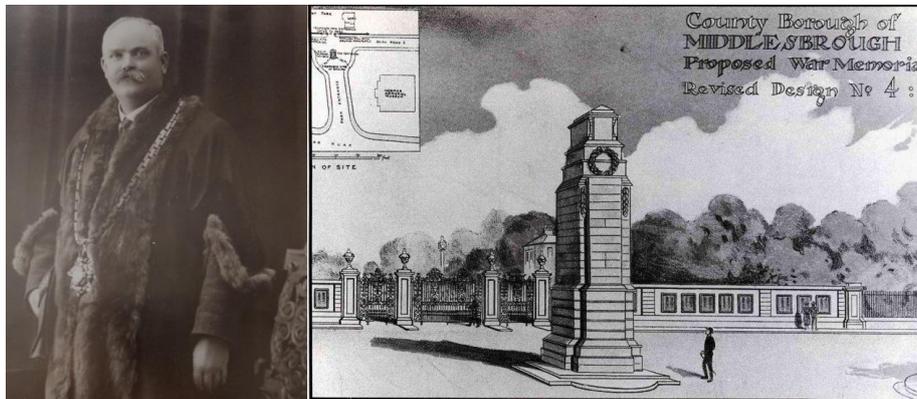


Centenary of the Middlesbrough Cenotaph – 11th November 2022

A century ago on the 11th November 1922 the Middlesbrough Cenotaph outside the Dorman Museum was unveiled.

Over three thousand local men and women had given their lives in the cause of freedom. The Evening Gazette had written in an editorial article announcing the end of the war on Monday November 11th 1918 that “We must not overlook the stead-fastness of the soldiers, all our joy must be tempered by the stupendous sacrifice entailed, if the millions that have fallen to rise no more, could be made to stand at ease they would stretch from John O Groats to Landsend.”

A public appeal had been launched and a war memorial committee set up under the chairmanship of the Deputy Mayor, Cllr. J. G. Pallister with Arthur Dorman as a member and the money began to be raised and soon discussion turned to what sort of memorial that Middlesbrough should have, should it be a war memorial or should it be medical facilities in memory of those who had died? The final decision was taken in October 1919 at a public meeting to erect a permanent memorial and soon the committee was able to organise a design competition for the war memorial.



Cllr JG Pallister

Proposed Design of Cenotaph

The memorial was to be erected on land donated by the industrialist Arthur Dorman outside the Dorman Museum that he had given to the town in 1904 at the entrance to Albert Park. The design competition using a list of architects recommended by the Royal Academy of Arts, was won by the York firm of Architects Brierley and Rutherford who had also designed the extensions to Acklam Hall in 1912. Construction work on the memorial began in April 1922.

The cenotaph itself is of polished Aberdeen Granite and the words etched on the sides come from His Majesty King George V himself. At first armistice remembrance which was observed on 7th November 1919 throughout the British Empire His Majesty had issued a proclamation calling for a two-minute silence, where, as he said *"All locomotion should cease, so that, in perfect stillness, the thoughts of everyone may be concentrated on reverent remembrance of the glorious dead."*

Although the Armistice happened on 11th November 1918 but the war was not formally ended until the signing of the Treaty of Versailles on 28th June 1919 hence the dates on the side 1914-1919.

There are 3,138 names recorded on the 24 bronze memorial tablets.

A procession led the way from the town hall for the unveiling it included Members of the Corporation, the police, four bands, representatives of the British Legion the Red Cross boys from the Industrial School, and the armed services including Middlesbrough two recipients of the Victoria Cross, Private Jim Smith of the Border Regiment and Private Tom Dresser of the Yorkshire Regiment and they were observed and joined by many thousands along the route and in the procession itself. The dedication service itself commenced with the singing of the Hymn "O God Our Help in Ages Past".



Unveiling of the Cenotaph

From The Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer - Monday 13th November 1922

"MIDDLESBROUGH'S CENOTAPH UNVEILED. Middlesbrough's war memorial, standing at the main entrance to the Albert Park, was unveiled on Saturday. The memorial polished dark grey Aberdeen granite, in the form of cenotaph classic design, measuring 34ft. high, 12ft. long, and 7ft. 6in. the base. On the north and south sides of the cenotaph is the inscription, "The glorious dead 1914 1919." The panelled walls, and gate piers at the entrance to the Albert Park, are executed in Portland stone, and the bronze plates on the panelled walls bear nearly 3,000 names of the fallen. The new entrance gates, which form part the memorial, are fine example of hand-wrought ironwork. The memorial designed Messrs. Brierley and Rutherford, architects, of York. The scheme has been completed at an approximate cost of £17.000.

