

Bridge of Remembrance



Category : Monument

Title : Bridge of Remembrance

Primary artist(s) : Prouse and Gummer
(architects)

Other collaborators : Gurnsey assisted by
Lawrence Berry did the sculptural work

Foundry / fabricator : D. Scott and Son
(construction)

Unveiling date : 11 November, 1924

Media : Concrete faced with sandstone

Location : Cashel Street bridge

Setting : Pedestrian bridge linking
Cambridge and Oxford Terrace

Owner / administrator : Parks Unit,
Christchurch City Council

There were many ideas for an appropriate means of acknowledging Canterbury's contribution to World War I. The suggestion for a bridge of remembrance was put forward in a letter to the *The Press* by Mrs J. Wyn Irwin, wife of a school teacher. Mrs Irwin envisaged an arched bridge in place of the Cashel Street bridge. This bridge was significant because all the soldiers passed over it as they left for war. This proposal received a lot of support but still had to compete with the other projects.

The Bridge of Remembrance project gained an advantage over the other schemes when the Council agreed to pay for the building of the steel understructure. A competition was held for the design of the bridge. A Wellington architectural firm Prouse and Gummer was selected as the winner from twenty four entries. The construction contract was let to D. Scott and Son for £16 078, and work started on the bridge 23 January, 1923.

The design by Prouse and Gummer incorporated a cross suggesting sacrifice as the basis of the human character. Included in the bridge's design are torches to highlight the inscribed battle fronts, lions symbolising the Empire and its victory, along with wreaths of rosemary for remembrance. The sculptural detail was performed by Frederick Gurnsey, a local sculptor and his assistant Lawrence Berry.

The Bridge of Remembrance was opened on Armistice Day, 11 November, 1924 and was dedicated to the memory of those who took part in the 1914-1918 war. At a later date further plaques were added to commemorate the battlefields of World War II.