

# The Great War and the North West



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# Editorial



Nick  
Mansfield

As I write, the great guns have started booming. Though not of the power of the week-long British bombardment which preceded the Battle of the Somme, which could be heard as far away as Norfolk, or the broadsides of the German Imperial Navy, which ripped apart working-class coastal towns from Hartlepool to Yarmouth, they prefigure a battle of control of the legacy of arguably the most important event in twentieth-century British history. Michael Gove, the Secretary of State for Education argues that the appalling condition of state-funded education is symbolized by the way which an overriding left-wing agenda has denigrated pride in Britain's achievements in the First World War. When his opposition shadow Tristram Hunt, a historian by profession, attempted to reasonably nuance Gove's statements, he was subject to a barrage from other Tory heavyweights like Boris Johnson.

Yet portents of these debates have already been here for the last two decades, in the rather obsessive concentration on the minutia of the military detail of the conflict. In the United Kingdom this fascination is reflected in the enormous growth of often unfocussed amateur histories serving an appetite for this war which seems to have no counterpart amongst other European countries, even with the former protagonists. This limitless fascination is sustained by the huge number of specialist societies, re-enactment groups, battlefield tours, websites and so on. A visit to any high-street bookshop shows an extraordinary range of military histories on a war lasting only four years, usually in a greater quantity than the whole of the rest of the history section. In northern France and Belgium a potentially unhealthy heritage industry amplifies this theme. As the conflict now slips beyond living memory, both popular and professional historians can become misty eyed and sometimes incapable of rational debate when the Great War is mentioned. This threatens to devalue the vast consequences of the struggle which still matter in British society a century later. As the public history jamboree triggered by the conflict's centenary explodes, with extraordinary and unprecedented attention given to the Great War, this special issue of

the *Manchester Region History Review* seeks to emphasize the particular importance of the North West in examining how the struggle shaped Britain's regions in diverse ways.

Every family was affected by the Great War and being large (both my parents were one of ten), mine certainly was. As a child I heard about the uncle who enlisted at fifteen, the only brother of three who survived the battle of the Somme, the improbable coincidental meetings of brothers in the middle of France, and the conscripted uncle who ate soap in an unsuccessful attempt to fail his army medical, only to be killed in the last weeks of the conflict. But it was not all about fighting. I also heard about the mother who still did the daily washing for her three sons when they were billeted in the Corn Exchange of their home town for the first three months of their service. I knew intimately the memorial shrine constructed in a little-used front room by bereaved female relations, and the Labour club built by unemployed returning soldiers. But we also had family in France. Though my uncle Charlie had volunteered for the gentlemen's club of the Suffolk yeomanry, as a plate layer he had been put to work helping run the railways behind the lines. With more opportunity for interaction with civilians, he met and married a French girl and from 1919 he worked as a gardener with the Commonwealth War Graves. My childhood was punctuated by visits to northern France where his large family lived in an exotic and unique Anglo-French community.

Though our French relatives were distinctive in our close-knit neighbourhood, the fiftieth anniversary in 1964 and in particular the screening of the influential BBC TV series *The Great War*, seemed to rekindle interest. All the old men in the street – former Tommies to a man – were avid viewers and it helped the Great War emerge from the shadow of the 'good war' of 1939–1945, with its more positive image.

I came across the Great War again in the early 1980s, doing an oral history project on the farmworkers' union in East Anglia. I visited old activists expecting to talk about the union but they wanted to talk about the war. They viewed the conflict as a key part of their lives and saw no incongruity in being socialist activists whilst volunteering for the armed forces. Later while researching farmworkers in the Welsh Marches in this same period, I found a more intense local patriotism mixed with ancient ethnic suspicion of the Welsh but also allied with trade unionism and briefly even socialism, before new conservative rural cultural institutions became consolidated. These developments were analyzed in my *English farmworkers and local patriotism, 1900–1930* (Ashgate, 2001) which 'attempted to reconcile academic research into aspects of labour history with the inherited knowledge of the patriotism and latent conservatism of many working-class families'.

The Great War was one of the prime motors of social change in modern British history. The growing impact of the state on production, employment and welfare soon came to affect most aspects of the lives of

United Kingdom citizens. Indeed 1918 saw for the first time the adoption of mass democracy with the enfranchisement of women and working-class men, which triggered massive changes in political allegiances in the following decades. Culture and technology at all levels were transformed and maps redrawn with Irish independence signposting the future decline of empire. But how did these fundamental changes vary from locality to locality? Taken together, did they drastically alter the long-established importance of regional variations and identities within British society in the twentieth century? Was there a common national response to these unprecedented events or did strong local and regional cause significant variations? Was it 'never the same again' or 'business as usual'?

This was the objective of the conference *The Great War: localities and regional identities* held at Manchester Metropolitan University in June 2012 and organized by the editors of this special issue, Craig Horner and Nick Mansfield. It was held under the auspices of the Manchester Centre for Regional History at MMU and the Institute for Local and Family History at the University of Central Lancashire in Preston and was supported by the Imperial War Museum North and the Western Front Association. Over one hundred delegates consisting of both professional and amateur historians listened to twenty excellent papers from established academics and post-graduate students describing how the conflict impacted on various parts of the United Kingdom. Six are published in this issue and a further eight – concerned with the those parts of the United Kingdom beyond the North West will appear in an edited volume, *The Great War: localities and regional identities*, to be published in the summer of 2014 by Cambridge Scholars Press.

One important factor was the expansion of the state. Its impact on production, employment, pensions, training, welfare and conscription eventually affected most aspects of the lives of all its citizens. The Representation of the People Act in February 1918 saw a tripling of the electorate, and the creation of a mass democracy with the enfranchisement of both women over thirty, and working-class men. Many of the army's rank and file, still abroad, failed to vote in the election of December 1918, which had been quickly and unfairly called by Liberal Prime Minister Lloyd George to capitalize on his record as war leader.

But in the longer term the act led to massive changes in Britain's politics with the increased importance of class and reduced deference leading to the rise of the Labour Party and the decline of the Liberals. In 1914 the labour movement had largely supported the war effort. Appeals by trade-union leaders to oppose German aggression, particularly against Belgium, led to over 250,000 of its members to enlist by Christmas 1914, with 25 per cent of miners volunteering before the introduction of conscription. (These figures dwarf those of the tiny number of working-class conscientious objectors.) Typical was John Ward, the leader of the Navvies' Union and MP for Stoke on Trent. To 'fight Prussianism', he

raised three pioneer battalions from his members and, commissioned as a colonel by Lord Kitchener himself, led them to battle in France, Italy and Russia. The Labour Party entered Lloyd George's coalition government with leader Arthur Henderson becoming a member of the war cabinet. Trade unions at home grew enormously during the conflict, especially amongst unskilled and women workers. By the end, one in three of the workforce was organized. Whilst previously regarded as anathema in polite circles, trade unions became part of a more corporate state, serving on recruiting, food and pension committees and judging appeals against conscription on military service tribunals. Having proved their patriotism, unions, post war, were accorded a significant role in society.

By the end of 1918 with many officers now recruited from ex-rankers of working-class origins, the British army did succeed in defeating the Germans on the Western Front. But casualty rates were little different from the worst trench warfare of 1916 and 1917. The overall cost in lives to the British working class was dreadful. However this abhorrence was combined with their growing confidence, a decline in pre-war deference and a widespread feeling that something positive needed to emerge from the 'blood sacrifice' and comradeship of the trenches and factory floor. Though women industrial workers lost jobs as ex-servicemen returned, growing female ambitions led many to better careers, causing the middle-class 'servant problem' of the interwar period.

The Labour Party was the main beneficiary of these changes of mood. A tiny adjunct to Liberalism in 1914, only ten years later the Labour Party formed a government. Its wartime patriotism was a major factor in its electability as the anti-war stance of some of the leaders, like Ramsay MacDonald, was forgotten. Widespread support amongst newly enfranchised younger women voters led to a second Labour government in 1929. However the severe worldwide economic slump following the Wall Street Crash blighted Labour's hopes, compounded by MacDonald's 'betrayal' to form the National Government, and by the domination of interwar politics by conservatism.

By the 1930s widespread disillusionment and growing pacifism combined with the domination of official commemoration by the armed forces. This led to a dwindling of interest in the First World War and its remembrance. Many ex-servicemen were keen to forget the military aspects of their service leading to their shunning of much of the postwar memorialization, with less than 10 per cent of those eligible joining the Royal British Legion. For Britain it also soon became overshadowed by the 'good war' of 1939–1945, which could be more easily celebrated with its defeat of world-wide fascism, followed by the establishment of the NHS, the welfare state, full employment and de-colonialization.

Britain's North West was arguably the powerhouse of the whole British war effort. Its unique combination of mature industries in textiles,

engineering and coal<sup>1</sup> made it a prime contributor to the newly created mass munitions production as well as meeting the other material needs of the armed forces, ranging from battleships to uniforms. Moreover the major cities and close-knit smaller communities of the Manchester region each produced the committed military and civilian workforces needed to prosecute the war to a British victory. Thousands of working-class men chose to volunteer for the army or for gruelling hours in factories, mines or mills. Building on a long regional tradition, women in the region staffed textile, munitions and other industries, learning skills and achieving independence which had a lasting impact on twentieth-century history. Many of these themes are reflected in this special issue's articles.

Helen McCartney's book *Citizen soldiers* (2005) was a much acclaimed portrait of Liverpool's territorial army battalions within the context of their society and especially the class, religious and ethnic divisions of that major city. Her contribution to this issue builds on her earlier work but discusses the culture of volunteer and conscript Great War soldiers from the whole region. She argues that their local concerns and the material and moral support from their home communities continued throughout the conflict through the actions of the regional press and voluntary organisations. She pinpoints the role of the very localized building blocks of early twentieth-century society: the schools, clubs, societies, churches, chapels, trade unions, co-ops, companies and trade associations in largely maintaining support for the war effort – in the face of colossal pressures – and in the subsequent commemoration of the blood sacrifice of each city suburb, town and village in an intense local patriotism which continued to stress the military structures of the war.

Though in the longer term the Labour Party was the beneficiary of the consequences of the war, it was a coalition government led by Welsh wizard and Liberal leader, Manchester-born David Lloyd George, that won an overwhelming victory in the 'coupon' election of 1918. This election was engineered by Lloyd George before the new electorate could be registered and the troops returned, resulting in the lowest voter turnout of the twentieth century. But in a study of Mossley, a small cotton town in the eastern fringe of Manchester, Neil Redfern examines a case of where Liberalism survived as the major loyalty for working-class voters. Here small family mills, non-political skilled unions and high levels of voluntary recruiting and widespread support for the war effort combined to maintain a Liberal stronghold. Discussing the work of Clarke and Tanner, Redfern concludes that the local Labour Party – though not tainted by accusations of wartime pacifism which blighted its hopes elsewhere – failed here to energize potential voters, achieving only one local councillor in the interwar period.

The continuities of Manchester and Salford's important national role in the pre-war struggle for women's suffrage were continued as the joint city became the fulcrum of war-based industries employing huge numbers

of women workers. Alison Ronan's closely argued article centres on the local Women's War Interest Committee. Female trade unionists, labour activists and suffragists of both pro- and anti-war persuasion put aside their differences to work together to improve the conditions of working women and pioneering campaigns for equal pay. A cadre of closely linked friends were seconded from the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, who successfully organized a large network of grassroots activists across the city region. Some continued to campaign for peace whilst working tirelessly on bread-and-butter issues for munitions workers, seemingly unconcerned about the apparent contradictions in their position. Ronan rescues these heroines from obscurity alongside some who became major national figures like Ellen Wilkinson, the future Jarrow MP, Labour education secretary and cabinet minister. Ronan also uses a major Manchester-based resource, the War Emergency Workers' National Committee papers held at the Labour History Archive and Study Centre within the People's History Museum. An umbrella organisation of the labour movement, it brought together all wings of the movement in a pragmatic and indefatigable struggle to improve working-class conditions throughout the war.

Martin Purdy is an established North-West author of the Great War, whose analysis of the conflict is far more sophisticated than all modern popular accounts. His contribution here examines the impact and more importantly, the long-term legacy in the region of the disastrous 1915 Gallipoli campaign against Turkey. This was especially so in the arc of cotton towns in eastern Lancashire centring on Bury whose pre-war part-time territorial battalions – all of local men – suffered so much in this Eastern fighting. Whilst Gallipoli is usually synonymous with the nation-building of Australia and New Zealand, Purdy argues that the British contribution to the campaign was much more important and that it was commemorated in east Lancashire in conscious opposition to Anzac claims in the interwar period. This was partly in reaction to anger in which both Anzac troops and English officers looked down on their working-class Lancastrian comrades. In the words of one aristocratic officer, 'they clog dance on all occasions, look dirty and untidy and have bad manners. Good God, what a sight met my eyes between decks – shambles and filth. Their officers all say "thee and thou", even the Captains. They are the commonest of men I ever saw [...] I would rather desert in Egypt than put up with the return journey. I can't think I left a valet and maid at home.'

Purdy outlines the way commemoration in some other towns also focussed on the supposed battle honours achieved by locally based regiments, often masking huge casualties, such as St Julien Day in Stockport. Moreover he argues the continuing importance of Gallipoli Day in the modern self-image of Bury, including its recently opened Fusiliers Museum.

Adrian Gregson studies one Merseyside battalion raised both in Bootle and the Southport area. Many of the 'Brutal Bootle' volunteers, largely dock workers, were rejected in 1914 for bad teeth and poor health, whilst the middle-class 'Sandgrounders' were accepted, underlying the basic class divisions within the unit. Indeed these were celebrated by the local press as a good example of sinking class differences against the common foe: 'If a clerk is as good a man as a docker let them fight side by side [...] this is no time for class distinction'.

Through active service on the Western Front Gregson argues that these tensions were sublimated through joint pride in service within the 55th West Lancashire division, and that they were actively and practically supported by their local communities, not only the elites but also by women workers in the massive munitions industries that grew up around the docks in Bootle. (More genteel Southport's war contribution was to allow its vast sands and dunes to be used to billet and train the new armies.) Gregson argues that this cross-class alliance continued into the postwar period in ex-service organisations which as well as funding memorials and celebrating comradeship, provided practical help for the unemployed and raised money for the reconstruction of adopted French communities where the battalion had fought and been stationed.

'The vagaries of memorialization' by Liz and Bob Moore was sparked off by a French name on the war memorial at Hollingworth Lake Rowing Club near Rochdale. Louis Lailavoix's intriguing life story involves the south of France, the Sorbonne, London, British Columbia and the mysterious death of an older alcoholic wife. Lailavoix made his living as an author and translator and then as a French lecturer at Manchester University, where he pioneered exchanges with French universities. After earlier national service, he was recalled to the French army in 1914 and was commissioned and killed at Verdun in the spring of 1916. As well as tracing his foreshortened career, the authors locate the memorials on which his name is commemorated.

The sheer quantity of published material on the Great War can be overwhelming, especially as so much is repetitive or concerned with military minutiae. Stephen Roberts has provided a very useful service with a North-West Great War historiography. As well as tracking down contemporary and obscure material, he provides a candid guide to the most useful of the popular titles from the region. In addition he reviews many classic general texts and their more recent challengers in the context of the many debates about the war. This energetic work is concluded with the most worthwhile of the crop of current websites devoted to the war.

2014 will see extraordinary and unprecedented attention given to the First World War. But the centenary commemorations risk becoming mired in a tired litany of Mons, Somme, Jutland and Passchendaele, just as the BEF did in the mud of Flanders. These events are far too important

to be left solely to the military historians, military museums and the armed forces. The present danger will give an over-concentration on the military history, in both the large national commemorations and in the programme of community-based projects being funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. How many identical and unimaginative local war memorial projects do we need? How can these centenary programmes be sustained until 2018 without battle fatigue setting in? I wonder what the Tommies that I knew as a boy would have made of, for example, the public funding of re-enactment societies? It is important that obsessive fixation on its military aspects does not devalue the huge social, economic, political and cultural consequences of the struggle which still reverberate a century after. In the face of the raw and numbing effect of the vast scale of the public history of the war, which can only get more powerful as the centenary engages, this issue instead celebrates the local and regional identities and nuances that still matter a century after.

Nick Mansfield  
February 2014

# World War One

## Media, Entertainments & Popular Culture

fiction, news, magazines, music, cartoons, film, photographs



### Conference

July 2nd & 3rd, 2015

People's History Museum  
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This conference aims to bring together scholars from a wide range of disciplines to examine and discuss both contemporary and subsequent accounts, interpretations and uses of the First World War in terms of mass and popular media and entertainments.

We are inviting proposals for papers on any aspect of entertainment, media and popular culture during and after the First World War.

#### Possible themes include,

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Contemporaneous press reportage  
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Oppositional/dissenting voices  
Music hall performers  
Wartime images  
The popular press and WWI  
Wartime and cultural memory  
Popular music  
Sports  
Pubs and clubs  
The war in popular fiction  
Cartoons, posters  
Post 1918 popular uses of World War I themes

#### Abstract

**DEADLINE Monday 19 January 2015**

Please email a 300 word abstract (stating your name, email address and institutional affiliation) to:  
[c.hart@chester.ac.uk](mailto:c.hart@chester.ac.uk).

#### Outputs

We intend to publish a book of selected papers from the conference titled, *World War I: Media, Entertainments & Popular Culture*. There will also be a special edition of *Media, War & Conflict* (Sage Publications).

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# Abbreviations

AUCE	Associated Union of Co-operative Employees
DORA	Defence of the Realm Act
EFF	Election Fighting Fund
FWG	Fabian Women's Group
ILP	Independent Labour Party
MSWS	Manchester and Salford Women's Suffrage Society
MSWTUC	Manchester and Salford Women's Trades Union Council
NCF	No-Conscription Fellowship
NFWW	National Federation of Women Workers
NUWSS	National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies
WCG	Women's Co-operative Guild
WEC	Women's Emergency Corps
WFL	Women's Freedom League
WIC	Women's Industrial Council/ Women's Interest Committee
WIL	Women's International League
WLL	Women's Labour League
WNC	Workers' National Committee
WPC	Women's Peace Crusade
WSF	Workers' Suffrage Federation /Workers' Socialist Federation
WSPU	Women's Social and Political Union
WWIC	Women's War Interest Committee

# North-West infantry battalions and local patriotism in the First World War



Helen  
B. McCartney

The war memorial in the town of Cheadle Hulme near Stockport bears the names of sixty-nine infantrymen who died in the First World War. Like so many towns and villages across Britain, over three-quarters of the men commemorated on the memorial had died serving with their local regiments.<sup>1</sup> What is often forgotten in the modern historiography of the Great War is that a large proportion of the British army fought alongside soldiers drawn from their local area to the end of the war and British patriotism in that period was often rooted more at the local than the national. This article seeks to examine the nature of local patriotism in the north-west of England and its role in motivating soldiers to fight in the First World War.

## The nature of local patriotism: home and family

Before the Great War British society was decentralized both administratively and culturally. The central state wielded relatively little influence over the everyday lives of the British public, whilst the local authorities, together with voluntary institutions, maintained the infrastructure of the country and regulated local life.<sup>2</sup> Culturally, the regions of Britain also maintained distinct differences. There were few overwhelming national cultural influences. Regional newspapers assumed a prominent role in leading opinion, local accents and dialects were strong and varied, whilst entertainment was often bound to local traditions and customs. Most people lived their lives at the local level. Their expectations and connections were rooted in their immediate communities and their loyalties tied to locality and county through their interaction and familiarity with civic institutions and their membership of local clubs, associations and meeting-places.<sup>3</sup>

This local preoccupation was reflected in the patriotism of those enlisting in the British army on the outbreak of war. John Bourne and Ian Beckett have argued that the patriotism of the British soldier was multifaceted and derived 'from a complex web of individual loyalties'.<sup>4</sup>

These loyalties were rooted in the civilian sphere and began, first and foremost, with their families.

That soldiers were motivated by a desire to protect home and family was not lost on those seeking to enlist recruits. Pre-war recruiting literature for the Liverpool territorials drew on the idea of immediate



home defence. The advertisement of one battalion in 1912 featured a letter from a father to a new recruit. It ended, '[y]our sister says she does not want her garden trampled over by a foreigner and looks to you to take your share in protecting it. P.S. Her hyacinths are doing splendidly.'<sup>5</sup> This theme was continued in wartime with a recruitment advertisement for the 7th City battalion of the Manchester regiment that urged potential recruits in November 1914, 'You owe the duty to your kith and kin as much as to your King and Country.'<sup>6</sup> Whilst the advertisement also appealed to recruits to avenge the treatment of the Belgian people and to support those already fighting at the front, the protection of 'kith and kin' was the primary recruiting message. It was a message that would have resonated with G.W. Ross who wrote to his daughter in 1915, 'If all fathers were to stay at home in this war, what would become of the children? It is better for a father to risk his life and help save his family. Look how proud I shall be when you ask me, when you are grown up, what I did in the war? I shall be able to say I helped you all!'<sup>7</sup>

Of course, some civilians were not in a position to enlist on the outbreak of war. Adrian Gregory makes the important point that many men felt that joining the forces would leave their family in financial distress and argues that married men were much less likely to join up than their single counterparts. The idea of protecting the family could militate against as well as stimulate enlistment.<sup>8</sup> This factor was taken on board by local recruiting committees and appeals were made to employers in Manchester and Liverpool to encourage recruiting by providing for employees who were willing to enlist.<sup>9</sup> Sergeant Harris of the 17th battalion, King's Liverpool regiment remembered the day he joined his regiment:

All the male office staff of the Liverpool Gas Company assembled as usual for duty in Duke Street [...] Before mid morning, those of military age were asked to go to the board room on the third floor, as the chairman wanted to talk to them [...] 'The Gas Company', said Sir Henry, 'would grant leave of absence with half pay to all those who enlisted'.<sup>10</sup>

Figure 1: Men of 1/7th Battalion, King's Liverpool regiment in France, 1915 – 'Formby Company': *Formby Times*, 17 April 1915

Similarly, at a meeting of the Manchester Insurance committee on 24 November 1914, a letter was read from a member of staff offering to join the army if the committee would make an allowance to his dependents. The committee decided that any employee joining the armed forces should suffer no monetary loss through his enlistment.<sup>11</sup>

It was the guarantee of an income, albeit reduced, for the duration of the war and employment on return that helped to persuade many potential soldiers that they could provide for their family's physical protection through serving in the army, while securing their financial protection at home. An analogous, though less widespread problem, was highlighted by S.E. Gordon of the Liverpool Rifles. Soldiers in his territorial unit were reluctant to volunteer for overseas service because of a concern that their life insurance policies would be invalidated were they to be killed abroad. This too was solved by the intervention of Lord Derby with a guarantee that any pre-war policies would be underwritten.<sup>12</sup> Civilians were prepared to enlist in the army to defend their homes and families, but it was often conditional on an understanding that their families would not suffer disadvantage from their service, providing further evidence that the protection of the family was at the heart of local patriotism during the First World War.

The idea that Britain was at risk from invasion, and that families and locality needed protecting, came from a range of sources.<sup>13</sup> Pre-war invasion literature had played a role in raising the possibility of foreign, particularly German, invasion in the public imagination.<sup>14</sup> While this type of propaganda convinced some to join the armed forces in the years before the First World War, military service was not generally popular.<sup>15</sup> It was specific threats, real and imagined, which gave the idea of invasion power and immediacy in 1914.<sup>16</sup>

Fear of German invasion was fuelled by the activities of both the British authorities and the enemy. It was not lost on the people of the North West that the whole of the length of the British east coast was subject to defensive measures against invasion. North-West units found themselves part of this defence, reinforcing fears that invasion was a possibility.<sup>17</sup> This fear was reinforced by the bombardment of Scarborough, Hartlepool and Whitby in December 1914, which was widely reported in the national and local press. On 18 December 1914, the *Manchester Courier* contained an article that listed the civilian casualties at 560, stressed the prevalence of women and children amongst the killed and maimed, as well as the wholesale destruction of property, and displayed the headline, 'Germany now talking about an invasion'.<sup>18</sup>

Further threats to the safety of civilians in Britain were to follow. Zeppelins were spotted in the South East of England from December 1914 and, although they never plagued the North West in the same way as London and the south coast, the potential threat of air bombardment

of homes and families persisted.<sup>19</sup> Finally, the sinking of the *Lusitania* in May 1915 had a significant impact on attitudes in the North West. The sinking of the ship with over one thousand civilians on board was seen as shocking in Britain as a whole, but for the people of the North West, the impact was more personal. Many of the civilians lost when the ship sank hailed from the North West and the ship had been the pride of the Liverpool-based Cunard shipping line. In the years before 1914, the *Lusitania* had become a symbol of the success and power of Liverpool, having beaten German shipping to win the Blue Riband; the sinking was seen as a direct attack on the people and interests of Liverpool and provided additional motivation both for enlistment and for those in uniform. The war cry of the Liverpool Scottish, 'Remember the *Lusitania*', during their attack at Hooge the following month showed the extent of their feeling and a desire to avenge the loss of the ship.<sup>20</sup>

These early actions by the enemy contributed to a belief in Britain that the Central Powers were acting outside the established rules of warfare and that they viewed civilians as deliberate targets.<sup>21</sup> This belief heightened fears that any potential invasion by Germany would be devastating for local populations, a fear that was reinforced by the arrival of Belgian refugees in the early months of the war. Belgian refugees provided first-hand evidence of the consequences of invasion and the behaviour of German soldiers. The fact that the refugees were distributed around the country meant that most communities had first-hand contact with the exiles; this increased both the news coverage and word-of-mouth knowledge of their experience.

One of the first contingents arrived in Manchester as early as 23 September 1914.<sup>22</sup> Their arrival underlined the seriousness of the situation and brought home the realities of the war to the civilian population of the North West. Stories of their experiences appeared in local newspapers and, although they were far less lurid and more accurate than traditional accounts would have us believe, the substance of the reports helped to build a picture of a ruthless enemy who would decimate British towns if he was permitted to invade.<sup>23</sup> A journalist from the *Manchester Courier* reported that 'houses were burned and families turned adrift', adding interviews from a woman who had been 'turned out of her house just as her baby was about to be born' and a man who saw his brother shot for protesting when German soldiers dispersed his cattle.<sup>24</sup> The atrocity stories took on a life of their own as the rumour mill on both the home front and in the army began to generate more exaggerated and horrific tales. As Ada McGuire, who resided on the Wirral, wrote in a letter to her sister on 11 October 1914,

If they [the Germans] do come here they will have no mercy on us and oh! Their cruelty is appalling. There are children in Waterloo and Birkenhead who have no hands [...] two little Belgian girls [whose] parents were dead and their nurse had been found bayoneted at their side but both

children had had their arms chopped off from above the elbows! Now that is a fact.<sup>25</sup>

Not everyone bought into these types of atrocity story, but the fact that these kinds of rumours did not originate from the press, rather from some nebulous third party who had supposedly seen the evidence or heard the story from Belgian refugees themselves, endowed them with a greater sense of credibility.<sup>26</sup>

Throughout the war soldiers regularly justified their participation in terms of protecting home and family from enemy brutality. While the brutality they encountered was not necessarily on a par with the stories of mutilated children, enemy invasion was, nonetheless, seen as something that needed preventing at all costs. Private Francis, serving in Belgium in 1914, believed strongly that he was helping to prevent an invasion of Liverpool. The belief sustained him when crouching knee deep in a waterlogged trench for hours at a time and he reminded his family of why he was fighting in a letter home, 'Think of all the homeless Belgians. When I remember we are protecting our homes from the same fate I could bear all the [...] discomforts cheerfully.' Private Francis was not primarily sustained by an abstract, national, idea of patriotism. His patriotism centred around the defence of his home and family.

This type of patriotism survived into 1916 and was expressed in numerous letters home to friends and family. Private H. Johnson wrote to his parents after the Lancashire fusiliers advanced to the Hindenburg Line in December 1916:

I only wish you could see the villages the enemy has blown up and burned and see the conditions he has left the people in. It was when I saw them half-clothed and terrified to death that made me want to fight the Germans keener, for I thought of my own people in England and how they would have been treated.<sup>27</sup>

Similarly, RQMS R.A.S. Macfie of the Liverpool Scottish expressed similar sentiments in October 1918 as the battalion advanced through villages that had been occupied by German troops for much of the war. He described a German gas attack on a village as 'particularly mean' and wrote of the numerous towns that had been looted and prepared for burning by the retreating enemy.<sup>28</sup> The logic of protecting their families by fighting abroad persisted to the end of the war for these soldiers, particularly for those serving on the Western Front. Their experience mirrors that of the metropolitan soldiers examined in Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert's *Capital cities at war*. Their conclusion, that 'much of their [soldiers'] understanding of what the war had been about had the domestic sphere at its heart', is equally applicable to the experience of soldiers from the North West.<sup>29</sup>

## The nature of local patriotism: local identification and local communities

Most soldiers could agree that the protection of home and family played a part in motivating them to both join the army and continue to fight during the First World War. However, the role played by wider local patriotism in motivating and sustaining soldiers is more complicated and contentious. Local patriotism was influenced by involvement in and identification with local communities, but how soldiers conceptualized and interacted with their local communities often depended on their social status and occupation as well as war-time experience. Even at a local level, British social life was stratified and class-bound in 1914. It was based on individual affiliations to diverse clubs, societies, religious organisations, trade-union branches and workplaces, and it was these connections that often channelled civilians into the army in the first place, influencing which unit they joined.<sup>30</sup> The pattern of enlistment in and formation of these battalions can help to illuminate the nature of this local patriotism.

The regional recruiting system of the British army prior to 1914 reflected the decentralized structure of the nation and drew upon the attendant local loyalties in its recruitment. Since the Cardwell reforms of the 1870s, each infantry regiment had been based in a definite area of the country and bore the name of the city or county with which they were associated. By 1914, each regiment consisted of between two and four regular battalions and a number of part-time territorial units, and, in theory, drew its personnel from its local recruiting ground. While in practice, the regular army often relied on recruits from outside its recruitment area to bolster its numbers, the territorials, who were required to attend regular evening drill nights and Saturday exercises, had no choice but to join a local battalion near their home or place of work. These units were often recruited through existing social networks, which made many of them socially or ethnically homogeneous.<sup>31</sup>

On the outbreak of the First World War the British army began its transformation from a small organisation designed to police its empire to a vast institution encompassing over five million servicemen. The route to expansion was not an easy one. The county regimental structure was maintained, but a range of different units were raised. Pre-war territorial battalions recruited second and third lines of troops, while another set of units, the 'new armies', were raised, providing additional battalions for existing regiments.<sup>32</sup>

Many of the units maintained or emulated the social, ethnic or religious exclusivity of the pre-war territorials in their wartime recruitment. For example, the territorial battalions of the 6th and 10th King's Liverpool regiment continued to recruit according to their pre-war criteria, attracting men of elevated social status, drawn from existing social

networks, based on place of employment and social clubs. The 6th battalion also maintained a height restriction, appealing for recruits over 5ft 8in as a way of excluding poorer applicants who tended to be smaller in height as a result of poor nutrition. In addition, they explicitly appealed for recruits from specific, middle-class, areas of the city and in this way recruited middle-class soldiers for the first and second lines of the battalion into 1915. In the case of the 10th battalion, there was also a focus on Scottish ancestry and membership of the local Presbyterian church.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, the 7th Manchesters, another territorial unit, continued to draw its recruits from commercial sectors of the city, and 'could turn out more barristers than all the other East Lancashire units put together'.<sup>34</sup>

From the latter days of August 1914, Lord Derby did much to promote the idea of existing communities of 'Pals' serving with each other. His first appeal in the Liverpool press asked for men 'such as clerks and others engaged in commercial business who wish to serve their country and would be willing to enlist in a battalion of Lord Kitchener's new army if they felt assured that they would be able to serve with their friends and not be put in a battalion with unknown men as their companions'.<sup>35</sup> One of Derby's aims was to encourage middle-class men to join the ranks of the army by guaranteeing they would serve alongside soldiers from similar backgrounds. This appeal helped to initiate the formation of many of the 'Pals' battalions and spurred a committee of Mancunian industrialists and local dignitaries to raise their own units. Their recruitment appeal called for warehousemen and clerks and participating firms issued enlistment tickets to employees so that they could prove their occupational status. This appeal to the middle-class strata of Mancunian society was successful and reinforced by descriptions of new recruits in newspapers. The *Manchester Evening News* reported in September 1914 that the Pals recruits were 'the type which one sees on Saturday mornings in the winter carrying lacrosse and football bags – clean limbed and strong young fellows whom the recruiting officer eyes in vain in peacetime'.<sup>36</sup>

Of course not all service battalions were raised through appeals to the middle class; the recruitment of many units was based on occupation or workplace. Indeed, Lord Leverhulme helped to form the 13th battalion of the Cheshire regiment from his employees at Port Sunlight, while still more units did not stipulate social or occupational status.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, following established pre-war territorial traditions that drew on allegiances from civilian life to attract men into the ranks, those in charge of recruitment identified class as an important factor. Middle class recruits, in particular, responded to the appeal to serve alongside those of similar social status.

