

Fakenham pump

It is not known when Fakenham pump was installed, probably in the mid 17th century. At first it was clad in wood with the distances to nearby towns painted on it. This lasted until the enclosure riots of the 1870s when it was burned down. Its replacement, now in decorative cast iron lasted until January 1939 when it stopped working.

In August 1941 the pump was relocated to the yard of Walsingham Rural District Council, It was never used again and probably ended up as salvage for the war effort. The pump was moved under the orders of Lord Hastings who was attached to the Intelligence corps of the British Army and was also in charge of the Norfolk Home Guard. The Parish Council were advised to claim compensation for the loss of the pump and there were plans to fix a rotary pump onto the blockhouse but this was not done. With the time fast approaching when the town would not need a pump in the Market Place, the claim was never lodged even though a lot of correspondence passed between the two parties.

This new defence in the town needed to be disguised and so, stage designer Oliver Messel was contacted at his camouflage school in Norwich to come up with some ideas. His idea was to put a statue on the top resembling Justitia.

The location of this blockhouse was not welcomed by the residents of the town, it was the cause of two accidents, one of them fatal! It was also difficult for any military traffic to get through the town.

The Blockhouse was not up and running at the time of the invasion scare in 1940 so it could be said that it was a waste of resources.

In February 1944 orders were given to demolish the Blockhouse and in September of that year it was razed to the ground, the only time that it was photographed thanks to a local newspaper! Some parts found their way into local gardens where they are probably still today! The three feet thick concrete walls presented a challenge!

The parts below ground remained until 2000 when it saw off a JCB which had been brought in to clear the ground for road improvements.