

POTTER HANWORTH WAR MEMORIAL AND ITS' SURROUNDINGS

The war memorial

And its setting

1917 to 2011

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THE WAR MEMORIAL THROUGH TIME

These photographs of the Potter Hanworth war memorial cover most of the twentieth century, from its building in 1920 to the present day. There are no photographs of the dedication on 7TH March 1920. A blizzard was blowing, most of the dedication service took place in the church and no record was made. Since then, the granite Memorial has stood almost unchanged in the centre of this village for more than ninety years. Historical photographs are often as interesting for the surroundings they show as for the main subject, and so it is here. For comparison, each historical photograph is paired with a modern one showing a similar view.

1917 - 2010 OCT

"1917" shows the site before the war memorial was built. The tree was taken down in 1919, supposedly because it was in a dangerous condition, and the flagpole (the base of which is visible to the left of the tree) was erected for the coronation of King George the fifth in 1911. The white painted cottage in the background was demolished in 1917 or 1918, so this photo must have been taken before this but after 1911.



The original "Stocks Hill Tree" stands on the stocks hill, place of punishment for village offenders in the past and venue for open air meetings of the whole village when needed. The place is referred to as the stocks hill in the parish council minutes, and a meeting to discuss the arrangements for the celebration of the coronation of King Edward the seventh is known to have been held on the site on 25th June 1902. The school, founded by the rev A. H. Anson, was opened in 1855. By 1917 it had already been expanded once. At this time the cottage was the home and part of the smallholding of Mr Henry Wilkinson Smith. As part of the glebe property, the Rev W.T. Goodrich had it inspected along with two other church cottages in 1916 and managed to get all three condemned as unfit for habitation and replaced by newer houses in Barff Road, which were built in 1917 and occupied shortly afterwards. Lawn cottage stands to the right at the head of Barff Road and was a farmstead until shortly before this time.

In October 2010, the war memorial stands on the site of the original "Stocks Hill Tree", and the replacement tree stands a little to the east, close to the corner of the green. The cottage is long gone, together with the huts forming the original

village hall which stood on the site after 1920, replaced in their turn by the Memorial Hall. The school, though greatly expanded, remains, as does Lawn Cottage.



1930, 1955a – 2009 JUN

The two photos “1930” and the “1955a” show the view northward from the west corner of the green on the edge of Nocton road . “1930” shows the large tree (a pink-flowered hawthorn) by then in the school playground, which was extended onto the cottage garden after the cottage was demolished. The flagpole is also still present but has been moved into the school yard. A shed, roughly garage size, is visible in the garden of Glebe House, probably quite close to the present small entrance gate, with its’ gable quite close to the road. There may be a figure in a light-coloured top standing behind this shed.

Just to the south of this , standing in Glebe House paddock with the long side parallel to the road, is a rather large black shed, which served as the village fish and chip shop in the 1920’s and 30’s. Mr George Harrison opened the business in about 1920, and it was continued by his brother Frank. The establishment closed before 1940.

The old elm trees line the west side of the main road, and there are some small ornamental bushes, possibly standard roses, in the little garden in front of the huts. There are no electricity poles or wires anywhere, nor are there any telephone wires and no telephone box. The first one was outside “Potters Wallop”. There are no street lights, no concreted or tarmac-surfaced paths at all, no kerb-stones and probably no tarmac-finished road surface and no road signs. The part of the road nearest the camera may have boot or horse prints scored in its surface.

Mains electricity is known to have come to the village in March 1933, so the photograph is before this, and Miss Audrey Underwood recalls conversations referring to a large tree in the garden of Glebe House which had been removed about the time her family came there in 1929. So this photo almost certainly dates from between 1929 and 1932.



1930

Apart from the memorial itself and the school, the most interesting features of the photograph are the fish and chip shop, of which this is the only known image, the elms in their maturity, the view confirming that the present limes almost exactly duplicate the effect of the original trees, and "The Huts" These ex-First World War temporary hospital wards, from the hospital which had stood in the grounds of Lincoln School, served as the village hall and formed a local centre for higher practical education for both children and adults until after the Second World War. The state of the roads and the paths is also extremely interesting.



