyttelton to unveil it. Major Lyttelton pulled a cord and thus unveiled the Memorial, releasing a Union Jack, which had been draped over the cross.

#### **The names upon the cross are:**

**C Tudor Bennett  
Bernard Cookson  
John Collins  
William Davies  
Roland Day  
Arthur W Eld  
Samuel T Eley  
Charles Wilmot Evans  
Walter B Fieldhouse  
Walter Gough**

**Roland Gough  
James E Hopcutt  
William G Hopcutt  
Maurice M Pearson  
Thomas J Price  
Percy C T Pudge  
Frank L Pudge  
Frederick Tate  
L G O Townsend  
Francis A Wyer**

**THE COUNTY EXPRESS**  
**SATURDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> MAY 1922 (PAGE 9 – COLUMN 3)**

**Hagley War Memorial**

**Unveiling and Dedication**

**Address by Major Lyttelton**

The imposing cross which has been erected at Hagley at the junction of Park Lane and Kidderminster Road in memory of 20 men from the parish who gave their lives in the war, was unveiled on Sunday afternoon 14<sup>th</sup> May by the Hon J C Lyttelton and dedicated by the Bishop of Worcester in the presence of a large company of villagers and residents of the district.

The ceremony was very impressive. Men of the Stourbridge Company of the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion Worcester Regiment, (in command of Lt Grazebrook) with fixed bayonets, formed up on two sides of the monument and at the third side was a choir composed of singers from the parish church, St Saviour's Church and the Free Church, West Hagley under the direction of Mr G F Davies. At the fourth side were Mr J F Pearson (Chairman of the Committee), the Bishop, Major the Hon J C Lyttelton, the Revd L Westmancott (Rector), the Revd J Long (Curate), the Revd Josiah Thomas (United Methodist Minister, Blackpool), who was on a visit to Mr Davies and Mr W E Hand (Chairman of the Parish Council).

Positions around the site were taken up by ex-servicemen (wearing decorations), Hagley scouts (under the charge of District Commissioner L Harris, with Scout-Master Dale Hammersley as second in command), school children and the general public.

Among those present were Gen Sir Neville Lyttelton, Col C Herbert Collis, Messrs G Hatton CBE, Alderman J War, W F Downing, J H Cheshire, E Harris, Mr Jordan, W H Palmer (Secretary of the Committee) and others.

## ADDRESS BY THE BISHOP

An address was then delivered by the Bishop.

He said he did not know whether it had occurred to those present that the memorial had been placed at a very significant spot (at the junction of roads). In human life there were all kinds of directions which persons could take if they would. They might want to go to Kidderminster, to Stourbridge or to Birmingham, or anywhere else; the roads were open, life was free. But that cross stood there with its finger pointing in none of these directions but rather straight upwards; it was just the same with us in war.

All were inclined to go back in thoughts to those fatal moments at the beginning of it. We know there were all sorts of things we could have done if we had liked; we could, if we wished, have kept out altogether and when we were in it, people put before us all kinds of ways for us to try and win it.

He did not doubt that many of those dear dead ones whom they were commemorating had quite a way of saying, "Yes, but then you know there is not only that way and that way (pointing outward) but there is that way (pointing upward). It did not do to forget that. During the war we had all sorts of fine expressions for that upward way. He supposed that some of those present had been thinking that week of the King in Brussels, and also of that picture which helped a great many people through the war, of the King whom our King had been visiting, and who in the picture said, "Yes, it is all very well for you to talk about having lost everything, but I have kept my soul". That was what the cross pointed to. "Have you found your soul?" was the question it would ask those who passed it.

The memorial was dedicated by his Lordship and the Last Post was sounded by Second J Perry of the Scouts, followed by two minutes silence. Afterwards prayers were offered by the Rev J Thomas and the hymn "How bright these glorious spirits shine" was sung.

## MAJOR LYTTTELTON AND IDEALS

Major Lyttelton then gave an address. He said, "When the committee did me the honour to invite me to unveil this memorial to the men of Hagley who gave their lives in the Great War, I was aware that I was being asked to act as deputy for my father whose severe illness prevented him taking his place here today. It is not necessary for me to tell you how proud he would have been to have been here to pay his tribute to the men among whom he lived, in the place he loved above all others. We heard it said frequently, in the early stages of the war, that war was a good thing for a nation, that it calls forth all that is best in a people – self sacrifice, brotherhood, endurance and a high courage; and it turns the mind away from the pleasures and small things of everyday life towards the highest and most serene thoughts. To me the idea underlying such an assertion is an altogether false idea. While today we are honouring the memory of men who undoubtedly displayed all those qualities to the full, it is untrue to say that such virtues were only implanted in them by war. War itself is nothing but waste and destruction, carrying in its train the greatest evils with which mankind can be afflicted. That it demands in its performance many of the noblest qualities of which mankind is endowed, has given in the past and maybe still does, give to war a glamour which in reality is utterly foreign to it.

So we mourn the loss today of those so young lives, because they were cut short by death before they were able to fulfil all of the promise that was in them. While it is right and natural we should mourn their loss, there is another thought that comes into our minds as we think of them lying in the distant lands; would they have it otherwise? On top of Spion Kop in Natal there stands a monument erected to the memory of men who fell on that fatal hill 22 years ago, on which is inscribed an adaptation of the famous epitaph of Simonides to the Spartans who fell at Thermopylae, "Tell England, ye who pass this way, that we who died at her command rest here content". That is the spirit in which we feel our dead wish to be remembered; honour the dead by keeping their memory green, not by weeping over their end. Had these young men, had any of those who gave their services in the war, been asked what they were fighting for, the replies would probably have been widely differently expressed, but with the same ideal underlying all of them. "England", "the flag of England", "King and Country", "The Empire", are, in their highest and proper senses, phrases used to express those ideals which lie deep in the hearts of all Britons; ideals of brotherhood, of liberty, of fair play between all men, the ideal of a Christian and not of a godless people."



