Historic England

Listing War Memorials in England

A Guide for Volunteers

Summary

This document briefly describes what Listing is, how to find out if a war memorial is listed, and how to apply for one to be listed. It explains the information required in an application and suggests ways to research this. Then, to help you write your own List entry to accompany your application, it gives examples to follow. Finally, it gives links to other guidance documents.

In the aftermath of the First World War tens of thousands of war memorials were erected across the land to remember those who served, and especially those who had died. Often communities chose a freestanding memorial - some form of cross, cenotaph or statue bearing the names of those commemorated. But there is enormous variety.

Now, as we remember the conflict and its consequences, the Government has placed a special emphasis on the country's war memorials, and has announced a national effort to ensure they are all in a fitting state of repair by 2018. Historic England is working with communities across England and partners, especially War Memorials Trust and Civic Voice, towards this aim with advice on maintenance and repair, grant aid and an ambitious programme of listing.

www.HistoricEngland.org.uk/advice/

Front cover
The unveiling ceremony at Keighley War Memorial, Yorkshire, July 1922. Listed Grade II. Sculptor H C Fehr.
Historic England image FAR 01/01/146

Figures 1-3

1. Brackley, Northamptonshire. Listed Grade II.

2. Benenden, Kent. Listed Grade II. Sculptor Albert Toft.

3. Bridgnorth, Shropshire. Listed Grade II. Sculptor Capt Adrian Jones, MVO.

What is Listing?

Listing is the process by which a building or structure is added to the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) because of its architectural or historic interest. Almost all war memorials will meet this test. However, those built within the last 30 years will have to be exceptionally important to be listed, and under threat.

Listing is not a preservation order. But it is intended to ensure that a structure's essential character and interest is maintained, and listed building consent via the planning system is needed for changes that might affect its special interest. In this way its long-term future is safeguarded.

Figure 4
Whittlesford War Memorial Cross, Cambridgeshire. Listed Grade II.

The war memorials which are already included on the NHLE are mostly listed at Grade II. More ambitious examples, perhaps ones with high-quality sculpture, may be graded at II* or even Grade I, although the latter accolade is very exceptional indeed.

So far, only about 1,700 of England's war memorials are listed, a small percentage of the total. Each year between 2014 and 2018 we intend to add substantially to this tally. How many we manage to add will depend to a large measure on the contributions we receive from the public, but we are aiming for an overall target of 2,500 new listings. You can help us attain this target.

Who is responsible for listing ?

It is the Secretary of State for Culture, Media & Sport who decides whether a structure merits listing. They act on advice provided by Historic England, the Government's expert adviser on the historic environment.

How can I find out if our memorial is already listed ?

All listed structures appear on the NHLE, which is publicly searchable. You can find this at www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list. For villages and small towns simply type the place-name in the search box, press search, and then scroll down the search results to see if the memorial is listed. For larger places use the Advanced Search which allows you to enter additional information to narrow your search. This includes building type – war memorial.

How to Apply to List a War Memorial

If a memorial isn't listed, you can submit an application for listing yourself via an online form at www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/apply-for-listing/. The more information you can supply about the memorial and its history, the better. Advice on how to research war memorials is offered below.

Key information needed for Listing

Please supply as much information as you can – if it can be found – under these headings

- date of memorial – that is when it was unveiled

- designer (sculptor, architect or mason)

- materials (type of stone, etc)

- a description of the memorial

- details of dedicatory inscriptions and the conflicts and number of individuals commemorated

- history – how the memorial was paid for, when it was unveiled and by whom

- sources of further information (newspaper articles etc)

- ownership

Generally speaking, List entries do not record the names of the individuals commemorated, or details of their military careers. Where such details are known they can be contributed to the Imperial War Museum's project Lives of the First World War at www.livesofthefirstworldwar.org/ or the War Memorials Archive www.ukniwm.org.uk/.

Photographs

Each application should be accompanied by a small set of photographs – typically up to six – of the memorial. These should include

- the monument in its local setting – say in the churchyard, or town square

- a straight-on picture of the whole monument

- a detailed shot of each inscription, or particular decorative detail, or any statue

What happens next ?