Civilians thus joined the army in 1914 in ways that mirrored and reinforced their social connections and social life at home. Indeed,

by serving in the armed forces, they were ensuring that they not only protected their families but their way of life and they were supported in their enterprise through enduring connections with the communities they were defending. Clubs, societies, churches and employers maintained tangible links with their members in myriad ways. Parcels of food and clothing as well as telegrams were sent to those serving, which ensured that soldiers felt appreciated for their sacrifice. For example, Mr Cecil Calthrop, president of the Seed, Oil and Cake Trade Association, Exchange Buildings, Liverpool, wrote to Brigadier-General Stanley on 10 July 1916 after the opening of the Battle of the Somme:

The committee of the above Association desire me to convey to you their sense of pride and pleasure in the accounts of the excellent work done by the Pals battalions of the King's Liverpool Regiment, which are so largely composed of employees of the various firms comprising this association. Their bravery and tenacity in capturing and holding positions in the late advance is much admired. I trust you will make this known to your men.<sup>38</sup>

It was also important to soldiers and civilians alike that a continuing dialogue between front and home was facilitated to keep those serving engaged with their local communities and local issues. To this end, many organisations sent newsletters and magazines to their serving members that often contained both messages from home and from the front. The Lever Brothers' magazine for the Port Sunlight works carried letters from soldiers serving abroad, while church magazines, such as that of the Crescent Congregational Church in Liverpool, were constructed specifically for establishing reliable communication.<sup>39</sup> The importance of keeping in touch for soldiers and home community is highlighted in the speech by the Revd R.J. Fenwick, given at the memorial service of Willie France, one of the first soldiers from Hayfield to be killed. Speaking about France, a former Sunday School teacher, Fenwick recalled:

a little while before his death the superintendent of this school received a letter from him [France] in which he spoke about this school, the happy times he spent in it, how oft he thought about it, how he hoped it was getting on alright and how glad he should be to visit it again [...] Will France loved this school and he showed his love in a practical fashion. While he was training it was our school anniversary. He could not be here, but he did not forget us. Out of his small income he sent a gift to the collection. That gift we prized greatly, not for its value but for the spirit that prompted it and the love there was behind it.<sup>40</sup>

While serving with the 12th Manchesters, Willie France had remained a part of his local community, to the extent that he contributed actively to the school anniversary collection. It was clearly important to France to maintain his links with the school in which he had taught and to which he hoped to return. On his death he was commemorated by the Little Hayfield Primitive Methodist Chapel community and the 'Lily of the

Valley' Lodge of Oddfellows while the flag at his place of work, Clough Mill, was flown at half-mast as a mark of respect. Willie France had been identified with and retained his place in at least three different local communities during his war service. It was for his family and these very local communities that he fought.<sup>41</sup>

## Wider identities: city, county, national and imperial patriotisms

If British society was fragmented and based on tangible networks of sociability during the First World War, did larger conceptions of local identity and local patriotism hold any meaning for those who fought? We have established that soldiers identified with multiple local communities, but did they also identify with their town or city, their county, their region, their nation and their empire?

There is evidence to suggest that strong local ties and local identity were often compatible with wider notions of regional, national and imperial patriotism. The idea of different, multiple, patriotisms existing side by side is well illustrated by a postcard sent by a mother to her son in the forces. Its title read: 'A greeting from Burnley; to my boy who is doing his duty to his King, Country and to us at home'.<sup>42</sup> Her son was seen as simultaneously protecting his king, country, town and family. Similarly, while the primary motivation of signaller Walter Williamson was to protect his wife and young child and ensure that his son never had to face mass warfare in the future, he also believed that he was fighting for the people of his home town of Stockport, from where his battalion, the 6th Cheshires, was raised. He persistently asked his wife for news of positive public reaction to the return of the battalion's colours.<sup>43</sup> A sense of place and a collective need for validation from the wider communities from which they came was important to those fighting away from home. Soldiers could also feel that they were fighting for more abstract, 'imagined' communities, such as a town, city or county, although their main points of reference were still their family and small social groups.

Concepts of imperial patriotism were less often discussed and references to the empire could depend on the social and occupational status of soldiers as well as the front on which they were fighting. The journalist Philip Gibbs believed that the horizons of the soldiers were profoundly local and that 'any allusion to "The Empire" left them cold, unless they confused it with the Empire music hall when their heart warmed to the name'.<sup>44</sup> To a large extent, Gibbs was correct. Most soldiers did not ruminate on the necessity of defending the British empire. Nevertheless, there were some groups of soldiers who saw tangible benefits in doing so.

Although they were initially reluctant to go to war with 'Lancashire's best customers', the men of the 7th Manchesters saw the value of

securing Britain's imperial assets to preserve markets further afield.<sup>45</sup> In 1915 the *Manchester Sentry*, a journal of the 7th Manchesters, explained that 'It was a good thing for Manchester men to see at close quarters the working of British Imperialism', which, they claimed, 'had done so much for the happiness of mankind.' Indeed, the battalion, composed as it was of many men from the commercial sector of the city, stressed its connections with trade and the empire. The entrepreneurial editors of the battalion journal even attempted to gain advertising revenue from businesses in Manchester explaining:

Trade follows the flag, Manchester, we opine, marches with it. Manchester and the Sudan are irretrievably wedded by the band of trading. Our goods are household names here and your trading houses welcome entries in our ledgers at home [...] we aim to make the *Sentry* the main vehicle of publicity between supply depots and the trader and so the variegated millions of the Sudan.<sup>46</sup>

In this case, the battalion and its members acknowledged that by defending the empire they were exploiting their own business interests and thus the interests of their city. The connections between the empire and their home area were comprehensible, and as such, were seen as worth protecting.

## Local pride and motivation in war

The argument so far has rested on the idea that soldiers in the First World War fought to protect their families, their homes, their business interests, their society and, ultimately, their way of life. However, within some formations, particularly at the beginning of the war, an analogous but subtly different facet of local patriotism, local pride, also helped to motivate soldiers in the field. As Adrian Gregory has suggested, 'the suffering of soldiers stood at the heart of wartime values' and soldiers sat at the top of the 'moral hierarchy' of sacrifice.<sup>47</sup> Communities at all levels did not want to be seen to be shirking their responsibilities in providing men for the front. Even the smallest workplaces, chapels and social clubs produced rolls of honour, listing not only those who died, but also those who were serving in the armed forces.<sup>48</sup> These rolls of honour played a dual role in both acknowledging the sacrifices being made by individuals and demonstrating that communities were pulling their weight in wartime.

The need to demonstrate a community's worth through blood sacrifice was played out on a larger scale at town and county level. The localized nature of recruitment, coupled with established rivalries between cities and counties, and the broader national rivalries between Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England, encouraged soldiers to defend the honour of their area. Beginning with local enlistment, local battalions tied to

Figure 2: Men of 55th Division marching from the trenches, 10 April 1918. Imperial War Museum Q342



cities and counties vied for recruits in the first year and a half of the war. While not always successful, the appeals, nevertheless, often had a geographical as well as a class inflection. For example, in November 1914 the *Manchester Evening News* exhorted the men of Manchester to join the 5th City battalion by warning them that ‘Liverpool has already started her 5th battalion and Manchester must not lag behind.’<sup>49</sup> The traditional city rivalry had been carried into the military sphere.

Similarly, military success, or at least military sacrifice, was also seen as a mark of a town, a city or a county’s honour. Sergeant A. Ruckman of 1/6th Lancashire fusiliers wrote to a friend in 1915, ‘The only thing I can say about the lads from Middleton is that they have done their duty and Middleton ought to be proud of them. If Middleton will help to keep the homes going we will keep the flag flying and keep the fighting name.’<sup>50</sup> On a similar note, the 42nd East Lancashire divisional history recorded that ‘On 9 January 1916 the last of the 42nd Division left Gallipoli. Yet much of the ground in the South Western Peninsula is still held for Lancashire by thousands of her best and bravest.’<sup>51</sup> Long after the war it remained a point of pride that Lancashire units had fought and died for their county.

Perhaps the most striking example of how local pride could motivate a unit can be seen in the actions of the 16th Manchesters on 21 March 1918. The battalion was holding a strong point known as Manchester Hill. While resisting a concerted German attack, the commanding officer sent a message to his brigadier that the ‘Manchester Regiment will hold Manchester Hill to the last.’ He was true to his word. The unit held out against a devastating onslaught for twenty-four hours before being overrun. Barely a handful of the battalion returned.<sup>52</sup>

There remains a nagging question. Were these practical manifestations

of local pride real, or simply illusory, created in the minds of regimental historians and journalists after the event? The attitudes of unit commanders towards local identity might hold a clue. Throughout the war, numerous commanders sought to capitalize upon local pride by encouraging its expression. Major General Jeudwine of the 55th West Lancashire division was one such convert to harnessing the power of localism to stimulate fighting spirit. County identity



was used in his division as the citizen soldier's equivalent of regimental loyalty. The rose of Lancaster was adopted as a divisional badge in 1916. It became an identification mark on artillery and transport and was the image displayed on the shoulder patch of each member of the division. From June 1918 the rose was imprinted on the metal plaques covering the graves of all the divisional dead and post-war Jeudwine claimed, 'so great was the pride in the badge that no more dreaded a punishment could be awarded for slackness [...] than to order the individual to remove the rose from his shoulders or the unit to erase it from its transport.'<sup>53</sup>

It is possible that, post-war, Jeudwine exaggerated the power of local pride as a motivational force in an attempt to justify his decision to encourage local loyalties within his division. Nevertheless, there is evidence to suggest that the Lancashire rose was not simply a meaningless symbol imposed from above, but one that was accepted by those fighting within the division. An artillery officer of the 275th West Lancashire brigade composed a poem, the last line of which, 'We win or die who wear the rose of Lancaster' was adopted as the divisional motto. The poem tapped into a sense of local pride and was quoted in Liverpoolian papers, the 55th divisional magazine and within obituaries of those killed.<sup>54</sup>

Figure 3:  
Major General  
H.S. Jeudwine  
with Lord Derby  
and staff of  
55th Division,  
1919: J.D. Coop,  
*The story of the  
55th Division*  
(London, n.d.)

## Local patriotism and local pride at the end of the war

While a desire to protect family, home and local communities persisted as an individual motivational force for many soldiers to the end of the war, the collective use of local pride to motivate a unit was not necessarily applicable by 1918. The capacity of local pride to encourage soldiers to acts of heroism obviously relied on that formation being drawn from a similar geographical area of Britain and maintaining strong ties with its population. From 1916 soldiers no longer chose their own units and

from 1917 conscription was based on eleven regional recruiting areas in Britain which each drafted, via regiments, to a specific number of battalions at the front.

However, while this meant that the tight, community-based battalions of 1914 could not be maintained in the latter years of the war, it at least ensured that many battalions continued to be composed of men drawn from one county or regional area. For example, in 1918, 88 per cent of the dead from 1/8th Manchesters had lived in Lancashire or Cheshire.<sup>55</sup> The advantages conferred by belonging to a small local community did not, on the whole, survive 1917, but the motivational advantages, based on broader sub-national patriotisms, remained for many units. Some formations were served well by a regionally-based recruitment and drafting system. North-West units, with traditional recruiting areas in Lancashire, fared particularly favourably. It was these units that had been most locally specific to begin with, and which drew their recruits from regional recruiting areas with large urban populations, that were able to maintain broad county identities and exploit the motivational force of local pride to the end of the First World War.



# Labour failure and Liberal survival: the impact of the Great War on the labour movement in Mossley



Neil Redfern

Mossley, a small cotton town in the Manchester conurbation, was one of those places (Bacup in Lancashire's Rossendale Valley was another) where the Liberal Party survived the later nineteenth-century transference of political allegiance in the cotton districts from the Liberals to the Conservatives. A much more typical cotton town was Mossley's neighbour, Ashton-under-Lyne (hereafter Ashton). There, a Conservative MP was almost invariably elected after the passing of the Second Reform Act; Mossley though was nearly always represented by a Liberal. Ashton Conservatives enjoyed a comfortable majority on the town's council while Mossley Liberals similarly controlled that town's council. In contrast to Anglican Ashton, and consistent with its dominant Liberalism, Mossley was a staunchly non-conformist town (in 1901 it had one Methodist minister for every 4,484 persons compared to one for every 14,630 in Ashton).<sup>1</sup>

These deferential, confessional working-class attitudes, generally dominant in Lancashire's industrial towns after the defeat and collapse of Chartism, were severely disrupted by the Great War, during which 'a rampant omnibus' ran over the Liberal Party.<sup>2</sup> Post-war, traditional voting patterns were in most places replaced by a much more class-based politics. Labour became a serious contender for office and replaced the Liberals as the main opposition party.<sup>3</sup> Labour made remarkable gains in the first post-war municipal elections of 1919 in, for instance, Ashton, London, Manchester, Blackburn, Hull, Colne and Leeds.<sup>4</sup> But in Mossley the Great War's political impact was more akin to that of a horse and cart than an omnibus: while the Labour vote did increase, the party failed to make a single gain.

Historical discourse has concentrated on two aspects of the change to class-based politics in the early twentieth century. What was the principal factor in Labour's rise: was it the Great War itself or was it the greatly expanded franchise created at the end of the war? A debate on this issue has continued for years.<sup>5</sup> Both factors increased the potential Labour vote in Mossley, but it is impossible to say which was primary. More pertinent



to the Mossley case, given that Mossley Liberalism held back the Labour tide, are the arguments of P.F. Clarke and Duncan Tanner. Clarke argued that the 'new' Liberalism could have survived mass democracy and the trauma of war to continue to vie with the Tories for power.<sup>6</sup> Tanner though argued that the war and the expansion of the franchise created favourable conditions for Labour to overtake the Liberals.<sup>7</sup>

That Mossley's Liberals did continue to vie for power with the Conservatives for decades after the Great War provides some empirical support for Clarke's contention, but their survival owed much to a Labour failure to take advantage of favourable circumstances in the immediate post-war years. The principal cause of Labour's triumph in Ashton was that the experience of war convinced the majority of the town's labour movement and a substantial section of its working class that only the Labour Party could be trusted to fight for the interests of the working class.<sup>8</sup> But in Mossley, while working-class deference was undermined to a significant extent, it persisted particularly in the town's labour movement, which was ideologically unable to sever the umbilical cord connecting it to the Liberals. Rather than fight independently, Mossley's Labour Party entered into a sunset version of the progressive alliance, fought for by elements of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) and left-leaning Liberals in many towns and cities in the years leading up to the war.<sup>9</sup> Presumably because Mossley's branch of the ILP had had little influence (its only electoral success had been that of Mathew Farr, first elected in 1895), the town's Liberals had seen no advantage in a progressive alliance. But the war stimulated pro-Labour sentiments to a

Figure 1:  
Manchester  
Road, Mossley,  
1930s. Courtesy  
of Tameside  
Local Studies  
and Archives



Figure 2:  
Micklehurst  
Road, showing  
Hollins Mill  
(Radcliffe's Mill),  
Mossley, 1910s.  
Courtesy of  
Tameside Local  
Studies and  
Archives

degree sufficient to allow the formation of a branch of the party in June 1918 (the local branch of the ILP dissolved itself in favour of Labour shortly afterwards, declaring that it had never supported the national ILP's anti-war stance<sup>10</sup>) and to convince the Liberals that electoral necessity demanded an alliance with Labour.

The particular conditions of Mossley were ideal for the survival of deference. By the start of the twentieth century, Ashton, six miles due east of Manchester, with a population of 43,890<sup>11</sup> had become the largest town in a mini-conurbation which included the cotton districts of Audenshaw, Dukinfield, Droylsden, Hyde and Stalybridge and the hatting town Denton. Mossley, in contrast, though only a few miles from Ashton and from Oldham, was an isolated small town in a steep Pennine valley, populated by only 13,452.<sup>12</sup> Mossley people tended to be as isolated as the town itself. We find, for instance, that in 1917 at Park Bridge iron works, midway between Ashton and Oldham, 45 per cent of employees were from Ashton, nearly all the remainder from Oldham, a number from other nearby towns, but none from Mossley.<sup>13</sup> In sharp contrast, in 1918 99 per cent of employees at a Mossley mill were from Mossley,<sup>14</sup> a proportion which had scarcely changed by 1950.<sup>15</sup>

Mossley's isolation tended to seal off influences competing against those of the millocracy. Due no doubt to this isolation, industries other than cotton had hardly penetrated into Mossley. In 1901 58 per cent of Mossley's occupied population worked in the cotton industry, compared to only 38 per cent in Ashton. Only 6.6 per cent of Mossley's workers were employed in engineering, the largest occupational category after cotton.



In Ashton, brewing, mining and engineering as well as cotton offered work.<sup>16</sup> Providing fertile ground for the exertion of employer influence in Mossley was the predominance of family firms<sup>17</sup> and the relatively small size of the typical Mossley cotton mill<sup>18</sup> (the 1905–09 boom in building huge new mills bypassed Mossley).<sup>19</sup>

Moreover, it was far easier to travel for work (and, of course, for social and cultural reasons) to other towns from Ashton than it was from Mossley. There was an infrequent rail service to Ashton, but it was not until 1904 (compared with 1881 in Ashton) that the tram came to Mossley.<sup>20</sup> This, with its far greater number of stops, was, as Patrick Joyce observed,<sup>21</sup> a far greater facilitator of mobility for working-class people than the train. But even after the inauguration of the tram service there was only one infrequent service to Ashton and none to the other nearby possible source of work, Oldham. A bus service was not inaugurated until 1925.<sup>22</sup>

Deference and hierarchy existed within the labour movement as well as between employers and workers. Rightly called ‘barefoot aristocrats’ by Alan Fowler and Terry Wyke,<sup>23</sup> the spinners were important players in the cotton districts. In Mossley they were by far the largest occupational group. The spinners’ union was in effect a craft union with much more in common with the ‘old’ unionism of skilled workers than with the ‘new’ unionism of general labourers. Spinners were highly unionized (nationally, around 90–95 per cent belonged to the Amalgamated Association of Operative Cotton Spinners and Twiners [ACS]).<sup>24</sup> They controlled the supply of entrants into the trade, had relative stability

Figure 3: Micklehurst and Hey Farm Estate from Manchester Road, Britannia mill and pub foreground, Milton and Carrhill mills centre left, Bradbury’s right centre. Courtesy of Tameside Local Studies and Archives

of employment and higher than average pay. Moreover, remuneration was made per spinning mule: the spinner controlled much of the work environment and was responsible for paying the big and little piecers (who mended broken pieces of yarn) under his control. These factors could only serve to foster conservatism.

Spinners tended to be Conservative as well as conservative. The apotheosis of such 'clog' Toryism was the joint Conservative candidatures of the spinners' leader, James Mawdsley, and Winston Churchill in the Oldham double by-election of 1899. In Mossley, support for the Conservatives was strongest in the largely rural Cheshire ward and in Lancashire ward, where there was the largest concentration of cotton mills and spinners. Contests in this ward were usually won by the Conservatives (probably in part a reaction against Irish immigration into the ward). It was perhaps Tory imperial sentiments which led a majority of Mossley spinners to reject in 1894 the Eight Hours bill, which aimed to limit hours of work.<sup>25</sup> Most spinners were opposed to this measure on the grounds that it might damage cotton exports.<sup>26</sup>

Liberal support tended to be concentrated among labour movement activists, especially among those on the trades council, which aspired to represent the collective interests of the trade unions. Mossley was represented on the Stalybridge, Millbrook and Mossley council, which, typically, was resolutely opposed to introducing 'politics' into its affairs, lest the council be split. But in the cotton towns, labour-movement activists tended to wear a 'non-political' hat on the trades council and a Liberal hat during elections. In Ashton, for instance, according to the local newspaper, control of the council was contested by 5,000 ratepayers supporting the Tories and 6,000 trades council members supporting the Liberals.<sup>27</sup> In Rochdale, too, many members of the 'non-political' trades council were 'privately Liberal'.<sup>28</sup> Labourism had little attraction: none of these trades councils was affiliated to the Labour party.

The political trajectory of one alderman Lees was typical of those Mossley workers who had become politically active in late Victorian England. Lees became a little piecer at the age of nine, active in the co-operative movement, joined the Liberals and rose through the political ranks to become an alderman. He was the subject of a fawning eulogy on the occasion of his death.<sup>29</sup> The political closeness of Mossley's labour movement to the Liberals was demonstrated by Mathew Farr's obsequious speech at the mayor-making ceremony of 1916. Farr, local secretary of the cardroom (where cotton was prepared for spinning) workers' union and delegate to the trades council, and now an ILP alderman, claimed that the new mayor, Liberal alderman Rhodes, a local small businessman, was sure 'to have the confidence and esteem of the workers of Mossley'.<sup>30</sup>

Such was the temper of Mossley labour early in the last century. How was it affected by the experience of the Great War? A significant degree of working-class discontent did emerge, but it did not lead

to political radicalism and was easily contained within the town's traditional power structures. On the outbreak of war, the ILP mounted small anti-war demonstrations in the nearby towns of Oldham, Hyde and Rochdale,<sup>31</sup> but none was reported in Mossley. The local press – the Tory *Ashton Herald* and the Liberal *Mossley and Saddleworth Reporter* – were keen to boost support for the war. The *Herald* was anxious to whip up xenophobic sentiments. Soon after the outbreak of war it



urged residents to assist the government by ‘safeguarding bridges [...] and by keeping an eye on foreigners, who are likely to be spies.’<sup>32</sup> Later, it reported that in one day alone eighty men had volunteered and that on the next day crowds ‘had gathered at the railway station to see them off’.<sup>33</sup> Atrocity stories – raped nuns, children forced to walk in front of advancing German soldiers and so on – soon appeared, while clerics vied to produce the most compelling ‘god on our side’ arguments. At Abney Congregational Church, the minister claimed that ‘if ever any people since history began could claim that their battle was not theirs but God’s, we surely are that people’. The war was ‘a fight of the human soul for freedom, independence and self-control against an arrogant, swaggering and cruel military caste’.<sup>34</sup> The congregation at Roughtown Church of England parish church heard the vicar denounce Catholics and Dissenters: ‘The Pope has been sitting on the fence [...] I say dissenting Protestantism is very much in the same box [...] it draws all inspiration from Germany – its home.’<sup>35</sup>

Labour movement activists had their own reasons for supporting the war. Patriotic sentiments were leavened with dissenting and liberal attitudes. Early in 1915, a debate on the theme ‘Is the Empire Worth Fighting For’ was held at the Mossley ILP club. Samuel Munns, claiming that he was speaking ‘on behalf of the badly paid and sweated workers’, argued that the empire was not worth fighting for. A ‘large majority’ disagreed.<sup>36</sup> At the 1915 annual meeting of Mossley’s spinners, their secretary, Wright Mosley, supported the war while hoping that ‘God would give to us and the whole world a speedy, righteous peace’ and that the outcome of the war would be ‘a true brotherhood of man, and a lasting fellowship of nations’.<sup>37</sup> But the more nationalistic claim that ‘as one small community Mossley is nobly doing service for King and country’<sup>38</sup> might well have been more representative of majority opinion among the spinners.

Figure 4: Laying of the foundation stone, Milton Council School, September 1911. Alderman Matthew Farr on front row, holding paper. Courtesy of Tameside Local Studies and Archives

But what of the mass of Mossley people? Though there is no evidence of significant anti-war sentiment, Adrian Gregory<sup>39</sup> and Catriona Pennell<sup>40</sup> have both shown that contemporary press reports of wild patriotic excitement and enthusiasm must be treated with some scepticism. Recruitment in Mossley presumably conformed to the national pattern. Becket and Simpson showed that despite surges of volunteering in the early months of war, only 29.4 per cent of the eligible national labour force of 1914 volunteered. Enlisting among textile and clothing workers (the main trade in Mossley) was the lowest of all.<sup>41</sup> Though the leaders of the spinners' union argued in 1915 that the fact that 1,576 spinners and 3,400 piecers had enlisted 'goes to show [...] that cotton workers are taking their fair share in the bearing of the nation's burden',<sup>42</sup> this represented only 10 per cent of spinners and piecers (of course, many spinners and piecers were too old for active service).

British reverses at Mons shortly after the declaration of war produced national and local expressions of concern at the low levels of volunteering. Kitchener's 'Your Country Needs You' campaign was launched. Mossley's notables attempted to use their influence to boost recruitment. The mayor, alderman Bradbury, attended special church services which were followed by processions of recruits who, 'not having received their uniforms wore badges around their arms with the name of the regiment.'<sup>43</sup> A few months later, Bradbury presided over a recruiting meeting addressed by Lord Derby, instigator of the eponymous scheme (in which men would 'attest' their willingness to serve in the armed forces should it prove necessary). Bradbury invoked the defeat of the Spanish Armada, noted that England 'was still the mistress of the seas' and called for a 'constant stream of volunteers'. Fred Brocklehurst, once a stalwart of Manchester ILP but now a Tory, referred to the 'great debt' humanity owed to German writers, but in Germany now 'moral force had been crucified'. The Mossley men in the trenches, 'plain, ordinary sort of men' were wondering why Mossley men who had not volunteered were not 'coming to help us'.<sup>44</sup> But cheery reports of territorials singing 'as they march to the front' and 'light-hearted lads always singing even when shelled'<sup>45</sup> were presumably treated with some scepticism once, despite censorship, conditions and casualties at the front were becoming known at home.

In January 1916 apprehension that conscription would have to be introduced was confirmed by the introduction of the Military Service bill. In response, resolutions opposing the bill were passed overwhelmingly at special conferences held by both the Trades Union Congress (TUC)<sup>46</sup> and the Labour Party.<sup>47</sup> Stalybridge, Mossley and Millbrook trades council had earlier denounced conscription, though on impeccably liberal rather than class grounds: it would be 'a violation of the principle of civic freedom hitherto prized as one of the chief heritages of British liberty'.<sup>48</sup> The trades council resolution may well though not have reflected majority

opinion among the town's labour movement and workers. More delegates abstained than voted in favour of the trades council resolution, while the hard line maintained by alderman Farr on the local military tribunal does not seem to have affected his influence and popularity in the town.

The available evidence suggests that in Mossley, as in the labour movement generally, opposition to conscription was not based on anti-war sentiments (there had been some initial equivocation, but thereafter both the TUC and the Labour Party had given general support to the British war effort), but on an increasing belief that the working class was bearing an unfair share of the burden of war and that, as the War Emergency Workers' National Committee (WEWNC) argued, capital, as well as labour, should also be conscripted.<sup>49</sup> By 1917, after nearly three years of war, such sentiments were becoming widespread. Lancashire weavers were angered by increased prices (prices outstripped wages throughout the war; by 1918 average real wages of cotton workers were only 75 per cent of pre-war levels<sup>50</sup>): 'profitmongers' had exploited food shortages while 'some six million men have been giving their blood on the battlefields'.<sup>51</sup> Mossley spinners condemned rising prices in biblical terms: 'capitalists have waxed fat, profiteers have wrung out a golden harvest'; but they were still confident that in the war 'Justice and right will prevail'.<sup>52</sup>

Clearly, class tensions were mounting in Mossley, as they were nationally, culminating in the unrest of 1917–19. Interpretations of the civil strife of this period vary wildly. Perhaps taking their inspiration from Willy Gallacher, Red Clydesider and founder member of the Communist Party, historians of a leftist outlook have detected a near-revolutionary situation in 1919.<sup>53</sup> Ian McLean disagreed, arguing that the great majority on the Clyde were not opposed to the war and did not aspire to overthrow the social order.<sup>54</sup> Bernard Waites too, was sceptical of the leftist explanation, arguing, for instance, that German advances in the spring of 1918 led to a revival of working-class patriotism, 'highly reminiscent of the early months of the war', marked by a precipitous fall in days lost in strikes.<sup>55</sup> The evidence from Mossley supports Waites's interpretation of the industrial unrest of 1917–19.

There were few strikes in the cotton industry in the first two years of war. After some initial disruption the cotton trade enjoyed something of a boom until 1917. Disputes erupted occasionally in Mossley in this period, indicating there were definite limits to the sacrifices workers were prepared to make. There were several disputes over the introduction of women into spinning rooms. Though the local branch of the spinners claimed that 'such work is totally unfitted for girls and women',<sup>56</sup> an agreement was eventually reached that women could be employed as piecers, but only until the end of the war.<sup>57</sup> In 1916 spinners and piecers at the Britannia Mill struck in protest at the sacking of an overlooker.<sup>58</sup>

In June 1917, alarmed by the rapidly increasing number of days lost in

strikes, the government appointed several commissions of enquiry into industrial unrest. In the cotton districts, the decisions of the Cotton Control Board (CCB) were a notable cause of unrest. The CCB rationed and allocated supplies of cotton, severely disrupted by submarine warfare. In consequence cotton workers experienced regular periods of unemployment. While the spinners' union accepted that eking out supplies of cotton must mean slack periods in each mill, it nevertheless wanted the government to make up spinners' pay. Mossley was but one of many towns which in 1917–18 saw strikes in protest against the application of the rota system devised by the CCB.

Much more serious than earlier isolated and sporadic disputes was a week-long industry-wide dispute in September 1918 – ended after an appeal to the 'patriotism of Lancashire' from the prime minister<sup>59</sup> – which threatened supplies of cotton goods for the front. Negotiations continued after the strike, but after the armistice the spinners struck again. They returned to work after a 50 per cent increase in the piece-rate was agreed after the prime minister again appealed to patriotism when receiving both union and employer representatives at Downing Street in early December.<sup>60</sup>

Mossley workers were also involved in the serious unrest of the 'red year' of 1919. During the national rail strike of that autumn alderman Farr addressed the railwaymen who later 'marched in procession' to the market ground.<sup>61</sup> But the most serious strike affecting Mossley was the general cotton strike – the biggest strike of that year – in which virtually all Mossley's mills were closed.

The principal issue in the strike was the claim of the United Textile Factory Workers' Association (UTFWA), an umbrella organisation of cotton unions, for a reduction in the working week from fifty-five to forty-four hours.<sup>62</sup> Failed negotiations led in late June to a strike of a few days duration and an offer of a reduction in hours to forty-eight, accompanied by an increase in piece rates to compensate for the effect of the reduction in hours.<sup>63</sup> UTFWA accepted the offer. Most weavers and cardroom workers returned to work. But the spinners stayed on strike. After a further three weeks on strike an agreement was concluded that their settlement would last for only nine, not eighteen months.<sup>64</sup>

Not all weavers and cardroom workers were happy with the improved offer. Many violently objected. In Stalybridge, a hosepipe was turned upon protesters who had attempted to storm the back entrance of a mill. At a mill in Ashton, the centre of militancy, the manager was attacked by women, one of whom 'plastered a piece of bread and margarine over his face'.<sup>65</sup> Mossley people do not seem to have been involved in the disturbances. A rumour spread that women from Ashton were *en route* to demand that Mossley workers come out.<sup>66</sup> But none appeared. Given that those involved in the disturbances were mostly women and some young men,<sup>67</sup> Mossley's calm may have been due to the numerical and

ideological dominance of spinners in its cotton industry. 59 per cent of Mossley's cotton workers were spinners, compared to only 44 per cent in Ashton. Probably of greater significance is that a mere 15 per cent of workers in Mossley's spinning rooms were women, compared to 58 per cent in Ashton.<sup>68</sup>

In the cotton districts, the industrial militancy of 1919 was but one aspect of a leftwards shift by the trade unions and the working class generally. Politically, this shift was marked by a rapid growth in support for the constitutional and emphatically reformist Labour Party rather than by a turn to revolutionary politics. Labour's participation in national and local government, thus demonstrating its patriotism and responsibility, its increasing appeal to women as it broke with narrow trade unionism, growing collectivism and support for reform, and the Liberal's ideological difficulties in appealing to the greatly enlarged, mainly working-class electorate (the Representation of the People Act of 1918 approximately tripled the parliamentary and doubled the municipal franchise) have been variously identified as factors favouring the Labour Party.<sup>69</sup> All these factors were present in the cotton districts to varying degrees, though less so in Mossley than in most places.