So while we think today of those whose names are inscribed on this memorial dying for those ideals and content so to die, so must we honour their memory with pride and gratitude. There are many men and women of Hagley, some of whom are here today, who gave their services to their country during the war; happy are they for they can look back upon their duty well and faithfully fulfilled. There are some who suffered and suffered terribly in the war by wounds; happy are they. For their suffering and sacrifice they have won the undying gratitude of their country. There are those whose memory we are keeping today who are buried in far off lands under an alien soil; happy men are they. "Never the lotus closes, never the wild fowl wake, but a soul goes out on the east wind that died for England's sake. Man or woman or suckling, mother or bride or maid, because on the bones of the English the English flag is stayed."

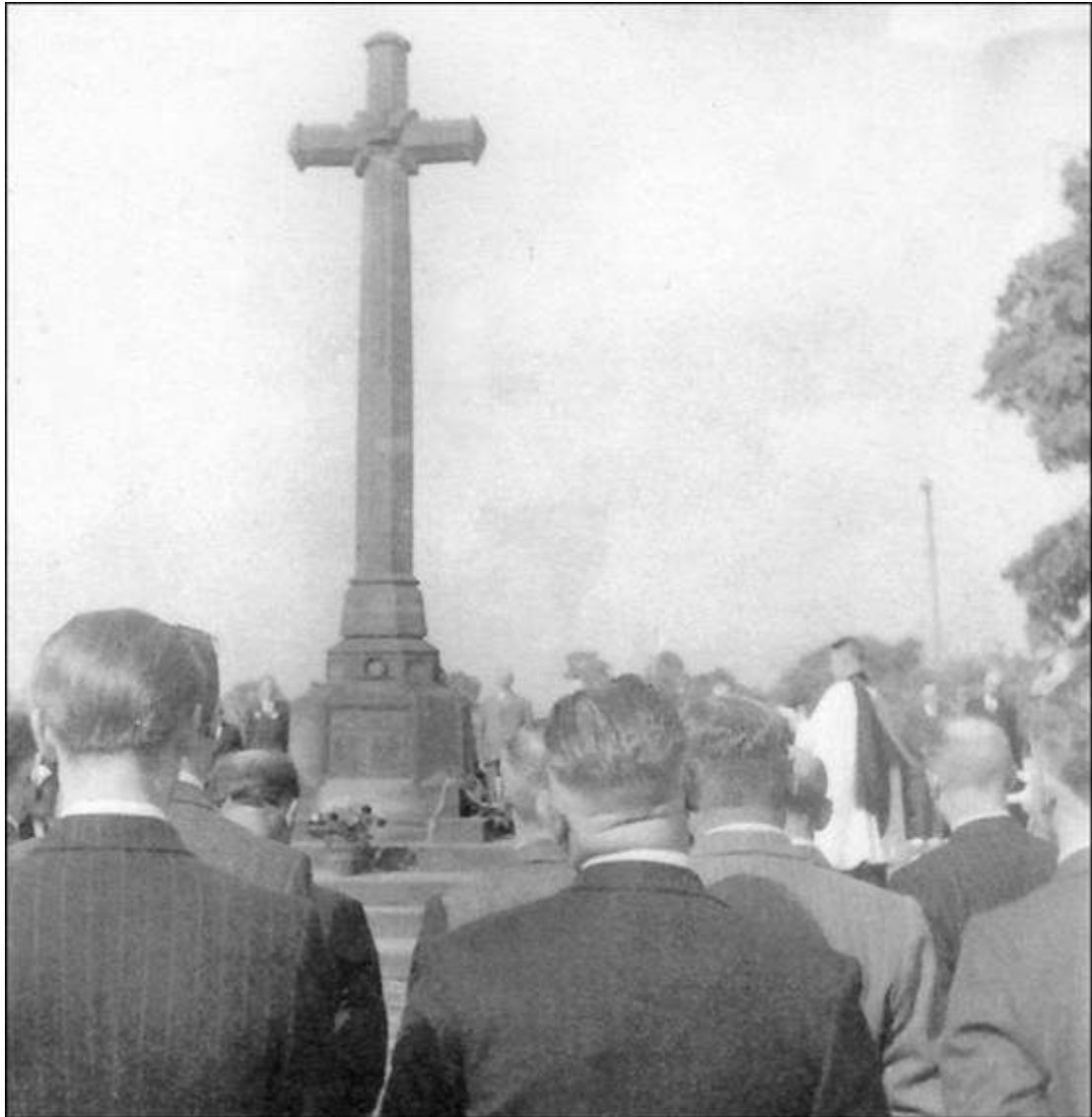
I have asked Mr Hand to take over this memorial on behalf of the Parish Council, to lie in their keeping for all time.

### **THE PARISH COUNCIL'S CHARGE**

Mr Hand said that he accepted, on behalf of the Council, the care of the beautiful memorial erected by the people of Hagley. He would assure Major Lyttelton and those present that the Council would not only regard the care of it as a duty, but as a real honour.

Floral tributes were placed on the steps by relatives and by Col. Collis and Patrol Leader R Everson (on behalf of the Scouts). The hymn "Ten thousand times ten thousand", was sung and the proceedings closed with prayer, the benediction by the Bishop and singing of the National Anthem. The police arrangements were organised by Superintendent Hill. The memorial has cost about £500 and it is announced that about £250 is still required.

After the Second World War of 1939 – 1945  
the names of the fallen in that conflict were added to the  
memorial



THE UNVEILING OF PLAQUES

SUNDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> JULY 1947