If your application includes all the necessary information, we will assess the war memorial. This includes a consultation period in which you will be able to comment. We then send our recommendation to DCMS for a decision. We let you know when that has been made. The whole process takes at least 3 months. For more information go to www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/designation-process/

Condition

Information on the physical condition of war memorials can be recorded on War Memorials Online.

Finding Out About War Memorials

Websites

UK War Memorials

A web portal, www.ukwarmemorials.org/, hosted by the Imperial War Museum, offers a good starting point for investigation. Ever more websites about war memorials are appearing, which shows the considerable public interest in this topic.

War Memorials Archive (WMA)

www.ukniwm.org.uk/

The Imperial War Museum's War Memorials Archive (formerly UK National Inventory of War Memorials, established in 1989) is working to compile a comprehensive historical record of all war memorials in the UK to promote their appreciation, use and preservation.

It estimates that there are approximately 100,000 UK war memorials, and it has recorded over 65,000 to date.

WMA records memorials commemorating all wars and periods of peacekeeping, and not just those from 1914-18. It also records a wide variety of types of war memorial, from familiar community crosses, obelisks and statues to less common memorials such as bus shelters, sundials, park benches and even an island. Not all of these are eligible for listing, which is confined to buildings and structures.

War Memorials Online (WMO)

www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/

Managed by War Memorials Trust, War Memorials Online was set up in 2011. The website seeks to create a greater understanding of the condition of war memorials. Anyone can add information, photographs and condition details for war memorials as well as reporting concerns. The home page has a search box, that takes you to any records held, some of which include photographs.

Other resources

There are an increasing number of regional and county resources. An exemplary website is that of the North East War Memorials Project at www.newmp.org.uk

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

www.cwgc.org

The CWGC's website includes a casualty database locating the place of commemoration of those who died during the two world wars.

Other ways of finding out

Google searches (try the place name plus war memorial) often throw up useful information. Your local studies library will have books and other materials on particular places. Once you know roughly when a memorial was unveiled, a search of local newspapers may well locate an account of the ceremony. Again, local studies libraries will either have these, or know how to access them.

For some parts of the country the Public Monuments and Sculpture Association has published a detailed inventory of statues and other sculpture in the public realm, including war memorials. Details of the places covered in its Public Sculpture in Britain series can be found on the PMSA website at www.pmsa.org.uk/.

Books

Some of the key works on war memorials are:

Geoff Archer, *The Glorious Dead. Figurative Sculpture of British First World War Memorials* (2009).
An extremely helpful and well-illustrated survey of war memorial sculpture, concentrating on mainly bronze figures.

Derek Boorman, *At the Going Down of the Sun: British First World War Memorials* (1988)
A pioneering study of war memorials with many illustrations.

Alan Borg, *War Memorials: from Antiquity to Present* (1991)
A good general survey of military commemoration across the centuries from an art-historical point of view, with an emphasis on the First World War.

Alex King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain: The Symbolism and Politics of Remembrance* (1998)
A detailed study of the circumstances surrounding the erection of war memorials from a local history perspective, drawing heavily on contemporary records.

Mark Quinlan, *Remembrance* (2005)
A wide-ranging study into the forms of war memorials.

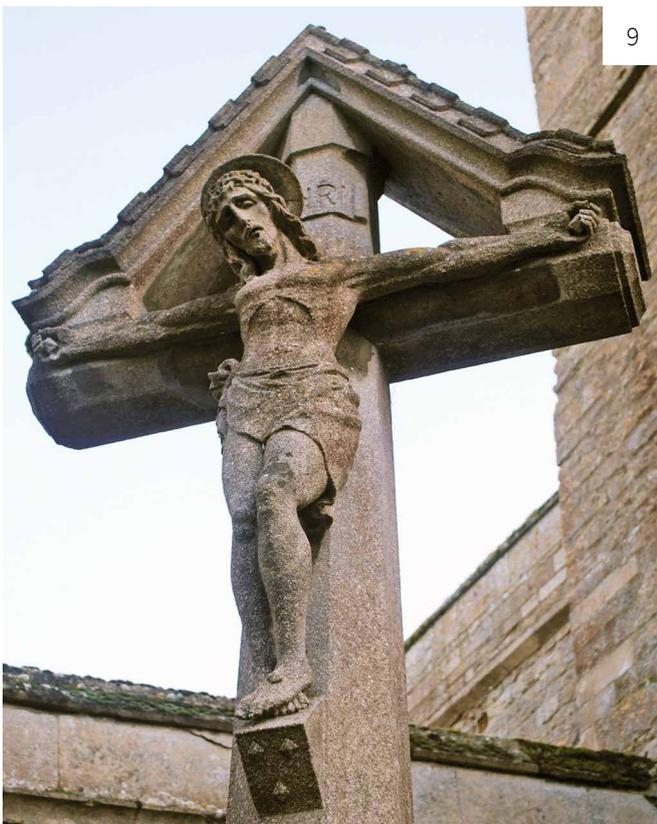Kate Tiller, *Remembrance and Community: War Memorials and Local History* (2013)
A very useful introduction to the subject, giving useful advice on sources.

