

The Harpenden Sign

The sign was erected by the Harpenden Society to commemorate the Coronation of their majesties King George VI and Queen Elizabeth in 1937. The sign was designed by local artist Ernest Hasseldine, and a new seal for council use was made using the crest and first used on Coronation Day 12th May 1937 having been designed by Frank O Salisbury.

The Harpenden Sign was carved by Mr. "Carver" Wood and was unveiled by Lord Brocket at 6.00 p.m. on 5th June 1937 watched by local residents. It was removed for the duration of the war, after which it was re-erected. Some confusion was then caused by a letter read to the Council Meeting on 2nd September 1946 from Mr. H Ellis - Tomlinson pointing out that the design did not comply with Heraldic principles. The letter was passed to Mr. Frank O Salisbury for his comments from which started the long process of finding a new legal design, one which the council could restrict the use of to approved use.

The sign was taken down at the end of November 1948 and at a meeting on 2nd May 1949 the Clerk said it was necessary to purchase copies of the new design approved in April, for working purposes, at a cost of £5-5s-0d each. He wanted to purchase one in colour and one in black and white, but the meeting decided that only the black and white version was to be bought.

The new sign was designed by Frank O Salisbury and carved by C Fowler and painted and gilded by his cousin F J Fowler and re-erected in July 1949. It consists of a massive oak post with a seat round its base and a cross member bearing the name Harpenden in gilt letters, above which stands the Coat of Arms of the Town surrounded by a Hart couchant.

A new Hart was carved by Basil Kassanis in June 1977 made of teak rather than oak as before and was put up facing west, whereas the original faced east.

In April 1980 the sign was removed again to be renovated and fully restored at a cost of £500 paid for by Harpenden Town Council.

The twin town signs were carved by Gordon Hanson in April 1984 and fitted to the south side of the post. The whole thing was filled on 22nd February 1985 and a new post erected by Websters Builders on 4th April 1985 after two days digging out the old stump of the post a new fiberglass sign was fitted on top of the post replacing the former wooden one and once again the Hart faced east. The stone paving was re-laid round the base and was completed on 16th April 1985.