

permanent memorial shows the true humility of the man when facing eternity. The villa at Kentish Town provided an essential haven for a man wishing to keep in touch with the world but at the same time wishing to retreat from its hurly burly, and ultimately it was a place where Stukeley could continue to pursue his real passion of gardening.

Acknowledgements

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FROM EAST END WAR SHRINES AND HYDE PARK'S GREAT FLOWER SHRINE TO THE CENOTAPH IN WHITEHALL

By Sophie Seifalian

We are all familiar with the war memorials erected after the end of the Great War, and which can be found in towns and villages throughout the country. However, during the course of the war there were other, more ephemeral memorials: simple flower shrines were created in local streets, particularly in the East End of London, to remember those serving as well as those killed. Although supported by the Church of England and the press, there was no official guiding hand, and the shrines were for the most part put up and tended by mothers and wives. Towards the end of the war, when the losses and casualties on the battlefields had affected so many, Hyde Park's Great Flower Shrine drew thousands in an act of public mourning. At the end of the war, a temporary Cenotaph was built to act as saluting point for the Victory Parade. The public's immediate reaction was overwhelming; a deluge of wreaths and flowers was laid at its base in an act of pilgrimage. In response, the government decided to build the permanent version of the Cenotaph found in Whitehall today.

Hyde Park's Great Flower Shrine

On Sunday 4th August 1918, twenty thousand people converged on a Great Flower Shrine in Hyde Park to lay flowers in memory of the dead. The Shrine was unveiled by the Right Revd. Arthur Foley Winnington-Ingram, Bishop of London, and was the most spectacular of the special services of praise and prayer held that day throughout the country to commemorate Britain's declaration of war against Germany four years previously (*fig. 16*). These large patriotic rallies had been conducted since the first anniversary of the war to promote enthusiasm and support for the war effort, and as the war progressed to pay tribute to the fallen. This day became known as *Remembrance Day* until superseded in 1919 by 11th November.

The Great Flower Shrine was the brainchild of the Bishop, with the support of the Lord Mayor of London and advertising entrepreneur Charles Higham,¹ and paid for by Sir Samuel Waring of the furniture manufacturing firm of Waring and Gillow. Repatriation of those killed had been forbidden from the early days of the war, and the organisers of the Great Flower Shrine proposed a 'floral tribute to the fallen in the Great War', where flowers from the public could be received and which could symbolise placing them on the graves in France and Flanders² (*fig. 17*).

The Shrine was described as having a large Maltese Cross at the base, with a spire twenty-four feet high surmounted by a Union Jack, and around it the flags of the Allies. The spire was a tapering octagonal timber structure, which was draped in purple and white cloth.³ From early morning the foot of the Shrine was bedecked with flowers, and 'human hedgerows walled the paths on either side'.⁴ A bunch of marigolds beside a wreath of malmaisons, white roses, pink carnations from a group of wounded soldiers – all day people came – mothers, wives, sisters and the wounded, with their flower tributes, which

1. Charles Higham was joint organiser of the War Shrine Movement. Gary Messenger, *British Propaganda and the State in the First World War*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), p.219.

2. The National Archives, WORK 16/26/8.

3. *Evening News*, 3 & 5 August 1918.

4. *Daily Express*, 5 August 1918.

they handed over to members of the London Volunteer Rifles, who laid them reverently on the Shrine, until 'the shrine of memory was carpeted in purple and blue and gold and scarlet - symbols of an undying reverence for those whose deeds are undying'.⁵ The Shrine was blessed by the Bishop of London, and after the dedication, a procession was formed, preceded by the Salvation Army Band.⁶

By the end of the week it was reported that up to one hundred thousand people had visited the Shrine. By 15th August, the organisers were claiming that two hundred thousand people had laid flowers at the Shrine.⁷ On the second weekend a simple bunch of flowers in a glass vase drew particular attention and comment. The red, pink and mauve carnations with spikes of red and white gladioli, tied with a tricolour ribbon were the tribute from Queen Alexandra. The accompanying card read:

In grateful memory of our brave and splendid
soldiers who gave their lives for King and
Country, God bless them all.
Alexandra.⁸

Rolls of Honour and East End War Shrines

However, the question is: did the Bishop of London's inspiration for the Great Flower Shrine derive from the war shrines of East London? Very possibly. Both Mark Connelly in his book, *The Great War, Memory and Ritual* (2015) and Alex King in *Memorials of the Great War in Britain* (1918) dedicate a chapter to the war shrines.⁹ Connelly states that the war shrines of East London laid the foundations for later remembrance.

In the early stages of the war, Rolls of Honour were being used as part of the recruiting campaign. Town councils and institutions began to publicly commemorate local recruits with Rolls of Honour displayed in prominent places listing the names of men who were serving, noting distinctions on the battlefield and the names of those who had been killed.

5. *Daily Express*, 5 August 1918.

6. *The Times*, 5 August 1918.

7. Alex King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain*, (Oxford: Berg, 1918), p.56.

8. *The Times*, 19 August 1918.

