

KELSO WAR MEMORIAL

With the end of the war, there began the mission to honour the Kelso dead with a fitting memorial. Before the Treaty of Versailles was signed, a public meeting unanimously approved of the Duke of Roxburghe's offer of the ground at Abbey House, and of the proposal to erect a monument in the space there provided. A large committee was appointed. Subscriptions of £3214.18s.5d were gathered with a further £63.7s. promised. Permission was granted to demolish the building of Abbey House in order to erect a war memorial.

The architect selected was Sir Robert Stodart Lorimer, KBE (1864-1929) and the sculptor Charles Pilkington D'Orville Jackson ARSA, FRBS, FRSA (1887-1973).

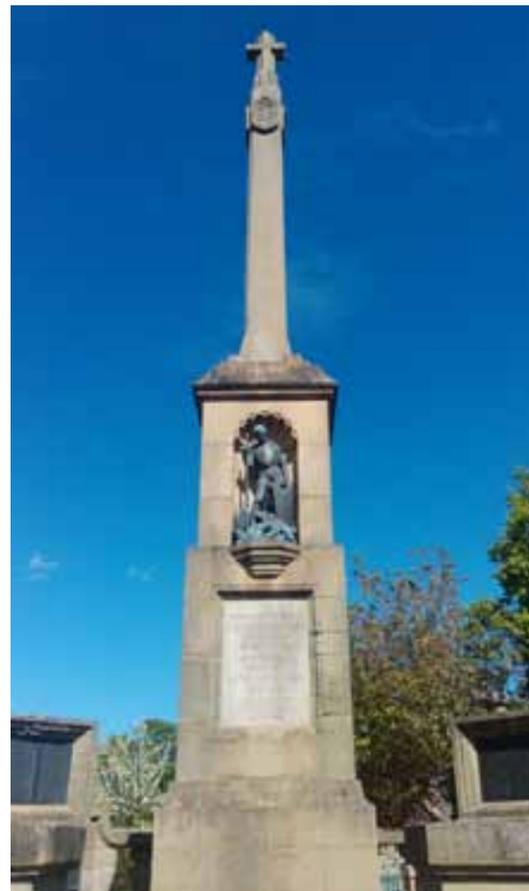
On the large plaques are the names of the 243 men who fell in the war.

The eventual cost of the memorial was over £4000.

The memorial was unveiled on Sunday 25 September 1921 at 3pm by the Duke of Roxburghe with over 4000 people present. A large number of Volunteers and ex-service men formed a guard of honour.



*The unveiling ceremony of the War Memorial in Kelso.
Courtesy of Derek Robeson*



The War Memorial, present day.

SCOTTISH NATIONAL WAR MEMORIAL

A memorial was first discussed in 1917 when, even although victory was not certain, some people became determined that those who had made the ultimate sacrifice should be commemorated.

The Scottish National War Memorial is housed within Edinburgh Castle at the apex of the castle rock on the site of an old barracks. Its central location and the fact that most of the Scottish regiments had served there appealed to all involved.

Designed by Sir Robert Lorimer (the architect of Kelso War memorial), the memorial contains the names of over 100,000 Scots who died in the First World War. Names from the Second World War and subsequent conflicts have since been added. Opened by the Prince of Wales on 14 July 1927 the memorial consists of a Hall of Honour and a Shrine surrounded by a magnificent bronze frieze depicting all types of service men and women wearing working or battle dress.

Lorimer appointed two hundred Scottish artists to work on the memorial. One of these is known to have a Kelso connection. Alexander Carrick who was the father of Anne Scott (of Walton Hall, herself a painter and model maker) was responsible for the small carved sculptures of Justice and Courage set in niches over the entrance and the Royal Artillery bronze panel in the Hall of Honour.



THE CENOTAPH

Over 700,000 soldiers had died in the War.

It was impossible to repatriate the bodies and in any case many had no known grave so it was decided to create a national focus for mourning the dead.

The Cenotaph was erected in Whitehall, London where a British and Commonwealth Service of commemoration is held every November.

In practically every town and village across Britain local memorials were built.



TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN WARRIOR

The tomb of the Unknown Warrior representing all those who fell and have no known grave, is situated at the West end of the Nave in Westminster Abbey. The idea came first from the Rev. David Railton (1884-1955), a chaplain at the Front, when he saw a grave with a rough cross marked "An unknown British soldier".

The body was selected from four unknown British servicemen whose bodies were exhumed from battle areas in France. Brigadier General Wyatt, selected one and the others were reburied.

The body was brought to London in a special coffin and, on 11 November 1920, was carried on a gun carriage through the streets of London, first to the Cenotaph and then Westminster Abbey. The coffin was lowered into the grave, which was filled in with soil brought from the different battlefields.

In 1923, when the Duke of York (later King George VI) married Lady Elizabeth Bowes Lyon in Westminster Abbey she laid her wedding bouquet on the grave as a mark of respect (she had lost a brother during the war). All royal brides married in the Abbey since then have sent back their bouquets to be laid on the grave.

