

SARRATT WAR MEMORIALS

A Historical Perspective

The wording of the appeal for funds for a war memorial on Sarratt Green (June Spotlight) implies that those villagers who lived through the Great War and suffered the loss of their loved ones neglected to acknowledge the youthful sacrifice. Nothing could be further from the truth.

In March 1919 the village set up a War Memorial committee with Mr G Carey (chairman), Rev G Ryley (hon sec), and Mr Peter Clutterbuck (treasurer) and ten further members. Various schemes were suggested: a memorial hall, a cross on The Green, the endowment of a bed in Watford Cottage Hospital or the erection of tablets in both the Parish Church and the Baptist Church on which would be inscribed the names of the fallen. At a public meeting the village chose the tablets. £157 was raised, £50 each was given to Holy Cross and the Baptist Church to erect their tablets and the remainder was to be used for memorial seats around the parish.

The tablet in Holy Cross was dedicated at morning service on 29 August 1920. It was draped in the Union Jack and unveiled by Peter Clutterbuck. Rev Ryley solemnly read all the names on it. Additional names were added on another tablet after the Second World War. Four graceful 'art deco' seats were placed around the village: three on the Green – by the Crickets' dell, under the lime trees opposite Old Red Lion Farm and by the Old Wheatsheaf, and one on Dawes Common. These seats have been shamefully neglected and only three remain but they are still there, on the Green and Dawes Common, for us all to use and to remind us of those who gave their lives. This is not to say whether we should or should not have another memorial on the Green but we believe it is our duty to care for and respect the existing memorials so thoughtfully chosen by those closest to the terrible suffering of the time. Otherwise what hope do we have that a new memorial will be cherished eighty or ninety years from now?

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