9. Mark Connelly, *The Great War, Memory and Ritual*, (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2015); King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain*, *op. cit.*

The first description of war or flower shrines in East London comes in early 1916. In May of that year, in a speech to the Diocesan Conference, the Bishop of London praised the Vicar of South Hackney who had set up a Roll of Honour in every street in the parish, with the names of the men from each particular street who were serving. Below the names a prayer for the men at the Front was attached, which people were asked to learn and to say daily. Flags were placed above the rolls and vases of flowers at either side, which local residents kept filled with fresh flowers.¹⁰ Every Sunday afternoon the clergy conducted a short service by the rolls, at which large crowds attended. In his speech the Bishop exhorted the Church to show its support for the men at the Front, saying 'Don't be satisfied with your roll of honour in the church, go into the streets and make them understand.'¹¹

In the summer of 1916, the Battle of Jutland and the Battle of the Somme brought home the stark reality of the war to most Britons and significantly to most East Enders.¹² Elmer Paget in her biography of her husband, Henry Paget, who served as Bishop of Stepney during the war, wrote:

All this time War Shrines were beginning to appear in the back streets. They had sprung up spontaneously, and no one seems to have planned them; they were entirely of the people imagined, carried out and paid for by them. The usual form was a simple tryptych [sic] with a shelf beneath for flowers, recording the names of all who had gone out from the street to serve the Colours.

Intercessions were constantly made at the shrines and they quickly proved of real spiritual value. The Bishop was always ready to dedicate these little stations... Once when a shrine was dedicated in Bethnal Green, the street was crowded from end to end with women, bare-headed Englishmen, and head-covered Jews. The Bishop, after giving the blessing in English turned to the Jews ...and then gave the blessing in Hebrew.¹³

In August 1916 Queen Mary visited five of South Hackney's growing number of war shrines. According to *The Times*, every street with houses flush to the pavement was to have

10. *Church Times*, 19 May 1916.

11. *Church Times*, 19 May 1916.

12. Connelly, *op. cit.*, p.25.

13. Elmer K. Paget, *Henry Luke Paget*, (London, New York Toronto, Longmans: Green and Co, 1939) p.197.



16. Souvenir napkin commemorating the Great Flower Shrine in Hyde Park on 4th August, 1918.

Souvenir paper handkerchiefs or napkins were produced for all major events that passed through London's streets and drew a crowd such as royal processions and political demonstrations
(© MUSEUM OF LONDON)



17. In memory of those who have fallen: The Bishop of London, Arthur Winnington-Ingram, blessing the great flower shrine in Hyde Park, London in 1918
(CHRONICLE / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO)

one. Her visit was organised by the Rector Batty and was possibly prompted as recognition of how many men had been recruited from the locality. In each street she visited, the number of men who had volunteered exceeded the number of houses. In Palace Road 111 men had volunteered from 70 houses.¹⁴ A Pathé film of the Queen's visit shows a small motorcade led by Rector Batty and his two curates.¹⁵ At each shrine the Queen left her car to inspect the roll of honour and brought flowers to lay beside the shrine, and gave words of comfort to those she met. At 69 Eaton Road the shrine looked like a flower show and picture gallery combined and the Queen placed a nosegay of carnations in front of the roll of honour.¹⁶ Not only did her visit give a real boost to communal pride, it was so widely reported in local and national press that a nationwide street shrine movement was soon established (*fig. 18*).

The movement really took off in October 1916 following an article in the *London Evening News*, which commended the shrines, and also raised a fund for materials for shrines in the poor parishes. This was endorsed by the Lord Mayor of London and the mayors of Battersea, Holborn and Hackney, and the offer was taken up by clergy of several denominations. The earliest shrines were very simply made. They were decorated with the Union Jack and other flags, and often there would be photographs of a national figure, such as Jellicoe and Kitchener or some local heroes (*fig. 19*). In October 1916, *The Times* reported on an exhibition of ready-made shrines on display at Selfridges, organised by *The Evening News*.¹⁷ Prices ranged from thirty shillings for a simple Gothic panel from Mr C. Geddings of Hoddesdon, to something more elaborate from Bodley and Hare for fourteen pounds and ten shillings.¹⁸ The shrines appeared mostly in working class parishes and more often than not they were cared for by local women. For example, in the parish of St. Michael and All Angels in Poplar there were eighteen shrines recording over 1,500 names, and in Trafalgar Street, Walworth the shrine

listed three hundred men from one hundred and sixty houses.¹⁹ By the end of October 1916 more than 250 shrines were in the process of being set up or were indeed in place in streets throughout London.²⁰

According to Connelly, 'the shrines were set up because people wanted them and needed to feel that they were doing something to remember their dead and to provide some sort of superstitious protection for those still serving at the front'.²¹ At the same time the Church of England was active in promoting the shrines, and often undertook the administrative and organisational tasks involved.²² Nevertheless, the shrines were extremely popular and were treated with great respect. In normal times, people in South Hackney complained that they could not keep flowers in their gardens because of continual thefts, yet the vases of flowers on the shrines were never touched.²³ The whole community was involved; and the focus of attention on the ordinary servicemen at the Front allowed the anxious and bereaved a release of feelings, as far as that was possible. Letters from men at the Front also showed how much they too appreciated the mindfulness which the shrines represented.²⁴