Figures 5 and 6
5. The First World War memorial at St Mary's Church, Turweston, Northamptonshire. Listed Grade II.
6. Stoke Bruerne and Shutlanger War Memorial, Northamptonshire. Listed Grade II.

Four Common Cross-head Types

Figures 7-10

7. A Latin cross, where the shaft is longer than the cross arm. A Greek cross has shaft and arms of equal length.

8. A wheel-head cross, here in the form of a Celtic cross with interlace ornament.

9. A calvary, showing the crucified Christ.

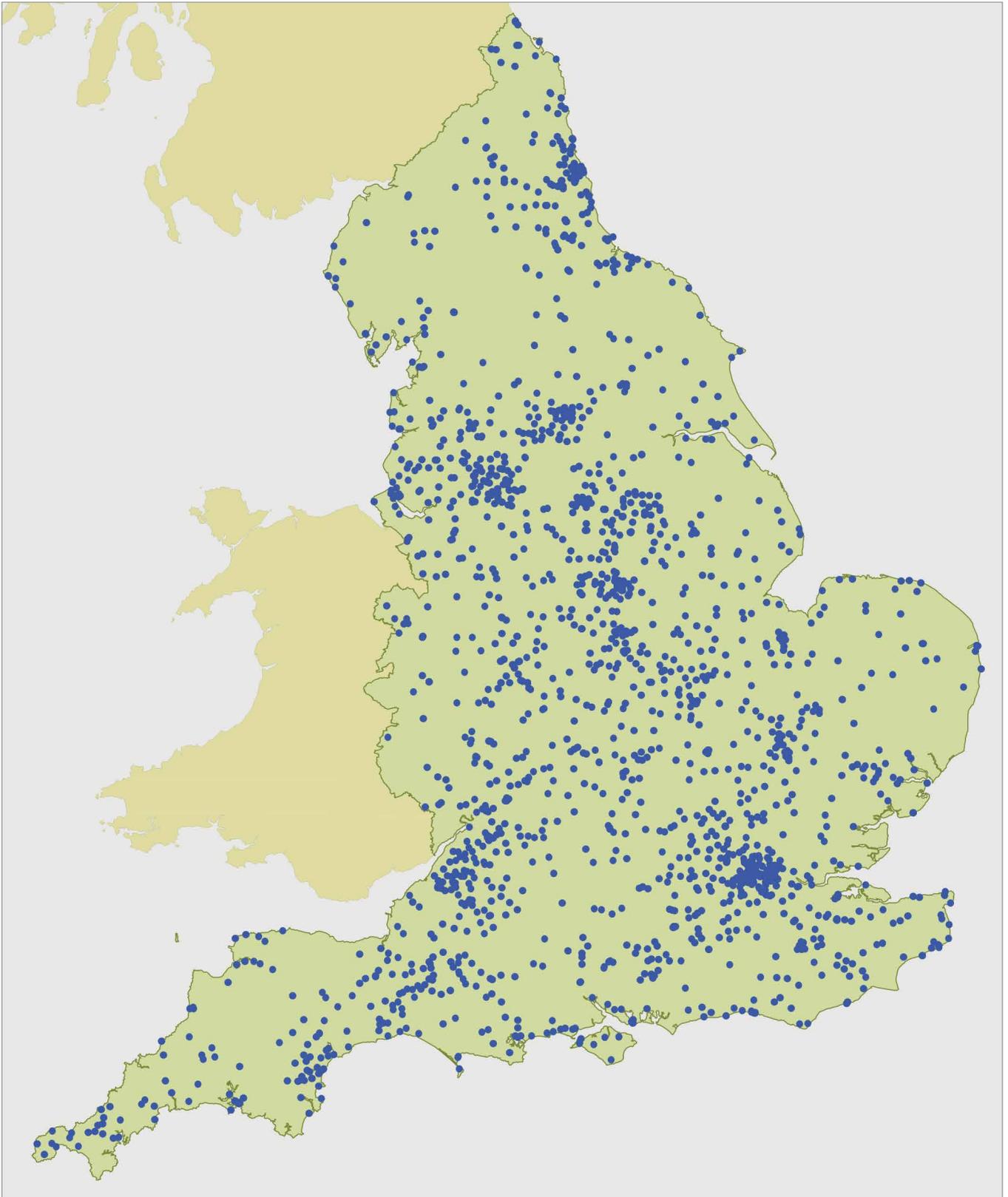10. A lantern, modelled on a medieval churchyard cross-head.

