

Hyde War Memorial Trust

History

A public Memorial Fund to commemorate those lost in world War One was convened by the Borough Council of Hyde in March 1920, and included sub committees of representatives from Traders, Mills and Workshops with some £750 in hand and a further £7,000 pledged.

The eventual sum raised was £14,513 14s 8d (£488,115 – 2017 equivalent) all raised and in hand by May of 1920!

A Children's sub-committee awarded 33 scholarships to children, dependents of fallen servicemen at a cost of £3,750 – (£124,050) .

The Lower Higham Lodge was gifted to the Fund and converted to become the Aspland Maternity Home at a total cost of £4,250 (£140,500!)



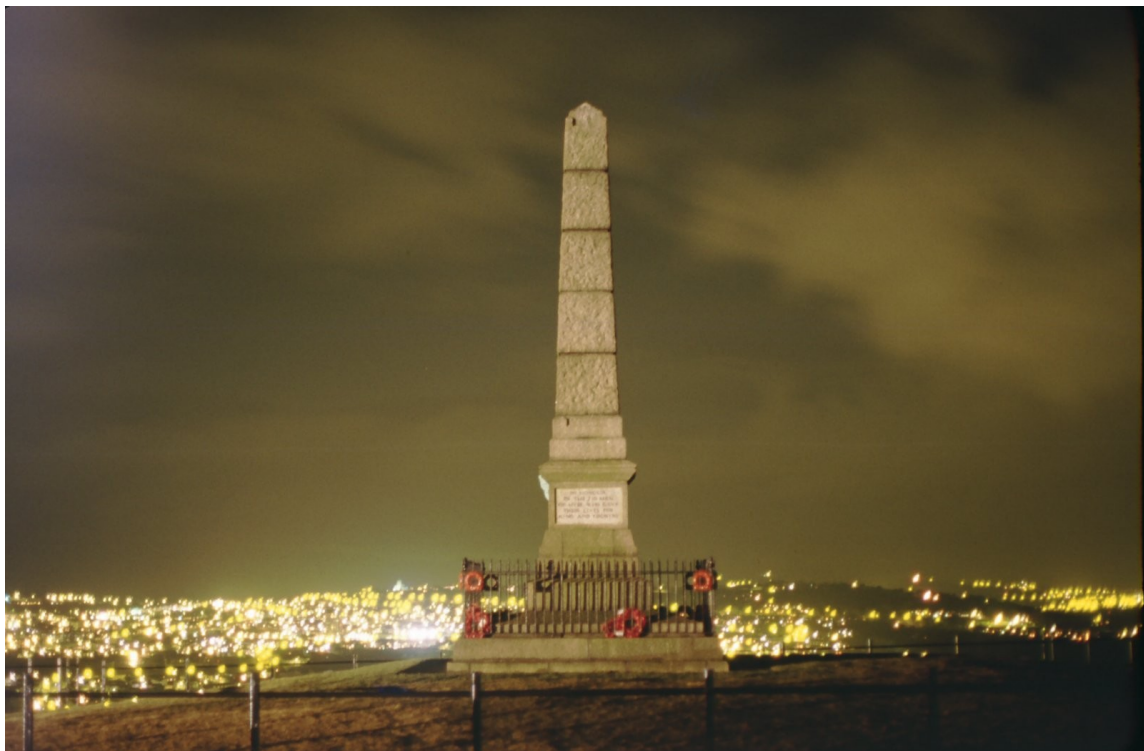
The Aspland was nationalized into the NHS in 1948 and all connections with the Trust severed. It became redundant in 1973 and despite local agitation it was dealt with as any other unencumbered redundant site, demolished, and the site sold for residential development.

Lower Higham Farm was purchased at a cost of £4,000 (£132,320) The farmhouse alone was valued at £680,000 for insurance purposes in 2019.