War-time national union opinion, including that of the cotton unions, had steadily grown in favour of reform and the Labour Party. The spinners' executive supported sending a UTWFA delegate to Labour's annual conference of January 1918.<sup>70</sup> At its special conference of June 1918 Labour adopted a radical programme calling for, *inter alia*, democratic control of industry, a minimum wage, extended unemployment insurance and a programme of public works.<sup>71</sup> The cotton unions too were moving in a radical direction. A UTFWA delegate at the June conference argued for a 'gradual building up of a new social order based [...] not on the domination of subject classes, subject races or a subject sex but on co-operation.'<sup>72</sup> Later that year, UTFWA called on textile workers to vote Labour in the forthcoming general election, declaring that 'The Labour Party is the only party which knows and understands the needs of labour. [It stands] for the abolition of the Poor Law and the creation of a Ministry of Health.'<sup>73</sup>

Such sentiments had been growing in Mossley for some time. A 1913 national ballot of spinners produced far more Mossley votes (44.7 per cent) in favour of being permitted to use union funds for political purposes (which the Osborne Judgement of 1909 had prohibited) than earlier ballots had.<sup>74</sup> Perhaps buoyed by such evidence of growing support for Labour (the proposal was clearly aimed at allowing the union to support the Labour party), Mossley branch sent two delegates to the Labour Party conference of 1914.<sup>75</sup> In the last two years or so of the war pro-Labour opinion in Mossley grew rapidly. In late 1917 alderman Farr gave a speech at the ILP club on housing and town planning. Such was the interest that there was 'talk of engaging a larger hall and calling a

public meeting'.<sup>76</sup> A few months later members heard 'a speaker from Ashton' denounce 'private ownership of land'.<sup>77</sup> The *Reporter* claimed that 'public feeling in favour of Labour Representation [i.e., the formation of a branch of the Labour Party] is gaining ground rapidly' and that 'a local minister' had said he would vote Labour.<sup>78</sup> 'Over thirty societies' attended the meeting which founded Mossley Labour Party in 1918.<sup>79</sup> Mossley sent a delegate to Labour's annual conference of 1919.<sup>80</sup>

Just as the centre of gravity of labour-movement opinion shifted leftwards, so it did on the town council. A few unreconstructed Gradgrinds who opposed any increase in public spending or provision became increasingly out of step with public opinion. Tory alderman Sykes (a trade unionist-turned-businessman) objected to expenses incurred due to central government regulations which ensured that the council could no longer 'keep children in the workhouse'.<sup>81</sup> The council exhibited a notable parsimoniousness in rejecting a suggestion prompted by a recent drowning that it should pay neighbouring Stalybridge the cost of allowing Mossley residents to use their public baths (Mossley had no public baths).<sup>82</sup> Even the reform-inclined *Reporter*, while noting that 'the need for a public library is greatly felt', also reported approvingly the view of 'two local businessmen' that expenditure on a public library was 'unwarranted at the present time'.<sup>83</sup>

But the national tide was increasingly moving in the opposite direction. Inevitably, the war years did see an increased role for local government and increased public expenditure in Mossley. Alderman Farr, who seems to have been invigorated by the demands of war and the emerging desire for social reform, was the principal advocate of change. He instigated an application to the Local Government Board to be allowed to establish a scheme to foster the 'welfare of infants, mothers and expectant mothers'. A clinic was opened after some council procrastination in November 1917. Twenty-three mothers – one of whom said she would not have missed it 'for a sovereign' – and babies attended the first session.<sup>84</sup> Farr was the prime instigator and head of a committee tasked with boosting food production. Seeds, manure and so on were obtained wholesale and distributed at cost. By March 1917 forty people were using allotments.<sup>85</sup> Farr was also a member of the local Food Control Committee (FCC), established in January 1918 to administer food rationing. Farr suggested investigating the possibility of establishing communal kitchens and was asked to suggest possible premises, but the war ended before any kitchens could be established.<sup>86</sup>

But these were measures, either consistent with normative social doctrine or in the interest of winning the war, which could easily command majority support on the council. An increased role for the council in the provision of housing (housing reform was rapidly becoming an insistent working-class demand) was quite another matter. During the war national opinion had begun to shift in favour of council-house

building. The Salisbury Committee's 1917 report *Housing in England and Wales* had indicated that this would probably be necessary,<sup>87</sup> while this was the obvious inference to be taken from Lloyd George's 'Homes Fit for Heroes' speech. The king too advocated a much more interventionist approach to housing. At Buckingham Palace he told representatives of local authorities that 'it is not too much to say that an adequate solution of the housing question is the foundation of all social progress'.<sup>88</sup>

In 1917 a Local Government Board circular requested local authorities to survey the state of housing, to report on proposals for building council houses and to establish housing committees. Much of Mossley's housing stock was found to be in a poor state. The Medical Officer of Health reported that out of 160 houses inspected, seventy-six were found to be defective, chiefly in drainage.<sup>89</sup> A further survey found much overcrowding and that hardly any houses had an indoor bath, indoor lavatory or adequate food store.<sup>90</sup> According to the *Reporter*, 6 per cent of Mossley's houses were back-to-backs while 25 per cent had no through ventilation.<sup>91</sup>

Proposals for building council houses were provided to central government by Mossley town council only with reluctance. Still, in late 1917 the General Purposes Committee resolved that 200 houses could be built, subject to 'satisfactory financial arrangements' (in other words that central government fund their construction).<sup>92</sup> In the full council debate, Farr insisted that 1,000 houses were unfit and that it would be a 'black crime' if the soldiers were to return 'to the pigsty homes they left behind them'. But Tory councillor Rhodes thought that the council 'had enough to do without building houses that were not required'.<sup>93</sup>

The town council procrastinated on the matter of a housing committee until 1919. At its first meeting, Conservative alderman Sykes, the embodiment of parsimony, advocated caution in proceeding with a programme of council-house building: the rest of the committee seem to have agreed.<sup>94</sup> No firm plans to improve the town's housing stock were made. The housing question could then have provided the infant Mossley Labour Party with an ideal campaigning issue. The mild pro-reform mood generated by the war and the enormous extension of the franchise in 1918 had clearly increased the potential support for Labour. In the cotton districts the great majority of the new electorate was working class, Labour's and reform's potential social base. But various factors hamstrung Mossley Labour's electioneering.

The newly formed branch of Mossley Labour Party was in no position to field a candidate in the general 'coupon' election of 1918: after some hesitation (the Co-operative Party was not then affiliated to the Labour Party) it supported the Co-operative Party candidate. Austin Hopkinson, a coalition Liberal, won Mossley (a new constituency, Mossley having previously been part of sprawling Prestwich) with an emphatic 75.6 per cent of the vote.<sup>95</sup> Hopkinson, an employer in nearby Audenshaw, was an

idiosyncratic right-wing character who made quite clear his opposition to social reform and his contempt for the labour movement. He opposed nationalization of railways and expressed a robust scepticism regarding the establishment of a state health service.<sup>96</sup> In response to criticism from Hyde trades council of his opposition to an increase in old-age pensions he replied that 'I told them the unpleasant truth instead of lying to them and licking their boots.'<sup>97</sup>

Hopkinson – more a Tory than a Liberal – was such a political chancer and maverick (in 1941 he was to claim that it was 'preposterous' to put Bevin, 'a man whom the craftsmen say 'is only a labourer', in charge 'of the whole labour affairs of the country'<sup>98</sup>) that his continuing success in parliamentary elections (he stood variously as a Liberal Coalition, Independent, Independent National and National Independent candidate, winning every contest from 1918 to 1935, save that of 1929, which Labour won) tells us very little about political allegiances in Mossley.

The municipal elections of 1919 suggest that municipal politics could have taken a course different from that which they actually did take, especially given that the great majority of those newly enfranchised by the Representation of the People Act of 1918 were working class. Data for Mossley are not available, but in Ashton the municipal electorate in 1919 was 84.8 per cent greater than in 1914. Mossley's municipal electorate is unlikely to have been significantly different numerically from Ashton's.<sup>99</sup> There, the prime cause of Labour's victory in the municipal elections of 1919 was the manifest reluctance of the town's ruling elite to finance urgently needed improvement of working-class housing. The infant Ashton Labour Party broke out of its self-imposed pre-war trade-union ghetto and campaigned vigorously on social matters, especially housing. Their support came principally from working-class voters, especially from working-class women, who were probably the majority of the newly enfranchised.<sup>100</sup> The Ashton experience suggests that in Mossley a similarly bold campaign on housing might well have attracted sufficient of these women to make the difference between success and failure (Labour candidates lost by fairly narrow margins).

During the war, alderman Farr had been indefatigable in fighting for reform on the housing issue. At a national housing conference in Manchester in the spring of 1917 he had argued that if 'seven or eight millions of pounds a day' could be spent 'on the destruction of life, it would be a standing disgrace to us a nation if we could not spend £20,000,000 or even £250,000,000, to build sanitary and healthy houses'. But, he added, 'the people would have to realise that there was no one to look after the workers' interests but the workers themselves'.<sup>101</sup> Such class consciousness evaporated in the post-war period. Mossley Labour ran a lacklustre campaign (which seems to have consisted merely of one badly attended public meeting a week before polling) in the municipal elections. They were timid on the housing question, and, perhaps most

importantly, had neither cut the apron strings tying them to the Liberals nor fully broken with the traditional economism of the trades council. Mossley's council's reluctance to undertake reform of the borough's housing was simply not exploited by Labour.

Farr seems to have lost his political bearings after the war. The dominant personality in Mossley's Labour Party, he proved either unable or unwilling to lead Labour in fighting for the reforms for which he had argued and fought during the war. Probably he was an ideological captive of the Liberals. He had been on the council since 1898, the heyday of the progressive alliance. Labour clearly had little confidence in its future as an independent force. In October 1919 it was announced that Labour and the Liberals would form an anti-Tory electoral alliance.<sup>102</sup> The Conservatives had already announced that they would field two candidates in each ward (two councillors were to be elected). The Liberals and Labour would each field only one candidate, hoping that both party's candidates would be elected.

It soon became clear that the electoral alliance would be one of the last gasps of the progressive alliance. Shortly before the elections, the *Reporter* noted approvingly that the 'combined Labour and Liberal Parties are working well together'. A week later a front page advertisement urged the electorate to vote for the 'progressive' candidates, because:

they are willing that Liberalism should have representation ...  
they are willing that Labour and trade unions should have representation ...  
they are willing that Catholics should have representation ...  
the progressive candidates stand for Progress, Education, Temperance and  
the uplifting of all social classes.<sup>103</sup>

This 'progressive' platform owed much more to the millocracy's Liberal, non-conformist tradition than to the emerging Labour programme. Particularly striking is the failure to identify housing improvement in the alliance's programme. Nearly as striking is the appeal to temperance, a stance guaranteed to mobilize large numbers of working men for conservatism (conversely, it might well have mobilized Methodists and women for the alliance).

One factor suggesting that a vigorous pro-reform campaign might have won more support for Labour (though patriotic sentiments must have played a significant role) was the performance of the National Federation of Discharged Sailors and Soldiers (NFDSS) candidate in Cheshire ward. Labour withdrew its candidate in favour of the NFDSS candidate, who easily won. According to the official history of the British Legion, into which it was eventually subsumed, the Federation had for a short while left-wing inclinations and close contacts with Labour.<sup>104</sup> Certainly, in Glasgow, the Federation supported the mass strikes of 1919,<sup>105</sup> while in Ashton, the Federation's candidate, Thomas Lister, the national chairman of the organisation, spoke on 'pensions,

reconstruction [...] the exploitation of labour and the housing question, laying special stress on the latter'.<sup>106</sup>

But Mossley Labour, in an alliance with one of the two parties who were resisting expenditure on housing, were in no position to campaign vigorously on the housing question. Nor could their cause have been helped by the unreconstructed attitude of the spinners, who showed no interest in other than traditional trade-union concerns. One factor fostering such conservatism might well have been the low proportion of women in Mossley's spinning industry: in Ashton's spinning rooms women workers had demonstrably shifted the ideological balance leftwards. But though nominated as a Labour candidate, Wright Mosley, the spinners' secretary, fought Yorkshire Ward as a 'trade union' candidate. At his adoption meeting he had been insistent that he was 'the nominee of the operative spinners' and declared that those present at the meeting (only fifty or so) were a 'small branch of missionaries who [...] would help to spread the gospel of trade unionism'.<sup>107</sup> This was presumably opportunistically calculated to maximize support from trade unionists: but it was also the failed electoral strategy of the past thirty years or so.

Labour's low-key election campaign in alliance with the Liberals could only help the established parties. But compared to the last pre-war elections, when no Labour candidate stood and the Liberals won four seats and the Conservatives two, its performance could be considered a minor triumph. No seats were won. But Wright Mosley failed to take the second seat in Yorkshire Ward by only seventy votes. The Labour candidate in Lancashire ward, while coming last, was supported by only seventy-six fewer voters than the second victorious candidate. The Liberals won three contests, including two gains from the Conservatives, who won two seats. Labour's failure to take advantage of favourable circumstances in 1919 helped to ensure that the Liberals controlled the council for much of the inter-war period. Not until 1922, when all three of its candidates came last, did Labour contest a municipal election again. After the elections of 1938, the last before another world war, Labour had only one councillor on Mossley council, compared to thirteen Conservatives and ten Liberals.

The experience of war had created favourable electoral circumstances for the Labour Party. Though support for the established parties remained strong, working-class appetite for reform and the immense expansion of the post-war electorate had greatly increased the potential Labour vote, demonstrated nationally in the first post-war decade by the Party's remarkable leap from third-party-status to government. But Mossley Labour Party misjudged the mood of the post-war electorate. The Labour and NFDSS vote in the elections of 1919 shows that even in such a backwater as Mossley working-class deference had been considerably undermined in the war years, that there was an opportunity for an electoral breakthrough. But Labour deference to the Liberals, the

Liberal's tactical adroitness and the stubborn economism of the spinners' leadership combined to ensure that Labour failed to take advantage of the radical tide of 1919, whose eddies lapped around even torpid Mossley, before withdrawing for decades.

# The Women's War Interest Committee in Manchester and Salford: a snapshot of feminist activism in the First World War



Alison  
Ronan

[In Manchester] several thousands of women and girls had entered the engineering shops. Dressmakers, workers from the various making trades, domestic servants, cotton operatives, girls straight from school and a proportion of married women including soldiers' wives all became busy in producing the munitions of war.<sup>1</sup>

This quotation is from Manchester and Salford's Women's War Interest Committee's short but influential publication *Women in the labour market in Manchester and Salford during the war*. Published in 1916, it was edited by local socialist and pacifist Annot Robinson (1875–1925) and its content referred to the vast movement of women into the munitions industries in Manchester after 1915, a movement which was replicated in industrial cities across the country. It is almost a truism to declare that the women employed in the munitions industries have become the most visible face of the woman worker in the First World War but it is less well known that their entry into the labour market raised significant political questions for women's trade unions and women's rights activists.<sup>2</sup> The social and industrial commentator Betty Hutchins noted in 1915 that,

women need not only to be enrolled in Unions but to have a voice in the management and control where they are organised with men, has been made plainer than ever. So strongly was this felt at Manchester, that a special committee was formed for the protection of women's interests in munitions work and for co-operation with the interested trade unions in any movement towards the organisation of women.<sup>3</sup>

She refers to the establishing of the Women's War Interest Committee in Manchester in May 1915 which, although nominally part of a network of women's interest committees established by the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS), differed from many of these other committees in both composition and intention. The Manchester committee fought its battles about the gendered difference in pay and working conditions on a number of fronts. It used investigation to



find out local facts using local activists as a research sub-committee, it convened three well attended conferences between 1915 and 1917, it successfully lobbied for women to be included on local munitions tribunals and regularly sent deputations to the Ministry of Munitions to argue for the minimum conditions for women that male trade unionists should sanction. The committee consistently and continuously stressed the political relationship between women's work, women's organisation and the vote in all its campaigns and publicity.

As the war intensified, women were increasingly taking the place of both unskilled and skilled men in munitions work in Britain and across Europe. By 1915, the need for more weapons and shells for the Western Front – known as the 'Shell Crisis' – had changed the dynamics of the labour market on the home front.<sup>4</sup> The formation of the Ministry of Munitions in 1915 and the resulting Munitions Acts (amended throughout 1915–1917) concentrated on regulating industrial discipline in order to maximize munitions production. The Defence of the Realm Act (DORA) legislation was extended in 1915 in order to incorporate munitions work.<sup>5</sup> New controls were imposed on the supply and allocation of raw materials. In Manchester and Salford, the engineering, chemical, and textiles factories, core industries of the city, were effectively taken over by the government in the service of the war effort. In Manchester, and in other industrial cities, the absorption of women into the labour market during the Shell Crisis of 1915 revitalized pre-war feminist concerns about gendered discrepancies in pay and conditions and the ensuing threat to sustaining women's rights in the workplace.

Figure 1:  
Women at  
Belsize factory,  
Openshaw,  
1918. Courtesy  
of Manchester  
Libraries,  
Information  
and Archives,  
Manchester City  
Council

By August 1915, there were at least five women's interest committees across the country, in London, Bristol, Leeds, Manchester and Newcastle, and each committee appears to have had a different relationship with the local suffragist societies and each had a different emphasis in its response to the issues of relief, women's organisation and employment in a time of war. What makes the Manchester committee particularly unusual is that it was composed *exclusively* of anti-war suffragists, socialists and trade unionists. The women on the committee were simultaneously involved in developing the local branches of anti-war groups in the city, such as the Women's International League (WIL) and the No-Conscription Fellowship (NCF) as well as involvement in other anti-war campaigns such as the short-lived Women's Peace Crusade (WPC) during 1917–18. Although the women in the Manchester and Salford committee always regarded their work as independent and controversial, this article asks whether its work was in fact unique, or was it part of a much wider feminist wartime movement concerned with women's rights? Can the composition and focus of the Manchester and Salford committee shed light on the ways in which wartime feminists were networking and agitating and what does this short-lived committee tell us, if anything, about the prefiguring of a new feminist politics? There was an apparently paradoxical situation in which the women on this committee, who were consciously agitating for a negotiated peace, were, at the same time, supporting women making munitions and shells for the war itself. There are no surviving debates about this apparent inconsistency but it seems likely that the issue of equal pay and decent working conditions for women workers in a time of war became a priority for these trade union and socialist feminists. They realized that the war itself made women workers vulnerable to exploitation, undermining trade-union pre-war demands and threatening to set a precedent for low pay after the war. However the women on the WWIC used these contacts in the mills and at the factory gates in their later campaigns for peace, leafleting house-to-house in the working-class areas that surrounded the mills. For example, in November 1917, the Women's International League offices in Albert Square, Manchester, were raided and more than 20,000 leaflets and handbills were seized. Three local houses used as 'centres' for the WIL were also raided.<sup>6</sup> These houses cannot be identified but their existence suggests that there was a well-organized approach to campaigning which replicated and drew on the suffrage and trade-union activism which inspired the Women's War Interest Committee throughout 1915–17.

In the immediate years before the war, women-only groups in Manchester and across the country had been agitating for improvements in the living conditions of women workers, exploring the social and political reasons for low pay and pressing for women's trade-union organisation. The women involved in the Manchester Women's War

Interest Committee already had reputations as pre-war political and feminist activists and were actively involved in suffrage, women's rights and trade-union campaigns. As the report for the committee in 1916 declared: "The demand for "equal pay for equal work" or to avoid the cliché, that women's work should be paid on results and not on a fancied comparison of their needs with men's, has long been advocated by feminists."<sup>7</sup> The women in the WWIC had been involved in trade-union campaigns before the war, and they had local and national contacts with the Fabian Women's Group (FWG), the Women's Industrial Council (WIC), the Women's Labour League (WLL), as well as with local trades and labour councils. By the summer of 1915, one of the committee members, Julie Tomlinson, reported to the NUWSS bureau that 'the local Trade Union Section, Armaments Output Committee, Trade and Labour Council are co-operating with the Manchester Women's War Interest Committee in the demand for a minimum wage for women munitions workers and [they] are recognising the Committee as representing local women workers'.<sup>8</sup> This confirms two things, namely that the committee was drawing on its contacts throughout the labour and trade-union movement, and also that the committee was well regarded in its campaigning work for the trade-union organisation of women during the war.

There were a number of other catalysts behind the establishing of the Manchester and Salford Women's War Interest Committee. There is a more complicated back story. For instance, the local activists' involvement in a large War Emergency Workers' National Committee (WNC) meeting in London in March 1915 was certainly significant. The WNC was a joint Labour organisation established at the very beginning of the war to protect the interests of the working classes.<sup>9</sup> This particular meeting in March 1915, about women and labour, was convened by trade-union organiser Mary Macarthur, one of the few women on the WNC, and was attended by ninety-two delegates representing a range of trade unions, suffrage and other women-focused organisations. The resolutions emphasized the overlapping industrial concerns of the delegates whilst making connections with the demand for the vote and it focused on the same women-centred issues which concerned the women in Manchester and Salford.<sup>10</sup> Almost immediately, in May 1915, the Women's War Interest Committee was established in Manchester and five women and one man took on the formal work. Suffragist, women's rights activist and Independent councillor Margaret Ashton was president while her suffrage colleagues Julie Tomlinson and Mrs Salis Simon were chairman and treasurer respectively.

Socialists and suffragists Annot Robinson and Ellen Wilkinson were joint secretaries of the committee, a position they shared with university settlement warden and lecturer G.K. Grierson. Importantly Robinson and Wilkinson were simultaneously employed as organisers for the

National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies' Election Fighting Fund (EFF) which developed support for pro-suffrage election candidates in north-west working-class constituencies before and during the war. These posts ensured that they had a well developed network with other EFF organisers in the North West, who were mostly working-class women with experience of mill or factory life. All EFF organisers had good connections with the local branches of the Independent Labour Party (ILP), the Women's Co-operative Guild (WCG) and the local trade-union movement.<sup>11</sup> In the immediate years before the war, suffragist NUWSS women and the ILP spoke together at local rallies for the vote and these links between suffrage and labour women became much more definite at grass-roots level and these networks became explicitly represented in the Women's War Interest Committee.<sup>12</sup> These arguments about connections between women's labour and women's suffrage had been rehearsed before the war but the war made them even more explicit.

In 1915 the EFF organisers Annot Robinson and Ellen Wilkinson were, in effect, seconded by the NUWSS to the Manchester and Salford Committee which stated, quite clearly, in a letter to the NUWSS Information Bureau in the summer of 1915 that

[the committee] is not a sub-committee of the National Union: the NUWSS is represented by 2 delegates, and it has kindly sanctioned its EFF organiser Mrs Annot Robinson co-operating with the Women's War Interests Committee with special regard to trade union work in the EFF constituencies.<sup>13</sup>

It is clear that pre-war associations and connections were central to the networking capacities of the WWIC committee. In the immediate years before the war, in 1912, a joint committee had been formed between the local Women's Co-operative Guild (WCG), the Women's Labour League (WLL) and the Women's Trade Union Council (WTUC) in order to prioritize 'the interests of local working women' and this network was to be reconfigured in the WWIC.<sup>14</sup> However, the focus of the committee in wartime Manchester and Salford was necessarily narrow: Annot Robinson explained that its remit was 'to look after the interests of women as emergency war workers, recognising the peculiar situation of war but also the need for vigilance.'<sup>15</sup> The social and political networks of the committee were extensive and they stretched through the radical left, social reform movements and women's rights campaigns. Annot Robinson was a committed member of the Manchester Central branch of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) taking over the chair as the ILP men were imprisoned or called up. She was also a local and paid organiser of the WLL during the war and she was a delegate to regional WLL conferences where she built up a body of evidence to support the feminist demands of the Manchester Committee. For example, in January 1916, the tenth national Women's Labour League conference in Bristol passed

a resolution 'regretting the haphazard method of organising women employed upon war work'.<sup>16</sup> Across the country, members of the WLL were instrumental in challenging the male-dominated trade unions; for instance the Aberdeen WLL branch had made a 'strenuous fight against the exclusion of women in the tramway service'.<sup>17</sup> Similarly in Manchester (despite an earlier assertion by the local Amalgamated Association of Tramways and Vehicle workers that, 'the employment of women on the tramways was a most dangerous and unwise innovation') the WWIC finally persuaded the local transport unions to allow women to join the union when they were employed by the corporation so that by 1916 not only were women employed as conductors, drivers and guards but they were also becoming part of the local trade union.<sup>18</sup>

The new committee saw itself as an *independent* body on which six women's associations and seven trade unions were represented on a general committee. A wider cross-section of organisations in the city sent delegates to the committee, including representatives from women-only groups like the local branch of the National Union of Women's Workers (NUWW), and Women's Emergency Corps (WEC) where Ellen Wilkinson was employed briefly as an organiser for the local Manchester branch in 1915.<sup>19</sup> There were also representatives from the Manchester and Salford Trades and Labour Council and the National Union of Railwaymen. The committee recognized, as the committee's president Margaret Ashton declared in an article in *Votes for Women* in 1916, that 'All labour legislation has hitherto been made to suit the male worker'.<sup>20</sup>

However there is yet another back story: although the establishment of the Women's War Interest Committee in Manchester and Salford overlapped with the establishment of a series of NUWSS Women's Interests Committees (WIC) across the country, many of the women involved in this initiative were to resign from the executive of the NUWSS in the spring of 1915 over the complex issue of the NUWSS's response to the war and the making of peace.<sup>21</sup> The anti-war suffragist Catherine Marshall (1880–1962) stayed as a member of the London WIC even after her resignation from the NUWSS executive in 1915, 'providing [herself] with a certain right to continue to monitor issues of women's work and to comment on NU policy'.<sup>22</sup> Marshall became a regular visitor to Manchester and stayed with Margaret Ashton in the summer of 1915 specifically discussing the work of the local WWIC.<sup>23</sup> Marshall retained her close parliamentary links, developed when she was NUWSS parliamentary secretary so that when the WWIC chairman Julie Tomlinson raised the issue about pressing for a minimum wage for women in autumn 1915, she asked Marshall to use her influence: 'it now needs a push in London to get the Govt to move. Can you help us or suggest? We have been to everyone we can think of'.<sup>24</sup> There were increasingly strained relations between the women in the London NUWSS/WIC



Figure 2: Lady conductors, Manchester Corporation, 1914–1918. Courtesy of Manchester Libraries, Information and Archives, Manchester City Council

concerns from women in Manchester and from the women activists on the committee of the WNC that women were being encouraged to move into industry, on any terms, thus potentially undermining the work of the trade unions and the demands for women's organisation.<sup>27</sup>

By the summer of 1915, after the national and local splits in the suffragist societies across the country, another resignee from the NUWSS executive, suffragist and ILP activist Isabella Ford, reported to the NUWSS information bureau that the work of the local WIC in Leeds had been absorbed by a sub-committee of the lady mayoress' relief committee, suggesting that the focus of the local committee in Leeds was on providing 'relief' rather than challenging local conditions and pay of munitions workers.<sup>28</sup> However, in Newcastle, socialist Dr Ethel Bentham confirmed that, although the WIC was being set up in conjunction with the local NUWSS, Ellen Wilkinson from the Manchester WWIC had visited the embryonic committee and 'fixed them up with a preliminary committee' presumably using the Manchester model of activating existing industrial networks to develop local trade-union support.<sup>29</sup> In Bristol the composition of the WIC had not been organized by the NUWSS but had been established through the political networks of another EFF organiser and ILPer Annie Townley. Like Manchester it was 'formed of mainly

and Manchester WWIC, perhaps caused by the rift in the NU at national and local level during the spring and summer of 1915. By October 1915, Manchester declared that 'we will call in at the NU offices if we are in London and be quite amiable [but] we have no intention of being tied up with the London Committee.'<sup>25</sup>

The divergence in focus of London and Manchester also led to this antagonism: the London WIC (which was the nominal headquarters for WICs across the country) became increasingly involved in organizing war service for women by running a women's service bureau as an employment exchange, offering a wide range of training for women from acetylene-welding to mechanics.<sup>26</sup> But there was no focus on the subsequent pay and conditions for women workers. There were

suffrage men and women, with representatives from the local university settlement, two Labour councillors and two from the local Board of Trade' and the committee '[had] an almost symbiotic relationship with local Labour groups'.<sup>30</sup> A letter from the NUWSS information bureau to Catherine Marshall in August 1915 stated, 'I gather from Miss Ballantine that the Bristol committee is working for the recognition of the principle of equal pay for equal work and is endeavouring to get the Council to draw up a schedule of rates of pay for women employed by them.'<sup>31</sup> It is clear that the strength and organisation of women from the local EFF or WLL networks became essential to the way local WIC organized themselves and prioritized their work.<sup>32</sup>

The WWIC in Manchester saw the purpose of its work as investigating the local situation in order to gather data and present evidence in order to lobby the government to improve conditions and pay for women in the munitions industries. Chairman Julie Tomlinson wrote to Catherine Marshall in 1915, 'they [NUWSS] can't say afterwards that they have not been clear about the position as I have written to point out that we are an entirely independent committee and outlined the work we are doing – it is really a comical situation, no-one can consider our work non-controversial.'<sup>33</sup> Early-twentieth-century feminists were not just concerned about the relationship between women and poor housing or the fragility of unorganized work, poverty and infant mortality but they were also passionate about women's economic and industrial independence through trade-union representation, among other things. They related all these inequalities to the lack of an enfranchized citizenship.

These particularly feminist concerns, about suffrage, women's poverty and the conditions of women's employment were to re-emerge during the war with particular reference to how the progress of the war affected the lives of local working women. In the years before the war, women's work was often regarded as seasonal or temporary while paid work in the home (as dressmakers for instance) was often unrecorded.<sup>34</sup> In the North West many women employed in the cotton and textile trade were members of trade unions but gendered segregation of jobs in the mills affected rates of pay.<sup>35</sup> This was to be a ruse used during the war and challenged by the WWIC which noted that:

The presentation of facts, showing the that the recommendations as to wages are being ignored, has assisted in inducing the Government to take power in the amended Munitions Bill to regulate wages and conditions of labour for women in controlled establishments, and the clear case which has been made out for more direct representation of the women workers in the Manchester area has led the Ministry of Munitions to consider this demand favourably and we expect it will be granted.<sup>36</sup>

Trade-union activists like Mary Quaile and Ellen Wilkinson became influential. Both women were actively working in trade unions: Quaile

in the local Homeworkers' Union and the Café Workers' Union while Wilkinson was the women's organiser in the Amalgamated Union of Co-operative Employers (AUCE), where she influenced their demand in August 1915 that both women and men should be paid the union rates.<sup>37</sup> With evident delight the WWIC reported that 'the AUCE, by guerrilla warfare, has enforced its conditions in over twenty societies pressing the question to a strike where necessary, [which is] an immense step in the campaign for equal pay'.<sup>38</sup>

However, there was still yet another context which influenced the Manchester committee: in April 1915, Manchester suffragists Margaret Ashton and Carys Schuster resigned from the NUWSS executive committee over the lack of NU representation at the International Congress of Women in The Hague. In June 1915, Margaret Ashton was forced to resign from her position as NW NUWSS federation president, along with thirteen other women when a proposal to run a peace education campaign through the local suffrage branch network was defeated. This group of exiles from the local suffrage group became the nucleus of the emerging Women's International League (WIL) in the city. This rift and its repercussions need to 'frame' the development of the Women's War Interest Committee campaign in Manchester and explains why some women activists appeared to shift their priorities at this particular stage of the war. The ubiquitous and feisty Margaret Ashton became the president of the newly established WIL in Manchester in 1915 and became one of the vice-chairs of the national WIL committee. This move brought her and other pro-peace suffragists into contact with different sets of allies and activists who were simultaneously agitating for a negotiated peace and an end to the war. For many provincial suffragists this reconfiguration of allies and purpose, constituted a shift not only in their political understanding but, for some, a shift in their political priorities.

The Women's War Interest Committee in Manchester developed a raft of strategies honed through their pre-war suffrage campaigning: one was to convene a series of conferences and consultations, this time with local employers and trade unions. They judged the success of this approach by noting the 'improved attendance of delegates' despite a high degree of initial resistance from the male-dominated unions. The suffragists and trade-union activists in the WWIC had well-developed skills in political lobbying, which proved useful in this new piece of work and they also activated pre-war contacts with the trade-union movement. There is evidence that suggests that these women were also respected by their male counterparts and by the summer of 1915, Julie Tomlinson reported to the NUWSS bureau that, 'the local Trade Union Section, Armaments Output Committee, Trade and Labour Council are co-operating with the Manchester Women's War Interest Committee in the demand for a minimum wage for women munitions workers and [they] are recognising

the Committee as representing local women workers'.<sup>39</sup> Interestingly, the Manchester chair of the government-led Armaments Output Committee was the local industrialist Hans Renold whose daughter-in-law was suffragist Margaret Renold. She was on the local WIL committee with Ashton and Wilkinson, showing explicitly the complex influence of networks that were operating locally and nationally. Julie Tomlinson commented in October 1915 that 'perhaps our best piece of work will prove to be the sympathy we have secured from the T.U.s and [their] understanding of our position.'<sup>40</sup> The proposals of the local committee in Manchester were very close to those which were simultaneously being put forward at a national level by the Workers National Committee and the Women's Labour League. The Manchester demands focused on trade-union membership for women, equal pay for equal work and for women to be recompensed if they were displaced at the end of the war. The committee relied heavily on local teams of researchers to amass its evidence. A sub-committee had been convened who used correspondence, enquiry forms and personal interviews. In this way specific reports were obtained from a large number of engineering firms who were employing women and relevant press cuttings were collected, which sadly have not survived.

The final report of the committee, 'Women in the labour market (Manchester and district) during the war', published in autumn 1916, echoing the WNC conference title of the previous year, was probably written by the socialist, feminist and pacifist Annot Robinson. As a working mother and one of the local WLL/EFF organisers Robinson had a personal and professional interest in women's labour. She was also explicitly against the war and committed to fighting for women's rights. The report focused on demanding decent pay and working conditions and advocated the retaining, or the pensioning, of working women at the end of the war when the men were demobilized. Robinson was in correspondence with Jim Middleton, secretary of the WNC, over this issue during 1916 and 1917. She was to continue the fight for women's need for recognition and pensions after the war in her work with the WLL and the ILP.

The report stressed the necessary relationship between women's working conditions and pay, and their trade-union organisation. As the report noted,

Even on new machinery, the wages paid to women bear no relation to their output or efficiency nor are they paid the equivalent of a man's wage. There is an obvious danger that women entering the trades without proper guarantees will permanently depress the rates of wages in those trades.<sup>41</sup>

As has been noted, the very naming of the Manchester committee as the Women's *War* Interest Committee differentiated it from that of London and the other committees across the country. The name drew attention

to the war as the cause of specific industrial problems for women but it also positioned the war as a potential opportunity for finding a solution. In the summer of 1915, WWIC member Julie Tomlinson wrote again to Catherine Marshall, declaring that employers from the local Armaments Output Committee had accused the WWIC of 'using a national emergency to make a bargain for women and force up wages.'<sup>42</sup> That was exactly what they were doing!

Both Margaret Ashton and Mary Quaile were on the local munitions tribunals, initiated by the government as part of the Munitions Acts, and both women's intricate organisational and personal networks ensured that these women-focused industrial debates were being taken into suffrage, trade-union, labour and socialist organisations.<sup>43</sup> The knowledge of the committee was up-to-date and it drew on local evidence by building on grass roots contacts with local working-class women. By the beginning of 1916 the WWIC felt that:

[their] constant presentation of facts showing that the recommendations as to wages are being ignored, has assisted in inducing the Government to take power in the amended Munitions Bill to regulate wages and conditions of labour for women in controlled establishments.

By February 1916, the WWIC had succeeded in getting the national recommendations of the national Munitions Supply Committee to include a considerable part of their demands.

However after 1917, the work of the committee appears to dwindle as the committee saw that their persistence had paid off. They had influenced the government in regulating wages and conditions in the controlled establishments during the war and many women were being paid the pound a week that had been argued by the WWIC and had been accepted as members of local trade unions. For members of the committee, by 1917 priorities began to shift. Relationships with working-class women had been developed and were to be activated through the women-only anti-war organisations like the WIL, the Workers' Socialist Federation (WSF) and the spontaneous demonstrations in Manchester and throughout the North West of the Women's Peace Crusade (WPC) throughout 1917–18. For these women the knowledge gained by the work of the Manchester WWIC made their influence on the making of peace and the need for a post-war reconstruction to recognize women workers, even more imperative.