The Flower Shrine that never was

Such was the overwhelming public response to the Great Flower Shrine and the Hyde Park Rally in August 1918, that within days Waring wrote to Sir Alfred Mond, First Commissioner at His Majesty's Office of Works (HMOW), offering to pay to erect a permanent shrine on the site.²⁵ / ²⁶ A minute sheet records that the Royal Parks had consistently opposed all memorials in the

19. Connelly, *op. cit.*, p.27, <https://www.southwarknews.co.uk/history/the-history-of-walworths-world-war-one-street-shrines/>, accessed 8 August 2020.

20. Connelly, *op. cit.*, p.25 [See also *Evening News*, 4, 6, 10, 13, 27 October 1916; *The Times*, 16, 31 October 1916; 4, 10 November 1916; 8, 26 December 1916].

21. Connelly, *op. cit.*, p.25.

22. Connelly, *op. cit.*, p.27; King, *op. cit.*, p.49.

23. *Church Times*, 19 May 1916.

24. *Hackney Gazette*, 1916.

25. The National Archives, WORK 16/26/8.

26. Towards the end of the war, Waring had transformed his Hammersmith based company into the Alliance Aeroplane Company, making aircraft parts instead of the furniture that was normally made there. The company's expertise in woodworking and knowledge of fabric coverings made them a perfect choice for this, <https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/education/educational-images/first-world-war-aircraft-works-waring-and-gillow-london-4714>, accessed 5 August 2020.

14. *The Times*, 11 August 1916.

15. <https://www.britishpathe.com/video/queen-mary-at-hackney-aka-festive-crowd-for-queen/query/patriotism>.

16. *Daily Express*, 11 August 1916.

17. Connelly, *op. cit.*, p.25 [also *Evening News*, October 1916].

18. *The Times*, 31 October 1916.



18. Queen Mary reads a Roll of Honour during her visit to the flower shrine
in Palace Road South Hackney, in August 1916
(COURTESY PA IMAGES)

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"TO LIVE IN HEARTS WE LEAVE BEHIND IS NOT TO DIE": HOME TRIBUTES AT A LONDON WAR SHRINE

DRAWN BY S. BEGG.-(COPYRIGHTED IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA.)

19. Drawing by S. Begg on the front cover of *The Illustrated London News*, 13th January 1917, showing a woman and two small children leaving a floral tribute at a London street shrine.
(© ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS LTD/MARY EVANS)

parks, and that any proposal to do so had always become a subject for hostile criticism in and out of Parliament. At the same time, the popularity of the Great Flower Shrine was also acknowledged. For the next three months, until the signing of the Armistice, controversy would surround the matter of a more permanent version of the Great Flower Shrine in Hyde Park.

In early September, an article in *The Times* took Mond and Sir Lionel Earle, First Secretary at HMOW, totally by surprise.²⁷ It reported that Sir Edwin Lutyens, commissioned by Waring, had designed a permanent shrine for flower tributes in Hyde Park, and gave a full description.²⁸ Earle quickly wrote to Lutyens saying he and Mond knew nothing about the shrine, and basically asked what was going on. He was alarmed, because in any case the King, as Ranger of the Parks, would need to give his approval before any commitments could be given.

Lutyens' design for a Flower Shrine was described as an oblong form seventy feet in length. At either end there were pylons rising to forty feet in height with inscriptions, and on an eminence in the centre, a 'great stone'. Along the length of the Shrine, on each side, there were six steps which the public could mount to lay their flowers on a wide shelf. Further descriptions in *Country Life*, which was supportive of the scheme, stressed its non-denominational design, the inscriptions on the pylons being 'hopeful of immortality and expressive of faith in the Divine'; the pine cones atop the pylons possibly 'an emblem of eternity'²⁹ (fig. 20).

Correspondence between the King and HMOW shows that although His Majesty sympathised with the idea of the shrine and its location, as regards the design, 'he does not like it at all', and regretted that the go-ahead had been given without his approval.³⁰ Mond wrote to the King, taking responsibility for any criticism and pleaded for a temporary scheme to proceed because of the great public interest,

submitting that it would be 'unfortunate if this scheme fell through'.³¹ The King again reiterated his request that Sir Edwin submit new designs – '[his] genius will produce something which though not on strictly theoretical artistic lines, may be more acceptable to the perhaps debased taste of the man in the street!'³²

Lutyens did indeed alter his design significantly (fig. 21). He eliminated the pylons which had drawn much criticism, but kept the altar, which could be made in wood and plaster, and without which he thought the design would resemble a coffee stall.³³