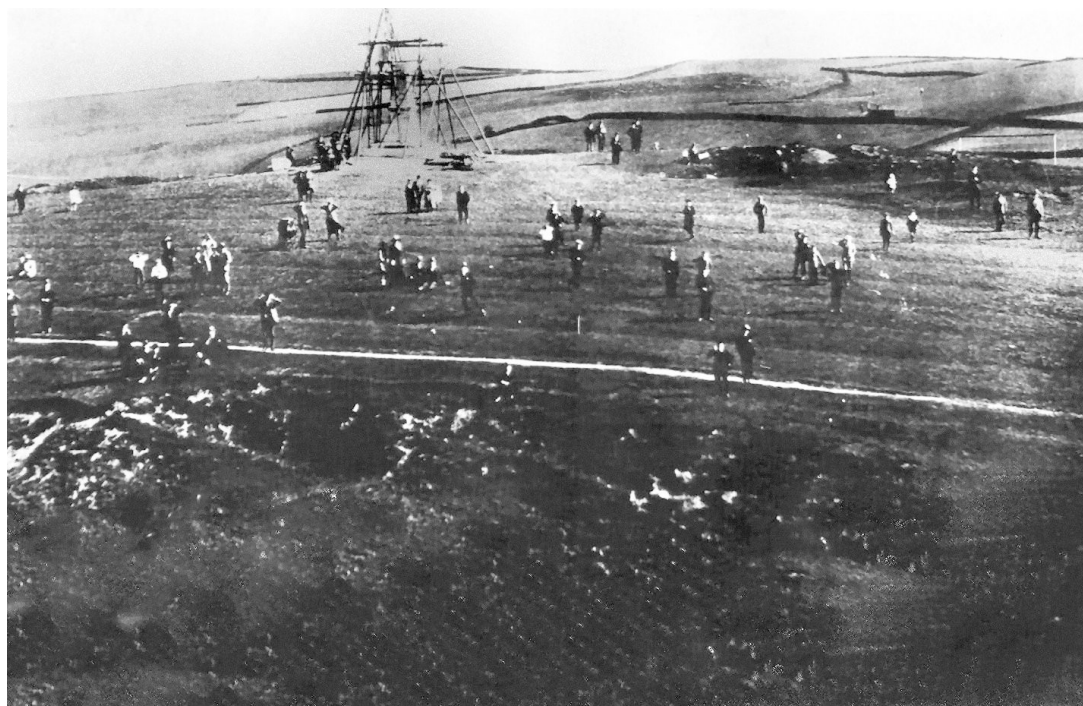


The memorial obelisk was constructed out of Cornish granite for the sum of £2,000 (£66,160) and was formally commissioned by way of a ceremony on the 25th June 1921. The 2019 rebuilding cost was estimated at £135,000

A rare floodlit shot of the monument



Building the cenotaph



Opening Day 25th June 1921



Opening Day Crowds



Trust Obligations

The Hyde War Memorial Trust is bound by complementary declarations created on its inception almost one hundred years ago by the War Memorial Committee of the Hyde Borough Council as follows :-

“Aldermen and Burgesses of the Borough of Hyde declare that we hold the said premises upon the Trusts and that we will observe the following conditions :-