In conclusion, the unique legacy of the Manchester Women's War Interest Committee is the short but influential report on the situation in the city during the early years of the war and its controversial aspect lay in its explicitly feminist remit. The report shows not only the wide scope and the increasing complexity of work done by the women who were working in the munitions industries but it also reveals the way in which women activists were networking and sharing strategies about

achieving and sustaining rights for women in the workplace. It allows a glimpse of how industrial women worked across organisations and it illustrates how they were drawing strength from each other. The work of the committee in Manchester and Salford was not unusual: many other cities, like Bristol and Newcastle, with strong WLL and ILP women, were fighting similar battles but in Manchester and Salford the clearly defined organisation of local research, the convening of regular conferences and persistent lobbying of the government, made this Women's War Interest Committee distinctive. Their work achieved its aim of shifting the views of entrenched male-dominated unions about the position of working women in a time of war, through persistent political lobbying and the convening of local conferences. The work of the Manchester WWIC made these politically shrewd women activists realize the absolute importance of their influence on the recognition of women's employment rights and employment opportunities in a post-war reconstruction. This short-lived committee reveals how women activists were prefiguring a new and feminist politics, as the WWIC argued:

In the long run the status of the woman worker depends upon the degree of her organisation. It avoids the possibility of women's labour being cheap labour and abolishes the sex distinction in rates of pay.<sup>44</sup>

However as the war intensified during 1917 and 1918, and with the passing of the Representation of the People Act in February 1918 and a general election on the horizon, many WWIC committee members changed direction: Ashton, Robinson and Quaile became much more visible in the anti-war movement as the activism of the Women's International League, the No-Conscription Fellowship and the Women's Peace Crusade developed in the city and across the region. At the same time the women on the committee, who had been involved in the suffrage campaign before the war, became increasingly active in the reactivated suffrage campaign after the establishment of the speaker's conference in 1916. Trade unionist Mary Quaile was to shift her energies briefly to campaigning for the No Conscription Fellowship (NCF) after 1916 until the end of the war, thus involving herself in an overlapping but different network of pacifists and conscientious objectors.<sup>45</sup>

Armed with specific evidence about the working lives of local women, the committee members went into the anti-war, and the renewed suffrage, campaigns during 1917–1918 with a different and strengthened network of contacts across the labour and trade-union movement. The partial granting of the vote to women in 1918 however did not mark the end of a fifty-year struggle for the vote; rather it marked the beginning of another set of struggles for social, political and economic equality that engaged political women during the inter-war years.<sup>46</sup> As the local constitutional suffrage group in Manchester declared in 1917, 'We are clear that, with the vote won, our work will be just begun.'<sup>47</sup> After the war many of these

Figure 3:  
Munitions  
workers at  
Mather and Platt  
1917. Courtesy  
of Manchester  
Libraries,  
Information  
and Archives,  
Manchester City  
Council



women transferred their energies to famine relief in Europe, especially during the Allied blockade of Germany in the immediate post-war years. Annot Robinson and Ellen Wilkinson (briefly) became public speakers for the Women's International League in the USA and Europe during the early part of the 1920s. Mary Quaile was elected onto the TUC and visited Russia in 1924. Margaret Ashton was edged out of Manchester Corporation but continued working with the WIL until her death in 1937. Most of the WWIC were active in encouraging eligible women to vote in 1918 by running debates, organizing meetings and following the well-worn strategies of the suffrage campaigns. Others like Hannah Mitchell became local councillors or went into national politics like Ellen Wilkinson and her socialist pacifist friend Muriel Nichol (née Wallhead), both of whom became Labour MPs.<sup>48</sup>

The final report of the WWIC, 'Women in the labour market in Manchester and Salford during the war', reveals the importance of local and national organisational connections and the complex personal networks that were built on pre-war campaigning. It shows how local activists were using their pre-war campaigning strategies in different spaces and within the different contexts of a total war. What it also shows is that women, who were agitating for a negotiated peace, were also lobbying for the sustainability of women's rights in the workplace. They were consciously using their work as 'leverage' for the renewed struggle for the vote. The composition and focus of the Manchester and Salford committee sheds light on the ways in which wartime feminists were networking and agitating and the work of the committee reveals the complex and the sometimes contradictory concerns of politically aware women in a time of total war.



# The Commonest of Men: Gallipoli and the East Lancashire legacy



Martin  
Purdy

On 6 May 1915 the first men from a near-20,000-strong collection of amateur territorial soldiers from across East Lancashire found themselves thrust into the heat of battle at Gallipoli. For eight months these troops of ‘the territorial force’ were to play a significant and costly role in a military operation that failed to achieve any of its objectives – a campaign that would ultimately end in ignominy for many of its perpetrators.<sup>1</sup>

While much has been written from a military perspective about the ill-fated undertaking that was Gallipoli, as well as the associated Antipodean and Turkish legacy, it is only in more recent years, courtesy of historians such as Moorhouse and Macleod, that the issue of the British legacy has been discussed in depth.<sup>2</sup> Despite a growing interest in all aspects of the campaign, there has been very little analytical material produced about the East Lancashire territorials. This is perplexing given the fact that the force (made up of men from towns including Ashton, Oldham, Rochdale, Stockport, Manchester, Burnley, Blackburn, Wigan, Salford and Bury) was to become the first territorial unit to ever volunteer for service overseas.<sup>3</sup>

The aim of this article is to identify, and test the validity of, some of the factors that may have contributed to what I would argue has been the demotion of the men of the 42nd East Lancashire territorial army division to the role of mere extras or footnotes in the story of Gallipoli.

## Commemoration 2013

Commemoration of the Gallipoli campaign is generally focused on the nearest Sunday to 25 April; the date that the Allied forces first landed on the Turkish outpost. The objective was to overcome the defences protecting the strategically important straits of the Dardanelles – the gateway to the Turkish capital of Constantinople.

The operation was an abject failure, with all of the allied troops having been evacuated from the Gallipoli peninsula by early January 1916, less than nine months after their initial landing. The losses suffered



(which we will look at in more detail shortly) were considerable, but certainly no worse than those being, or subsequently, suffered in many of the prolonged battles of the Western Front. Despite this, there is no comparative level of commemoration of any of those other battles or campaigns of the First World War – there has, for example, been no public call for a ‘Loos Day’, ‘Somme Day’ or ‘Passchendaele Day’. Sacrifices made during these other actions of the First World War have traditionally been acknowledged cumulatively as part of Britain’s Remembrance Day events on 11 November – events that no longer mark the sacrifices of the First World War alone, but all wars that have involved British forces since. So why does Gallipoli stand alone in the commemorative calendar?

A list compiled by the Gallipoli Association of the commemorative events held across the British Isles at the last Gallipoli Day commemorations in April 2013 provides a good indication of the ongoing importance placed on the Gallipoli legacy in these isles.<sup>4</sup> A total of thirty-nine ceremonies are recorded as having taken place (although there is every likelihood there were more). Where they took place tended to be geographically reflective of the involvement that a particular area/community had to the campaign – for example, there were fewer ceremonies in Wales, which had fewer battalions and men involved, than in Scotland, which had more.

The most high-profile ceremonies took place in London, where there were a total of four events, and the largest outside of the English capital took place at Bury, in Lancashire, and at Cannock Chase, Staffordshire.

Figure 1:  
The annual Gallipoli Day commemorations in Bury continue to draw large crowds. Courtesy Martin Purdy

It should be noted that of the four events in London, two were focused almost solely on Anzac (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps) remembrance. Likewise, there was a considerable split in the focus of the ceremonies outside of London: the event in Lancashire was a 'Gallipoli Day' event, while the event in Staffordshire was an 'Anzac Day' event. Indeed, twenty of the known thirty-nine ceremonies held across the British Isles had a strong Australian and New Zealand focus.

The distinction between the Gallipoli Day and Anzac Day labelling is at the heart of this article, serving to highlight the fact that the battle for the ownership of the Gallipoli legacy is not only very much alive as we approach the centenary of the campaign, but also one that pits the British against their colonial cousins.

I would argue that the roots of this contest can be traced back to the very first anniversary of the Gallipoli campaign in April 1916. The British government, keen to acknowledge the losses of the Anzac/dominion forces (and presumably ensure their support for the ongoing struggles on the Western Front), suggested that a special 'Anzac Day' service, honoured by the presence of the king, be held in Westminster Abbey on 25 April that year. The idea was embraced by the Anzacs, but the decision to single out the sacrifices of the Antipodeans was one that served to ignite ill-feeling on home shores, and particularly in Lancashire.

## International and Anzac attitudes

It is important at this point to look at why the Anzacs were so keen to accept the British government's apparent 'gift' of the Gallipoli legacy as their own – a gift, that could be seen, of failure. It is also worth looking at why such a decision appears to have only sparked consternation in Britain.

More than 57,000 allied soldiers are estimated to have died during the Gallipoli campaign, with the British losing the most (34,072). Interestingly, the second highest level of loss is attributed to the French and French colonials (9,798). The Australian deaths are recorded as 8,709, New Zealand's 2,721, and the combined Indian and Ghurka losses at 1,358. Finally, forty-nine Newfoundlanders were killed during the campaign.<sup>5</sup>

From these figures, we can see that the French have justifiable cause to involve themselves in the battle for the Gallipoli legacy, however, to date they have limited their interest to one annual event in Marseille, the port from which French troops sailed to the Dardanelles. French legacies of the First World War have traditionally focused on the liberation of their own soil from foreign (German) invaders, with French academics pointing out that there has been little appetite for highlighting or commemorating failure when the nation has a rich history of military success to draw on.<sup>6</sup> Gallipoli commemoration is equally limited on the post-colonial

Indian subcontinent, as well as Newfoundland, where the losses were comparatively small and remembrance events commensurate with this fact. As such, these nations and their subsequent sub-divisions are absent from the ongoing debate. The Turkish Ottoman losses at Gallipoli were greater than those of the Allies, but while victory at Gallipoli was to play a major part in the rebirth of modern Turkey after the First World War, this has not had a significant bearing on the allied legacy and will not be discussed here.

In stark contrast to the profile enjoyed by Gallipoli commemoration among the former allied nations, including Britain, 'Anzac Day' is a national holiday in Australia and New Zealand. These commemorative events are much better attended than November 'Remembrance Day' gatherings. Some historians have claimed that 'there is little doubt' that the story of Gallipoli now overshadows all other Australian military history.<sup>7</sup> It is a similar situation in New Zealand, which lost almost a third of its troops who fought at Gallipoli. Gallipoli was the first time that troops from Australia or New Zealand had fought under their own national flags. As a result, Gallipoli was always destined to become a defining moment for the people of these nations – not least because of the emotional intensity involved in a place responsible for families receiving such items as their first 'death' telegrams.<sup>8</sup>

However, there were wider political ramifications: as ambitious but fledgling nations it could be catastrophic to be perceived as having 'failed' at the first time of being asked to take part in a matter of global importance. If the Antipodeans wanted to 'save face', they would need to take control of the Gallipoli legacy and redraw it to their advantage. Furthermore, in order for a victory to be forged from defeat it would be necessary to distance themselves from the decision-making of failure and instead focus almost solely on a parallel vision of their own heroism.

The man who is generally credited as being responsible for laying the foundations of the Anzac legend is Charles Bean, the official First World War correspondent for Australia. Bean made a decision to construct the image of a near-mythical Anzac soldier: one built out of bravery, a healthy disrespect for authority, physical superiority, humour and loyalty to mates. There was no room for acknowledgement of human frailty or military weakness in Bean's creation, and many of the Anzac soldiers' problems could be traced back to an alleged inferiority in the British.<sup>9</sup>

Bean's Gallipoli diary highlights his attitude towards all but the professional, pre-war British soldier: in his diary entry for 29 August 1915 he states: 'Our men do not trust the "Tommy" – except the Regular Army. The truth is that after 100 years of breeding in slums, the British race is not the same.'<sup>10</sup> In September 1915 he added: 'Well, the problem of Gallipoli reduces itself to – why can't the British fight? In a year's training he can't be turned into a soldier because, to tell the truth, he's a very poor, feeble specimen.'<sup>11</sup> These references were a direct attack on

the 'non-regular army', or volunteers fighting with the British army at Gallipoli, including the part-time territorials of East Lancashire who had arrived on the peninsula less than a fortnight after the Anzacs and who were the biggest 'volunteer' unit present on the peninsula.

Unsurprisingly, Bean's claims have been widely debated, analyzed and oft-criticized, but the fact remains that his general theme of British inadequacy and Anzac heroics has become one that 'many [Anzac] survivors of Gallipoli would carry for the rest of their lives to be passed on in extreme old age to anyone wishing to hear'.<sup>12</sup> This is a truism that appears to have rarely been seriously challenged in either Australia or New Zealand.

Among the correspondence of the East Lancashire territorials is acknowledgement of many of the positive traits that Bean uses to build the Anzac legend; not least acknowledgement of the fact that the majority of the dominion troops were of a superior physique and displayed a form of bravery and insouciance to authority and danger that the average British Tommy envied. Still, there is also a claim that Anzac bravery could verge on the foolhardy, with an alleged lack of discipline, naivety and over-confidence sometimes proving fatal. These are allegations that have, to a degree, been tacitly acknowledged by Australian and New Zealand authors who have recognized that their countrymen's boisterous and sometimes cavalier attitude to soldiering could, at times, be problematic – an early example of which involved extensive rioting by around 3,000 Anzac troops in Cairo's red-light district prior to their embarkation for Gallipoli.<sup>13</sup> It is also worth noting that the other troops training in the area at the time of these riots were those of the East Lancashire division, and the Lancastrians did not have such disciplinary issues.

Rather than being seen as big, bold, brash and attractively reckless, the Aussies were commonly portrayed by the Lancastrian officers as being brutish, arrogant, uncouth and ignorant. In October 1914, the Lancashire territorial and junior officer Eric Duckworth wrote to his father from what would prove to be the Gallipoli training camps of Egypt to say: 'The place is now crammed full of Australian troops. Huge swarthy men in slough hats and of ferocious character. They don't care a hang for anyone. The other day an Australian and one of the Lancashire Fusiliers quarrelled in a cafe, the Australian pulled out a revolver and shot him through the lungs. They are rough customers.'<sup>14</sup> The Revd Denis Fletcher, chaplain to one of the East Lancashire battalions, was even more outspoken. In a letter from Egypt in February 1915, he claimed:

The implication is clear, the though the Australians are physically magnificent, and have many fine men among them, yet a big number of them were rowdy, immoral, and drunken. They were doing our Lancashire lads a lot of harm by treating them to drink and otherwise leading them wrong. The behaviour of the Australians has been a scandal. There has

been endless trouble with them. People in England and Australia should be told that a certain type of soldier sent to Egypt from Australia is a bad type without discipline and without much character... many of the men here now from Australia are doing the Empire no good.<sup>15</sup>

Australians were not a disciplined force; something that would certainly have been seen as a benchmark for good soldiering in most armies of the world at the time. Nevertheless, Lancastrian soldiers such as Private Charles Watkins agreed with many of Bean's constructs; in his memoir he called his own British comrades 'mongrels' and described the Anzacs as 'eye-catching mastiffs'.<sup>16</sup> Private George Peak of Salford recalled training alongside the Anzacs and said: 'I thought the Australians were the biggest set of men I'd seen in my life. I don't think I hardly saw one that was under six feet.' Nonetheless, Peak added that initial assumptions could be misleading: 'It's alright seeing them but one little bullet will put them down – them big fellows made a big target.'<sup>17</sup> Charles Watkins also wrote that the battlefield was a great leveller, recording an incident in which the East Lancastrians met up with some confident New Zealanders who had been sent to relieve them from a long spell spent in the front line at Gallipoli. He recorded:

In the picturesque littoral [sic] of the cotton towns we were 'bloody well on our knees'. On our way down we passed the troops relieving us: New Zealanders just landed that day, full of starch, self-confidence, brash, bronzed and healthy – not like us, wan and forlorn. One of our chaps called out as we passed, 'Give 'em hell lads, show 'em what you can do'. They called back cock-sure and confident, 'Just wait till we get at 'em, nobody knows what we'll give 'em.' We relieved those New Zealanders some ten days later [...] chastened and quiet they passed us glumly without a word.<sup>18</sup>

The above accounts show quite clearly that the allied troops were making their own comparative studies in 1915, and it is a theme that historians have been keen to revisit: Pugsley, for example, has looked closely at the specific issue of Anzac performance at Gallipoli and concluded: 'Anzac mistakes were many and in some cases of such magnitude that the commanders who committed them may not have remained in command had they occurred under the spotlight of the Western Front.'<sup>19</sup> In 1996, the historian Peter Simkins carried out a statistical study in a bid to find answers to claims of dominion superiority on the battlefields of the First World War and came up with answers that negated many popular Anzac misconceptions.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, in a campaign such as Gallipoli, where all of the allied troops did little more than hang-on to meagre gains, it is hard to see how any particular group can be judged as having performed at a consistently higher, or lower, level than any other.

In the case of the East Lancastrians, the official history of the 42nd East Lancashire territorial division provides considerable coverage about the

extensive training the men underwent in Egypt prior to their Gallipoli odyssey and stresses the fact that they were not only 'thoroughly fit' but also singled out for specific praise. In a special order of the day, the divisional commander said the Lancashire soldiers had risen to a state of condition 'the equal of any other'. The divisional history adds that 'Brigade shows and Divisional stunts' were carried out regularly with the Australian and New Zealand troops.<sup>21</sup> In other words, the Lancastrians and Anzacs trained together in Egypt, had the same physical regimes and learnt the same tactics. Nevertheless, the Anzac legend of battlefield superiority remains very strong and continues to have major implications for the legacy of all those who fought at the Dardanelles – not least the East Lancastrians.

## The British

If the Anzacs had sound nationalistic reasons to lay claim to the Gallipoli legacy, the question remains as to why Britain did not take a similar stance to the French and simply wash their hands of what had proved a wholly unsuccessful military undertaking. After all, Britain had plenty of successes in its military history to fall back on. The answer is undoubtedly down to the fact that the loss of life had been great and the loss of face as the perpetrators of the campaign potentially even greater still. While the Anzacs were able to create their own legacy by distancing themselves from the decision-making of failure, the British were forced to both confront their failings and look at alternative ways of attempting to create a positive legacy from the campaign.

The result appears to have been an attempt to play down the failure by constructing a 'romantic myth' that provided grounds for reinterpretation of the campaign. This myth would be centred around the classical associations of a part of the world that resonated with the age-old themes of chivalry, heroism and missed opportunity. The British had lost, but theirs had been a noble adventure in a land famed by such associations: from the legends of Homer to tales of Troy and the Christian Crusades.<sup>22</sup> More to the point, a Royal Commission into the failure of the Gallipoli campaign concluded that while it had been very badly executed, the idea behind it had been good in principle. This provided a sound foundation for legacy building, and one that chimed perfectly with the ancient theme of tragic-heroism.

The official British war historian for the volumes on Gallipoli, Brigadier General Cecil Aspinall-Oglander, summed up the campaign in a way that was to become common in Britain, by placing Gallipoli on a pedestal that would see it 'rank amongst the world's classic tragedies'.<sup>23</sup> Ernest Raymond, a chaplain who served with the East Lancashires at Gallipoli, and who went on to become a highly popular post-war novelist, wrote of his time at Gallipoli:

We saw across the mouth of the Dardanelles the road-steads of Asia where Agamemnon moored his thousand ships. There, by Troy, was Mount Ida, from whose summit Zeus sat watching the Trojan War. If we turned and looked the other way we might see the towering island of Samothrace where, so legends said, Poseidon, God of the seas, sat to consider the siege of Troy.<sup>24</sup>

Such romantic idealism was helped by clear Mediterranean seas, wild flowers and sunshine in the early months of the expedition, all of which provided a stark, exotic contrast with the muddy and seemingly far less glamorous settings of the Western Front. Nevertheless, at the heart of the construct was a public school obsession with the classics. It was a pre-requisite of the era that commissioned officers be the sons of gentlemen and, as a result, the vast majority had been classically educated. In the early stages of the war the British army was polarized by class: this was not an army of conscription where the middle classes served in the rank-and-file alongside the labourer.<sup>25</sup> The geographic and Homeric lineage of the Dardanelles would, as such, have been familiar to virtually all of the officers serving at Gallipoli and, as such, it is my belief that class played a considerable part in the formation of the British legacy of Gallipoli.<sup>26</sup>

The obvious question is where, if at all, a division of ‘cotton town comrades’ from East Lancashire would fit into such a classical, romantic myth? Sharing a troopship with members of the East Lancashires on their voyage to the East, a ‘gentleman’ officer serving with the socially elite Westminster Dragoons cavalry unit complained of the men from Lancashire: ‘they clog dance on all occasions, look dirty and untidy and have bad manners. Good God, what a sight met my eyes between decks – shambles and filth. Their officers all say “thee and thou”, even the Captains. They are the commonest of men I ever saw [...] I would rather desert in Egypt than put up with the return journey. I can’t think I left a valet and maid at home.’<sup>27</sup> Even those with a genuine and deeply held affection for the Lancastrians made negative assumptions, such as an established officer like Gerald Hurst who was second in command of the 7th Battalion of the Manchester regiment. In his memoir of the Gallipoli campaign he wrote: ‘Lancashire boys are not brought up to read [...] when I once came across a man reading *The Golden Treasury* I knew he could not be a Manchester man – he was not!’<sup>28</sup>

Charles Watkins, serving with his hometown battalion from Rochdale, knew his history, though the response to his musings by one of his comrades certainly fitted the ‘clog dancing’ stereotype. ‘This bloody place of Gallipoli fascinated you,’ wrote Watkins.

There was a feel that was sort of special – the glory, pathos and the shit of war, and the feeling that what we were now doing in this Homeric contest had been done many times before in this particular part of the world. Dammit, you could almost hear the clank of sword on shield! I once

Figure 2: Men of the 6th Territorial Lancashire fusiliers, from Rochdale, on a landing craft bound for the Gallipoli beaches in May 1915. Courtesy Martin Purdy



commented on this to a mate of mine, but he only seemed concerned with my sanity. 'Oh, it's orlreet tha' knows,' he said. 'Ere, 'ave a little sup o' this tea an' tha'll soon feel better.'<sup>29</sup>

Watkins says in his private memoir that he was one of the few in his battalion who had been allowed to continue his education beyond the age of eleven. As a result, he often found himself nominated letter writer and reader for his less literate comrades.

In truth, many letters home from the Lancastrian ranks, though often poignant, rarely displayed any romantic or classical affinity. Even when they saw something of beauty, the men from the cotton towns often seemed to struggle to find the right words or fitting description. For example, Lance Corporal Gerrard wrote the following, somewhat typical, letter from Cairo: 'I went to see the Pyramids and the Sphinx last week. The largest is known as the Great Pyramid and is about as high as the distance between the Red Lion and White Hart pubs at Birch [north Manchester]. I am having a nice time here but am getting fed up with the grub.'<sup>30</sup> At the same time that the classical poet Rupert Brooke, who was serving with a Royal Naval battalion bound for Gallipoli, was penning the 'Soldier' about a corner of a foreign field remaining 'forever England',<sup>31</sup> one wag from the East Lancs was sending the following ode to his local paper: 'By heek owd lad, a drop o' rain 'ud be worth summut. Aw heven't

sin a drop sin we left Blighty an as never complain again at th' way it rains i Middleton!<sup>32</sup>

Nevertheless, despite the 'thees and thous' so liberally attached to them, it would be wrong to dismiss all of the East Lancastrians as poorly educated. The 6th Battalion of the Manchester regiment, for example, was a strictly middle-class unit made up almost exclusively of men from white-collar jobs in the City of Manchester. Their motto was 'not a rotter amongst them'.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, a look at the officers of the 6th Lancashire fusiliers shows that the commanding officer, George Kemp, was an Oxford graduate and peer with a seat in the House of Lords. Of his underlings, Major Roderick Lees was a landowner with estates in Cheshire and Lancashire; Gilbert Scott was the son of a newspaper proprietor; and Ernest Gledhill ran a large firm of solicitors. Among the junior officers were the sons of wealthy factory owners and businessmen, including one who was the grandson of a knight of the realm.<sup>34</sup>

However, putting an understanding of the classics to one side, there is another issue of class that should be considered in relation to the legacy of the East Lancastrians. Gerald Hurst wrote of the territorials of the 42nd East Lancashire division who went to Gallipoli: 'Their comradeship brought classes together so closely that the easy relationship between officers and men in the 1st line territorial unit of 1914–1915 was the despair of the more crusted regular martinet. These men had little of the Crusader or Elizabethan but his valour [...] another distinctive virtue was that all ranks, from brigadier-general to private, came from one neighbourhood and viewed life from much the same angle.'<sup>35</sup> This very much fits with Private Charles Watkins' description of his battalion from Rochdale: 'Our comrades were the same boys we had played with as kids, grown up with, worked with and scrapped with. The Commanding Officer was, as one of our chaps said, "one of us, like – a chap from the same town".'<sup>36</sup>

For the class-conscious regular army such communal links between officers and men would be seen as highly unprofessional. Furthermore, prior to the outbreak of war the territorials had been part-time soldiers who only trained once a week and went to camp just once a year. Military snobbery as well as educational inferiority may, as such, have affected their legacy. Lord Kitchener, as the Minister of State for War in 1914, was quite open about his lack of faith in the amateur territorials, with Lord Moyne saying that when Kitchener took over at the War Office he laid

Figure 3: A group of officers serving with the East Lancashire territorial army division outside their dug-out on the Gallipoli Peninsula. Courtesy Martin Purdy



down a firm marker on his first day by stating that ‘he could take no account of anything but regular soldiers’.<sup>37</sup>

Territorial soldiers had undoubtedly been seen as figures of fun in the run-up to the war, often half-mockingly described as ‘Saturday Soldiers’ or ‘part-time soldiers’. It is something that the troops themselves appear to have been acutely aware of, with Arthur Bullough of the East Lancashires writing home after being wounded on Gallipoli to state: ‘The “Saturday Afternoon Soldiers” have now proved themselves the equal of the regular soldiers.’<sup>38</sup>

As such, the East Lancastrians not only failed to fit neatly into the classical, romantic construct of this British Gallipoli legacy, but also found themselves carrying the stigma of being seen as second-class soldiers in the class-conscious military hierarchy of 1915. It was not a strong position to be in when it came to the distribution of high-profile roles in a formative British legacy.

## Lancashire

International and national legacies aside, there is another major element to address when it comes to the Gallipoli legacy and the fate of the East Lancastrians: one that involves regional and regimental concerns. In order to highlight this issue, it is necessary to rewind to an earlier point and the decision by the British government to hand over the first anniversary of the Gallipoli campaign to the Anzacs. As stated, this was to prove a highly contentious decision, and among the first to go public with his concerns was the Revd Charles Hill, the vicar of Bury, which was the garrison town of the Lancashire fusiliers. The Revd Hill was reported in his local newspaper, the *Bury Times*, as stating that he would be hosting a matching service to the Anzac one planned for Westminster Abbey. His service would have a very different focus: ‘We don’t, and dare not, forget the part played by the sons of England, Scotland and Ireland and, duty bound, we specially commemorate the immortal heroism shown by the officers and men of our own regiment. If they do not find mention in the [Westminster] Abbey, at least they shall find it here.’<sup>39</sup> Lancashire would, as such, host a ‘Gallipoli Day’ commemoration, not an ‘Anzac Day’ event.

This would become a tradition in the town of Bury and place it at the forefront of Gallipoli remembrance in Britain, despite the fact that more than eighty different regiments of the British army from all over the British Isles had served in the campaign.<sup>40</sup> Interestingly, and perhaps most tellingly for the East Lancastrians, ten years after his initial service, in April 1926, the Revd Hill again made a public outburst via his local newspaper. This time he was paraphrased as saying: “Anzac Day” for the Empire is “Lancashire Fusiliers’ Day” for us. Our men, no less than those from the southern lands, had achieved the impossible and “Lancashire Landing” stands as their memorial to all time.<sup>41</sup>

The Revd Hill was no longer referring to the 'Anzac Day' branding as an insult to all of the British combatants, but just to the men of the Lancashire fusiliers – and in particular those involved in an event he refers to as 'Lancashire Landing'. The battle-lines had been redrawn, bringing regimental and regional concerns to the fore.

The introduction to the official history of the 42nd East Lancashire territorial division in the First World War says: 'Gallipoli! Who in Lancashire, in England, before 1915 knew where or what it was, or had even heard the name? Bitter was the dispelling of ignorance; hard the road to knowledge. A name of death, of affliction, of suffering almost too heavy to be borne; but also a name of heroism and endurance and of high endeavour. A name of failure, but no less of glory.'<sup>42</sup> Such sentiments were common in Lancashire at this time and show that if claims to the heroic legacy of Gallipoli were quick to be grasped by the Anzacs, the campaign's importance to Lancashire had also been rapidly recognized.

However, any form of regional campaign would be hard to coordinate as the various Lancashire units involved had their own regimental loyalties and commemorative priorities. Of the near-20,000 men who served with the East Lancashire territorials, for those who served with the battalions of the Lancashire fusiliers, 6 May 1915 was their key date as it marked the first time that they had gone 'over the top'. For their comrades serving with the Manchester regiment, 4 June 1915 was their most emotive date, being the anniversary of the first time they had gone into battle.<sup>43</sup> These kind of anomalies were inevitable. The Lancashire fusiliers had six battalions involved in the campaign, the Manchester regiment seven, the East Lancashire regiment three, and the King's Own Royal Lancasters, Loyal North Lancs and South Lancs one battalion each. Every one of these battalions had started with a roll-call of around 1,000 men, and hundreds more would ultimately be drafted into the ranks in order to replace casualties. The 42nd East Lancashire territorial division was made up almost completely of men from Lancashire and, as in the case of the Anzacs, Gallipoli would provide the majority with their first taste of war. As such, it is hardly surprising that the official history of the division devotes nearly a third of its pages to the campaign. The introduction includes a foreword from Major General Solly-Flood, who commanded the division at Gallipoli, and describes the Lancastrians' achievements as 'conspicuous even in days of great deeds.'<sup>44</sup> It was a proud boast, but the territorials' 'great deeds' had already been usurped.

Despite the sacrifices of the East Lancastrian territorials, as the Revd Hill's words underline, it was the efforts of just one Lancashire battalion that would come to overshadow all of the rest. The 1st Battalion of the Lancashire fusiliers was to make its name on the opening day of the Gallipoli campaign courtesy of its landing at a site marked 'W' Beach. The Turks were firmly entrenched with barbed wire buried in the shallow waters, land-mines laid on the beach and machine gun teams on the

high ground. Nevertheless, the battalion succeeded in securing the beach before the morning was through, at the cost of fourteen officers and 533 rankers who became casualties. The Fusiliers were allocated six Victoria Crosses for the attack and duly named them the 'Six VCs before breakfast'. The beach that they had taken would also be renamed 'Lancashire Landing' in their honour.

The story of 'Lancashire Landing' was to steal national and regional headlines in much the same way that the Anzacs were to steal the international ones. During the Gallipoli campaign, men serving with different battalions of the Lancashire fusiliers (including those serving with the East Lancs territorials) won twenty-six medals for bravery and forty-three 'Mentions in Despatches'. However, what had captured the popular imagination was the six Victoria Crosses. As such, one of the most highly-commended incidents on the peninsula, if not the most highly commended, featured a Lancashire battalion whose glorious deeds had taken place before the territorials had even stepped foot on the Turkish coastline. Sir Ian Hamilton, the overall commander of the allied forces at Gallipoli, said of the landing: 'It is my firm conviction that no finer feat of arms has ever been achieved by the British soldier – or any other soldier – than the storming of those trenches from open boats.'<sup>45</sup> The territorials may have taken part in three major, costly and bloody attacks on Gallipoli in just four months but, despite the obvious magnitude for those involved, it was never going to be enough to surpass the heroics of 'Lancashire Landing'. The territorials' own official history even pays generous tribute to the exploits of 'the six VCs before breakfast', conceding that the territorials had landed in the 'world famous' 1st Battalion's footsteps.<sup>46</sup>

When the war memorial was unveiled in the regimental town of the Lancashire fusiliers on the seventh anniversary of the Lancashire landings in 1922, many of the surviving East Lancs territorials were present, but in a supporting role – it was the colours of the 1st Battalion that would be presented to Bury Parish Church and hung on the wall as a focal point of remembrance.<sup>47</sup> The message was clear; Bury would be the town that would be at the centre of Lancashire remembrance and the professional battalion – and its six VCs – would remain at the heart of the ceremony.<sup>48</sup>

Bury's commitment to Gallipoli remains, and when the fusiliers' old regimental home and museum was closed in 2009 and a new museum opened in a more tourist-friendly location in the town centre, the war memorial was moved with it and the park it was placed in renamed 'Gallipoli Gardens'. The *Manchester Evening News*, the biggest regional newspaper in Lancashire, explained the reason for this: 'Sparrow Park will be formerly renamed to commemorate a chapter in the town's military history [...] Lancashire Fusiliers' soldiers famously won "six Victoria Crosses before breakfast" in the Gallipoli landings of 1915.'<sup>49</sup> In

recognizing that more than one local battalion took part in the Gallipoli campaign, Bury Metropolitan Borough Council was more inclusive in its press release about the park's renaming, but it still could not resist the VCs: 'Six battalions of Lancashire Fusiliers fought in the ill-fated Gallipoli campaign. Many honours were awarded in the 1915 battle, including six Victoria Crosses.'<sup>50</sup>

The small communities whose men had swelled the ranks of the East Lancashire territorial battalions never appeared to embrace Gallipoli in the same way as the regimental town of the Lancashire fusiliers. Gallipoli simply became one name in an ever-growing list of tragedies and heroics that would continue to fight for the headlines in the remaining years of the war and the years that followed. The veterans of the campaign would often gather in home communities on key dates linked to their Gallipoli travails, but once their numbers had dwindled too far many started attending the annual commemorations at Bury instead. Indeed the last veteran of the Gallipoli campaign to march at Bury had not been a Lancashire fusilier but a member of the Manchester regiment.