The King approved of the design, and construction was about to proceed. However, on 12th November 1918, the day immediately after the signing of the Armistice, Waring met with Lutyens and asked him not to proceed with the temporary scheme, but to prepare new designs for a permanent shrine. Lutyens wrote to Mond, 'my position is somewhat awkward'.³⁴ The upshot was that the temporary shrine scheme was cancelled, and in reply to a question in the Commons two days later, Mond replied that no proposal for a permanent memorial in Hyde Park had yet been submitted, and that any such scheme could only be carried out at the public expense and with the approval of Parliament subject to the permission of the King, the Ranger of the Royal Parks.³⁵

Plans for a permanent shrine in Hyde Park were now put firmly on hold. Earle wrote to Lord Stamfordham: 'a nightmare from which I have suffered for many weeks is, I trust, at last removed'.³⁶

The Great Flower Shrine continues to draw crowds, but becomes a source of trouble

People continued to flock to the Great Flower Shrine erected for Remembrance Day 1918. Mr. J. R. Clynes, the Food Controller, visiting in the middle of August, described his feelings on placing a bunch of pink carnations at the

27. *The Times*, 3 September 1918.

28. *The Times*, 3 September 1918.

29. *Country Life*, 21 September 1918, <https://keyassets.timeincuk.net/inspirewp/live/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2014/08/Country-Life-Proposed-War-Shrine-Sep-21-1918.pdf>.

30. Letters from Lord Stamfordham, King George V's private secretary, to Earle, 26 & 27 September 1918. The National Archives, WORK 16/26/8.

31. Letter from Mond to King George V, 27 September 1918. The National Archives, WORK 16/26/8.

32. Letter from Stamfordham to Mond, 30 September 1918. The National Archives, WORK 16/26/8.

33. The National Archives, WORK 16/26/8.

34. Letter from Lutyens to Mond, 12 November 1918. The National Archives, WORK 16/26/8.

35. Hansard, HC Deb 14 November 1918 vol 110 cc2870-1.

36. Letter from Lionel Earle to Lord Stamfordham, 16 November 1918. The National Archives, WORK 16/26/8.

foot of the cross:

Approaching this ground...and looking at the cross of flowers is a desire to kneel down and pray. The symbol which is erected here could only spring from our sense of the nobility of sacrifice covered by the names of the men who have died in the greatest of all causes. No small or separate monument could do justice to the collective heroism of the men who have fought and died together, and it is therefore fitting that in this great centre of the Empire a simple collection of flowers should be used to indicate the sense of national thanksgiving. I think the war shrine should be continued because it affords an outlet for what is true, deep, national feeling.³⁷

The deadline for removing the Shrine was frequently extended; at first to the end of August and then the end of October. As autumn turned to winter, and then to spring, the Shrine took on a bedraggled air. The upkeep was difficult. The grass paths were worn away, the structure needed constant upkeep: painting the flagpoles, replacing the torn flags and perished canvas drapery. In March 1919, Mond reported to the War Cabinet that the Shrine had become an eyesore, and he wanted the War Cabinet's sanction for its removal. The park staff were doing what they could to remove dead flowers and keep the ground dry, but removing it altogether was likely to raise a considerable amount of public controversy. This was expressed by Higham, who wrote that it should not be removed, since 'to hundreds of thousands of people this spot in Hyde Park is now a sacred place where they can go to regularly to lay a flower'.³⁸ The situation that HMOW found themselves in was difficult - there was no authority to spend public funds on repair of the Shrine, and yet if Waring were asked to undertake this work, there was a fear it would prolong a claim to the existence of the Shrine. An article in the *Westminster Gazette*, called it 'a derelict memorial that should be cleared away...this is no memorial to those who have fallen in the war. It is a symbol of forgetfulness'.³⁹ In the summer of 1919, renovations were again put in hand, but it soon

became shabby again. Earle just wanted the Shrine to 'disappear'.⁴⁰

It is not clear exactly when it was cleared away, but in a letter dated 28th October 1919 to HMOW from a Mrs Whitford, she expressed her outrage that the Shrine had indeed been removed. This was a 'small piece of ground where...sorrowing mothers could derive some little comfort in placing wreaths and flowers to their memory, as we cannot take them to our loved ones' graves'. She had been told it was removed 'during the strike as the park was used for lorries'.⁴¹ This was the nine-day Railway Strike from 27th September 1919, during which Hyde Park was used to assemble lorries to ensure the safety of London's milk and food supplies. This was surely the opportune moment to 'disappear' the Shrine.

A Temporary Cenotaph in Whitehall

In her letter, Mrs Whitford referred to people also laying flowers and wreaths at the Cenotaph in Whitehall. This temporary Cenotaph was conceived and constructed in a matter of two weeks as a saluting platform for the Peace Celebrations of 19th July 1919. From its unveiling, however, it had unintentionally become the focus for public mourning.