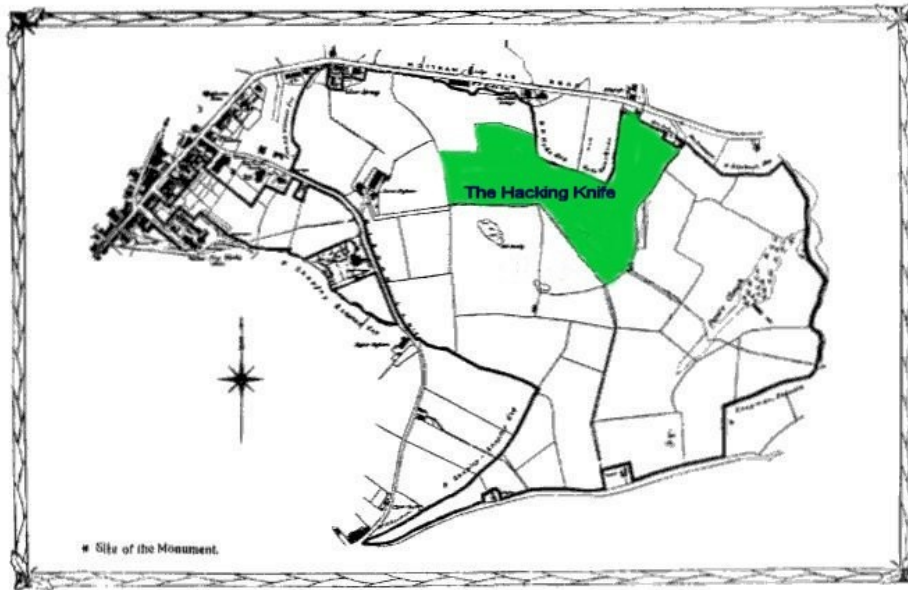
The gift of the said farm was made with the intention that it should be held generally for the good of the inhabitants of the Borough of Hyde, and that parts of it, and particularly those parts known as the “HackingKnife” should be open and unbuilt upon and be available at all times for the resort and use of the inhabitants of the said Borough subject to such conditions and regulations as may from time to time be imposed or made by us.....”

Note :- The Trust has, subject to the consent of the Charity Commission, the right to buy, sell, or lease land or to invest assets to provide a return to create revenue to support the aims of the Trust. There is often confusion about this situation – but it is fact.

The Trust can sell, lease or licence land and once subject to legal agreement there is no public access other than designated footpaths, riding tracks etc.

The Trustees have a duty to maximize the returns on assets and that means that where land is not designated for public use – it is off limits.

This is a plan extracted from the 1921 Cenotaph unveiling ceremony which has been annotated to show the “HackingKnife” area by green colour.



The Saving of the Trust and New Scheme

Hyde B C Managed the Fund until 1973 but made the fatal mistake of failing to distinguish the Trust from its statutory functions.

Many plots were sold off for housing and this came to a head in 1973 when the fields to the east of Silver Spring were proposed for large scale building.

The Hyde War Memorial Action group was formed in the face of Council hostility and identified the confusion of Council powers, and duties as Trustees. Papers were accordingly lodged with the Charity Commission complaining of maladministration.

In 1976 the Charity Commission upheld the complaint in full, and ruled against the Tameside MBC, successors to Hyde B C, removing the Trust from their hands and setting up the 1976 Scheme which runs to this day. TMBC were required to pay to the new Trust a sum of £37,500 (£430,000) as damages for their actions since 1921. The 1976 scheme is on the HWMT website www.hmwt.org.

All Trustees since then are volunteers, giving up their own time free of charge, and putting their own assets at risk to serve. Being a trustee is a serious business, not helped by burgeoning bureaucracy, compliance issues, increasing employment issues affecting free time and deterring many who would formerly have got involved.

In 2001 the Trust created a sheep fold Garden of Remembrance to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Trust which was unveiled by Ron Husband, our much missed first archivist who created the record of the 710 men of Hyde, lost in the First World War.

The Peace Garden 1st July 2019



The stone at the centre is inscribed :-

“ Lest we Forget” In this place of peace,
 Reflect on the wars that have brought such sorrow,
 Remember those who dies, Those who suffer, Those who mourn,
 We inherit the benefits of such sacrifice
 May we be thankful
 And in our lives, work for justice and peace

The Trust is obliged to hold two events per year :-

A “Peace Day Service”

The Trust is obliged to lay a wreath on the cenotaph on the nearest Sunday to the 28th June – the date of the signing of the Treaty of Versailles that formally ended World War One.

Many though, nowadays believe that treaty to be fundamentally flawed, and to have led directly to the rise of Nazism and World War Two, but that could not have been foreseen in 1921.