## Conclusion

We can see how the men of the East Lancashire Territorials, through circumstances beyond their own control, have been pushed to the fringes of the Gallipoli historiography: firstly, at an international level, as the result of the need of the fledging nations of Australia and New Zealand to create a singular narrative at the expense of their fellow combatants; secondly, on a national level, because of the territorials' lowly ranking in a class-conscious military machine that, in the early part of the war, was very much controlled by men from a public school background that was to prove central to the British legacy; and finally, on a regional level, as the result of the glorification of one Lancashire battalion whose highly commendable achievements were to prove far more successful in capturing the public imagination.

# From docks and sand: the maintenance of community identity in a territorial battalion in the First World War



Adrian  
Gregson

Some studies of the First World War have demonstrated the level of resilience of local community identity in battalions during the First World War.<sup>1</sup> This has perhaps run counter to more traditional thinking but if the notion of spatial identity is expanded from purely the recruiting centre, and is one supported by evidence, for instance, in *Soldiers died in the Great War 1914–1919*<sup>2</sup> and casualty lists, the question then moves on to one of why the endurance of community identity was important. Primarily it can be shown to be a particularly contributory factor to levels of morale which in turn contributed enormously to combat effectiveness. Community identity – or rather the identification of the local community with their local battalions – was also important in maintaining interest and support during the war, and, significantly, contributed to the way in which local communities dealt with its aftermath.

This article bases its argument on the experience of 7th Battalion (Territorial Force) King's Liverpool regiment, initially in the Regular 2nd and then 7th Divisions, through to its integration in the re-formed 55th West Lancashire territorial division in 1916 under Major-General Jeudwine, until the end of the war. The home town recruiting bases particularly of Southport and Bootle were crucial to the battalion's mix, and the maintenance of identity carried through to the post-war period, based primarily on the connection between the soldiers' war experiences at Festubert and the Lys area and the civilian contacts with that area after 1918.

## The recruiting area

The battalion had its main headquarters in Bootle, centre of the Liverpool docks, and a secondary recruiting base in Southport, a more middle-class seaside resort. Recruitment was high in August and September 1914 and once the 1/7th had left for training in southern England, a second battalion was recruited (which went to France

in 1917) and a third was also gathered from the area, remaining on garrison duties. The two centres were very different. Sectarian Bootle had overcrowded tenements and slums, a high infant mortality rate and large numbers relying on the opportunities for unskilled labour on the docks. There were many migrant workers, from Scotland and Ireland in particular. Engineering, construction and the docks were the main areas of employment. Dock work was tightly controlled by both the unions and the bosses, with demarcation being rigidly applied between skilled and non-skilled work. The war was an employment opportunity for the many casual dock workers, paid below the poverty line, and the physical and often dangerous work was good training for the trenches. Ironically poor diet and health meant recruits needed to improve their fitness once at war.

Southport's 1911 census showed large numbers of domestic servants and hydropathic hotels, and the suffrage movement was particularly active.<sup>3</sup> Employment in the town and its rural hinterland consisted mainly of teaching, agriculture, medicine and dressmaking, and such industry as existed was light industrial, family concerns and not factories as seen in Bootle. The population was imbalanced with more older people, and more women than men, particularly unmarried and independent women. A later report argued that the 6th King's battalion attracted the 'best sort of fellows' and had a history as a 'class battalion' similar to the men from Crosby and Southport in the 7th Battalion, 'but in Bootle they got the ordinary sort of Territorial'.<sup>4</sup> 'Brutal Bootle'<sup>5</sup> was dominated by the docks, and felt the sinking of the *Lusitania* particularly keenly; Southport's miles of sand and clear skies had been popular with early flying shows and was a resort considered more superior than others like, for instance, Blackpool.

No figures exist for the battalion on the eve of war but figures for supplies of clothing and ammunition in other Liverpool territorial battalions give an indication that the likely number in 7th Battalion was between 650 and 700 men.<sup>6</sup> As with all territorial force battalions, the battalion was made up of eight companies<sup>7</sup> – three based in Liverpool, two in Bootle and one each in Crosby, Formby and Southport.<sup>8</sup>

Throughout this early period, the Southport papers were full of pictures and reports of men who had volunteered. The creation of a roll of honour in the *Southport Guardian* was further encouragement, along with lists of men from the same workplace or sports club.<sup>9</sup> The roll was updated in the new year.<sup>10</sup> As the editorial put it: 'Never before in the history of the country has a war come home so closely to the people. The effect of the Territorial Force being embodied in the Regular Army is to find almost every household represented in the ranks.'<sup>11</sup>

As well as the Southport papers, the *Formby Times* was an enthusiastic recruiter, printing names and photographs, and helping to forge a community spirit. The *Bootle Times* appeared less so. The editorials were



Figure 1: 7th Battalion men billeted in Eastbourne, 1914. Courtesy of Philip Threlfall

that 180 men had volunteered at Bootle, although a number had been rejected due to bad teeth.<sup>12</sup> An editorial towards the end of August indicated that not everyone was rushing to join as perhaps they should. Reference was made to people who would join up, were it not for the meagre allowances paid to dependants and calling on the government to increase the separation allowance.<sup>13</sup> The *Bootle Times* also urged recruits from all sections of the community, noting 'If a clerk is as good a man as a docker let them fight side by side [...] this is no time for class distinction' – a comment which could have been meant directly for the social mix in 7th Battalion.<sup>14</sup>

Given the numbers involved, it would seem reasonable to assume that a cross-section of society was represented in the recruits. An analysis of the residencies or places of enlistment recorded in *Soldiers died* for men of the 7th King's shows that there were more men killed coming from Bootle than from Southport: 156:107. Large numbers from Litherland, Waterloo, Formby, Great Crosby and Birkdale were also recorded. This ratio of deaths from the two main centres of 60 per cent to 40 per cent compares directly with the total male populations in 1911 of 25,958 (Bootle) and 17,228 (Southport).<sup>15</sup> This would indicate that, in terms solely of this battalion, both communities suffered losses proportionate to their population, and therefore a similar proportion of men must have volunteered from both communities for the three line battalions. Volunteers from these geographical areas also joined other battalions, including other local regiments, the territorial artillery and transport columns, and for other regiments around the country. This was widely reflected in the names and units recorded later on war memorials.

There was no great disparity between the total number of NCOs from each area, nor does one area significantly stand out in terms of their battle effectiveness, with Southport providing five winners of the

no less in favour of the war or the recruitment drive, but there were not the lists of men, local names, or pages dotted with photographs which appear elsewhere. This does not seem to have unduly affected the figures for recruiting in Bootle or the south of the area in question but there was a noticeable difference in approach. On 21 August, the *Bootle Times* reported

Military Medal and Bootle four.<sup>16</sup> Taken with the analysis of men killed, the evidence is of a battalion that crossed social divides although there are difficulties in establishing an accurate view of the social composition, due largely to the absence of attestation papers.

Although the battalion was soon training on the south coast, khaki was still everywhere in Southport. In common with many other seaside resorts, its boarding houses and coastal facilities were key attractions for the government when billeting troops around the country. The influx of these large numbers of soldiers to west Lancashire, with its sands<sup>17</sup> and rifle ranges, was a real dilemma for local people. While wanting to do all they could to help the war effort, the restrictions which came with the troops and the commandeering of buildings and facilities were problematic. Additionally, the proprietors of houses where men were billeted had to be careful not to price themselves out of the market. At one stage during the winter of 1914/15, the number of troops in Southport was 16,000 and despite their going in May 1915, another 5,000 arrived in July, gradually increasing to around 13,000 by the end of 1915.<sup>18</sup> In addition to billeted soldiers in Southport, soldiers were camping in Great Crosby, where the recreation ground was given over for mechanized transport use, and stationed at Litherland at Orrell Road and Beach Road. There were soldiers all over the place and school logbooks indicated that schoolchildren were sometimes more interested in them than in getting to school on time.<sup>19</sup>

The soldiers in the borough were allowed use of the plunge baths in Bootle at specified times.<sup>20</sup> In Southport the Victoria baths and Crowlands hydropathic baths were used at specified times and the tramways depot was used for drill and medical inspections.<sup>21</sup> Free evening classes were arranged for the soldiers such as those in Litherland on general knowledge and French.<sup>22</sup>

But there were drawbacks. Southport had to spend more on street cleaning and cleaning the drains, due to the increased population numbers, which was costing an extra £25–30 per week.<sup>23</sup> Litherland had to fund extra fire hydrants around the Orrell Road camp.<sup>24</sup> The conditions for the soldiers were of some concern too. Corporal John Whittaker's father noted 'an epidemic of neuralgia' which was being cured by the army dentist.<sup>25</sup> Waterloo council called on the military authorities to provide properly, in advance of the winter, for soldiers who were under canvas to be housed in wooden huts or galvanized iron buildings. While this sounded like the council had the soldiers' comfort in mind, no doubt they were simply anxious to move the men away from the residential areas of Waterloo and Seaforth and up to waste land to the north of Great Crosby, where they could more easily be watched over and supervised according to army regulations.<sup>26</sup>

There were tensions but a meeting between Waterloo and Seaforth Urban District Council (UDC) and the officer commanding Mersey

defences served no purpose as he stated that troops would be accommodated as ‘military exigencies require’ and that the concentration and supervision of the troops was not the concern of the UDC.<sup>27</sup> The council had to finance and build a club house on Moor Lane, Thornton, at the south-west corner of the camp.<sup>28</sup>

An extreme example of the problems of stationing troops in residential areas was provided very early on. A sixty-two-year old pedlar was shot by a sentry at Maghull on 18 August 1914. He had abused the sentry’s warning and the judge and jury found that the sentry had done his duty, and a verdict of justifiable homicide was given. According to the judge: ‘By walking along the highway at midnight at present a man speaking vulgarly was asking for it.’<sup>29</sup> These tragic shootings were connected to the hysterical fear of spies which was rife.<sup>30</sup>

As well as difficulties, billeting soldiers brought money into the town. The army paid an allowance for each man of 3s 4½d, though this was often subject to negotiation – especially if another local town was able to offer accommodation at a cheaper rate.<sup>31</sup> Blackpool was reportedly disappointed that the 16,000 troops they had hoped for were not now coming. These men would have brought an estimated £20,000 per week for the town.<sup>32</sup> Blackpool was later to be a major destination for training and billeting of troops, including 7th King’s Liverpool. In Southport there were rumours that 14,000 men needed to be housed in hotels and

private residencies by the end of September.<sup>33</sup> When the troops did start to pour into the town on 13 October they were greeted by huge crowds of well-wishers. Mostly, the men were from the Manchester regiment’s 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th territorial battalions. Around 1,000 were in the first wave but the full 14,000 was expected shortly and soon Southport was a garrison town for the Manchester battalions.<sup>34</sup>

Bootle’s contribution to the war effort revolved around its industries with many turned over to munitions and two of six national shell factories managed by the Liverpool War Munitions Committee being in the borough:

Figure 2:  
Cunard shell  
works, Rimrose  
Road, Bootle,  
1916. National  
Monuments  
Record Centre,  
Bedford  
Lechmere  
Collection,  
BL24001–96





Figure 3:  
Munition  
workers, Vulcan  
Engineering  
works,  
Southport, 1916.  
Photo: Adrian  
Gregson

Cunard's on Rimrose Road and the National Gauge factory in Clyde Street. In the 7th recruiting area there was also the No. 2 National Filling factory near Aintree station in Sefton, the No. 3 National Aeroplane factory at Aintree, and HM Explosives factory at Litherland. In this area 15,440 people were engaged in munitions work, of whom 80 per cent were women.<sup>35</sup> The Cunard factory was 'the pioneer in the employment of women on shells of large calibre'.<sup>36</sup>

Conditions could be dangerous. At Aintree, there were nine cases of toxic jaundice, all of whom had septic teeth, three of whom died.<sup>37</sup> An explosion at the filling factory in Sefton in July 1918 killed three people,<sup>38</sup> and there had been a small explosion and fire at the Brotherton's HM Explosives factory on 22 September 1916.<sup>39</sup> Siegfried Sassoon, training at Litherland camp, described 'a hissing and throbbing inferno, which incessantly concocted the form of high explosive known as TNT; when the wind was in the east the camp got the benefit of the fumes. ... [The factory] flared and seethed and reeked with poisonous vapour'<sup>40</sup> and a report by Bootle Council's medical officer found that 'fumes escape from nearly every joint in the pipes. There were greenish yellow clouds of nitric acid over the roofs [of nearby houses]'.<sup>41</sup> The surveyor and his colleague died accidentally, 'by being asphyxiated by gas', while attempting to carry out their investigation.<sup>42</sup>

## The battle of Festubert 1915

The 1/7th King's Liverpool regiment embarked from Southampton on the *Manchester Importer* on the night of 7 March 1915. After landing in France they went into training straight away near Bethune and lost their

first men in a 'St. Patrick's Day baptism of fire' while out digging trenches on 17 March.<sup>43</sup>

Planned as the third attempt in this area of the Front, following failures to breakthrough at Neuve Chapelle and Aubers Ridge, Festubert was the first night attack of the war,<sup>44</sup> although little critical attention has been given to this fact.<sup>45</sup> It was a defining moment for the battalion, retaining a significance during and after the war itself. However, in the 2nd Division the explicit method of attack by Brigadier-General Fanshawe was to use the raw, or 'expendable' troops as live bait to draw the enemy, who could then be punished by rested, seasoned troops waiting in reserve. In a memo referring to new troops it was stated that: 'to encourage the enemy to attack it will be better for us to employ them and keep our seasoned troops in reserve.'<sup>46</sup>

The battalion war diary reported that 'A & B Coys in attack, moved over parapet about 10.45pm & waited. Attack successful. German line carried'.<sup>47</sup> The 6th brigade war diary noted that machine gun fire and shelling were heavy and attempts to move other units up to the captured trenches were fruitless, though by daylight on the 16th men in ones and twos were able to get to the German line. With these trenches thick with troops, it was fortunate that German shelling was more on British trenches, though these were also congested.<sup>48</sup> The 7th Battalion were amongst those withdrawn to British trench breastworks on the night of 16th and 17th, while 1st King's took the objective originally thought to have been secured by 7th Battalion.

The events were quickly reported, largely through soldiers' letters, in the local papers. The *Bootle Times* based its report of the action on a few letters, but the *Formby Times*, the *Southport Visiter* and the *Southport Guardian*, produced extensive reports and details under bold titles such as 'Praise for Local Lads', 'Seventh's Glorious Charge', and 'Southport's Heroic Soldier Sons'.<sup>49</sup> However, the *Southport Visiter*, which published earlier than the others, first led with: 'Southport's Battalion's Heavy Losses'.<sup>50</sup>

The editorial of the *Bootle Times* was quite clear in emphasizing the local identification with the battle: 'The famous charges will long form the subject of admiring talk in this neighbourhood, which is so closely associated with this regiment and goes to prove that the young manhood of Bootle is doing its share towards crushing that monster of organised brutality which is named militarism'.<sup>51</sup>

The emphasis on the Southport men in the 7th King's caused a few ripples of discontent when copies of the *Southport Visiter* reached the troops, prompting a 'Sandgrunder' to write: 'there are one or two Liverpool or district boys in this battalion [...] and I think they would have appreciated a word or two on their behalf [...] now just give a word of praise to the Liverpool boys'. The editor inserted a by-line reading, 'Of course the whole of the 7th King's Liverpool Battalion has

done splendidly, and the designation “Southport Battalion” includes the Formby, Bootle and other men from this district.’<sup>52</sup> The *Liverpool Echo* said: ‘King’s in thick of the Fight. Fine work in the battle of Festubert a tribute to gallant local officers. Splendid record of bravery. How our Territorials and Regulars stood the great test of courage.’<sup>53</sup> The emphasis on the brave work of territorials and regulars together was a clear message of the solidarity and uniformity in the regiment as a whole.<sup>54</sup>

According to the 7th Battalion war diary nine officers were killed or missing, and four wounded, on 16 May; along with 220 Other Ranks killed, wounded or missing.<sup>55</sup> Later, the official record in *Soldiers died* showed 115 men in the battalion were killed at Festubert representing nearly 12 per cent of the total deaths for the battalion, 1914–19, of 960. Of those 115, ninety-eight had enlisted at Bootle, Seaforth, Southport, Crosby or Birkdale.<sup>56</sup> The battalion fighting strength was reduced to 639.<sup>57</sup> There were more casualties in the summer and, in early August 1915 the battalion was detached for training as a pioneer battalion. This may have been in part due to the composition of the battalion drawn from the docks but seems more likely to have been driven by the fall in capacity. However, ranks were filled by a draft of 164 men from the Manchester regiment, particularly from Tameside battalions, arriving on 9 August 1915, with a further seventy-six coming on 7 September.<sup>58</sup> In early January 1917, 550 reinforcements who had been training at musketry school swelled the ranks of all three brigades.<sup>59</sup> The other significant draft of men to the battalion came in early 1918 when 202 joined from sister battalions as a result of the reorganisation of the army.<sup>60</sup> This episode saw some of those from the first line Liverpool battalions being amalgamated with their second lines and others drafted to 1/5th, 1/6th and 1/7th Battalions. The 1/7th Battalion war diary noted specifically 137 Other Ranks and five officers transferred from the Liverpool Irish (8th Battalion).<sup>61</sup>

The full extent of the dilution of the battalion for the duration has been established by examining the details presented in *Soldiers died*.<sup>62</sup> This analysis shows that of 960 Other Ranks listed, 70 per cent were from the Merseyside area, including 55 per cent from around Bootle, Southport, Crosby, and Formby. A further 16 per cent had enlisted in Lancashire. In 1915, the battalion’s fatalities were all from the Liverpool area with nearly 90 per cent of these men coming from its recruiting base. In 1918, only 26 per cent were specifically local, but considerable numbers remained, with 45 per cent in total from Merseyside and 45 per cent from the rest of Lancashire. The figures show that there was still a significant percentage of men from the region, comparable to figures shown by McCartney for 6th and 10th Liverpool battalions.<sup>63</sup>

## Community identity in the 55th West Lancashire (TF) division

Having forged an identity for the battalion and the local community with Festubert in 1915, the identification with Lancashire as a whole was promulgated for the rest of the war in the West Lancashire division, after its re-creation in January 1916. As with the study of the Leeds territorials, where Morris found that despite losing high numbers of local men, the 'local spirit' of the battalions remained, the maintenance of this social cohesion and *esprit de corps* was also prevalent in 1/7th King's.<sup>64</sup>

Under Major-General Sir Hugh Jeudwine, the red rose of Lancashire became 'an object of deepest reverence [...] there was no more dreadful punishment [...] than to order the individual to remove the Rose from his shoulders or the unit erase it from their transport'.<sup>65</sup> When the booklet produced to celebrate the stand at Givenchy in April 1918 had an early version of the logo, Jeudwine was incensed, noting on his copy 'This is not the correct badge'.<sup>66</sup> In theory, every officer and man had the badge on both shoulders and it was painted on every item of transport and artillery.

The old territorial 'Liverpool Brigade' was reunited as 165 Brigade in the new division, but the reuniting of the whole Lancashire division was recalled by Critchley as being most important. He said '[the division] were all Lancashire lads [...] we were fighting as a division for the first time and we soon made our name. Our motto was "We win or Die"'.<sup>67</sup>

The divisional general displayed a consistent determination to emphasize the importance of the Lancashire connection within the division. In January 1916, days after the formation of the division, Jeudwine wrote to XIV Corps requesting that 1/1st West Lancashire field company be transferred from 4th Division to the 55th.<sup>68</sup> Corresponding with Lord Derby in March, he noted that this had happened.<sup>69</sup> Jeudwine was keen to baulk the system which

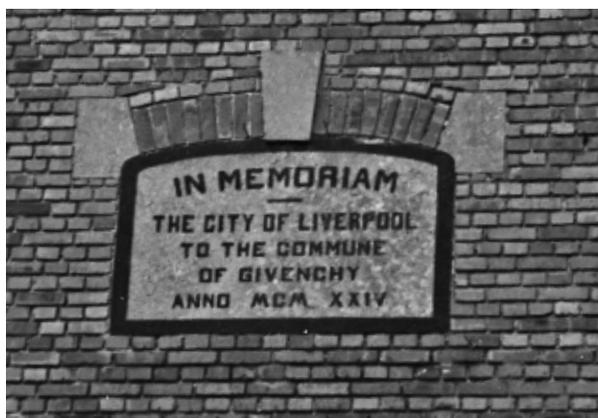


Figure 4:  
Commemoration  
tablet,  
Community  
Hall, Givenchy:  
Photo: Adrian  
Gregson

had removed the continuity with a soldier's unit. In correspondence with Lord Derby in late August 1918 he was still emphasizing the importance of the 'localness' of the division when urging the return of wounded men to their own units. After Critchley had been wounded at Festubert, he had been able to return to the same battalion eight months later, by then in the new division.<sup>70</sup> In his letter to Derby, Jeudwine reiterated that 'our Boys are very proud of their Division [...] and they ask nothing better than

that they may continue to fight side by side with their comrades [...] if possible to add further lustre on the emblem they have so proudly worn'.<sup>71</sup>

The divisional theatre party were called the 'Roses',<sup>72</sup> and the trench magazine was *Sub Rosa*.<sup>73</sup> Trench names around Givenchy included Scotland Road, Old Haynes Road, Southport Road, Crosby Road – all familiar from the Liverpool area.<sup>74</sup> In June 1917 1/7th Battalion was based first at Mersey camp and then at Derby camp on the outskirts of Poperinghe.<sup>75</sup>

Although Tilsley wrote that 'old hands said the Divisional General had sworn to make the Somme either a Lancashire victory or a Lancashire graveyard',<sup>76</sup> Jeurwine was unique when in the summer of 1918 he made plans to mark the graves of all his troops with a cocarde, a metal roundel with the Lancashire rose in the centre and around the edge the divisional motto: 'They win or die who wear the rose of Lancaster'.<sup>77</sup> He wrote: 'Arrangements are being made to procure a supply of metal divisional badges, similar to the 'Cocarde' placed by the French on every soldier's grave [...] placing one over the grave of every soldier of the 55th Division who has fallen in France or Flanders'.<sup>78</sup> The £800 which these memorial tablets cost was raised through public subscription.<sup>79</sup> Divisional chaplain Canon Coop led two expeditions to place divisional 'cocardes' on graves in February and October 1919. The graves all had wooden crosses and it would have been easy to nail on the cocarde.<sup>80</sup> It was equally easy to remove them and Coop found that many placed at Gorre in February 1919 had later been removed for souvenirs.

Jeurwine made a direct link between the Lancastrianization of the division, enhancing morale, and the impact on combat effectiveness. Paddy Griffith recognized that an, albeit informal, hierarchy of divisions had emerged by the end of 1916, including 55th Division amongst the more trustworthy units who were grouped as an elite for assault.<sup>81</sup> There had also emerged a group of senior commanders who were clearly more effective and who led the strategic thinking and training through the rest of the war. Griffith listed nineteen names, including Jeurwine. It was these men who formed the 'assault spearhead of the BEF' in 1917.<sup>82</sup>

The new division's first major action came on the Somme in August and September, 1916. At Guillemont in August, the frequent calls to attack appeared confusing and Lieutenant-Colonel Cochrane, head of the divisional general staff, believed that subjecting his infantry to 'retaliatory bombardment in positions affording little protection was to expect the impossible'.<sup>83</sup> His concerns about renewed attacks were ignored and he recalled this in writing to Jeurwine in 1933: 'There was only one indifferent trench line so attacking troops were subject to intermittent artillery fire throughout. This caused considerable disorganisation and casualties'.<sup>84</sup> The continuing failure to take that village highlighted the need for proper preparation and communication before and during the battle.

The evidence demonstrates that there was considerable review of the results at Guillemont and that the conclusions of this analysis were put into practice firstly at Ginchy and more especially at Guedecourt. The after-action reports on the Guillemont battles indicated the areas which needed work to be more successful in the next attack and Jeurwine's memoranda emphasized the need for discipline, determination, for trenches to be properly sited, for notice boards to be clear, for operational orders to be communicated down to NCOs and their companies, the vital role of runners, the importance of communication and the need for adequate reconnaissance.<sup>85</sup> On 25 September the division's objectives were north of Guedecourt, and this time 165th Brigade was much more successful in carrying out the attack.<sup>86</sup>

Almost a year later, 1/7th King's were in action in the Ypres Salient. On 31 July 1917, the 165th Brigade captured the enemy's front line trench system.<sup>87</sup> Critchley called it the battalion's 'finest hour',<sup>88</sup> and when the brigadier-general's praise for the King's battalions was published, the *Southport Guardian* heralded the 'Praise for Local Troops' which would be read with 'considerable pride and interest by Southport people'.<sup>89</sup>

However, the advance ground to a halt by the end of the day and XIX Corps ordered a renewed attack but with the onset of rain Jeurwine visited brigade headquarters and on viewing conditions, demanded that trains were used to take the men away.<sup>90</sup> It was estimated that thirty enemy officers and 600 men were captured by the division, while it suffered 166 officer casualties and 3,384 men between 30 July and 4 August 1917.<sup>91</sup>

Still with Fifth Army, 55th Division found itself attacking virtually the same objectives on 20 September as it had on 31 July. Now in combination with Second Army, the attack was to take the Gheluvelt Plateau and the ridge from Zonnebeke to Gravenstafel.<sup>92</sup> 7th King's attacked from a line of shell holes and disused trenches. A string of reinforced concrete dug-outs were captured by 1/7th King's.<sup>93</sup> The positions were held and strong points constructed. Sixty-one men in 1/7th Battalion were killed, 166 were wounded, twelve had gone missing and three later died of wounds, while five officers died and four were wounded.<sup>94</sup>

At the end of November 1917 Jeurwine was appointed by Haig to chair a committee of generals, to prepare new defensive procedures for the British army.<sup>95</sup> Although the committee's proposals were rejected by GHQ,<sup>96</sup> when the third wave of the German spring offensive began on 9 April 1918, Jeurwine's division, and his own corps commander Haking, appear to have agreed to pursue a defensive scheme, based on the Jeurwine committee proposals, with some great success.<sup>97</sup>

This battle at Givenchy was as significant for the division's identity as Festubert had been for the 7th Battalion. Due to the limited number of troops available, emphasis was put on defending Givenchy, in order to maintain the support flank across the La Basse Canal to Cunchy.<sup>98</sup> For



Figure 5: Men of 1/7th Battalion King's, in the trenches, March 1918. Imperial War Museum Q10740

1/7th King's in 165th Brigade in front of Festubert, the marshy and boggy ground was unsuitable for fortified positions and there was no real depth to the defence.<sup>99</sup>

At 4.15am the Germans attacked the allied line with a severe bombardment which lasted for over two hours. At 9.51am Division reported the SOS in front of Festubert to corps and by 10.30am the outpost line was lost.<sup>100</sup> The heavy mist or fog restricted visibility to about ten yards,<sup>101</sup> and when the assault came this added to the confusion. The front companies were overpowered from the flank and the rear. However, 'the fierce and stubborn fighting of the platoons and companies in the front posts' had broken up and disorganized the attackers.<sup>102</sup>

A number of officers were taken out of the battle, leaving men to organize themselves. Initiative at a local level was quite prevalent and Brind referred to the defence by 'the men in the strongpoints whom General Judy had trained [...] to have confidence in themselves'.<sup>103</sup> According to Colonel Crump, GOC 1/4th Loyals, it was Jeudwine's training policy which 'bore fruit – a remarkable example of the value of taking the British soldier into your confidence and making him understand "why" he was being ordered to do something'.<sup>104</sup>

Strongholds changed hands often more than once but gradually the initiative was regained as Le Plantin, Windy Corner and others were recaptured.<sup>105</sup> During the battle all and sundry were being told off for fighting detail: 'Headquarters Details, including Cooks, spare Signallers, Pioneers, etc. had been ordered to take up a position'.<sup>106</sup> Critchley said that once the Portuguese had retired and the enemy was behind them, 'every available man [...] transport, cooks and fellows that had soft jobs after being wounded' were called into the line.<sup>107</sup> Colonel Buckley, in

describing the battle said 'the 7th Kings were doing heroic work [...] everybody was in it – RE's, Pioneers, cooks, bottlewashers and all.'<sup>108</sup> Brind understood that, unusually, 'it was an order in the Division that every man, servants, clerks, cooks etc. had to fire so many rounds over the top every month' in which case at least they would know what to do.<sup>109</sup>

The battalion was relieved two days later, after fifteen days in the line. The division pulled out on 16 April to great accolade.<sup>110</sup> In Haig's general despatch following the battle he referred to the 55th Division's 'success of this most gallant defence, the importance of which it would be hard to over-estimate', which he said 'was due in great measure to the courage and determination displayed by our advanced posts. These held out with the utmost resolution, though surrounded'.<sup>111</sup>

In what seems like a unique idea by the divisional commander, all men of the division were issued with a booklet which included comments and references praising the work of the division during the battle. Congratulations came from the army commanders Haig, Plumer, Horne and Haking, but the list of other individuals and organisations demonstrates the significance of the local community links. Led by Lord Derby, there were congratulations also from the mayors of Blackpool, Preston and Liverpool, from GOCs of 1st, 42nd, 51st and 57th Divisions, the Liverpool Corn Trade Association, the Blackpool Branch of Discharged and Demobilised Soldiers and Sailors, Liverpool Branch of Comrades of the Great War, and many past and serving officers and commanders of 55th Divisional units. This spread of civic, military and business comment on the home front displays elements of pride, identity and fraternity with the men fighting.

## Memorialization in Bootle and Southport

The significance of Givenchy in spring 1918 and the key role which the local division, and particularly the local battalion, had played was demonstrated through the memorialization processes after the war. These came in part through formal war memorials, in part through establishing ex-soldiers' regimental associations, and in part through establishing links with the area in which local men had fought and died.

The Southport War Memorial Committee wanted it to be 'lofty and well set-up, visible from a distance'.<sup>112</sup> A huge obelisk stands in the middle of London Square on Lord Street, the attractive and elegant Edwardian shopping centre of the town. On either side are colonnades of names of the fallen listed in alphabetical order. Emphasizing the importance of the local regiment, the King's Liverpool men are listed first, and then those from other regiments and units. The committee calculated that about 10,000 of Southport's men and women had served in the war, from a total population of 72,500.<sup>113</sup> The memorial had been expected to contain

800–1,000 names, and when it was opened in 1923, actually listed 1,133, with the north-east end still incomplete. A further 150 were added the following year.<sup>114</sup>

Lord Derby<sup>115</sup> led its opening on Armistice Day 1923.<sup>116</sup> The procession was led by the 55th Divisional band, standard bearers came from the King's Liverpool regiment, and official invitees included the 7th Battalion's Festubert Association and 320 children who had been orphaned in the war. Two admission tickets were sent to the relatives of all those listed on the memorial, though priority seats went to subscribers to the memorial fund.<sup>117</sup> Ex-servicemen were encouraged to take part in the procession, although tickets for the enclosure were restricted.<sup>118</sup> Reportedly, 2,000 people walked in the procession and 30,000 lined the streets.<sup>119</sup>

The Bootle War Memorial Committee<sup>120</sup> agreed on an imposing set of figures, a soldier, sailor, airman and a woman and her child. At the unveiling in October 1922 local councillors and dignitaries were present, but few from the military establishment. Although 7th King's – 'Bootle's Own' – formed a guard of honour, Colonel Hemelryk was unable to be present. Major Burnie MC, who had commanded 2/7th Battalion, was a local Bootle man, who also happened to be the parliamentary candidate for the Liberal Party in the forthcoming elections. In unveiling the statues he spoke, controversially: 'To those who have this world's goods I say give them freely: to those who have less, give sympathy. They have passed through hell. I say it is our right and our duty to help them.'<sup>121</sup> During the following week Alderman Turner accused Burnie of using the occasion to make a political speech. Letters to the paper, however, were more critical of the Conservative alderman: 'how many men of a military age in the Conservative Party in the Bootle Town Council went and did their bit for King and Country?'<sup>122</sup>

A veteran of the ranks, Edward Cox was not untypical, however when he complained that he was debarred entry to the ceremony as he had no ticket 'beyond my 1914–15 medal. I thought that was quite enough', and he was then forcibly ejected by the police.<sup>123</sup>

In erecting a memorial in France, the division followed the pattern of many other army units.<sup>124</sup> The memorial, unveiled by Marshal Joffre on Whit Sunday 1921,<sup>125</sup> still stands in Givenchy at the edge of the village reinforcing the identity with the division in this area. A tourist wrote in the 1930s, 'why did they put it here of all places, right off the beaten track?' perhaps not realizing that it was sited to commemorate their stand in April 1918.<sup>126</sup>

The 55th Divisional Association, formed under General Jeudwine's presidency in Belgium in December 1918, further underlined the importance of loyalty and identity within the divisional structure.<sup>127</sup> By the time of its first annual meeting – significantly on 10 April 1920 – the Association claimed 12,075 members.<sup>128</sup> It was, primarily, an

unemployment bureau for discharged servicemen. There had been 673 requests for assistance when it was set up while in France and there are many requests for testimonials and introductions from officers now unemployed amongst General Jeudwine's papers and also amongst Lord Derby's papers.<sup>129</sup>

By 1924, the Association had around 600 registered members of whom 530 were officers. Annual subscription was 2s 6d. Their work in running an unemployment register continued, as did the aid fund for widows and orphans of divisional men, but the discounts offered to members at the various clockmakers, tailors, furniture stores, china and jewellery dealers were probably of little interest to any rankers who may have joined for welfare purposes. A war graves fund was also established which allowed assistance for relatives to visit the war graves, all marked by the metal cocardes placed in 1919 and 1920, although as these remained 'unofficial' they soon fell victim to souvenir hunters and the weather. Scarves, handkerchiefs, badges, copies of *Sub Rosa* and the Givenchy battle report, and postcards of the Front were all available to those who wanted to continue their military connections into civilian life.<sup>130</sup>

The twentieth anniversary of Givenchy was marked by the divisional dinner club on 13 April 1938 in London, presided over by Jeudwine. As principal guest, Derby recalled his involvement in the evolution of the territorial forces thirty years previously and spoke of the 55th's inspiring wartime record.<sup>131</sup> The following year over 230, including Lord Derby, attended the twentieth annual dinner of the Association itself on 15 April 1939 at the Exchange Station hotel, Liverpool.<sup>132</sup> The survival of the Association through the interwar years is an indication of the strength of the camaraderie and regional identity which was built up by Jeudwine during the war itself.