At the beginning of July 1919 discussions were underway for the Peace Celebrations to mark the *Signing of the Peace of Versailles*. Prime Minister David Lloyd George, aware of the preparations in Paris for a Victory Parade, proposed in Cabinet that the celebrations in London should also include a Military Procession, and that a non-denominational catafalque, to act as a temporary shrine, should be set up at a prominent spot along the route, past which the troops would march and salute the dead.⁴² He suggested that a prominent artist should be consulted to draw up plans.⁴³ At the Cabinet meeting of 4th July, the date for the parade was set as two weeks hence, 19th July. Mond suggested a simple pylon would be impressive and had already arranged for 'sketches which would be laid before the War Cabinet'.⁴⁴ That Lutyens was consulted is not

37. *The Tablet*, 24 August 1918.

38. Letter from Higham to Mond, 18 March 1919.

39. Cutting from *Westminster Gazette*, 18 March 1919 in The National Archives, WORK 16/26/8.

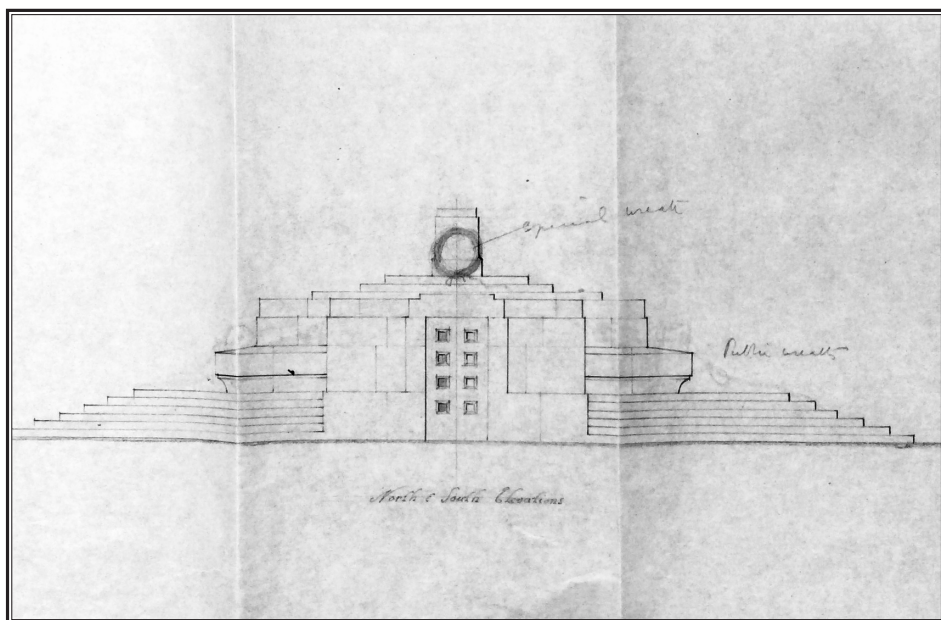
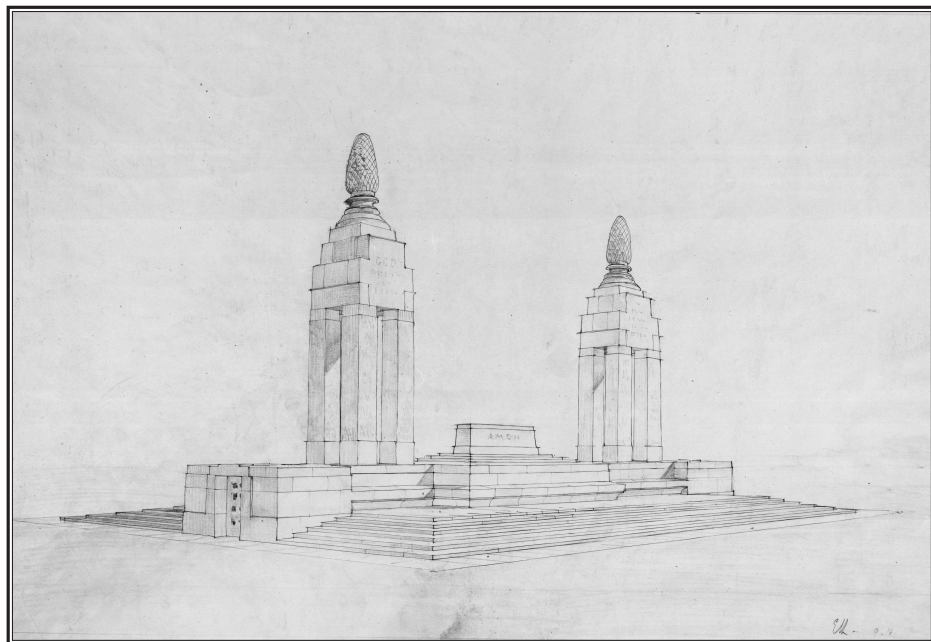
40. Note from Lionel Earle, 16 July 1918. The National Archives, WORK 16/26/8.

