

The Centenary Stone – A Day to Remember

In 2014 the History Group hosted a weekend exhibition and village event to mark the 100th anniversary of the start of World War One. Two years in preparation culminated in a very special event that we felt very proud of and brought to the fore the names and lives of 10 Hornton men killed in this war. This wasn't though just a history group



event because without you, your family stories, your photos, mementoes and willingness to help we would have had very little to show. In the end it turned out to be so much more than the story of 10 men, you can see the photos and story of that weekend elsewhere on the website.

It was after this weekend that we thought we should plan to celebrate Armistice Day in four years time with an event as special as our weekend event. Various ideas were put forward but how could we mark such an event with the respect it deserves? Finally in 2016 a possible answer surfaced on a building site on Millers Lane.

On my usual morning drive past the site I noticed some very large pieces of Hornton stone that had been excavated along with 500 tonnes of earth. So here right under our feet was the answer to our question, if we could have one of the stones we could create a memorial in our village to the soldiers of Hornton. In fact our weekend exhibition had taught us that it was not only the men who had suffered but their wives, mothers, fathers, brothers in reality it was the whole community that suffered.

At the time history group member Chris Woodcock was documenting the excavation and the history of the site. So she spoke to the owners about the possibility of having a stone for a memorial to the fallen men of WW1. Not only had they uncovered the stone but our research had uncovered that one of our soldiers family had lived in a cottage where the new houses were being built. Co-owners Mark Andrew and Stuart Vickers were more than happy to help us in our quest to create a lasting memorial.

All we had to do was turn this large rock into a suitable memorial stone! Step forward Stewart Neville and Hornton Stone Limited, Stewart had helped us in our second weekend exhibition in 2016. Highlighting the businesses in and around Hornton, Stewart was key in our research into the Ironstone Quarries. So using his skills in working with Hornton stone, he had the stone, cut, dressed and engraved ready to be set on a resting place within the village.



The ideal site was on the small tri-angular green in the centre of the village, I set to work on preparing a planning application and obviously needed help from a professional in mounting the stone. Here again a previous history event had put us in touch with such a person, local structural engineer and historian Andrew Baxter helped us prepare the technical side of the application. I presented our ideas to the parish council and they agreed to support us and paid for the planning application. Finally in July 2018 we had our decision from Cherwell District Council, the stone could go ahead. Through the many twists and turns in this process and the coverage of the centenary anniversary, our memorial had turned into the Centenary Stone ready to mark this historic event.

We were nearly there, all we needed now was to set the stone. So on a wet October morning the History Group rolled up its collective sleeves and created the concrete pad ready for the stone.

The following weekend we lowered and concreted the stone into place



To work in conjunction with the church remembrance service we unveiled the Centenary Stone at 10am. It was so rewarding to see so many attend the unveiling ceremony.



Martin Hemmings a relative of William Cawley, whose family lived on the plot where the stone was excavated, kindly unveiled the stone for us. David Robbins, grandson of John Robbins, killed in the Gallipoli campaign read a poem as did Bob Langton. 10 crosses were placed in front of the stone and we finished proceedings with the Last Post.