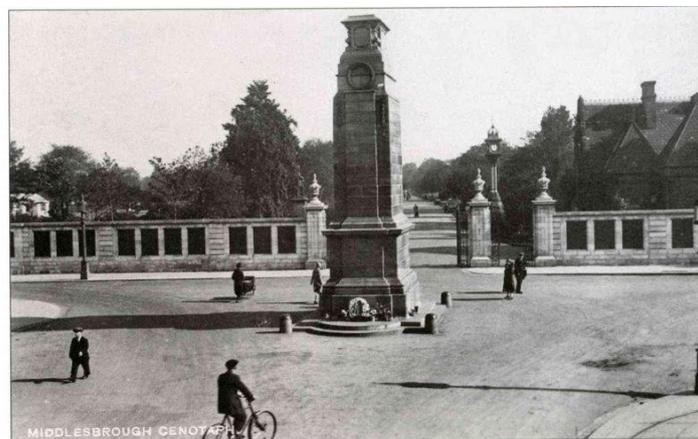
The proceedings opened with an inspection of military units and ex-Servicemen opposite the Municipal Buildings, and a procession to the park entrance. The Deputy Mayor of Middlesbrough (Councillor J. G. Pallister) chairman of the War Memorial Committee, performed the unveiling ceremony of the cenotaph and simultaneously two blinded soldiers (Lieut. J. Swales M.C., and Private George Hollins), unveiled the bronze tablets bearing the names of the fallen. (The new park gates were opened by Private Dowson, the first Middlesbrough soldier to have been blinded in the war). The Armistice silence of two minutes having been solemnly observed, six officers of the 13th Yorks. placed flags on the cenotaph, and the memorial was then dedicated the Rev. Canon Lawson. M.A.. rural dean and vicar of Middlesbrough. The Mayor (Councillor Stanley Sadler) formally accepted the memorial on behalf of the Corporation.

The Lord Lieutenant of the North Riding of Yorkshire (Sir Hugh Bell. Bart.C.B.) delivered a brief address, in which (sic) he declared it was not enough to have won the war. It was even more important they should preserve peace, and to one and all of them was confided that great duty. "The Last Post" was sounded by buglers of the 4th Yorks. and after one minute silence, three volleys were fired, followed by the reveille. The band of the Yorkshire Hussars played the National Anthem. and the proceedings closed by hundreds of the relatives of the fallen placing floral tributes at base of the cenotaph."

The cenotaph was listed as a Grade Two structure or building on 28th July 1988.

"Cenotaph, with gates gate-piers and screen walls, at entrance to Albert Park, 1922 by Brierley and Rutherford (York), and Messrs Coxhead (Middlesbrough),

masons. Tablets by Birmingham Guild Ltd. Gates renewed 1981. Polished grey Aberdeen granite ashlar cenotaph, iron gates, Portland stone ashlar gate-piers and walls, and bronze tablets. Cenotaph c.17m west of wide gateway with flanking pedestrian gateways, screen walls and short projecting end returns and terminal piers. Cenotaph: rectangular-plan pedestal and truncated shaft, supporting deep stepped and moulded base of chest tomb, with gadrooned band and panelled tablets on sides and ends. North and south faces of shaft inscribed: "THE GLORIOUS DEAD 1914-1919, 1939-1945". On ends of shaft and pedestal pilaster strips flanked at heads by bronze husk drops and topped by bronze wreaths. Pedestal on 2 broad steps, shaped at ends, and with glinters at angles. 2-leaf central gates and one-leaf pedestrian gates. Original side panels with elaborate scrolls and strapwork and similar crestings. Fielded-panelled gate-piers, with moulded plinths, deep cornices and ornamented urn finials. Screen walls have banded rusticated pilaster strips between groups of tablets; stepped plinth, cornice and similar piers at ends. Tablets, in moulded surrounds, have raised lettering recording names of fallen in The First World War; 12 tablets on each wall. Faceted ball finials on end piers. East faces of walls have plain raised panels." Historic England.



Cenotaph before pedestrianisation

In 2008 the area surrounding the cenotaph was pedestrianised for the first time and it allowed the creation of a dignified, worthy, solemn and car free civic space in which to remember and honour the fallen of all conflicts.

It is the setting for a number of commemorations each year including The laying of the First Poppy at the Field of Remembrance, and Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day in November Battle of Britain Sunday in September and The Battle of Trafalgar in October.

Every year, on the 11th of November it can be a place where we all can remember.

“They Shall Grow Not Old As We That Are Left grow Old Age Shall Not Weary Them Or The Years Condemn. At The Going Down Of The Sun, And In The Morning, We Will Remember Them.”

“When you go home tell them of us and say “For your tomorrow, we gave our today”



Refurbishment underway



Modern Cenotaph



Inscription on the Cenotaph