

90 Years of Coleorton War memorial.

Sometime after the end of WW1 most local communities set up funds to erect memorials in their towns, villages and parishes commemorating those that had been killed during The Great War. By 21st December 1921 Coleorton had managed to amass a fund of £134 – 14s – 5d from voluntary contributions of parishioners, and the trustees of the fund commissioned Messrs. R. Bridgeman & Sons of Lichfield to design and construct a war memorial.



Messrs. R Bridgeman & Sons, Lichfield.

Messrs. R. Bridgeman & Sons were paid £121 -18s – 2d to complete this contract and the war memorial was erected during the summer of 1922 in readiness for the unveiling ceremony on Sunday 17th September 1922.

The Coalville Times of Friday 22nd September 1922 records the unveiling ceremony. The weather was described as “sunshine” when the procession was formed at St Mary’s Church by 3.30p.m. The procession set off proceeding slowly, lead by the Leicestershire Yeomanry Band playing “the Death March”.

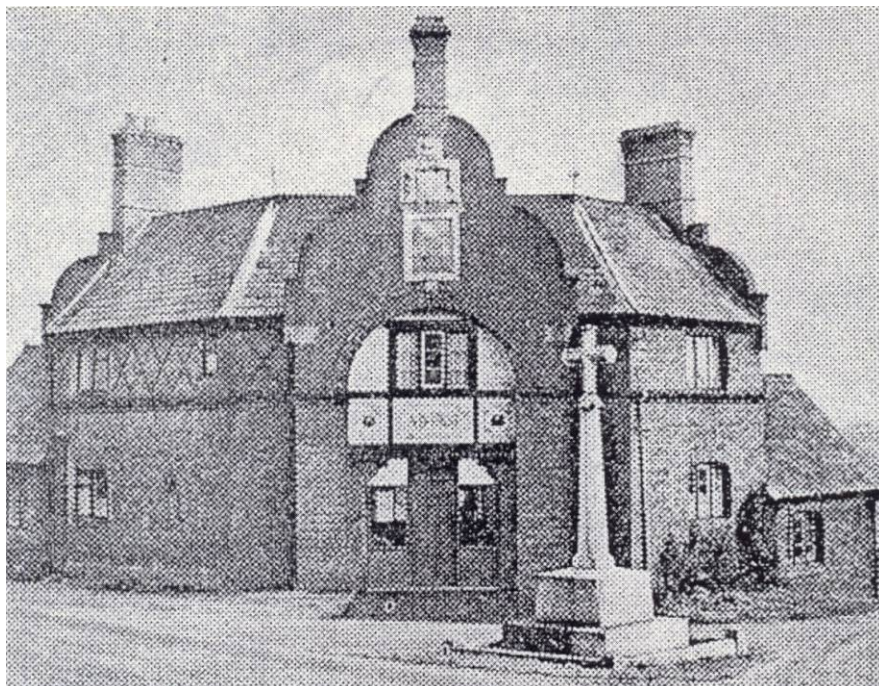
The procession also included members of the Leicestershire Yeomanry with Major Gore-Browne in command; there were a good number of ex-service men, church officials, the church choir, the Girl Guides and relatives of the deceased men. Among the dignitaries were Sir George Beaumont, the Dowager Lady Beaumont, Mrs Chas Booth, Mrs F Abel-Smith (Coleorton Hall) and Mrs Philpot.

The procession walked the short distance from St Mary's Church to the war memorial, which was situated immediately outside the Coleorton Alms Houses at the junction of the Loughborough Road (A512) and the Rempstone Road. Once assembled there was a short service in which Rev. J N Philpott read out the roll of honour (Rev Philpott's son John Reginald Philpott was one of the fallen).

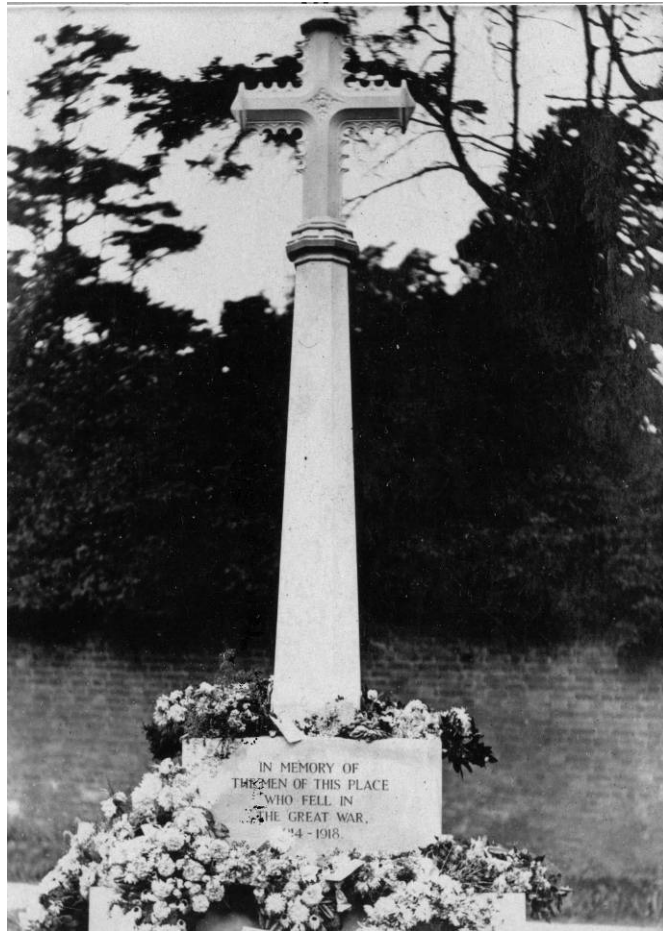
Lt. Col. R E Martin of the Leicestershire Regiment gave what was described as "a long address" after which he officially unveiled the war memorial.