A “Remembrance Day Service”

To be held at the cenotaph on the nearest day to November 11th – the day the guns fell silent. This is held later in the day than the civic services to allow those attending to make their way to the visitor centre and process to the memorial. It is the most important day in our calendar, reflects on all losses, not just those from 1914 to 1918 and it is a tragedy that the need is still there to take into account modern conflicts. We never learn!

The Centenary Day – November 11th 2018 - The Crowds Gather (G Sheppard)



Shades of the Opening Day Crowds – same place – same affiliations (G Sheppard)



“Joe” – Brian, Ambrose, Helen, and Lauren (P Husband)



Respect



The Werneth Low Joint Country Park

In 1979 it was resolved to set up the Werneth Low Country Park, to be run by a Joint Committee – the “Werneth Low Country Park Joint Management Committee”. The Management Agreement providing for its administration was written by Joe Lloyd (Asst Director – Administration TMBC) and later a Trust Chairman and sadly missed.

The Werneth Low Joint Management Committee was to be run by representatives from GMC, TMBC, and HWMT, initially five each, equality of representation was the intent. The 1979 Agreement is on the Trust Website www.hwmt.org.

The Committee is to be served by such officers of the council as may be necessary.

The agreement provides for the JMC to appoint a warden.

The Committee is to be responsible for the Financial Affairs involved in running the country park.

In 1985 the Government abolished the GMC and the five seats were re-allocated to TMBC – The ratio is now usually eight to five with the Trust representatives being appointed each year at our AGM.

The Council is committed Page Three, Para Four :- “to provide throughout the currency of the agreement :-

- (1) a sufficient allocation of funds to enable the respective lands (excluding the buildings at Lower Higham) to be maintained in a satisfactory condition having regard to the use as a country park, including necessary boundary or division walls, and fences, gates, tiles, footpaths, bridleways, signposts, seats, tables, or other outdoor facilities provided for visitors and
- (2) to enable the building at Lower Higham to be maintained in a reasonable condition for the use it is put to as part of the country park, as to its fabric, and structure, and to its interior furniture and fittings.”

This agreement runs until the 31st March 2020 and is thereafter terminable by either party giving a full twelve months advance notice to expire on the following 31st March.

The Werneth Low Joint Country Park was an autonomous body until 2012 and in that year the budget for its management was circa £70k. From that date the park has been managed by Tameside Greenspace officers alongside other Tameside properties and separate accounts are not available. The provision for 2018 /19 was £46.5K with the Trust contributing, around £7k – 15% of the total.

Day to day park management is in the hands of the JMC and TMBC Greenspace. Assisted by Country Park Volunteers. Access, site maintenance, fences, walls, compliance, relevant national awards and schemes etc fall to the JMC. Individual legal and property matters fall to the respective owners, TMBC or the Trust.

To summarise –

The Hyde War Memorial Trust is responsible for

Observing the 1921 Deed of Trust and the terms of the 1976 New Scheme.

Observing the Peace Day and Remembrance Day Services each year

Managing and maintaining the monument, visitor centre and Lower Higham Farm and associated lettings, legals, rent collections, and other matters.

Holding periodic Trustee meetings for this purpose

Holding an AGM at which Trust Finances and Investment Reports and others will be delivered.

The Trust, at its discretion, may comment on associated matters but if they do not relate to Trust responsibilities there is no obligation to do so and such matter cannot be regarded as Trust business.

To assist in its work the Trust seeks to appoint from its number, financial, legal and property advisers and those from other fields perceived to be of value to the Trust.

TheCountry Park Joint Committee, to which the Trust nominates members, in its own right manages Country Park issues as set out above – NOT the Trust.

Comments about Country Park issues should be directed to the Director of Greenspace Operations TMBC and not the Trust which has no control over Park matters.

What its All About – The Jewel in the Crown