At a battalion level, there had been reunions on Armistice night since 1920,<sup>133</sup> advertised by Colonel Hemelryk in the *Bootle Times* for comrades of all three units of 7th Battalion to resume the territorial force connection, to promote welfare, and not lose the comradeship built up on the battlefield, and the Park Street headquarters were already in use by battalion veterans.<sup>134</sup> In 1922 a group of officers established the Festubert Association on a more formal footing, to hold a celebration of survivors of Festubert, open to those who had fought there. One suggestion, thankfully not pursued, was to hold a re-enactment of the battle at the war memorial.<sup>135</sup>

The Festubert Association's chief aim became to hold a hot-pot supper to bring together as many local veterans of the battle as possible on or near the anniversary of Festubert.<sup>136</sup> The reunion continued in much the same vein each year. There were guests and toasts, and a speech about regimental tradition followed by a reply, usually given by the mayor, about the town's involvement in the war. This was a suitable balance to the event, demonstrating the continued shared identity between soldier

and civilian. The evening was considered so relevant to the community that the newspapers reported proceedings verbatim.<sup>137</sup> There were close links and interest with the progress on the adoption of Festubert and the building of the memorial hall. The Association was also a key invitee to lay a wreath on Armistice Day. However, they also agreed to lay a wreath at the memorial on the anniversary of the Festubert battle, but it was decided that it should be on the nearest Sunday as there would be conflict between the laying of the wreath and getting to the dinner on time.<sup>138</sup> It was unanimously agreed that Sergeant Hines, crippled at Festubert and confined to a wheelchair, would lay that first wreath the next day.<sup>139</sup>

The eighteenth annual reunion on 13 May 1939 marked the twenty-fourth anniversary. The dinner was chaired by Major Eckes and apologies included those from Major Thompson and Captain Marriott. The following day the Association held a service at St Andrew's church, a procession through Southport, and the laying of wreaths at the cenotaph.<sup>140</sup> The importance of Festubert to the local community was only overshadowed in subsequent years by the new conflict.

The establishment of an identification between 1/7th King's Liverpool battalion and Festubert, in May 1915, was immortalized by the whole community in Southport's choice of Festubert as its 'god-child' under the adoption scheme organized by the charity, the British League of Help for Devastated Areas of France.<sup>141</sup> The League of Help launched a national appeal in June 1920, writing to all municipal mayors inviting them to adopt a town in order to raise money, goods and assistance to help them recover from the war. The League's publicity stressed that these towns in north-east France and Belgium had been prepared to inundate the area if the need had arisen during the German spring offensive in 1918. Many of the towns had been destroyed by British shelling, not just German bombardment.<sup>142</sup>

The British League of Help was established by Lady Lilius Bathurst, owner of the *Morning Post* and run by her editor H.A. Gwynne and the paper's Paris correspondent, G.D. Knox.<sup>143</sup> It was formed partly in response to a need to coordinate the various individual and charitable efforts already being made to assist in the rebuilding of France after the Great War. Around Easter 1920 a proposal from M. Braibant, conseiller général of the Ardennes, was publicized in a letter to *The Times* from Admiral Sir Charles Dundas, a leading figure in the Association of Great Britain and France, suggesting that the best way in which England could help France was by one town adopting another.<sup>144</sup> In April, Gwynne wrote to Lady Bathurst proposing a scheme which would enable this to happen. He was keen to set up a process which would be able to react quickly, would give real help to French towns, and would avoid unnecessary red tape.<sup>145</sup> By June, Gwynne had produced a scheme which was launched at the League's inaugural meeting. The *Morning*

*Post* simultaneously carried long editorials extolling the virtue of such a scheme.<sup>146</sup> A meeting to inaugurate the League took place at the Mansion House on 30 June 1920, presided over by the lord mayor of London, Sir Edward Cooper.<sup>147</sup>

Meanwhile, in France, Knox had spent time going round the devastated areas, photographing them and assessing each town's requirements, with a view to putting together a magic lantern tour to encourage adoptions across Britain. Throughout May 1920 he visited Passel, Ville, Noyon, Beauvais, Amiens, Lens, Lille, Arras, Cambrai, St Quentin, Laon, Le Chemin des Dames, Rheims, Chalons, Bar le Duc, Tout, Nancy, Ligny and Meaux (and Armentières).<sup>148</sup> The lecture tour showed details of ruined houses, factories, churches and public buildings; destroyed bridges and flooded fields; and also British troops, tanks and war personalities.<sup>149</sup>

Lord Derby was amongst a number of influential figures and patrons on the League and he also presided over the London committee (which adopted Verdun) but had input to a number of other adoptions, notably those in the North West.<sup>150</sup> The League emphasized the importance of choosing a town to adopt where there was some connection and identity, where the local battalion had fought and where local men were buried or commemorated. As part of the adoption process, the League supplied lists of towns which would be a suitable 'god child' and also historical information about the war record of appropriate battalions.<sup>151</sup> The list of adoptions demonstrated how effective this was in securing links between towns in Britain and France.<sup>152</sup>

Correspondence with the secretary of the League Gilmer in the Derby papers reveals the extent of Lord Derby's 'facilitation' of the process. Gilmer hoped the larger Merville would be adopted by Southport but Derby redrafted Gilmer's somewhat inflammatory letter to the council on the subject of which town to choose.<sup>153</sup>

The League's publicity was anxious to point out the difference between assisting the French and the full-scale rebuilding which would be done as a result of German reparations. The adoption scheme was aiming to provide immediate practical assistance for towns and villages, where the population was living in wooden or tin huts, where there was no water supply, and where livestock and food crops had to be built up again to sufficient standards.<sup>154</sup> The scheme was also aimed at shaming the government into demanding full reparations. Emphasis was laid on the connections which the towns had with their local battalions, where they fought and where their dead now lay. Historical information could be provided as to the war record of local battalions.<sup>155</sup>

The association with a French town was usually based on the actions of the Pals or territorial battalions and not the regular battalions of the regiment. This was partly due to the close affinity which a town was able to command with such a 'civilian' battalion. Thus, Burnley adopted the area around Colincamps, forever associated with the Accrington Pals,

most of whom were actually recruited in Burnley and Padiham. Similarly, Malvern adopted Landrecies; Evesham adopted Hebuterne; Worcester, Gouzeaucourt.<sup>156</sup>

The emphasis on local identification with the adopted town was mirrored across west Lancashire. While Liverpool, the heart of the King's regiment and headquarters of the division, adopted Givenchy, Preston had adopted La Bassee, and Blackpool, Neuve Chapelle, both towns in the Lys where Lancashire men had fought in 1915 and 1918.<sup>157</sup>

Liverpool had built a memorial hall close by the divisional cross, opened by Liverpool's lord mayor on 28 September 1924.<sup>158</sup> This was followed by a later gift from the Divisional Comrades Association, of stained glass windows and a peal of bells.<sup>159</sup> In 1929, the memorial was officially handed over to the care of the Imperial War Graves Commission at a ceremony attended by various units of the division. Twenty-six oak saplings were planted at the same time.<sup>160</sup>

As Liverpool was developing its adoption of Givenchy, Gorre and Essars, Derby proposed that Southport should adopt one of the other local villages with which it had direct links – Festubert – and so it was agreed.<sup>161</sup> Southport set up a public subscription to build a memorial hall in the village which, by May, had reached £938 5s 6d.<sup>162</sup> Bootle, Litherland and Great Crosby dallied with the scheme, but only Southport went through with it.<sup>163</sup>

By the end of the first year fifty-nine British towns had adopted seventy-nine villages in the devastated areas, and the aim for the second year was to double that number.<sup>164</sup> An additional sixteen adopters appeared in the second annual report helping seventy-nine French towns and villages.<sup>165</sup>

The British League of Help, as a national organisation, was short-lived. In July 1922 Lord Derby had first suggested winding up central operations due to the economic downturn, and perhaps pick up the campaign in a few years when things improved.<sup>166</sup> The amounts raised and work done do need to be seen in the context of the national economic crisis which was developing. A push for funds in early 1923 failed and in October a sudden call for an emergency meeting two days ahead of a scheduled full meeting shows that panic had set in. After this meeting of 17 October 1923 was adjourned due to lack of people, Derby wrote advising that insufficient funds meant the League should be wound up. The next item of correspondence in the collection is dated 4 December 1925 from a solicitor in London seeking advice on which papers of the City and County of London committee to keep and which to destroy.<sup>167</sup>

Audited by the London County Council (LCC), the League failed to produce accounts for 1926, and only unaudited ones for 1924 and 1925. Although the original aims were established when it was registered as a war charity on 10 May 1921, at some stage these objects were extended to include 'and to collect funds for the Somme Battlefield Memorial'.<sup>168</sup> It was this change of aims and the missing accounts of 1924, 1925 and

1926 (which would have referred to that fund) in which the LCC was most interested.

Due to the failure of the League to furnish accounts and also due to other inappropriate behaviour, the LCC decided in March 1927 that the League should be wound up. The LCC criticized the League on five specific points: there had been no meeting since 1923; there were delays in presenting audited accounts; particulars of addresses and officers had not been submitted when these had altered; Gilmer's salaries did not appear in the accounts, and his reversion to being 'honorary' secretary was unsatisfactory; there appeared no minute which gave discretion to the chair and treasurer to act, but paid staff had been employed without a committee resolution.<sup>169</sup> The LCC were prepared to avoid bankruptcy proceedings if the League wound itself up.

Despite this sad end to the charity, local work continued across the country for a number of years. More important for the aims of the League than a community hall were the links between the two towns. The second annual report referred to the links between the young people of Britain and France as being the 'most valuable propaganda for the friendship of the two nations'.<sup>170</sup> To further these links for the future, a party of schoolchildren from across the country was taken over to France in 1923. Originally Gilmer had planned to take 1,000 children for a fortnight,<sup>171</sup> but this was modified considerably to 350. The children were to be between thirteen and sixteen and whose fathers had been killed in the war. There were so many applications that the names were drawn from a hat.<sup>172</sup> Ten children from Southport went on this first visit over the Whit weekend, receiving a mayoral send-off at the town hall.<sup>173</sup> In an item commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the war, the *Southport Visiter* described the links with Festubert and recorded that these trips had continued every year up to the Second World War.<sup>174</sup> As well as visiting various battlefields and Festubert itself, the boys laid wreaths at the graves of two local teachers from Holy Trinity School who served in 7th King's – Sergeant Knowles at the Guards cemetery and Sergeant Loveridge in Bethune.<sup>175</sup> It seems, however, that only the link between Keighley and Poix du Nord continued through into our modern-day twinning regime.

## Conclusion

The local territorial battalion from Bootle's docks and Southport's sands established a joint identity at the Battle of Festubert in 1915. They relied upon this shared experience not only to enhance their morale at the Front but also to recall endeavour and sacrifice after the war, and to engage the local communities for whom they had fought, in that shared expression of community identity. Despite losses within the ranks, it was an identity fostered and encouraged by General Jeudwine in the Lancashire division,

while another level of identity continued after the war. The experience of the battalion and the division demonstrates not only that community identity survived during and after the war but that it also had a direct bearing on morale and combat effectiveness – at least in the eyes of the commanders in the field.

In economic, social and cultural terms, Bootle and Southport were very different, even divided, in 1913 but the shared experiences and the focus that two key military engagements brought to the communities survived the war and its aftermath. Arguably, if another conflict had not intervened, contacts between Southport in particular, and the French town of Festubert, would have continued much longer. In fact, some of those long lost links between towns across the country have been reviving in recent years and may form elements of the upcoming commemorative activity. The British League of Help as an organisation foundered but its message was straightforward – make the link between the military engagements and the burial places of a community's soldier sons and foster that identification. The local area's already well developed community identity was further enhanced as a result. And from the military perspective, post-war comradeship and organisation built around those same battles are signs that identity, morale, combat effectiveness, and home support were as important as bombs and bullets in winning the war.

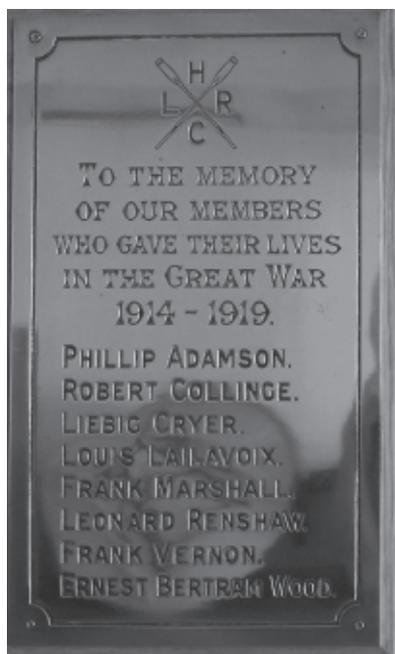
# The vagaries of memorialization



Liz Moore  
and  
Bob Moore

Figure 1:  
Memorial plaque  
at Hollingworth  
Lake Rowing  
Club. Copyright  
Liz and Bob  
Moore

The memorial plaque that commemorates the fallen of the Great War in the boathouse at Hollingworth Lake Rowing Club near Rochdale in Lancashire includes eight names. Seven were local men who fought with distinction in various regiments of the royal army, but the eighth, Louis Lailavoix, is something more of a mystery. His actual connections with the club are somewhat nebulous as he had only been elected as a ‘country’ member in July 1913 and there is no evidence that he actively engaged with the sport before his recall to the colours in 1914.<sup>1</sup> However, what marks out Lailavoix from his fellow servicemen on the memorial is that his sacrifice came in the service of his native France, begging the question of how a Frenchman came to be commemorated on an English war memorial in Lancashire.



Louis Lailavoix was born in southern France, in the hamlet of St Rambert-en-Bugey (Ain) on 1 July 1882. He was the son of Louis Lailavoix and Eugenie Fabry and had a twin sister, Louise. His father was a career civil servant who rose to prominence through a succession of posts as *agent voyer*, in charge of roads in the departments of Ain, Savoie, Rhône, and finally l’Aveyron. Included in his achievements was an honourable mention at the Universal Exhibition of 1889 for his 1/160,000 road map of the Somme region.<sup>2</sup> He was finally appointed to a high-ranking, central government position at the Ministry of the Interior in 1897 and relocated his family to 83 rue du Rome in the 17th arrondissement of Paris. Louis junior thus received the latter part of his secondary education in the capital, at the well-known Lycée Condorcet and then at the Sorbonne, where he graduated with a *Licence ès Lettres*. In the meantime, he also undertook his compulsory national service with the French army in the cohort of 1902. In these

respects, his career was not particularly remarkable or different from other young men of his class and social status in the metropolis, but this epitome of conventionality was soon to change.

By September 1906 at the age of twenty-four he had arrived in the United Kingdom and had married a Caroline Mary Dare in Hastings. His bride, the forty-nine-year old daughter of missionaries, already had several children from her first marriage – two of whom were older than Louis himself. Soon afterwards the couple, ostensibly minus the children (the youngest being about ten years old at the time), emigrated to Canada. Arriving in Quebec aboard the recently commissioned RMS *Empress of Ireland*,<sup>3</sup> they travelled across the continent and bought a parcel of land in Okanagan in British Columbia on 19 December 1906. There was some local speculation about them at the time of their arrival as a contemporary account indicates:

An air of mystery surrounded this suave young Frenchman, with his imperial beard and moustache, as he had no knowledge of farming or fruit growing. It seemed that there was no apparent motive for settling in this somewhat remote area of Western Canada, unless he was seeking a hideout.<sup>4</sup>

Louis was assumed by his neighbours to be around thirty-five years old and his wife reputedly over sixty – and with a drink problem. This was scandalous enough on its own, but within days, tongues were set wagging again when, in the depths of the Canadian winter, neighbours were summoned to the Lailavoix house where Caroline was found unconscious. Louis' explanation was that she had exhausted the supply of whiskey but then consumed a bottle of wood alcohol. The doctor certified her death as alcohol poisoning although the local press were kinder and attributed her demise to a heart attack. Her will left a reputedly substantial estate entirely to her husband, although this was subsequently and successfully challenged by some of her children.<sup>5</sup>

Local legend in Okanagan had it that Louis returned to France in the summer of 1907, having defaulted on the mortgage of his Canadian property. By 1908, he was back in Britain where he decided to continue his studies at University College London and also contracted a second marriage to Elizabeth Harnett, a twenty-six-year old Irishwoman from Glin, Limerick. The census of 1911 has them listed as living in a residential hotel in Upper Bedford Place in Bloomsbury with her mother, or grandmother, Jane Harnett, a widow aged seventy-one. Louis' occupation was listed as author and he had already published *La farce de Paquin fils. A play for children* and *Contes de ma*

Figure 2: Portrait of Louis Lailavoix in army uniform, from *University of Manchester roll of honour*, p. 40. Copyright Manchester University



*jeunesse. Upsala les trois étapes* in 1909.<sup>6</sup> The same year, he had taken up an appointment as assistant lecturer in French at the University of Manchester. Highly regarded by his employers, he enhanced his reputation by translating a key study, *Geoffrey Chaucer* by Émile Legouis, into English.<sup>7</sup> Subsequently promoted to lecturer, he pioneered a scheme for honours students in French at Manchester to spend a summer term in France, studying at the University of Caen.<sup>8</sup> This became the basis for what has now become commonplace in university language studies – namely that students spend part of their course in the linguistic region that they are studying – but in the first decade of the twentieth century, this was highly innovative. The minutes of Hollingworth Lake Rowing Club record his election as a ‘country’ member in July 1913 and as residing in Oxford Road, Manchester. His proposer, Leonard Renshaw, then club treasurer, had matriculated from the University of London and had just begun training to be a dentist at University of Manchester.<sup>9</sup> This suggests that he had come into contact with Renshaw or one of the other club members then studying at the university. The minutes that recorded his death in April 1916 indicated that his visits to the club had been very few and although ‘he had a desire to go in for sculling [he] did not get the opportunity of learning’.<sup>10</sup>

In the summer of 1914 he was recalled to the colours as a private in the 79e infantry regiment and promoted to sous-lieutenant in 1915. His unit first saw action at Morhange (Moselle) from 19 August 1914 where it was used to cover the retreat of the French army towards Nancy.<sup>11</sup> Subsequently stationed at Vitrimont (Meurthe et Moselle), the regiment was then moved to Flanders during November before returning to frontline duty in 1915 during the Artois offensive in May and in the Champagne offensive of September.<sup>12</sup>

In March 1916, after more than eighteen months of war, the 79e was deployed as part of the 20e Corps to help in defending the strategic fortress of Verdun from renewed German attacks, and it was here, near the small village of Malancourt (Meuse), that Lailavoix met his death. After recounting days of bombardments and enemy attacks on their lines, the regimental history describes the final stages of the battle as follows:

On 10 April at 11 am the regiment was once again called to resist, but soon they were no more than a handful of men. All the machine-gunners had been annihilated, they were overwhelmed to the right and to the left: they could no longer defend the south bank of the Forges stream: this was to be a disaster. Step by step the remnants withdrew to hill 304. In two battles they had helped stall the enemy offensive against Verdun. They had held, in accordance with the words of their orders, to the death.<sup>13</sup>

Louis was buried with other fallen comrades at the military cemetery at Farry, Esnes-en-Argonne where his body remains to this day. Back

in England, he left behind a widow and two young children, Louis, born in December 1914 and Austin, born in the spring of 1916. While this suggests he was able to return to England on leave, it is highly unlikely that he ever saw his second son.

His death was notified to his wife and reported with a short obituary in the *Manchester Guardian* on 27 April 1916, less than three weeks after the event, as well as in the *Rochdale Observer*.<sup>14</sup> His loss was keenly felt in the university, where the Senate minutes of 4 May recorded the members' 'sense of the valuable services rendered by Mr Lailavoix to the University [...] his distinction as a scholar and [...] the affection felt for him by his colleagues and pupils'.<sup>15</sup> He was one of four academic staff members who lost their lives in the Great War. Its roll of honour said of him that,

it is a most painful recollection to think that one so kind, so sympathetic, so devoted to the cause of learning, should sacrifice all, and plunge into the horrors and hardships of war. The University has suffered an unspeakable loss [...] The memory of such enthusiasm as Monsieur Lailavoix displayed in all his activities cannot but be an inspiration to all who knew him. Words are inadequate to describe the deep sympathy which we feel for those near and dear to him who have been left behind.<sup>16</sup>

This sympathy was given practical expression in the form of a fund to help his widow and children, which raised several hundred pounds. The preliminary list of donors included the then vice-chancellor Sir Henry Miers and many of the senior professors.<sup>17</sup> A second tribute came in the form of an *in memoriam* dedication to Lailavoix by two Manchester academics who published an edited collection of the poems of Sir William Alexander in 1921.<sup>18</sup>

Though a soldier in the French army, the name of Louis Lailavoix was nevertheless included on the memorials to the fallen at both the University of Manchester, where he had worked, and at Hollingworth Lake Rowing Club. Perhaps surprisingly, given the competition there



Figure 3: Military cemetery at Farry, Esnes-en-Argonne. Copyright Liz and Bob Moore

was for names to be added to French communal war memorials after the armistice, his name does not appear on the memorial at St Rambert-en-Bugy. Although born in his maternal grandfather's house, his parents were never resident in the village and thus he was never claimed by his birthplace as one of their fallen in the Great War. Although having fought and died for his country, Louis Lailavoix never commanded a public memorial to his sacrifice in France, save for the headstone that marks his grave in the cemetery at Farry. Yet in the north-west of England there are two memorials that bear his name, where he is listed, undifferentiated, among the fallen of his adopted country.



# The Great War in the North West: a historiography



Stephen  
Roberts

There has never been such a huge amount of popular interest in an historical event as that which currently exists in the Great War. Evidence for this judgement includes the popularity of societies dedicated to its study. For example, the Western Front Association has over 6,000 members in forty-eight local branches throughout Britain and Ireland and the Great War Society, whose members re-enact First World War military life, seems also to be flourishing. In addition, family history is immensely popular. Researchers are interested in finding Great War ancestors and often visit their graves on the Western Front. Battlefield tourism is a growth industry: there must now be more people earning a living from transporting, accommodating, feeding, guiding and educating battlefield visitors than ever before. Several of the great cemeteries and memorials, such as Tyne Cot and Thiepval, have had to be re-modelled and reinforced to accommodate the large numbers of visitors they receive.

There has also been an historiographical explosion relating to the Great War. New books on the subject appear every month. Every motorway, airport or station bookshop seems to contain a smattering of relevant titles. The noted military history publisher, Pen and Sword, currently has about 380 titles in the Great War section of its catalogue.

Paradoxically, however, it still seems as though the alleged words, uttered in the early 1970s by the first premier of the Chinese Republic, Zhou Enlai, that it was too soon to say what the effects of the French Revolution were, seem equally to apply to our current understanding of the effects of the Great War on British society.<sup>1</sup> The high level of popular interest in the Great War is not evidence of us having achieved a deep understanding but of our continuing quest to gain it. British people are still dealing with the shock of the Great War. They have not yet worked it out. It is not a matter of antiquarian curiosity, but a project: the popular fascination with ancestors on the Western Front is not morbid voyeurism or mawkish, pseudo-grief, but an effort to understand the impact of the past on the present, to empathize with the sufferings (which in many

cases were forgotten or suppressed by the exigencies of a second great conflict) of the previous two or three generations in order better to comprehend and cope with the present.

Equally, historical writing, though bountiful and improving in quality, has also failed thus far to help us understand the Great War. Due to the many excellent historians who have written brilliant books about British forces on all the fronts of the Great War and the multitude of so-called amateurs who have researched individual soldiers, units, formations, battles, military technology and hardware, it seems possible that there is not much more to say about the 'trenches': soldiers' routines, medicine, logistics, equipment, tactics, strategies, and command have all been investigated many times over. In fact, the depth and precision of existing knowledge on these matters might even be preventing us from understanding the Great War in the round, as a human experience. Military histories focus on combat during the four-year period. It is a truism, however, that most of the soldiers (even the regulars) were in fact civilians for most of their lives. Most had done some living before 1914 and even more after 1918. Additionally, everybody in Britain was at war between 1914 and 1918. By 1918, for every serviceman, there had been about six or seven civilians, who would have included family, friends, neighbours and former colleagues.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, in order better to understand the impact of the Great War, it is necessary to study life both before and after the conflict and to research the experiences of a greater variety of people in a wider range of places and circumstances.

The student should be aware of the classic works which explore the home front. Arthur Marwick's *The deluge* (1965) is the first of the best. As the title implies, he argued that the Great War transformed British attitudes to sex, youth, fashion, class, religion and politics. It is a classic work, but, in the light of subsequent research, we can see its weaknesses: his judgements are often sweeping and are based on a broad and disparate range of sources. In *Blighty*, which came out in 1996, Gerard J. DeGroot argues the opposite case to Marwick, claiming that any change which did occur had already begun before 1914 and that the British people survived the experience of total war by drawing on traditional institutions, attitudes and mores. DeGroot introduces his work with the interesting observation that both his and Marwick's works were reflections of their times. Marwick wrote during the supposedly radical years of the sixties, when everything was new and iconoclastic, whereas DeGroot was writing in the 90s, when even the ruling Conservative Party had rejected its radical leader and was groping towards more traditional values. He admitted that *Blighty* was based on a detailed review of specialist research which had occurred since *The deluge* was published. His bibliography is thorough and still relevant, but his work still leaves us longing for a more specific enquiry based on primary research.

Our wishes begin to be realized in *A kingdom united* by Catriona Pennell (2012) – the most highly recommended and valuable work in this review. Pennell spent three years exploring the attitudes of the British people to the declaration of war in 1914 by analyzing the words of a total of 441 people, including ‘diarists, correspondents, authors, poets and élite figures’ from all over the United Kingdom. She rightly concludes that: ‘Amongst 40 million people there can be no single “experience” [...] One thing is certain: an entire population’s feelings cannot be adequately described by the monolithic label of war enthusiasm.’ It is an awe-inspiring piece of research which demonstrates the necessity for us to study many and varied contemporary sources in order to begin to get a true understanding of how war affected people.

If we wish to adopt Pennell’s methods, we can begin by reading some contemporary accounts for ourselves in such works as *All quiet on the home front* by Van Emden and Humphries (2003) and *The road home* by Max Arthur (2009). The latter contains moving accounts by disabled and unemployed ex-servicemen who found that Britain was far from being ‘a land fit for heroes’. These works might motivate us to get into the field and discover for ourselves the multitude of sources still waiting to be analyzed which lie in archives, libraries, museums and private collections all over the country.

There is a need for more local research. Of course, in one sense, it is nothing new: during the 1920s and 30s, a multitude of books about local battalions, regiments and divisions was published, many of them written by former officers. The majority are well researched, accurate and dispassionate, if dry and punctilious. Indeed, many are so loyal to the military records that they are the first point of reference for ‘amateur’ military historians and genealogists. As such, they are almost treated like primary sources. They do not on the whole, however, make much, if any, reference to the social, cultural, economic and political contexts of the soldiers concerned.

The 1970s and 80s saw the rise of ‘new history’: researchers became interested in all aspects of human experience, using previously untouched source material. Local and family history became increasingly popular and even military history became a bit less élitist and more inclusive. Local enthusiasts, often possessing little or no formal historical training, began to write about the Pals battalions, using not just official records housed in The National Archives, but local newspapers and items written by the soldiers themselves. Turner’s *Accrington Pals* and Maddocks’s *Liverpool Pals* were the first ones to deal with the North West. Stedman’s *Manchester Pals* and *Salford Pals* came a bit later and are particularly thorough and scholarly. The author is a former history teacher whose interest grew out of his deep affinity for his home area and the past generations who dwelled therein. His enthusiasm has enabled him to become an authority on the part of the Somme battlefield where

his subjects fought. Andrew Jackson has built on Turner's work and investigated additional sources relating to Accrington soldiers, including local artillery units as well as the infantry. John Hutton was MP for Barrow and is now a member of the House of Lords; his study of soldiers from Furness who served in the 7th, 8th and 11th Battalions of the King's Own Royal Lancaster regiment is currently the only known attempt to explore the experiences of men from anywhere north of Preston.

Cumbria appears to be under-researched. Melvin Bragg made a valuable contribution in 1976 by putting the words of four Great War veterans of the Border regiment from Wigton near Carlisle into chapter 3 of his book *Speak for England*. But we are left longing for more accounts and are forced to lament the failure of oral historians to record more interviews in the region while the veterans were still alive. There is no shortage of local sources and there are several enthusiastic researchers, some of whose work can be viewed on the internet.<sup>3</sup> However, no regional or local history from Cumbria concentrating on the Great War currently exists, although plans are in hand to commemorate the centenary in Kendal with an exhibition based on primary research.

Important and readable though they are, currently available local military works do not go far into the soldiers' backgrounds or into the long term effects of the war in any great depth, but they should be read by all Great War researchers, due to their concentration upon that singular and remarkable phenomenon – the creation of the new armies in 1914 and how men were transformed from citizens to soldiers. Most are beautifully illustrated with contemporary photographs and maps and reinforced with soldiers' personal accounts; there are lists of names and short biographies which can aid further research. On the same theme, Peter Simkins's *Kitchener's armies* must not be missed. Simkins is a professional military historian and president of the Western Front Association who worked for many years at the Imperial War Museum and helped several of the Pals authors to get started. His work can usefully be supplemented by Richard Holmes's *Tommy* and Lewis-Stempel's *Six weeks* for its sympathetic treatment of officers in the Great War. These works share an important virtue – their 'bottom up' perspective.

Happily, it is relatively easy for the reader to develop his or her own 'bottom up' understanding by reading some of the many personal writings from the Great War. One of the most remarkable collections in existence relates to the North West. It was compiled by Doreen Priddey and is the diary and selected letters of her grandfather, Walter Williamson, who came from the Stockport area and served with the 6th Cheshires. Walter loved to write. His comrades teased him about it, but it clearly helped him to stay sane. His diary is one of the most detailed in existence and gives us a vivid picture of the lives of British soldiers in France and Flanders. It is not clear whether Walter rewrote the diary after the war based on contemporary notes or whether he intended his

work to be published, but he was obviously a humorous, humane and literary man, with an acute sense of place and a love of people. He was sceptical without being nihilistic and irreverent without being mutinous. He believed that he needed to play his part in the war in order to ensure that his son would never have to fight in a similar conflict. Just about the only time he expressed anger was when he talked about how the strikers on the home front were letting the soldiers down and when his wife failed to tell him whether she had seen the regimental colours being paraded through Stockport on their way to the front to join the men, giving us a fascinating insight into the kind of conservative attitudes which, as DeGroot claimed, seemed to be bolstered instead of shattered by the war. Walter was a typical lower-middle-class soldier, but he was also unique. His writings enlighten us about the banal routines as well as the extraordinary risks, discomforts and trauma of life on the Western Front, but, most touchingly of all, they make us think about the depth, diversity and resilience of human beings.

A welcome attempt to link military and civilian experiences of the war appeared in *History Today* in 2002. Remarkably, it was an article based on an undergraduate dissertation written by Mike Flinn, which focused on the role of the local press in making civilians on Merseyside aware of what was happening on the Western Front. It is an eye-opening and pioneering treatment of the issue, which, oddly, did not seem to lead to any notable further work in the North West which either copied Flinn's methodology or was based on local newspapers. However, Helen McCartney's *Citizen soldiers* appeared in 2005. It explores the 6th and 10th Battalions of the King's (Liverpool) regiment. In common with Catriona Pennell, the author is an academic historian who found the time and resources to be able to explore a wide range of primary sources. Her work is a true historiographical landmark because it explores the social background, culture and relationships of the men in the two units and then discusses how these factors enabled them to cope with the stresses of war. It is a fine demonstration of the way in which good history is rigorous, but at the same time deeply humane, sympathetic and moving. It contains many useful tables, helpful footnotes and a compendious bibliography which make it an invaluable resource for anybody wishing to understand people in war and to carry their researches further. Indeed, it builds on Flinn's work by exploring the fascinating singularity, diversity and dynamism of Merseyside and invites further study of local soldiers and civilians.

Given the popularity of local and family history, we might expect to be able to find a multitude of studies of communities during the Great War, but this is not the case, certainly not in the north-west of England at any rate. Some efforts were made in the inter-war years to record the contributions of local areas to the victory of 1918. *The Birkenhead victory souvenir* and *Todmorden in the Great War 1914–1918* are the best

examples. Despite containing important details about who was doing what, where, when and why, they are very much works which reflect the official line of the ruling class of their era, being uncritical, deferential, and triumphalist.