41. The National Archives, WORK 16/26/8.

42. The National Archives, CAB 23/11/1.

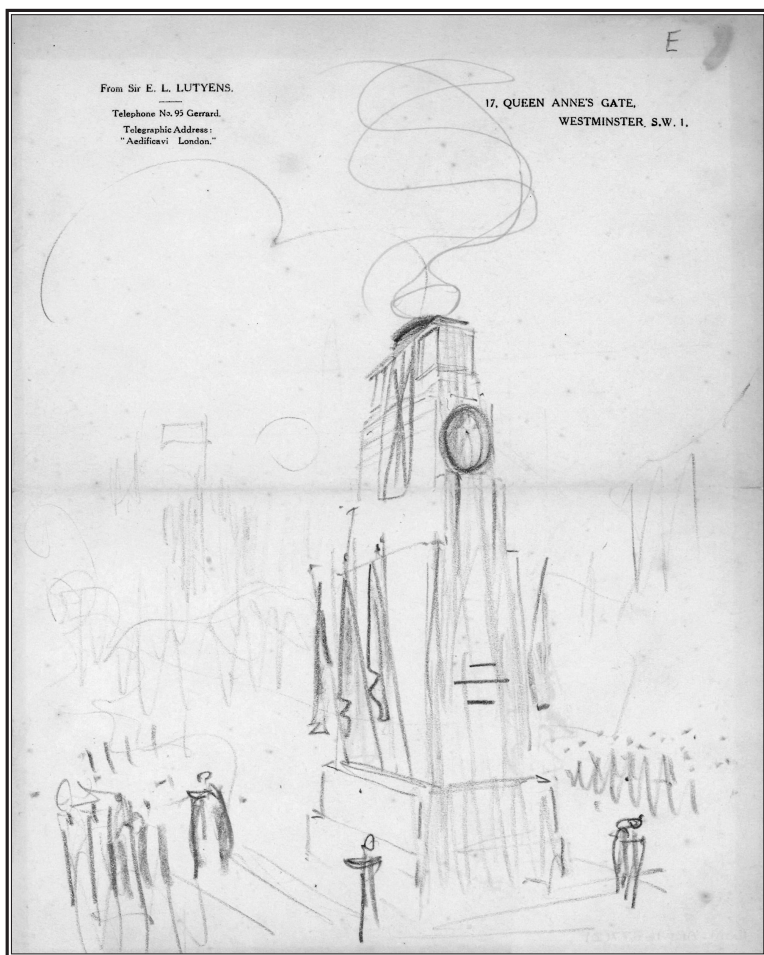
43. The National Archives, CAB 23/11/1.