1955a
Potter Hamworth Village, Lincs.

By comparison with the previous image 1955a shows the remarkable changes which occurred in 20 years. Both footpaths and roads have surfaces of concrete or tarmacadam. The road appears to have been recently re-surfaced. The bus shelter has appeared, and the elms are gone, not through Dutch Elm Disease in the 1950's but because they were a danger to traffic, replaced by the sapling Lime trees. Telephone and electricity cables are everywhere, a telephone kiosk has grown, and one of the earliest electric street lamps in the village stands outside the school. Both the thorn tree and the flag pole have finally vanished. Kerbstones are still scarce, and while the grass verges are not neglected, they are not cut very frequently. The fish and chip shop has gone to be rejuvenated as a workshop in Metheringham, and there are old-style road signs in the middle distance. The presence of the porch on the school helps to date the photograph, and together with others in the same series, it was taken in 1955 or 1956. Apart from the porch on the school and the bus shelter, there are few buildings from the 20th century and no modern ones. New services have been grafted on to an old base.



In June 2009, the scene is more urbanised, but also greener, and much more manicured. The memorial has its paved memorial garden, every roadside edge is kerbed, and modern aids to guide traffic are everywhere. Electricity cables are still evident, but the phone lines have literally gone underground. Some infill building can be seen, conversions are underway and the school has greatly expanded, with many new facilities.

1955b –2009JUN



This view from around 1955 shows the view looking down Barff Road from the memorial. Some of the small farms are still working. The stack yard of Mr Arthur Smith (son of Mr H.W. Smith) can be seen just behind the memorial itself. Barney Roberts' joiners' shop, still an active and thriving business, can be seen in the distance. Television aerials are beginning to appear.



In June 2009 farmyards have become gardens, roads are upgraded and although hidden by the greenery, many houses have been added to the village stock. The memorial is very much the centrepiece of the village, visible to all who pass through.

1965 - 2011APR



This view looking south across the green shows the memorial with the paved memorial garden in place and some simple bushes planted in the corners. It is hard to date exactly, but from the context of other photographs in its group, it probably dates from between 1963 and 1968. The most obvious change apart from paving of the memorial surround is that the village green grass is being more frequently cut.



In April 2011 there are some new trees, including the replacement stocks hill tree, and with the re-building of the bus shelter, a seat has been moved for the benefit of bus passengers travelling towards Nocton and Metherringham. Simple and appropriate spring flowers fill the memorial garden

1975 - 2008JUL



From the presence of the first brick-built porch on the school, the mix of cars parked outside and the identity of the figures on the left of the image, this photograph can be fairly reliably dated to the period 1973 to 1975. Relatively little change has taken place to the memorial itself since the sixties, and the garden is still in its simple, almost minimalist phase. The number of cars visible is perhaps the best indicator of the changes taking place in the village through all this time, both to the general income of the population, the demographic mix and the way and distance which children travel to school.



In July 2008 the garden is brighter and more noticeable, though composed of simple traditional flowers. The school has almost reached its present extent and the brick built porch of 1975 had been replaced by a larger structure in stone to match the rest of the building.

Throughout the ninety years for which it has stood, the surroundings to the memorial have continually changed. New services have arrived, and the principal employment of most of the villagers has changed out of all recognition, as has their general level of prosperity and comfort. Anyone returning now from 1914 would hardly recognise the village and would be amazed at the way of life which its inhabitants now enjoy. They would stand aghast at the existence of the memorial and the plain fact that out of a pool of perhaps 70 men of an age to serve in the armed forces at the time, some seventeen went away and failed to return. Among them were three pairs of brothers.

The memorial stands unchanged, a simple obelisk tombstone, guarding not a grave but a purpose, which is likewise unchanged. To remember and honour the dead, and to keep us constantly in remembrance of the human cost, the horror and all too frequently the futility of war.

One final image is needed:



Lest we forget