Lt. Col. R.E. Martin **C.M.G, T.D., D.L.**



Photograph showing the war memorial in front of the Alms Houses.



Photograph believed to have been taken after the unveiling.



Photograph believed to have been taken from a post card,
Also taken after the unveiling.

There are 20 “fallen heroes” listed on Coleorton war memorial and they are:-

Rank	First Name	Surname	Age at Death	Regiment	Year
PTE	William	Holt	33	RAMC	1920
PTE	Fred	Hubbard	21	Leicestershire Reg.	1918
L. Corp	Joseph	Martin	31	Sussex Reg.	1916
PTE	Frank	Palmer	21	Lincolnshire Reg.	1916
SPR	George John	Percival	39	RE	1917
Capt.	John Reginald	Philpott. MC	24	RFC	1918
PTE	Arthur Capenor	Preston	30	Leicestershire Reg.	1916
PTE	Alec James	Turner	19	RNVR	1917
PTE	David	Walker	28	Black Watch	1918
SGT	George Arthur	Walker	21	Leicestershire Reg.	1916
PTE	Samuel Thomas	Berkin	20	Grenadier Guards	1915
PTE	William	Bird	25	Leicestershire Reg.	1915
PTE	James	Blyth	30	Leicestershire Reg.	1918
PTE	Francis	Briggs	22	Australian Imp. Forces	1915
PTE	Frederick William	Briggs	24	Australian Imp. Forces	1916

PTE	Alfred	Clifford	18	Leicestershire Reg.	1915
PTE	Cecil Edwin	Cuthbert	19	Northumberland Reg.	1918
PTE	John William	Fearn	21	RFA	1918
PTE	Archibald	Holt	21	Royal Fusiliers	1918
LT	Archibald James Rowan	Hamilton	38	Irish Guards	1915

A further sum of £25 was paid to Messrs. R. Bridgeman & Sons on 11 September 1923, and whilst there is no record of what this payment is for, it is assumed to be for the addition of the low, small wall around the base of the memorial to add some protection.

Viscount Beaumont School has always held a special service on Armistice Day, which started on 11th November 1924 with the service being held in the school, and attended by Sir George Beaumont, the Dowager Lady Beaumont, other dignitaries and parents, with the Rector conducting the service. This service was eventually moved to the war memorial on November 11th 1935, with the children (Juniors and Seniors) attending with parents, the Rector and other dignitaries. The school continues this service today.

The war memorial is also the location for a village memorial day, held on Remembrance Sunday, where a short service is held and the roll of honour is read out by the chair of the Parish Council.

World War II

Following the Second World War those that were killed during the war were added to the war memorial; their details are:- (I have not found any record of this addition).

Rank	Initials	Surname	Regiment	Date
Stoker	K W	Bettison	HMS Submarine Triad	16/10/1940
PTE	L	Granger	Army Catering Corps	06/10/1945
FUS	E P	Robinson	2 Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers	15/10/1943
PTE	P	Topham	Pioneer Corps	16/03/1943
PTE	G H	Turner	2/3 Leicestershire Reg.	22/02/1942

In 1922 the amount of traffic on the Loughborough Road would not have been a significant risk, but as time progressed so did the level of traffic and the level of risk. It is believed that the war memorial suffered minor damage over the years through some minor collisions, but during the 1970's (The precise year/month is not known –so if you know when this was please contact John Macdonald) the memorial was hit by a lorry and suffered very significant damage. The complete memorial was taken away to be repaired and was reported to have been away for 3 years before being relocated in its current position on the Ashby Road.



The war memorial in August 2009.

Following a project organised through Leicestershire County Council, to document all war memorials in Leicestershire & Rutland, it was pointed out that the memorial had become very dirty and had some minor damage. Coleorton Parish Council with the support of the Historic Buildings Department of LCC had the war memorial cleaned and repaired.



Workmen in August 2010 cleaning and repairing the war memorial.



The war memorial after cleaning and repair – September 2010.

The War Memorial project started in 2009 has been an ongoing project and has progressed to a detailed research project into those that are listed on the Coleorton War memorial together with those associated with Coleorton and listed on other war memorials (e.g. The Methodist and Baptist Churches). If anyone has knowledge relating to any of those listed please contact John Macdonald at jwkmcd@hotmail.co.uk

John Macdonald
September 2012.