44. The National Archives, CAB 23/11/2.

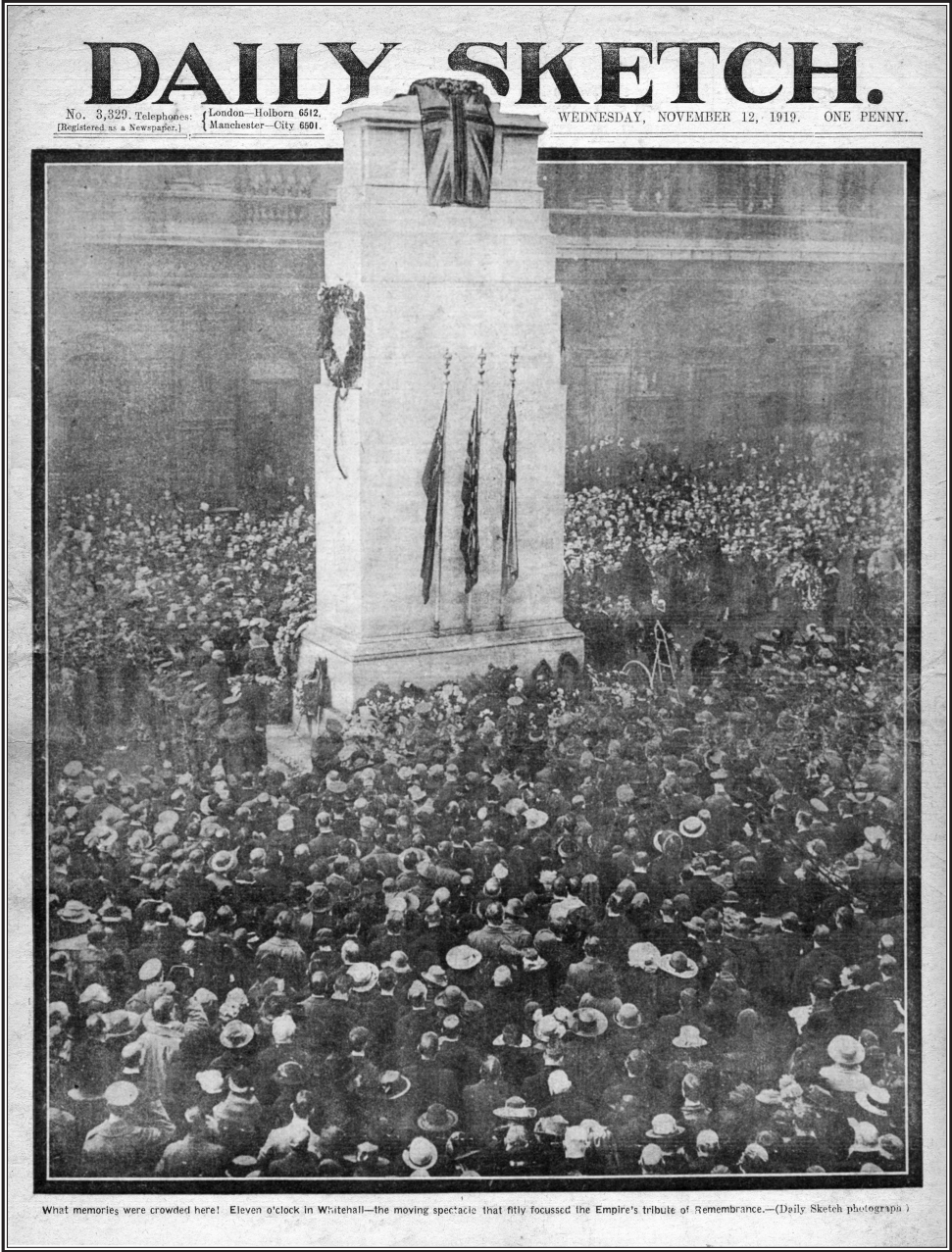


20. Sir Edwin Lutyens' design for the proposed Flower Shrine, Hyde Park: perspective view
(COURTESY RIBA COLLECTIONS)

21. Sir Edwin Lutyens' revised war shrine in Hyde Park
(COURTESY THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES, WORK 16/28/6)



22. A sketch of the proposed temporary Cenotaph by Sir Edwin Lutyens at the beginning of July 1919.
In coloured pencils on Lutyens' headed notepaper
(© IWM)



23. First Cenotaph Remembrance Day 1919.
Front page of the *Daily Sketch*, Wednesday 12th November 1919
(JOHN FROST NEWSPAPERS / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO)

surprising. He was the most eminent architect of his time and had already been an adviser to the Imperial War Graves Commission since it was set up in May 1917. Additionally, he was close friends with both Mond and Earle. At the later meeting with the Prime Minister, Lutyens reportedly told Lloyd George, 'not a catafalque but a Cenotaph'.⁴⁵ Legend has it that Lutyens sketched a design for the Cenotaph for Sir Frank Baines, chief architect at HMOW, in ten minutes, but he had in fact already been working on the design of a memorial for Southampton which made similar use of a pylon.⁴⁶ That said, time was extremely short to design and build even a temporary Cenotaph. His initial sketches show the Cenotaph almost exactly as it was built (fig. 22).

The temporary Cenotaph, made of wood and painted plaster to resemble stone, was erected in Whitehall, right in the heart of government. It was to provide a saluting base during the Victory Parade for the Allied troops and their leaders, Marshal Foch, Field Marshal Haig, Admiral Beatty and General Pershing. *The Times* praised:

... Sir Edwin Lutyens' design ...so grave, severe, and beautiful...The simple pylon, with the three broad steps to its base and the altar on its summit, bears no inscription but the date MCMXIX and the words "The Glorious Dead".⁴⁷

Despite the praise, it would have been difficult for anyone to predict that it was the forerunner to the nation's official war memorial.⁴⁸ So quickly did it capture the imagination of people, that it created 'a meaning for the memorial which was significantly different from its official meaning. It became a place of mourning and pilgrimage'.⁴⁹

There were reports of grieving relatives laying flowers and wreaths at its base before the Military Procession passed by, and on later

days people continued to lay flowers at its base. This is one of many reports describing how people came to visit the 'Glorious Dead':

Hour after hour, day after day, week after week they come; the men bareheaded and silent, the women wiping away a quiet tear or just standing as though in prayer. Each brings an offering of flowers to that bank of blossoms which ...has grown a foot high, two feet, three feet, four in such a marvel of scent and colour and shape as puts the flags to shame...Never has there been anything quite like it before... the hushed bareheaded throng stand six deep all day about its heart's grave, and that mute tribute of a million million blossoms, every one a tear.⁵⁰

A Permanent Memorial

Almost immediately, there were calls to create a permanent version of the memorial: 'no feature of the Victory March in London made a deeper or worthier impression than the cenotaph erected in Whitehall to the memory of "The Glorious Dead"... It ought undoubtably to be retained in a more permanent form'.⁵¹ On 23rd October 1919 the Cabinet decided to go ahead with the building of an exact replica of the Cenotaph in Portland stone on the same site in Whitehall, and not to discourage any laying of flowers and wreaths.⁵² In Cabinet Mond argued that no other site would have the same historical and sentimental associations.⁵³ Armistice Day in November 1919 again drew enormous crowds to the Cenotaph (fig. 23).

Whitehall was crowded with people, and the mass became more and more dense the nearer one could get to the Cenotaph...Wreaths mounted up rapidly at the foot of the Cenotaph. They were all kinds, from the most costly tribute florists could produce to the humble bunch of flowers of the poor.⁵⁴

The temporary Cenotaph remained in place until January 1920. The stone version that now stands in Whitehall was unveiled by the King during Armistice Day commemorations on 11th November 1920. It was decided to bury an unidentified soldier in

45. <https://cosociety.org.uk/war-memorials/london-the-cenotaph>. Lutyens' first encounter with the term Cenotaph, meaning an empty tomb in memory of a person or persons buried elsewhere, was at Munstead Wood, where a garden seat of stone and elm, which he designed for Gertrude Jekyll, was called the Cenotaph of Sigismunda.