Very few works seem to have been written in the post-Second World War era dealing with local experiences of the Great War. Bryant's article of 1988 about Bolton at the declaration of the war is similar to that by Flinn about the Merseyside press – it successfully offered us all a new line of enquiry and a different body of sources. Again, however, nobody seems to have taken up the challenge and looked at other places in a similar fashion, apart from the late Geoffrey Moorhouse with his *Hell's foundations: a town, its myths and Gallipoli* which came out in 1992. It is one of the most powerful and beautifully written books in English about a town anywhere in the world. It deals with Bury, where Moorhouse went to school and, in the words of Terry Eagleton writing in the *New Statesman*, is 'A subtle and moving exploration of the way that memories of slaughter and loss shaped the town's post-first world war identity.' Indeed, Moorhouse's use of personal stories as well as general perspectives is impressive and inspiring and offers us an example for what can be achieved when the researcher combines sympathy, determination, imagination and rigour.

Having said that, there are quite a few books, again written by enthusiasts from outside the academy, which deal with the experiences of people from the North West. Steven Howarth's book explores the lives of the casualties from the school where he is head of history – Ermysted's Grammar School in Skipton. It is based on primary sources from the school's records and from The National Archives and manages, as far as possible, to bring the men, who hitherto had simply been names on a list, back to life. David Hill's book about the casualties from Macclesfield Grammar School has a similar format but is not as well written as Howarth's work. It should also be noted that Birkenhead School has a very good section on its Old Boys' website<sup>4</sup> which contains biographies and photographs of all of the school's Great War casualties. Stephen McGreal's study of the men of Moreton and David Horne's recent similar work on Higher Bebington (both in Wirral) combine good knowledge of local and military history in order to commemorate and contextualize local war dead. As we approach the centenary of the declaration of the war, we should probably expect many more commemorative works of this nature to appear, but we should also encourage more integrated approaches which deviate from the traditional routes and chart new territory.

An interesting attempt to do just that is the novel *Clay* which was written by Gladys Mary Coles and was published in 2010. Even though it contains one or two anachronisms, the work is well researched. It follows the experiences of a young Merseysider of Welsh ancestry called

William Manderson, who served on the Western Front, was gassed and consequently discharged from the army. The scenes on the Western Front are probably the least convincing within the whole work, but the exploration of William's personal sufferings, including his ambiguous relationships with his best friend Matthew and his sister-in-law Elizabeth is subtle, nuanced and affecting. The novel conveys a deep sense of place as, apart from the Western Front and Liverpool, the characters also visit Wirral and North Wales. Significant local events, such as the 1917 national Eisteddfod which was held in Birkenhead Park and visited by Lloyd George, and the 1919 police strike and subsequent labour unrest, are shown to have affected the lives of the protagonists. Essentially, the book tries to do something not yet attempted by historians from the North West – to study the effects of the Great War on people in a holistic fashion. Coles appears to have been the first person thus far from our region to attempt to integrate civilian and military experiences and to trace the effects of these on post-war developments. It is far from being a great work of literature, but it is a fine provocation to us to do something we have not done before and perhaps with a little more empathy and imagination than have so far been applied.

The sources and the skills necessary for us to be able to research the lives of our ancestors before, during and after the Great War exist in abundance. As the work gets done, we will begin to find fascinating and probably quite surprising answers to our questions about the war's impact on society and this will be the most fitting way to begin to commemorate its centenary.

## Bibliography

### **Studies relevant to the North West**

This section contains every study of people's experiences of the Great War in the North West which was published since the Second World War of which the author is aware. It is evident that very few works attempt to combine civilian and military perspectives. Naturally, there must be numerous privately published works which he has not yet discovered and, therefore, do not appear here. Two earlier works about Birkenhead and Todmorden are included as examples of attempts to describe the experiences of north-western English towns in the Great War.

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This section contains a selection of books and articles which were published since the Second World War and which broadly deal with the human experience of the Great War, whether this be in a military or a civilian context. Some items attempt to combine the two areas and some offer a longer term perspective of the issues, particularly in relation to the development of working-class consciousness and labour movements; others offer original insights and interpretations which are or were groundbreaking or controversial.

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### **A selection of websites which deal with the Great War**

There are very many websites about the Great War. The following is a list of those which this author has found to be useful when researching both military and civilian experiences. Most of them contain links to other resources.

*BBC History World War One*: Very good explanations of the history of the war with virtual tours of the trenches and discussions about controversial issues.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwone/>

*The Commonwealth War Graves Commission*: essential information about British and Commonwealth cemeteries and memorials all over the world, with an invaluable searchable database.

<http://www.cwgc.org/>

*firstworldwar.com*: a multimedia history of the war with good explanations of its origins and developments and numerous primary sources, including contemporary recordings of music, catalogued by year of composition and performance.

<http://www.firstworldwar.com/>

*Government First World War centenary website*: news of plans for official commemorations with links to the organisations involved.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/first-world-war-centenary>

*Imperial War Museum First World War centenary*: contains much useful information about the war, news of events all over the country and many links to other organisations and programmes.  
<http://www.1914.org/>

See also *Lives of the Great War*. It is an opportunity to bring together thousands of life stories from all over the world; register your interest at <http://www.livesofthefirstworldwar.org/>

*The Long Long Trail*: an encyclopaedic resource about British forces in the Great War with advice on researching individual soldiers, designed and written by Chris Baker, a freelance military historian.  
<http://www.1914-1918.net/>

Also see his *Great War Forum* <http://1914-1918.invisionzone.com/forums/index.php>

*The National Archives First World War sources for history*: excellent selection of primary sources relating to Britain and the Great War:  
<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/firstworldwar/index.htm>

*Oxford University digital poetry archive*: contains over 7,000 items of text, audio and video for teaching, learning and research.  
<http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/wwlit/>

*The University of Birmingham Centre for War Studies links page*: Comprehensive list of websites relevant to the Great War, including regimental museums.  
<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/warstudies/links/ww1-links.aspx>

*The Western Front Association website*: contains plenty of information about the war and about the association and all its branches, with many valuable links.  
<http://www.westernfrontassociation.com/>

*The First World War document archive*: huge collection of primary sources from all over the world.  
[http://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Main\\_Page](http://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Main_Page)

The following websites are useful for researchers interested in the north-west of England. It can be seen that there does not yet appear to be a website which deals with the experiences of both civilians and soldiers from any one area. This is something which this author hopes to put right in the near future with regard to the West Kirby area of Wirral.

Local regimental museums may be found on the above University of Birmingham page.

*Birkenhead School Old Boys*: biographies of old boys who died in the Great War with photographs.  
<http://www.obs.org.uk/memorials-world-war-1>

*Carl's Cam*: Photographs and transcriptions of every war memorial within the historic county of Cheshire; it has a searchable surname database and is very useful for anyone researching the impact of the Great War on local communities.  
<http://www.carlscam.com/>

*Kendal Pals*: Information about the 8th Battalion border regiment.  
<http://www.freewebs.com/kendalpals/>

*Lonsdale Pals*: information about the 11th (Service) Battalion border regiment.  
<http://www.freewebs.com/granatloch/>

*More than a name: the stories of the men from the Stockport area who fought and died in the Great War 1914–1918*: Brief biographical details of each soldier, but very little about the social and economic or local context.  
<http://www.stockport1914-1918.co.uk/>

# 'From Street to Trench: a World War that shaped a Region'



Matt  
Brosnan

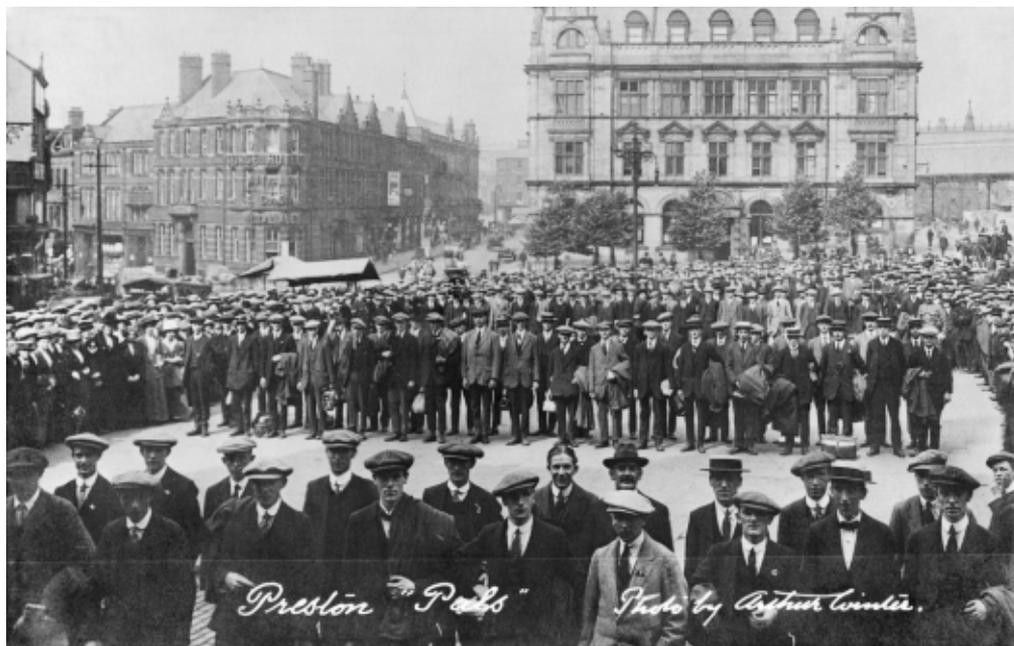
Exhibition at the Imperial War  
Museum North, Salford  
5 April 2014–31 May 2015

The First World War was a conflict that shaped Britain and the modern world. The centenary of the war, beginning in only a few months, represents both a challenge and an opportunity for the Imperial War Museum (IWM). In an age where the direct experience of this monumental conflict has recently left living memory, IWM needs to interpret the war both for visitors familiar with it and others for whom it is an increasingly distant event. The centenary is a chance to explore the war that was at the heart of IWM's foundation and continues to be central to the museum's remit today.

In approaching this task, IWM has been able to call upon the depth and breadth of its collections. These include art, audio interviews, documents, exhibits, film, photographs and printed material all related to the experience of the First World War as witnessed by people from a huge variety of backgrounds. IWM has been able to use this rich material to develop a range of new displays, including new First World War galleries at IWM London.

Artefacts from the collection, supplemented with significant loans from local institutions and individuals, form the backbone of the new exhibition 'From Street to Trench: a World War that shaped a Region' at IWM North in Manchester. This exhibition is the first in a programme of displays and events at IWM to mark the centenary of the First World War. It focuses on the wartime experience of the North West, exploring both the common themes of the conflict and aspects that were unique to the region. IWM North has now existed for over a decade and has built up a loyal regional audience. In staging an exhibition that looks at the experiences of people across the region – from Carlisle to Chester and from Liverpool to Manchester – IWM North shows the huge contribution local people made to the war effort and the significant impact it had on them.

'From Street to Trench' begins in the decade before the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. Using captivating film footage from the North



West Film Archive, the exhibition presents snapshots of life in the region before the war. Visitors can watch scenes of working life, from textiles to mining and dock workers busily unloading cargo at Manchester Ship Canal in 1912, the banks of which are now home to IWM North. There are also clips of everyday life and leisure, including football at Old Trafford, a royal visit to Blackpool and a bustling Stockport market. As these films show, pre-war life could be hard for the communities of the North West, yet there was a strong sense of patriotism and both regional and national identity.

Britain declared war on Germany on 4 August 1914. A section entitled 'Waking up to war' explores how men and women across the North West flocked to the flag to support the war effort. Men volunteered in their thousands for the armed forces, with a wall of posters showing how this recruitment campaign continued until the introduction of conscription in 1916. Regimental badges highlight how the traditional army regiments of the region expanded hugely, incorporating newly formed 'Pals' battalions that allowed friends, relatives and workmates to serve together. Other artefacts show how men could be recruited in music halls or at football matches and also provide insight into the months of training they faced after joining up. A letter written by soldier William Anderson, a stained glass designer from Blackpool, describes the pain of being away from his wife and child: 'My opinion is that duty and service, while all right and good, are poor compensation for the separation'.

Women also volunteered to work for the war effort. The exhibition includes recruitment posters for newly formed auxiliary military services

Figure 1:  
Volunteer recruits for the 'Preston Pals' parade in their civilian clothes in Market Square, Preston, 7 September 1914. IWM HU53725



Figure 2: The station mistress and two porters of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway at Irlams o'th Heights station, Salford, 1917. Imperial War Museum Q109840

and the Women's Land Army, which women joined from 1917. A group of personal items show how two sisters and one brother of the Quirk family from Manchester all contributed to the war in different ways. Gladys Quirk, the eldest sister, described their efforts in a handwritten poem: 'My brother is a soldier [...] My sister is a civil clerk, helping her country too [...] I'm just a munitions worker, toiling 8 hours a day'.

The First World War was the first conflict to mobilize whole societies in this way. The 'On the street' section expands on this theme by focusing on the wide-ranging impact the war had on life at home. The British government introduced new laws – most famously the Defence of the Realm Act (DORA) – that gave it greater control over people's lives. Many of the fundamentals of civilian life were altered, sometimes permanently. Artefacts highlight how everything from banknotes to pub opening hours changed during the war.

Women worked in a greater variety of roles than before the war. In Manchester it became a more familiar sight to see women commuting to work on trains, buses and trams that were now also staffed by women. Women also worked behind the scenes in technical roles. A hat and badge worn by a female ticket collector of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway shows how one of the region's largest rail companies employed many women in wartime. Children from the North West made their own contribution, including writing to soldiers serving at the front and helping to raise money for local charity-funded hospitals. A selection of board games and models from the First World War period shows how even toys bore the war's imprint.

'On the street' also explores how convalescent hospitals sprung up across the North West. Country houses and church halls were converted to accommodate and treat the many injured soldiers evacuated away from the battlefield. Visitors will see a surviving hospital bed borrowed from the National Trust property Dunham Massey, just outside Manchester, which housed one of these temporary hospitals. Letters and personal artefacts give insight into the experiences of patients in the region's hospitals and the medical staff who treated them. Among the latter are Mary and Kathleen Duckworth, a mother and daughter who helped to establish and run an auxiliary hospital in their home town of Heywood in Lancashire. Their story sums up the huge effort that many people put into supporting the war effort.

However, not everyone believed fighting the First World War was right. Conscientious objectors (COs) were those men who refused to be conscripted into the armed forces on moral, religious or political grounds. Throughout Britain around 16,000 COs were registered in wartime, facing a sequence of tribunals and imprisonment or some form of alternative service. As a region with a strong labour movement, the North West had its own contingent of COs. Amongst these was Euclid Thursby, one of ninety-three COs from the small town of Nelson in Lancashire. Later generations of Thursby's family have loaned photographs and an autograph book containing messages written by fellow COs at Wakefield Work Centre, a disused prison where these men were forced to work.

'On the street' also explores how civilians increasingly felt under threat. The North West experienced two air raids by German Zeppelin airships, with bomb fragments and other artefacts from a raid on Bolton in September 1916 on display. A Salford police register shows how the government kept tabs on German nationals living in Britain immediately after the outbreak of war. Many were later held in internment camps, as depicted by German artist George Kenner, who drew scenes at his camp on the Isle of Man. As well as being targeted directly by air raids for the first time, civilians also had to face food shortages due to attacks on British supply ships by German U-boats. This led to the first introduction of rationing in 1918.

Many of these changes on the home front were connected to the necessity of harnessing industry for the war effort. In 'Feeding the fire', the exhibition explores the North West's wide-ranging contribution to the huge industrial effort needed to support the war, illustrated by shells, hand grenades and rifle cartridges manufactured by the region's factories. As a traditional centre for the textile industry, companies in the North West also made a huge array of military and civilian service uniforms and insignia, examples on display ranging from a tunic of the Women's Police Service to specialist gold-embroidered Royal Navy insignia.

The region's industry also produced specialist equipment. Two camera guns made by Thornton-Pickard of Altrincham were used to take vital

Figure 3:  
Anna Airy, 'The  
'L' Press. Forging  
the jacket of an  
18-inch gun:  
Armstrong-  
Whitworth  
works,  
Openshaw, 1918'.  
Art.IWM ART  
2272



aerial photographs of battlefields from British planes. One of the largest objects in the exhibition is a flamethrower used in a naval raid in 1918 that was made by a Manchester firm more accustomed to making equipment to extinguish fires. Similarly, a small trench periscope used by troops to see over the top of a front line trench without being exposed to enemy fire is a prime example of wartime adaptability. It was made by Duerr's, a Manchester company that made jam in peacetime and still does today.

This section of the exhibition also examines how the region's industrial workforce changed. Women filled the roles left by men hurriedly drafted into the armed forces. As production intensified, some men with specialist skills later returned to industry. They worked alongside increasing numbers of women, who made a varied contribution. This is illustrated by a montage of photographs taken in 1918 showing women in the North West involved in making essential products from army ration biscuits to rubber mouthpieces for gas masks. A range of small metal components made by women workers highlights the technical skills that women were rapidly acquiring. However, film and audio clips reveal how industrial work, particularly with chemicals, could be hazardous.

The destination of much of this industrial output was the fighting fronts. The 'Witnessing war' section focuses on the experiences of people from the North West who served in the armed forces. The First World War was the first conflict to be fought on land, at sea and in the air, as well as around the globe. Men from the North West, many of whom had



never left the region, were to fight and serve in unfamiliar and highly dangerous locations.

Amongst the numerous personal stories and objects on display here, seen as visitors pass underneath the looming presence of a replica Sopwith Camel biplane, is a fascinating collection of items relating to a young pilot from Manchester. Leonard Riddell joined up aged seventeen, eventually flying planes with the Royal Air Force above the battlefields of the Western Front. In August 1918, Riddell crashed behind enemy lines, breaking his leg. He was held as a Prisoner-of-War (POW) in Germany until being repatriated in 1919. His photograph album, diary, letters and other documents have never been displayed before.

Items ranging from a flag flown from HMS *Birkenhead* during the Battle of Jutland in 1916 to drawings by a sailor-artist who served off the coast of Africa illustrate the range of experience of sailors at sea. In letters to his sister, pre-war professional footballer Teddy Ashton describes the twenty-four-hour daylight of northern Russia when serving in HMS *Albemarle*. By contrast, Salford-born sailor Thomas Clare witnessed action in the largest naval battle of the war at Jutland in the North Sea.

The global nature of the First World War is also explored through personal items of soldiers from the North West who served in Gallipoli, Mesopotamia, Salonika and Africa. These include a dramatic account of the famous 'Lancashire Landing', when men of the 1st Battalion,

Figure 4: A working party of the Manchester Regiment move up to the front line near Serre, France, 1917. IWM Q1792

Lancashire fusiliers landed at 'W' Beach on Cape Helles in Gallipoli on 25 April 1915, suffering heavy casualties. The battalion was awarded six Victoria Crosses for extreme gallantry. Also on display is a letter written by future prime minister Clement Attlee from a dugout on the front line in Gallipoli and souvenirs made and gathered by Jack Finnigan, a Lancashire soldier who served in the 40-degree Centigrade heat of Mesopotamia.

It was in France and Belgium that most of the soldiers from the North West experienced military service. Visitors can see personal artefacts related to eight individual soldiers who experienced the dangers of the Western Front at first hand. These include Wilfred Walton, an officer wounded during the Battle of the Somme in July 1916, and Arthur Burke, who was killed near Ypres in October 1917. On loan from the Bodleian Library are original manuscript poems written by Wilfred Owen, an officer of the Manchester Regiment who became one of the most famous soldier-poets of the war after his death in November 1918. The gallantry of local soldiers is represented through the medals and personal items of two Victoria Cross recipients, Felix Baxter VC and John Davies VC, and the Albert Medal for saving life on land of Victor Brookes, the latter recently donated to IWM by his family. All three are incredible stories of bravery and self-sacrifice.

The exhibition concludes with 'Aftershocks', which highlights the impact of the First World War on the North West both in the short and long term. As Rhoda McGuire wrote in a letter to her sister, the armistice of 11 November 1918 was met with a mixture of joy and disbelief in Liverpool: 'Hurrah! [...] Peace at last. I think we have all gone mad. Such a day! It seems too good to be true [...] we can hardly realise that the war is over [...] All shops and offices closed immediately and the streets were thronged with people. You could walk on their heads'.

In the years that followed, people had to try to come to terms with a conflict that had left few corners of the region, or of the country, untouched. On display is a gold locket kept by the fiancée of a lost soldier. There is also a large bronze plaque marking the loss of members of a Lake District climbing club. These items show how memorialization to lost loved ones took many different forms. Archive film footage of regional peace pageants and unveilings of war memorials in the 1920s is displayed alongside modern day photographs of local memorials and sites with First World War significance. A photographic piece by the artist Chris Harrison depicts the war memorial in the town centre of modern day Bolton. It forms a fitting end point to the exhibition, emphasizing how these sites are part of the everyday fabric of a region. Sometimes little noticed, sometimes a focus of annual remembrance ceremonies, they are always there. In that way, they represent the First World War in our collective memory – not constantly at the front of our minds, but always remembered as a huge and tumultuous event in our region and nation's history.

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# 'A Land Fit For Heroes: War and the Working Class, 1914–1918'

Exhibition at the People's History  
Museum, Manchester  
24 May 2014 – 1 February 2015



Chris  
Burgess,  
Josh Butt,  
Beccy  
Crosby  
and Helen  
Antrobus

Anniversaries offer museums the opportunity to hook an audience already interested in a particular subject. But a century on since the outbreak of the Great War, the risk of the possibility of 'war fatigue' is ever-present. Further problems remain, for example in emphasizing all too frequently the loss of life in the trenches, which has tended to obscure wider implications of war, be they social or political.

Collections at the People's History Museum reflect this societal change. While regimental, and indeed, national institutions can examine the horror of conflict, here at the People's History Museum we felt it important to examine the complexity of the working-class experience of war and highlight how the reasons for participating in the conflict were many and various, and the outcomes disparate. Most of the struggles that we are made aware of from the Great War are those of the soldiers. Exhibitions usually explore the history of the trenches: the disease, the depression and the squalor. However, though this aspect of the war is fascinating and important, there is rarely any commemoration of the war at home, and how the Great War entirely changed day-to-day life in Britain for the working class. The collections here at PHM demonstrate how the cultural legacy of the Great War was much more than simply uniforms and munitions, and reflects on the war's huge impact on society both at home and abroad. This article charts the use of those collections in the changing exhibition 'A Land Fit for Heroes: War and the Working Class, 1914–1918' held between May 2014 and February 2015 at the People's History Museum in Manchester.

One of the unspeakable (or at least unspoken) truisms about the Great War is how popular it was. By January 1916 and the introduction of conscription, over 2.5 million had joined up to fight. The endless recruiting posters show the state's reaction to the need to sign up men, but the majority of Britain's working classes held a deep-seated patriotism. Recruiting figures alone were testament to this, but it did not end with men signing up. For Mrs Pankhurst, leader of the Women's Social and



Political Union, patriotism was evident with the halting of the campaign for the vote in order that women could contribute fully to the war effort. The government, having hitherto largely ignored women's calls for

Figure 1: Women on the Great Women's March gather on Whitehall. Courtesy of the People's History Museum



Figure 2: Detail of souvenir napkin. Courtesy of the People's History Museum



Figure 3: Robert Blatchford.  
Courtesy of the Working Class Movement Library

in his own newspaper the *Clarion*, he wrote that ‘the Germans [...] are a race of treacherous homicidal robbers.’ This anti-German feeling as reason for popular support for the war cannot be ignored. A photograph in the PHM collection shows a Russian shopkeeper emphasize his nationality for fear of being looted by an angry mob fuelled by German atrocities such as the attacks on Hartlepool, Scarborough and Whitby, and the sinking of the *Lusitania* in 1915.

involvement, was forced to listen when Pankhurst organized a huge march to demand war work for women. Images of the day show the scale of the demonstration, while a souvenir handkerchief mentioned the route and the spectacle.

Those collections dedicated to people’s history demonstrate that patriotism was not antipathetic to socialism. Mrs Pankhurst was an avowed Conservative but committed socialists contributed to the recruiting effort too. Famously, the financier and MP Horatio Bottomley held large recruiting meetings, but so too did the founder of the *Clarion* movement Robert Blatchford.

He split his own organisation with its jingoistic anti-German message of survival. Commenting



Figure 4: “We are Russians”.  
Courtesy of the People’s History Museum

Joining the army was a chance to travel the world. In 1914 the working class endured long hours, uncertain employment and exhausting labour. The army offered the opportunity for a regular wage and a chance to escape the grimness of working-class life. War offered escape and excitement.

For many of those involved in the war it was simple. Many volunteers were motivated by the sense that if men were needed to win the war, why should they stay while others fought for them? The future Labour leader Clement Attlee reflected in his memoirs that ‘it appeared wrong to me to let others make a sacrifice while I stood by.’ The sacrifice and suffering served to stiffen the resolve to see the war through to the end and created an intolerance of defeat and of any who stood against the war effort. Those that stayed at home were viewed as ‘shirkers’ or cowards. There were 16,000 objectors in total (four times fewer than in the Second World War), many of whom objected on religious rather than political grounds. This group was a target for abuse and many spent several years in prison. The museum holds a significant collection relating to the conscientious objector Duncan Whiteman including some important photographs.

A focus on the war in Europe has marginalized the contribution women made to the war. Despite a glut of new war monuments there remains a lack of official recognition to working women’s achievements during the Great War. Women on monuments tend only to express experiences of grief as mothers and widows; the Five Sisters Window at York minster, which has been described as a ‘women’s cenotaph’, remains a rare exception.<sup>1</sup> The photograph collections of female workers at the People’s History Museum and at Manchester Central Library offer the chance to mark women’s war work and present a history rarely seen in museums or galleries. A photograph of women netting mines for the navy, for instance offers a rare image of women participating in vital work of which little object evidence survives given the censored and secret nature of the work.



Figure 5: Netting mines for the navy. Courtesy of People’s History Museum

Surviving photographs depicting women working help commemorates their contribution to the war effort and promote and understanding of the war beyond the narrow confines of military history.

The Labour History Archive and Study Centre at the People's History Museum contains the complete correspondence of the War Emergency Workers' National Committee (WEWNC). Within the collection are the personal stories of those who fought the war on the factory floor and in the buses. One letter tells of a twenty-four-year old soldier's widow who had to get up at 3.30 each morning to start her job as a ticket collector in London. Others reveal the poor wages and working conditions women had to endure. The presentation of these personal stories serves a similar purpose to the photographs; they bring the past to the present creating exhibitions that act as memorial sites. Similar to photographs and documents, objects have the capacity to depict women's working experiences. The transport sector saw the biggest increase in female employees from pre-war figures. A certificate of service was awarded to

Mrs W. Fuirman for her work as a conductor in London. Women in industry also made up a large proportion of the working sector during the Great War. A number of badges were created by unions and societies to commemorate their war work, such as the Society of Women Welders badge.

This union sought to confront the issue of pay. Like many other female workers, women welders did not receive the same rate of pay as their male counterparts, although the union did eventually secure a pay increase of 9d per hour. The badge serves a dual purpose in commemorating the women welders for their war work as well as celebrating the achievements of the union in securing an increase in the rate of pay; a step closer towards gender equality in the workplace.

The objects reveal the diverse experiences of women's war work. Exhibiting such objects is important because they serve as a form of memorialization for women's contribution to the war effort. It enables us to remember and observe women's war work away from the war-like rhetoric of 'the battle' of the sexes. While contextualizing these objects within one museum space offers little new information on working women to what historians already know, such objects offer the visitor a wider understanding of women's war work. Moreover, the displays encapsulate and epitomize working women's experiences and serve to act as a corrective for the lack of commemoration on war monuments. This allows all to appreciate the sacrifices and achievements working-class women had made, as well as to enrich our understanding of women's wartime lives.

The papers of the WEWNC reveal the plight of many of the populous during the campaign. The personal stories taken from the letters sent



Figure 6: Society of Women Welders badge. Courtesy of the People's History Museum



Figure 7:  
National Union  
of Railwaymen,  
Hither Green.  
Courtesy of the  
People's History  
Museum

to Jim Middleton, secretary of the committee, highlight the struggles of those away from the trenches, and those still at home. Many people were affected by the food shortages, the deaths of those on the front, and the many other problems. The letters also show the range of people who suffered; from young children experiencing lack of fruit and vitamins, to women whose dependency allowances were cut off. One example of this is the case of Thomas William Young, imprisoned for stealing sixpence-worth of apples. Middleton dealt with all of these complaints and issues, and suffered a nervous breakdown due to the stress and pressure he was under. The WEWNC stood up for the working class when nobody else would; they provided the means for them to have their voice heard. Whilst sometimes, in the case of Thomas William Young, it was unable to intervene, the WEWNC was dedicated to protecting the interests and the rights of the working class.

Whether it be through working in the factories or volunteering to fight, working-class support was not limited to an individuals. Trade-union support for the war was extensive. By Christmas 1914 250,000 trade unionists had volunteered to join the armed forces, and trade-union leaders such as the John Ward of the Navvies and the Agricultural Labourers' Union leader George Edwards actively recruited their members to the colours. Not all unions were active recruiters but many were extremely proud of their participation in the war. The National Union of Railwaymen, 45,000 of whose members had signed up by December 1914, marked their participation in the war by producing a series of



Figure 8: *Miller's Monthly*.  
Courtesy of the People's History Museum

front and living in trenches. Objects such as *Miller's Monthly*, a satirical magazine hand written by a munitions worker in 1917, demonstrate that there is evidence for an experience of war beyond regimental accounts, and only by understanding them can we get a much more rounded understanding of the war and its impact.

### People's History Museum

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Admission is free and the museum is open from 10am to 5pm, including Bank Holiday Mondays.

banners. One of these, 'Hither Green', included on the back an image of a station with soldiers and horses ready to embark. Such objects were produced long before more official memorials and are representative of a confident union movement buoyed by the rapid rise in membership as a result of war. The growth in members was partly as a result of women joining as they moved in to jobs occupied by men at the front, and by 1918 there were just over one million female trade unionists compared to 357,956 in 1914.

The centenary year has prompted many museums to commemorate the war, but the objects from the People's History Museum demonstrate how the war was not defined just by fighting on the



# Notes

## Editorial *Nick Mansfield*

1. See for example, Geoff Timmins, *Made in Lancashire: a history of regional industrialisation* (Manchester, 1998); John Walton,

*Lancashire: a social history, 1558–1939* (Manchester, 1987); Alan Kidd, *Manchester* (4th edn, Lancaster, 2006).

## North-West infantry battalions and local patriotism in the First World War *Helen B. McCartney*

The analysis, opinions and conclusions expressed or implied in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views or the Joint Services Command and Staff College, the Ministry of Defence or any other government agency. I would like to thank Dr Nick Mansfield for some very useful references and Dr Robert T. Foley for his comments on a draft of this article.

1. 77 per cent of infantrymen represented on the memorial had been serving with North-West battalions on death. Units included battalions of the Cheshire regiment, Loyal North Lancashire regiment, King's Own Royal Lancaster regiment, Manchester regiment, South Lancashire regiment and the Lancashire fusiliers. Similarly, of the thirteen infantrymen who served in the army from Elim Sunday School and Church, Burnley, 92 per cent served with North-West units, while all the infantrymen commemorated on Burnley's Wood Top Sunday School's roll of honour served with either the Cheshire regiment, East Lancashire regiment or the King's Own Royal Lancaster regiment. See <http://burnley-inthegreatwar.info/burnleyservedindex.htm>, accessed 1 Apr. 2014.
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3. Helen B. McCartney, *Citizen soldiers: the Liverpool territorials and the First World War* (Cambridge, 2005), p. 3.

4. Ian F.W. Beckett, *The Great War, 1914–1918* (Harlow, 2001), p. 212.
5. *Liverpool Scottish Regimental Gazette*, July 1912, p. 7.
6. *Manchester Evening News*, 25 Nov. 1914, p. 4.
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13. For a full discussion see Catriona Pennell, *A kingdom united: popular responses to the outbreak of the First World War in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 124–38.
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15. I.F.W. Beckett, 'The territorial force', in I.F.W. Beckett and K. Simpson (eds.), *A nation in arms: a social study of the British army in the First World War* (Manchester, 1985), p. 129.
16. Pennell, *A kingdom united*, pp. 124–33; Gregory, *The last Great War*, pp. 55–69.
17. Pennell, *A kingdom united*, p. 125.
18. *Manchester Courier*, 18 Dec. 1914, p. 1.
19. Andrew P. Hyde, *The first blitz: the German*

- air campaign against Britain 1917–1918 (Barnsley, 2002), pp. 20–6.
20. McCartney, *Citizen soldiers*, p. 114.
  21. Gregory, *The last Great War*, p. 46.
  22. *Manchester Evening News*, 22 Sep. 1914, p. 2.
  23. *Manchester Courier*, 23 Sep. 1914, p. 6.
  24. *Manchester Courier*, 23 Sep. 1914, p. 6.
  25. Quoted in Pennell, *A kingdom united*, p. 127.
  26. Gregory, *The last Great War*, p. 63.
  27. Quoted in Purdy and Dawson, *Doing our bit*, p. 159
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  30. Peter Simkins, *Kitchener's army: the raising of the new armies* (Manchester, 1988), pp. 49–75.
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  41. For further information on Willie France see: [www.stevelewis.me.uk/page14.php](http://www.stevelewis.me.uk/page14.php), accessed 5 Feb. 2014.
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  45. Hurst, *With the Manchesters in the East*, pp. 6–9.
  46. *Seventh Manchester Sentry*, 23 Feb. 1915, p. 3.
  47. Gregory, *The last Great War*, p. 121.
  48. See <http://burnleyinthegreatwar.info/burnleyservedindex.htm>, accessed 1 Apr. 2014.
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  51. Frederick P. Gibbon, *The 42nd (East Lancashire) division, 1914–1918* (London, 1920), p. 2.
  52. See [www.themanchesters.org/Manchester%20Hill.htm](http://www.themanchesters.org/Manchester%20Hill.htm), accessed 5 Feb. 2014.
  53. Lancashire Record Office, 356 FIF 54/5, Lieutenant General H.S. Jeudwine, general information on the adoption of the red rose of Lancaster as the divisional symbol, Records of the 55th (West Lancashire) division, 1914–19.
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were characterized by their heterogeneous nature, being populated with almost as many Englishmen as Welsh, a pattern that was followed by many English battalions. Indeed, regular units before and at the beginning of the First World War had often found it difficult to recruit volunteers and had relied on recruits from many different counties. Even some territorial units which had tight local ties in 1914 had lost their local specificity by 1918. Ian Beckett has argued that local specificity of Buckinghamshire units was destroyed during the war, and similarly, by 1918 only 43 per cent of the 1/5th Gloucesters dead and 53 per cent of the 1/4th Wiltshires,

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### Labour failure and Liberal survival: the impact of the Great War on the labour movement in Mossley Neil Redfern

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10. *Mossley and Saddleworth Reporter*, 5 Oct. 1918.
11. M. Newell, *The archaeology of twentieth-century Tameside* (Tameside, 2001), p. 36.
12. *Ibid*, p. 36.
13. Tameside Local Studies Unit (hereafter TLSU), Register of Employees at H. Lees Park Bridge Iron Works, DD389/6/23.