Figure 11
The location of all listed war memorials in
England at 1 June 2015.
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Example List Entry

This is an example of a fictitious draft List entry, with accompanying notes that explain what the entry is aiming to do. The closer a submission can be to this model, the easier it will be to add it to the National Heritage List for England.

Draft List Entry	Notes
Name Ambridge War Memorial, Borchestershire	Give the name of the war memorial.
Details The memorial, set on a grassed area, consists of a York stone obelisk, with a total height of 2.3m, set on a square base and pedestal. The northern face of the obelisk has a wreath in high relief and below it the inscription reads ERECTED/ TO THE/ GLORY OF GOD/ AND IN HONOUR OF/ THE MEN OF/ AMBRIDGE/ WHO SERVED THEIR/ KING AND COUNTRY/ IN THE GREAT WAR/ 1914 – 1918./ IN MEMORIUM. Below are the names of the three men who died with their rank and regiment or ship. Beneath this is the inscription LEST WE FORGET. The eastern face lists those wounded or taken prisoner and the western face those who also served. The southern face has the inscription: ALSO/ IN GRATEFUL/ REMEMBRANCE OF/ ALL FROM THIS/ PARISH/ WHO SERVED/ IN THE/ SECOND WORLD/ WAR/ 1939 – 1945 followed by the names. The memorial is surrounded by iron chains linking four timber posts.	Give the materials which the memorial is made of and describe the memorial (dimensions can be approximate). Record the inscriptions in capital letters, indicating the end of each line by using '/'. Generally only the number of names, and not the names themselves, is recorded. Named individuals should only be included for exceptional reasons, eg a Victoria Cross recipient.
History The Ambridge war memorial was unveiled by Major General Sir Robert Pargeter on 16 May 1921 on land on the south side of Main Street, donated to the parish by Miss Adeline Smith of The Manor.	Give the historical details. These should be specific to the memorial in question.

The memorial was paid for by villagers' subscriptions and the stone masons were W Wise and Son of Borchester. An unusual feature of the memorial is that it bears the names not only of those who died, but all who served during the First World War, including those wounded or captured. The names of those who served during the Second World War were added to the rear of the memorial.

Selected Sources

Ambridge War Memorial Unveiled, Borsetshire Herald, 21 May 1921, page 2

IWM War Memorials Archive, Ref: 1234 – Ambridge War Memorial, http://www.ukniwm.org.uk/server/show/conMemorial.1234/ viewed 27 November 2014

Only give sources specific to the particular memorial which give substantive detail.

National Grid Reference
SO123 678

Please try to record the map reference for the memorial's location.

Examples of already listed war memorials

Grendon Underwood, Grade II
http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1412840

The Machine Gun Corps Memorial, London, Grade II*
http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1226874

The Response, Newcastle upon Tyne, Grade I
http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=118620

Historic England

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This publication is one of a number of Historic England projects to mark the centenary of the First World War.

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