46. Gavin Stamp, 'The sublime Cenotaph celebrates its centenary', *The Oldie*, 7 November 2019, <https://www.theoldie.co.uk/blog/the-sublime-cenotaph-celebrates-its-centenary>, accessed 10 April 2020.

47. *The Times*, 21 July 1919.

48. Allan Greenberg, 'Lutyens' Cenotaph', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol.48 no.1, 1989.

49. David Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism*, (Oxford: Berg, 1998), p.58.

50. *Ashburton Guardian*, 31 October 1919.

51. *The Times*, 26 July 1919.

52. The National Archives, CAB 23/12/19.

53. The National Archives, CAB 24/84/84.

54. *The Times*, 12 November 1919.



24. Chichester Road War Shrine, now in St Margaret's Church, Leytonstone with Roll of Honour of 32 names, 27 who served and returned and 5 who died (© DAVID McClymont (WMR-12549))

25. Mace and Tagg Street Memorial, currently on the corner of Bonner Street and Hartley Street, Bethnal Green. A stone tablet recording the names of the 26 men from two streets who were killed during the Great War (PHOTOGRAPH SOPHIE SEIFALIAN)

Westminster Abbey on the same day, and the unveiling of the Cenotaph became a part of a larger funeral procession for the Unknown Warrior. If it was possible, the public response to the newly unveiled memorial exceeded even that to the temporary Cenotaph during the Peace Celebrations. Whitehall was closed for four days, and more than a million people visited the Cenotaph, and continued to file past for many days after, the pile of flowers and wreaths around the Cenotaph reaching enormous size. *The Times* wrote that, 'there has never before in this country been such a Pilgrimage to the grave of a hero or such a display of mourning around a memorial to the dead'.⁵⁵ It was an opportunity for the families of the fallen and returned servicemen to express feelings that they had felt compelled to suppress while the war was in progress. Indeed, such was the emotional impact, there was even the sense that the mourners could commune with the souls of the dead. The *Daily Express* wrote:

Britain's million dead lived again yesterday.
They who went down to the grave that we
might live were quick and beautiful, and they
spoke to us from heart to heart and we were
humbly conscious of our debt.⁵⁶

Conclusion

Many of the street shrines of the East End and their Rolls of Honour were retained at the end of the war; some were brought into the local church, but most eventually succumbed to decay, or were replaced with a more permanent memorial, listing only those who had died. One such Roll of Honour that has survived can now be found in St. Margaret's Church, Leytonstone. It lists the names of thirty-two men from Chichester Street, Leytonstone, five of whom died and twenty-seven of whom survived (*fig. 24*). A shrine can also be found at the corner of Mace and Tagg Street in Bethnal Green; the decaying wooden shrine was replaced by York stone tablets in 1936 (*fig. 25*). The modest shrines made from simple materials, decorated with flags and fresh flowers and tended mostly by women, brought a focus for the emotions of a neighbourhood.

They allowed small communities, often just one street, to share feelings of worry, grief and pride at a time of great peril for their fathers, husbands, sons and brothers. As the war continued, they also signified the need for more sacrifice.

Towards the end of the war, the Great Flower Shrine in Hyde Park allowed the coming together of people from all over London in solemn and mass mourning. Unable to visit the graves of their loved ones, this was the opportunity to pay tribute to the dead, and symbolically lay flowers on their grave. Such was the response that a call was raised to make a permanent flower shrine in Hyde Park. This was never realised and all traces of the Great Flower Shrine are now completely lost except for a few grainy photographs. However, clear parallels can be drawn with the temporary Cenotaph organised as a saluting point for the Victory Parade as part of the Peace Celebrations in 1919, as in turn it became the focal point for the bereaved to lay flowers. People responded quickly, for them it immediately became a sacred place, nothing less than a permanent memorial in the same location would be acceptable. David Lloyd in his book, *Battlefield Tourism*, describes the pilgrimage to the Cenotaph and the Unknown Warrior as one of the most extraordinary events in Britain during the interwar years. The response of people transformed them from observers at a public funeral to pilgrims at a ceremony of mourning.⁵⁷ From simple street shrine to the sublime beauty of the Cenotaph, bereaved relatives had sacrificed so much and they wanted it to be heard and they wanted it to count.

ATTACKING THE LUNGS –
COVID AND THE STATE OF PARKS
By The Perambulator

During this impossible year, both alarming and miraculous, when the heat-engine of global consumerism was closed down in a matter of days and bird song rang down deserted city streets, public

⁵⁵ *The Times*, 16 November 1920.

⁵⁶ *Daily Express*, 12 November 1920.

⁵⁷ Lloyd, *op. cit.*, p.92.