

# Wing War Memorial

## Background

In 1919 the village Memorial Committee conceived the idea of erecting a drinking fountain for people and horses in the High Street. This was to honour those parishioners who had lost their lives in the Great War. The suggestion was changed to one of a proper stone monument. A designated site was established in the Churchyard on ground donated by Lady Wantage as an extension. Planning permission was gained from the County Court of the Diocese of Oxford. The memorial was designed by architects Mr Howard and Mr Axell of Oxford and accepted in November 1919 at a cost of £268. The structure was built by Mr Thomas Yirrell of Linslade (Leighton Buzzard) and paid for through fund raising under the guidance of Captain Daniels. The memorial was dedicated by Captain Anthony de Rothschild on 5<sup>th</sup> December 1920 with Lady Leopold de Rothschild's Scout Troop forming the guard of honour.

## Details

The memorial is set in the grounds of the 11<sup>th</sup> century Saxon Church of All Saints, Wing. It borders the public footpath passing through the churchyard. The memorial consists of a cross bearing on the front a carved figure of Christ with St. Mary and St. John. At the back is a representation of St. John on horseback slaying the dragon. The cross has no visual defects and is mounted on a stone base of four stepped tiers. The overall height is 18 feet. The stone used for the majority of the structure is Golden Chipsum for the tiers and Portland for the steps. Nebresina stone panels bear the names of 48 casualties from World War I, 12 from World War II and 1 from Korea. The bottom tier contains lettering round the base in old English Gothic style and says 'To the Memory of the Men of this Parish who gave their lives in the Great War 1914 – 1918. Rest Eternal grant unto them O Lord and let Light Perpetual shine upon them'

## Maintenance

Piecemeal maintenance and repair had been carried out intermittently over the years until a major inspection in 2005 revealed serious erosion throughout, with the monument in danger of complete deterioration. After considerable enquiries with national conservation specialists the authority to restore the memorial to its original state was vested in 2008 to The Stone Shop, East Fairleigh, Kent. The Stone Shop is a major restoration company working with the Commonwealth War Graves Committee and whose projects include the Stanley War Memorial Hong Kong, Millenium Cross Westminster Cathedral, El Fayid Memorial Egypt, Gulf War Memorial Doha, Falklands Memorial London, Battle of Britain Memorial Wall Chapel le Ferne and many more. The Method Statement covering the work to be done comprised:

Bottom two tiers: Manufacture new stone to match as closely as possible the original material to replace the existing bottom tiers.

Take a rubbing from the existing inscriptions on the bottom tier and re inscribe using exactly the same style of lettering.

Remove the original stone and place the new pieces of stone in position using stainless steel clamps. Re point with lime based mortar.

Third and Fourth Tiers: These contain the names in memory. They are carved in flush lead lettering using Nabresina stone as facing material (it appears the original stone was moved and the new panels fixed into position using sand/cement mortar.) This area needs special attention and the cracked panel needs to be re engraved and replaced

Memorial Steps: Once the memorial has been cleaned , re fix the steps using stainless steel pins and re point using lime based mortar.

The requirements of the Method Statement have been fully met with a result that:

The matching Golden Gypsum stone has been sourced and fitted throughout.

The base inscription of Gothic lettering has been re carved in toto.

16 stones, all of different lengths, have been cut and fitted.

The 8 stone plinths have been professionally engraved.

The memorial has been under pinned.

The column has been under pinned.

Cracked name plates have been replaced.  
Repairs in many forms to inner foundations, caused by extensive erosion occasioned by inadequate DIY repair work, have been replaced with lime /mortar.

The initial stabilisation and work to stop further erosion was carried out in 2009 with the work to fully restore the memorial to its original state being completed in 2012. The £27,500 (including VAT ) to complete this work was raised wholly within the village by fund raising, and individual donations.

### Ownership of War Memorial

A large number of war memorials which had been erected by private subscription were subsequently handed over to parish councils, urban councils and boroughs to maintain. In order to ensure that every form of local council had the ability to raise appropriate funds to preserve these war memorials, the War Memorials (Local; Authorities Powers) Act 1923 was passed. Under the terms of this Act, as amended by Section 133 of the Local Government Act 1948, the Parish Councils Act 1957 and the Local Government Act of 1972, responsibility for the overall control of war memorials was vested with local authorities, who were empowered to incur reasonable expenditure for the maintenance, repair and protection of war memorials within their control. Those powers also extend to the alteration of a memorial to enable the fallen of any subsequent war to that for which it was originally intended, to be commemorated.

Note: Under the Disused Burial Grounds (Amendment) Act 1981 and the Pastoral Measure 1983, if a disused Church of England church or churchyard, or a disused non-conformist burial site is made the subject of a disposal scheme, relatives of those commemorated or buried there, or the CWGC, must be given the opportunity to make alternative arrangements for any war memorial on that site. Responsibility for matters dealing with disposal of war memorials from disused churches or burial grounds belonging to a church within England rests with the Home Office.

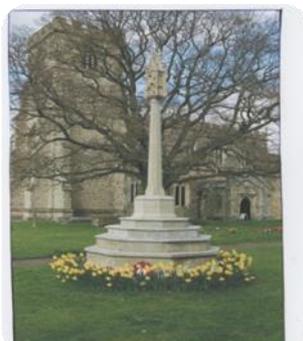
### War Memorial Inventory

There is an ongoing project to record the location, form and style of all war memorials in the United Kingdom as well as the names commemorated on them. The Inventory of War Memorials is based in the Imperial War Museum in Lambeth and it is compiling a data base of all war memorials.

The Wing War Memorial is included in this inventory as UKNIWM Ref. 7977. Shown on the inventory are the address, type, inscriptions, components, physical description, wars commemorated and people remembered, maintenance, history, ownership, sponsorship, craftsmen, architect, builder etc. The inventory was updated following a rededication after restoration on 11 November 2012.



Erosion 2008



Restored 2012



Erosion 2008