

## = Devon County War Memorial =

The Devon County War Memorial is a First World War memorial designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens situated on the cathedral green in Exeter, the county town of Devon, in the south west of England. It is one of fifteen War Crosses designed by Lutyens to a similar specification, and one of two to serve as a civic memorial in a city. The authorities in Devon originally planned to complete the construction of a cloister at Exeter Cathedral, which would be dedicated to the county's war dead, but this scheme was abandoned due to lack of funds. The Devon County War Memorial Committee commissioned Lutyens to design a War Cross instead, deciding on the green of Exeter Cathedral after scouting for several locations. A war memorial for Exeter itself was being considered concurrently, but the two committees failed to work together, resulting in two separate memorials: the county memorial by the cathedral and Exeter City War Memorial in Northernhay Gardens.

The memorial, a simple granite cross hewn from a single stone quarried from Haytor on Dartmoor stands just to the west of the cathedral, in alignment with the altar. The cross sits on a granite plinth, which itself sits on three steps. It was unveiled by Edward, Prince of Wales on 16 May 1921. The area around the memorial was remodelled after archaeological excavations in the 1970s. A processional way was added, leading to the cathedral close from the cathedral itself, along with a set of steps to a platform in front of the memorial, which emphasises its connection to the cathedral. The memorial is a grade II\* listed building and, since 2015, all of Lutyens' war memorials in England have been protected by listed building status.

## = = Background = =

In the aftermath of the First World War, thousands of war memorials were built across Britain. Amongst the most prominent designers of memorials was architect Sir Edwin Lutyens, described by Historic England as "the leading English architect of his generation". Lutyens designed the Cenotaph on Whitehall in London, which became the focus for the national Remembrance Sunday commemorations, as well as the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing – the largest British war memorial anywhere in the world – and the Stone of Remembrance which appears in all large Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemeteries. Lutyens was also responsible for Castle Drogo, to the north of Exeter. The Devon County memorial is one of fifteen War Crosses designed by Lutyens to a similar specification between 1920 and 1925. Most of Lutyens' War Crosses were commissioned for small villages, but the Devon County memorial is one of two commissioned as a civic memorial in a city – the other being the York City War Memorial.

The idea of building a war memorial at all proved controversial; the chairman of the local branch of the National Federation of Discharged and Demobilized Sailors and Soldiers was of the opinion that the funds would be better spent caring for surviving veterans and condemned the memorial as a "useless waste of money". Despite this, the authorities were determined to erect some sort of memorial to the county's war dead. The original plan was for the completion of the cloister of Exeter Cathedral to serve as a war memorial, but the idea was abandoned due to a lack of funds and instead Lutyens' War Cross was commissioned in 1920. The County War Memorial Committee, chaired by Hugh Fortescue, 4th Earl Fortescue, realised that it was unlikely to raise a large sum of money, and that communities across Devon would be focusing on their own commemorations and commissioning individual war memorials. Thus, they sought a simple but elegant monument. Several sites were considered, including Cawsand Beacon on Dartmoor and the Haldon Hills, but the committee's preferred location was Exeter's Cathedral Close, Exeter being the county town of Devon. The specific site was chosen so that the memorial would be visible from the High Street and Broadgate.

The memorial is one of two civic war memorials in Exeter, the other being the Exeter City War Memorial in Northernhay Gardens. Exeter Cathedral also contains memorials to the Devonshire Regiment and the Wessex Field Ambulance. The Devon County War Memorial Committee agreed to support the construction of a battlefield memorial at La Ville @-@ aux @-@ Bois @-@ lès @-@ Pontavert in France to honour the 2nd Battalion of the Devonshire Regiment, who endured

particularly heavy fighting at Bois des Buttes during the Third Battle of the Aisne . The city war memorial , on the other hand , was the responsibility of a separate committee ; the city and county memorial committees conspicuously failed to work together . According to Sir James Owen , chairman of the city committee , the city offered a joint committee but the county " slammed the door in our face " , while Lord Fortescue accused the city of proceeding with its own project without any discussion with the county . The result was that two very different memorials were constructed in Exeter ? the city 's memorial takes the form a figure of Victory on a large pedestal surrounded by further sculptures to form a cross .

= = History and design = =

The project proceeded simply once the original idea of completing the cloisters was abandoned . The memorial stands on the Cathedral Green , just to the west of the cathedral itself , in alignment with the altar . It takes the form of a 30 @-@ foot ( 9 @.@ 1 @-@ metre ) granite cross , quarried from Haytor on Dartmoor to the north of Exeter , and hewn from a single stone ? the largest Lutyens was able to acquire . The cross has a diamond @-@ shaped tapered shaft with chamfered arms , no wider than the base , close to the top to form a cross . The cross sits on a three @-@ tiered base and a rectangular plinth , which itself sits on three stone steps as is customary for Lutyens ' war memorials . The central tier of the base bears the inscription " THE COUNTY OF DEVON TO HER GLORIOUS DEAD / 1914 ? 1919 / TE DEUM LAUDAMUS / 1939 ? 1945 " .

The memorial was unveiled on Whit Monday , 16 May 1921 by Edward , Prince of Wales ( later King Edward VIII ) , the heir to the throne , with Lutyens in attendance . Upon its completion , Lutyens said of the monument , " it is very simple and a monolith and its subtlety in line means labour , care and thought . [ ... ] It should endure forever " . At the unveiling ceremony , Lord Fortescue ? chairman of the County War Memorial Committee ? estimated that 11 @,@ 600 men and women from Devon had been killed while serving in the war ; he later estimated that a total of 63 @,@ 700 ( 8 @,@ 000 regulars , 36 @,@ 700 volunteers , and 19 @,@ 000 conscripts ) had served . The names of the fallen were recorded on a roll of honour , of which three copies were made : one for Exeter Cathedral , one to be held by the county , and one which the Prince of Wales placed in a hollow in the base of the war memorial . The prince 's visit generated considerable excitement in the area ; local people lined the street to welcome his motorcade and banners were flown from businesses on the High Street . After the unveiling , he spent ten days touring the local area .

In 1971 , archaeological excavations were undertaken around the western fringe of the cathedral and the remains of several Roman buildings were discovered . As a result , the area was remodelled by Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe who created a processional way leading to the cathedral from Cathedral Close , past the war memorial . At the same time , Jellicoe introduced a set of steps and a platform leading to the memorial which emphasises the memorial 's alignment with the altar and strengthens the visual connection between the memorial and the cathedral . A set of metal railings was erected around the foot of the memorial in 2006 ? described by Lutyens researcher Tim Skelton as " an unfortunate addition " .

On 16 April 2009 , the memorial ? including the processional way ? were designated by English Heritage ( now Historic England ) a grade II \* listed building for its special architectural or historic interest , a status which offers legal protection from unauthorised demolition or unauthorised modification .

In November 2015 , as part of commemorations for the centenary of the First World War , Lutyens ' war memorials were recognised as a " national collection " and all 44 of his free @-@ standing memorials were listed or had their listing status reviewed and their National Heritage List for England list entries were updated and expanded .