14. TLSU, Register of Employees at Kershaw's Spring Bank Mill, DKM/10/4.
15. TLSU, handwritten list of names and addresses, DKM/10/5.
16. *Census of England and Wales 1901* (London, 1902), Table 35A, Grouped Occupations.
17. I. Haynes, *Mossley textile mills* (Tameside, 1986), pp. 20–2.
18. Excluding a small number of untypical mills, in 1914 the average spindlease in Mossley was 36,482, compared to 47,505 in Ashton and 60,251 in Oldham. Calculations based on data in *Worrall's cotton spinners and manufacturers' directory* (1914).
19. Haynes, *Mossley textile mills*, p. 23.
20. [Stalybridge, Hyde, Mossley and Dukinfield Tramways and Electricity Board], *Souvenir of the opening of the [tram] scheme* (May 1904).
21. P. Joyce, *Visions of the people: industrial England and the question of class, 1848–1914* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 118–19.
22. C. Norton and A. Kent, *SHMD* [Stalybridge, Hyde, Mossley and Dukinfield] *trams and buses 1904–2004* (n.p., n.d.).
23. Alan Fowler and Terry Wyke (eds), *The barefoot aristocrats. A history of the Amalgamated Association of Operative Cotton Spinners* (Littleborough, 1987).
24. D. Howell, *British workers and the Independent Labour Party* (Manchester, 1983), p. 53.
25. T.P. Eckersley, 'The growth of the cotton industry in Mossley with special reference to the Mayalls' (unpub. MA, Manchester Polytechnic, 1991), p. 89.
26. Conversation with Alan Fowler.
27. *Ashton Reporter*, 1 Nov. 1891.
28. J. Hill, 'The ILP in Lancashire and the North West', in D. James *et al* (eds), *The centennial history of the ILP* (Ryburn, 1992), p. 52.
29. *Mossley and Saddleworth Reporter*, 5 Aug. 1916.
30. *Mossley and Saddleworth Reporter*, 11 Nov. 1916.
31. *Labour Leader*, 6 Aug. 1914.
32. *Ashton Herald*, 22 Aug. 1914.
33. *Ashton Herald*, 29 Aug. 1914.
34. *Ashton Herald*, 21 Nov. 1914.
35. *Ashton Herald*, 10 Apr. 1915.
36. *Mossley and Saddleworth Reporter*, 2 Jan. 1915.
37. *Mossley and Saddleworth Reporter*, 30 Jan. 1915.
38. *Ashton Herald*, 29 Jan. 1916.
39. A. Gregory, *The last Great War: British society and the First World War* (Cambridge, 2008).
40. C. Pennell, *A kingdom united: popular responses to the outbreak of war in Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge, 2012).
41. Ian F.W. Becket and Keith Simpson, *A nation in arms* (Manchester, 1985), p. 9.
42. Manchester University John Rylands Library Special Collection, Deansgate (hereafter JRSC), ACS Executive Committee's quarterly report, 31 Jan. 1915, ACS/1/2.
43. *Ashton Herald*, 21 Nov. 1914.
44. *Mossley and Saddleworth Reporter*, 24 Apr. 1915.
45. *Mossley and Saddleworth Reporter*, 14 Aug. 1915.
46. A. Marwick, *The deluge* (Basingstoke, 1991), p. 119.
47. P. Ward, *Red Flag and Union Jack: England, patriotism and the British left, 1881–1924* (Woodbridge, 1998), p. 139.
48. *Ashton Herald*, 19 June 1915.
49. The WEWNC had been established by the TUC to co-ordinate the activities of the unions during the war. See R. Harrison, 'The War Emergency National Workers' Committee' in Asa Briggs and John Saville (eds), *Essays in labour history 1886–1923* (Oxford, 1971).
50. Stephen G. Jones, 'Work, leisure and the political economy of the cotton districts between the wars', *Textile History* 18 (1987), p. 37.
51. Lancashire Record Office, Preston (hereafter LROP), Amalgamated Weavers' Association (hereafter AWA), annual report, 1917, DDX 1123/1/12.
52. *Ashton Herald*, 2 Feb. 1917.
53. W. Gallacher, *Revolt on the Clyde* (London,

- 1936); John Foster, 'The Clyde 1917–20', in Chris Wrigley (ed.), *Challenges of labour: central and western Europe 1917–1920* (London, 1993), p. 83.
54. I. McLean, *The legend of Red Clydeside* (Cambridge, 1983).
  55. Dec. 1917 and Jan. 1918 both saw about 250,000 days lost, but Apr. 1918 saw only 15,000: Bernard Waites, *A class society at war: England 1914–1918* (London, 1987), p. 184.
  56. *Ashton Reporter*, 26 Mar. 1915.
  57. JRSC, Ashton Textile Employers Association, Special Minutes 1898–1917. Minutes of meeting, 10 Nov. 1915, ATEA/1/2/1.
  58. *Manchester Guardian*, 11 Apr. 1916.
  59. JRSC, quarterly report of the Executive Committee of the ACS, 31 Oct. 1918, ACS/1/26.
  60. JRSC, Executive Committee minutes of the ACS, undated, ACS/1/26.
  61. *Mossley and Saddleworth Reporter*, 27 Sep. 1919.
  62. LROP, Circular of Central Committee of AWA, 20 Mar. 1919, DDX 1123/4/8.
  63. JRSC, UTFWA letter to union branches, 27 June 1919, ACS/3/6/14.
  64. *Cotton Factory Times*, 11 July 1919.
  65. *Manchester Guardian*, 2 July 1919.
  66. *Mossley and Saddleworth Reporter*, 5 July 1919.
  67. *Ashton Reporter*, 5 July 1919.
  68. *Census of England and Wales 1921* (London, 1923), Table 16, Occupations by sex of urban areas with more than 20,000 population and Table 17, Occupations by sex of urban areas with less than 20,000 population. The proportion of women may have been higher in 1919, but it is unlikely that it was significantly so.
  69. Ross McKibbin, *The evolution of the Labour Party 1910–1924* (Oxford, 1983); Martin Pugh, *The making of modern British politics 1867–1945* (Oxford, 2002); Tanner, *Political change and the Labour Party*; John Turner, *British politics and the Great War: coalition and conflict, 1915–1918* (London, 1992).
  70. JRSC, Minutes of EC meeting of 22 Dec. 1917, ACS/2/1/1/1.
  71. A. Horne, *Labour at war: France and Britain 1914–1918* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 249–50.
  72. *Labour Party annual conference report 1918*, p. 43.
  73. LROP, Circular of 1 Dec. 1918, DDX/1123/4/7.
  74. Most branches voted in favour. Stalybridge alone (41.8 per cent) had a lower vote in favour than Mossley: J.L. White, *The limits of trade union militancy: the Lancashire textile workers, 1910–1914* (Westport, CT; 1978), pp. 152–4.
  75. JRSC, letter to head office, 4 Feb. 1914, ACS/6/12/83.
  76. *Mossley and Saddleworth Reporter*, 8 Dec. 1917.
  77. *Mossley and Saddleworth Reporter*, 23 Feb. 1918.
  78. *Mossley and Saddleworth Reporter*, 22 Dec. 1917.
  79. *Mossley and Saddleworth Reporter*, 22 June 1918.
  80. *Labour party Annual Conference Report 1919*.
  81. *Mossley and Saddleworth Reporter*, 10 Apr. 1915.
  82. *Mossley and Saddleworth Reporter*, 16 Sep. 1916.
  83. *Mossley and Saddleworth Reporter*, 12 Feb. 1916; 19 Feb. 1916.
  84. *Mossley and Saddleworth Reporter*, 4 Aug. 1917; 17 Nov. 1917.
  85. *Mossley and Saddleworth Reporter*, 20 Jan. 1917; 27 Jan. 1917; 17 Mar. 1917.
  86. *Mossley and Saddleworth Reporter*, 26 Jan. 1918; 9 Feb. 1918; 2 Mar. 1918.
  87. Marwick, *The deluge*, p. 315.
  88. D. Burnett, *A social history of housing 1815–1970* (Newton Abbot, 1978), p. 216.
  89. *Mossley and Saddleworth Reporter*, 24 Aug. 1917.
  90. *Mossley and Saddleworth Reporter*, 20 Oct. 1917.
  91. *Mossley and Saddleworth Reporter*, 13 Oct. 1917.
  92. *Mossley and Saddleworth Reporter*, 20 Oct. 1917.
  93. *Mossley and Saddleworth Reporter*, 13 Oct. 1917.

94. *Mossley and Saddleworth Reporter*, 10 Jan. 1919.
95. F.W.S. Craig, *British parliamentary election results 1918–1945* (London, 1983), p. 263.
96. *Mossley and Saddleworth Reporter*, 30 Nov. 1918.
97. *Manchester Guardian*, 23 Aug. 1919.
98. *Mossley and Saddleworth Reporter*, 11 July 1941.
99. Calculation based on statistics in *Ashton Reporter*, 22 June 1918. The municipal franchise was a household franchise (though qualified women could vote at twenty-one, not thirty, as in the parliamentary franchise). Mossley, a poorer borough than Ashton, may well then have had a proportionately smaller, though probably not significantly so, municipal electorate than Ashton.
100. Analysis of the changed franchise is notoriously difficult. See Tanner, *Political change and the Labour Party*, pp. 386–92, for one analysis; and Griffiths, *Lancashire working classes*, ch. 8 for another.
101. *Manchester Guardian*, 2 Apr. 1917.
102. *Mossley and Saddleworth Reporter*, 11 Oct. 1919.
103. *Mossley and Saddleworth Reporter*, 18 Oct. 1919; 25 Oct. 1919.
104. G. Wooton, *The official history of the British Legion* (London, 1956), pp. 1–5. See also Nial Barr, *The lion and the poppy: British veterans, politics and society 1921–1939* (Westport, CT; 2005).
105. Foster, 'The Clyde 1917–20', p. 83.
106. *Ashton Reporter*, 16 Nov. 1918.
107. *Mossley and Saddleworth Reporter*, 25 Oct. 1919.

**The Women's War Interest Committee in Manchester and Salford: a snapshot of feminist activism in the First World War** *Alison Ronan*

1. Manchester City Library, 'Women in the labour market in Manchester and Salford during the war', M50/4/26/13, p. 12.
2. See, for example, Gail Braybon, *Women workers in the First World War* (London, 1981); Deborah Thom, *Nice girls and rude girls: women workers in World War 1* (London, 1998); Angela Woollacott, *On her their lives depend: munitions workers in the Great War* (Berkeley, CA; 1994).
3. E.L. Hutchins, *Women in modern industry* (London, 1915), p. 256.
4. For example, Woollacott, *On her their lives depend*; Braybon, *Women workers in the First World War*; Susan R. Grayzel, *Women and the First World War* (Harlow, 2002). For a detailed exploration of the Shell Crisis see R.J.Q. Adams, *Arms and the wizard: Lloyd George and the Ministry of Munitions 1915–1916* (London, 1978).
5. Gerry Rubin, *War, law and labour: the Munitions Acts, state regulation and the unions 1915–1921* (Oxford, 1987); Adams, *Arms and the wizard*.
6. *Labour Leader*, 8 Nov. 1917.
7. 'Women in the labour market', p. 42.
8. NUWSS Information Bureau Dept., D/MAR/4/45, report dated Aug. 1915.
9. Royden Harrison, 'The War Emergency Workers' National Committee 1914', in Asa Briggs and John Savage (eds), *Essays in labour history* (London, 1971).
10. People's History Museum, Manchester, Labour History and Study Centre (hereafter LHASC), report of WNC conference, LP/WNC/32/4/, Apr. 1915.
11. Jill Liddington and Jill Norris, *One hand tied behind us: the rise of the women's suffrage movement* (London, 2000), p. 213.
12. See the small advertisements for local activism in the *Labour Leader* throughout 1913.
13. Cumbria Record Office, letter from Tomlinson to Marshall D/MAR 3/65/9, undated, probably 1915.
14. *Co-operative News*, 4 Apr. 1912.
15. Women's Library, 'Extracts: reports of some of the organisers in the service of the NUWSS', NWS/A/1/6, July 1915.
16. LHASC, report of the WLL National Conference held in Bristol WLL/172, 25 Jan. 1916.

17. *Ibid.*
18. All these references are taken from 'Women in the labour market'.
19. The Women's Emergency Corps (WEC), organized by the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS), acted as a clearing-house for women's paid and unpaid labour.
20. *Votes for Women*, 418 (Aug. 1916).
21. Cumbria Record Office, minutes of the Women's Interests Committee, D/MAR/3/65, 16 May 1917. See also Jo Vellacott, *Pacifists, patriots and the vote: the erosion of democratic suffragism in Britain during the First World War* (Basingstoke, 2007) for a detailed discussion and analysis of events in the NUWSS during 1915.
22. Vellacott, *Pacifists, patriots and the vote*, p. 116.
23. Parliamentary Archives, letter, Marshall to Lloyd George, LG/D/11/2/1230, July 1915.
24. Cumbria Record Office, letter, Tomlinson to Marshall, D/MAR/4/45, 20 Oct. 1915.
25. *Ibid.*
26. Angela K. Smith, *Suffrage discourse in Britain during the First World War* (Aldershot, 2005), p. 72.
27. Vellacott, *Pacifists, patriots and the vote*, pp. 113–15.
28. Cumbria Record Office, NUWSS Information Bureau Dept., D/MAR/4/45, Report dated Aug. 1915.
29. *Ibid.*
30. Vellacott, *Pacifists, patriots and the vote*, p. 117.
31. Carlisle Record Office, letter, Jetley to Marshall, D/MAR/4/45, 27 Aug. 1915.
32. Women's Library, minute book of the NUWSS executive committee 2/NWS/A/6, June 1914.
33. Cumbria Record Office, letter, Tomlinson to Marshall, D/MAR 3/65/9, undated, probably 1915. Emphasis in the original.
34. See Angela V. John (ed.), *Unequal opportunities: women's employment in England 1800–1918* (Oxford, 1986), p. 2.
35. See Liddington and Norris, *One hand tied behind us*, pp. 84–100.
36. 'Women in the labour market', p. 27.
37. Wilkinson was the women's officer for the AUCE at this time.
38. 'Women in the labour market', p. 28.
39. Cumbria Record Office, NUWSS Information Bureau Dept., D/MAR/4/45, Report dated Aug. 1915.
40. Cumbria Record Office, letter, Julie Tomlinson to Catherine Marshall, D/MAR/4/45, 20 Oct. 1915.
41. 'Women in the labour market', p. 28.
42. Cumbria Record Office, letter, Tomlinson to Marshall, D/MAR 3/67, 11 Aug. 1915.
43. Manchester City Library, WTUC annual report 1916, M308/7/11.
44. 'Women in the labour market', p. 29.
45. See Alison Ronan, "A small vital flame": anti-war women's networks in Manchester 1914–1918' (unpub. PhD, Keele University, 2010), for a detailed examination of networks.
46. Cheryl Law, 'The old faith living and the old power there: the movement to extend women's suffrage', in Joannou Maroula and June Purvis (eds), *The women's suffrage movement: new feminist perspectives* (Manchester, 1998).
47. Manchester City Library, MSWSS annual report 1917, M50/1/5/3.
48. For more details of these women and their biographies, see Ronan, "A small vital flame".

### The Commonest of Men: Gallipoli and the East Lancashire legacy *Martin Purdy*

1. The Territorial Force came into being in 1907 and was renamed the Territorial Army in 1920.
2. See, for example, G. Moorhouse, *Hell's foundations: a town, its myths and Gallipoli* (London, 1992); and J. Macleod, *Battle of the nations: remembering Gallipoli* (London, 2005).
3. F.P. Gibbon, *The 42nd East Lancashire division 1914–1918* (London, 1920), p. 5.
4. <http://www.gallipoli-association.org>, accessed 1 Apr. 2014.

5. Cecil Aspinall-Oglander, *Military operations: Gallipoli*. Vol. 2: May 1915 to the evacuation (London, 1932), p. 484; V. Lepetit, A. Tournoy du Clos and I. Rinieri, *Ministere de la guerre, etat-major de l'armee, service historique, les armées françaises dans la Grande Guerre* (Paris, 1923), p. 549.
6. See E. Delage, *The tragedy of the Dardanelles* (London, 1932), p. 23; and D. Dutton, 'Docile supernumerary: a French perspective on Gallipoli', in J. Macleod (ed.), *Gallipoli: making history* (London, 2004), p. 14.
7. J. McQuilton, 'Gallipoli as contested commemorative space', in Macleod (ed.), *Gallipoli: making history*, p. 1.
8. McQuilton, 'Gallipoli as contested commemorative space'.
9. C. Pugsley, 'Stories of Anzac', in Macleod (ed.), *Gallipoli: making history*, p. 47.
10. Moorhouse, *Hell's foundations*, p. 9.
11. *Ibid*, pp. 8–9.
12. *Ibid*, p. 9.
13. P. Lindsay, *The spirit of Gallipoli: the birth of the Anzac legend* (Prahan, Victoria; 2006), p. 20. The Cairo riots took place as a result of anger among the Anzacs at the poor hygiene in the brothels, which had resulted in large numbers of troops contracting sexual diseases. Cairo was the Anzacs' first foreign posting in the Great War, and the riots preceded their first time into battle at Gallipoli.
14. Leeds University Library, Liddle Collection (hereafter Liddle), 'Letters of Eric Duckworth', Box 1, Gallipoli 028.
15. 'Letter of Rev Denis Fletcher to a friend', 14 Feb. 1915, repr. *Rochdale Observer*, Mar. 1915.
16. Liddle, 'Interview with Charles Watkins', Feb. 1973, Tape 65, Gallipoli Records 223.
17. N. Steel and P. Hart, *Defeat at Gallipoli* (London, 2002), p. 34, from Imperial War Museum, SR 10648, George Peak.
18. C. Watkins, *Lost endeavour: a survivor's account of the Gallipoli campaign* (private pub., 1970), p. 78.
19. Pugsley, 'Stories of Anzac', p. 49.
20. Simkins' examination of the performance of a sample of fifty allied army divisions in the last hundred days of the Great War in 1918 found that at least ten British divisions performed just as well, if not better, than the Australians. Among the top British divisions was the 66th Division, which was made up of East Lancashire territorials: P. Simkins, 'Co-stars or supporting cast? British divisions in the "Hundred Days", 1918', in Paddy Griffith (ed.), *British fighting methods* (London, 1996), pp. 57–9.
21. Gibbon, *The 42nd East Lancashire division*, pp. 11, 15–16.
22. J. Macleod, 'The British heroic romantic myth of Gallipoli', in Macleod (ed.), *Gallipoli: making history*, pp. 82–3.
23. Aspinall-Oglander, *Military Operations: Gallipoli*, Vol. 2, p. 479.
24. E. Raymond, 'Gallipoli revisited', *Gallipollian*, 107 (2005), p. 27, from an article first published in the *Daily Telegraph*, 24 Apr. 1965.
25. R. Holmes, *Tommy: the British soldier on the Western Front* (London, 2004), pp.102–3.
26. H.C. Barnard, *A history of English education from 1760* (London, 1947), pp. 71–80.
27. J. Fox, *Forgotten divisions* (Wilmslow, 1994), pp. 22–3, quoted from Imperial War Museum Politzer/Morris Papers.
28. G. Hurst, *With the Manchesters in the East* (Sandhurst, 1918), p. 59.
29. Watkins, *Lost endeavour*, p. 58.
30. 'Letters of Lance Corporal Jack Gerrard', repr. *Middleton Guardian*, 14 Nov. 1914.
31. Brooke was serving with the Hood battalion of the Royal Naval division, which included leading members of 'the Bloomsbury Set', including fellow poet and academic Patrick Shaw Stewart and Arthur Asquith, the son of the prime minister. Brooke's famous poem 'the Soldier' was composed en route to Gallipoli.
32. The ode in Lancaster brogue appeared in *Middleton Guardian*, 14 Nov. 1914.
33. J. Hartley, *Not a rotter in the lot: 6th Battalion, the Manchester regiment* (Barnsley, 2010).

34. M. Purdy and I. Dawson, *The Gallipoli oak* (Ramsbottom, 2013), pp. 11–13.
35. Hurst, *With the Manchesters in the East*, pp. 2, 8.
36. Watkins, *Lost endeavour*, p. 39.
37. B. Bond (ed.), *Staff officer: the diary of Lord Moyne* (London, 1987), p. 198.
38. 'Letters of Arthur Bullough', repr. *Middleton Guardian*, 24 July 1915.
39. H. Mallinson, *Where is Gallipoli?* (Scarborough, 2005), p. 101. Mallinson provides a cutting of the article from the local newspaper in question.
40. R. Westlake, *British regiments at Gallipoli* (London, 1996).
41. Mallinson, *Where is Gallipoli?*, p.102. Mallinson provides the full report from the *Bury Times*.
42. Gibbon, *The 42nd East Lancashire division*, p. 19.
43. The *Rochdale Observer* newspaper carried two articles which highlighted this distinction: in the 20 May 1916 issue the Revd Fletcher, an army chaplain serving with the Lancashire fusiliers, said the Lancashire fusiliers' Gallipoli survivors had marked their anniversary on May 6, and then, in the 7 June 1916 issue, it was reported that many of the Manchester territorials, who were recuperating at Heaton Park from injuries sustained in the campaign, took part in a 'Gallipoli Day' event in Manchester on 4 June.
44. Gibbon, *The 42nd East Lancashire division*, foreword.
45. Moorhouse, *Hell's foundations*, p. 124.
46. Gibbon, *The 42nd East Lancashire division*, p. 19.
47. Moorhouse, *Hell's foundations*, p. 225.
48. *Ibid.*
49. 'Park named for Gallipoli heroes', *Manchester Evening News*, 22 Apr. 2009.
50. 'New name to remember Bury's brave soldiers', Bury Council, press release, 21 Apr. 2009.

### From docks and sand: the maintenance of community identity in a territorial battalion in the First World War *Adrian Gregson*

For fuller exploration of this article's premise see A.S. Gregson, 'The 1/7th Battalion King's Liverpool regiment and the Great War: the experience of a territorial battalion and its home towns' (unpub. PhD thesis, Coventry University, 2006).

1. J. Bourne, 'The British working man in arms', in Hugh Cecil, *Facing armageddon: the First World War experienced* (Barnsley, 1996); H. McCartney, *Citizen soldiers: the Liverpool territorials in the First World War* (Cambridge, 2005).
2. *Soldiers died in the Great War 1914–19: Part 13 – the King's (Liverpool regiment)* (Polstead, Suffolk; 1989) (hereafter *Soldiers died in the Great War*).
3. *Census of England and Wales 1911, 10 Edward 7 and 1 George 5, Ch 27 – County of Lancaster: tables extracted from Vols. I–XI of the Report on the Census of England and Wales 1911* (London, 1914) (hereafter *Census 1911*).
4. Liverpool City Local Studies Library

- and Record Office, WES/11/1(1) WLTAf Minutes, 7 June 1921, West Lancashire Territorial and Auxiliary Force Association.
5. P.J. Waller, *Democracy and sectarianism: a political and social history of Liverpool 1868–1939* (Liverpool, 1981), p. 94.
  6. Liverpool City Local Studies Library and Record Office, WES 356/4/1(21) WLTAf Clothing Committee Minutes, 25 Feb. 1913.
  7. Lettered A–H, these were merged into the double companies on mobilization to conform to the regular army's A–D companies.
  8. W. Richards, *His Majesty's territorial army: a descriptive account of the yeomanry, artillery, engineers and infantry with the Army Service and Medical Corps comprising 'The King's Imperial Army of the second Line'*, vol. 2 (London, c.1910); Col. A.D. Lomas (comp.), *Territorial force – West Lancashire division in Southport Visiter* (n.p., c.1910).

9. A roll of honour of Southport's Rugby Union Football Club appeared in the *Southport Guardian* 23 Jan. 1915, p. 2, and one of the tramways department in the *Southport Guardian* on 28 Apr. 1915, p. 9.
10. *Southport Guardian*, 6, 9, 16, 23 Jan. 1915.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Bootle Times*, 21 Aug. 1914, p. 8.
13. *Bootle Times*, 28 Aug. 1914, p. 4.
14. *Ibid.*
15. Census 1911.
16. *Soldiers died in the Great War*.
17. In a postcard in Apr. 1915 to Sergeant John Whittaker, 2/8th Manchester regiment, his father called Southport 'Salt Lake City', a reference to the great expanse of beach: private collection of postcard correspondence to John Whittaker.
18. *Southport Guardian*, 5 Feb. 1916, p. 8; Southport Borough Council Health Committee, 23 Mar. 1916, Medical Officer of Health Report for 1915.
19. STS 1/4 St. Thomas School, Waterloo Log Book week-ending 28 Aug. 1914.
20. Bootle Borough Council Volume 31 (1913–14), Parks and Baths committee minutes 19 Aug. 1914.
21. Southport Borough Council, 1913–14, Vol. Hospital and Baths Sub-Committee of the Health Committee minutes, 1 and 29 Oct. 1914; Tramways Committee 22 Oct. 1914.
22. Litherland Urban District Council 1914–15, Higher Education Committee Minutes 24 Nov. 1914, 16 Feb. 1915.
23. Southport Borough Council 1913–14, Vol. Cleansing and Sewerage Sub-Committee of the Highways and Works Committee, 30 Dec. 1914.
24. Liverpool Record Office, LUD 7 Litherland Urban District Council Minutes, 7 Dec. 1914.
25. Private collection of postcard correspondence to John Whittaker, No. 17, undated (c. Nov. 1915).
26. Waterloo and Seaforth Urban District Council Minutes, Vol. 20, 1914–15, 14 Sep. 1914.
27. Waterloo and Seaforth Urban District Council Minutes, Vol. 20, 1914–15, 5 Oct. 1914.
28. Waterloo and Seaforth Urban District Council Minutes, Vol. 20, 1914–15, 27 Oct. 1914, 26 Jan. 1915.
29. *Bootle Times*, 21 Aug. 1914, p. 2.
30. *Southport Guardian*, 29 Aug. 1914.
31. Annual meeting of the Southport Company House proprietors, 1916: *Southport Guardian*, 12 Feb. 1916, p. 5.
32. *Southport Guardian*, 23 Sep. 1914, p. 2.
33. *Southport Guardian*, 23 Sep. 1914, p. 5.
34. *Southport Guardian*, 14 Oct. 1914, p. 5.
35. *History of the ministry of munitions* (12 vols, Hassocks, 1976), Vol. 8, pp. 109–10.
36. A. Hurd, *A merchant fleet at war* (London, 1920), p. 72.
37. Three women were listed from the Merseyside area as having died from poisoning, although the source material is limited in scope: Sarah Cooper, Wavertree; Agnes Deane, Everton; and Elizabeth Walsh, Bootle: Imperial War Museum (hereafter IWM) MUN 34.2/16 and 17, 'Names and addresses of workers who died of poisoning during war work'.
38. *History of the ministry of munitions*, Vol. 8, part 2, p. 170. The *History* only listed three deaths from an explosion in the Liverpool factories, but six names appear in a list of women casualties who came from the Merseyside area – Margaret Bradshaw, Kirkdale; S. Payne, Liverpool; Agnes Brown, Garston; Mary Taylor and Sarah Wilshaw, both from Liverpool; Charlotte Massey, Seacombe: IWM MUN 34.2/14, 'List of workers to whom fatal accidents occurred'; and IWM MUN 34.2/15, 'Names and addresses of workers who met with fatal accidents'.
39. Liverpool Record Office, LUD 7 Litherland Urban District Council minutes, 2 Oct. 1916.
40. S. Sassoon, *The complete memoirs of George Sherston* (London, 1960), pp. 235, 381.
41. Liverpool Record Office, B /MO5 Bootle Borough Council Medical Officer of Health report, 24 July 1916.
42. Crosby Library, Sefton Borough Council, LUD 7 Litherland UDC minutes, 5 Mar., 7 May, 4 June, 2 July, 27 July, 8 Aug. 1917, 4 Mar. 1918.

43. *Southport Guardian*, 24 Mar. 1915, p. 5.
44. C. Messenger, *Terriers in the trenches: the Post Office Rifles at war 1914–1918* (Chippenham, 1982), p. 18.
45. The ‘Official history’ did not draw any particular attention to the fact, although Festubert was only the third major attack by the BEF after the trench lines had been established at the end of 1914: ‘1915: Aubers, Festubert and Loos’, in J.E. Edmonds (ed.), *History of the Great War based on official documents: military operations, France and Belgium* (London, 1922–1949), pp. 40–77.
46. The National Archives [hereafter TNA], WO95/590 I Corps war diary orders from Brig. Gen Whigham, 8 Apr. 1915.
47. TNA, WO95/1360 1/7th Battalion King’s Liverpool Regiment war diary, 15 May 1915.
48. TNA, WO95/1352 6th Brigade war diary extracts from Narrative of Operations from night, 15–19 May 1915.
49. *Formby Times*, 29 May 1915, p. 5; *Southport Visiter*, 29 May 1915, p. 7; *Southport Guardian*, 29 May 1915, pp. 9, 11.
50. *Southport Visiter*, 27 May 1915, p. 6.
51. *Bootle Times*, 28 May 1915, p. 7.
52. A ‘Sandgrunder’ was one born in Southport: *Southport Visiter*, 8 June 1915, p. 6.
53. *Liverpool Echo*, 29 May 1915, p. 3.
54. ‘No words can fittingly describe the pluck and gallantry shown by our troops, Regulars and Territorials alike, during the recent fighting in the Festubert district’: *Liverpool Echo*, 29 May 1915, p. 3; a report on ‘The Fighting Fifth – Liverpool Terriers in the thick of it’ was followed by another on ‘Seventh Liverpool’s Fine Work – Storming German trenches’: *Liverpool Echo*, 26 May 1915, p. 3. Another report included some letters, such as that from Private James Blackwood, B Company, which had not appeared in the Southport or Bootle papers: *Liverpool Echo*, 28 May 1915, p. 5.
55. TNA, WO95/1360 1/7th Battalion King’s Liverpool regiment war diary, 16 May 1915.
56. *Soldiers died in the Great War*, pp. 48–58.
57. TNA, WO95/1352 6th Brigade war diary, 23 May 1915.
58. TNA, WO95/1360 1/7th Battalion King’s Liverpool regiment war diary, 9 Aug. and 7 Sep. 1915.
59. TNA, WO95/2909 55th division war diary, AQMG branch, Jan. 1917.
60. TNA, WO95/2910 55th division war diary, A&Q branch, Jan. 1918.
61. E. Wyrall, *The history of the King’s Regiment (Liverpool) 1914–19* (3 vols, London, 1935), vol. 3, p. 608; WO95/2927 1/7th Battalion King’s Liverpool regiment war diary, 31 Jan. 1918.
62. *Soldiers died in the Great War*, pp.48–58; Ian Beckett used the source for similar purposes in ‘The territorial force’, in Ian Beckett, *A nation in arms: a social study of the British army in the First World War* (London, 1990), p. 147. There are other caveats which must be placed on these statistics, including the fact that the list in *Soldiers died in the Great War* covered all three line battalions indiscriminately. While the numbers who died in 3/7th were very small as the battalion did not leave England as a fighting unit, 2/7th was a fully-fledged battalion within the 2nd Line West Lancashire territorial division – 57th. They entered the war in June 1917 and should be recognized in relation to deaths during the last eighteen months of the war.
63. H. McCartney, ‘The 1/6th and 1/10th Battalions of the King’s (Liverpool) regiment in the period of the First World War’ (unpub. PhD thesis, Cambridge University, 2001), p. 371, pub. as *Citizen soldiers: the Liverpool territorials in the First World War* (Cambridge, 2005).
64. P. Morris, ‘Leeds and the amateur military tradition: the Leeds Rifles and their antecedents, 1859–1918’ (unpub. PhD thesis, Leeds University, 1983), p. 993.
65. Liverpool Record Office, 356 FIF/57, A history of the Rose 55th Division papers deposited by H.S. Jeurwine.
66. IWM, ref. 72/82/1 Jeurwine MSS.
67. Museum of Liverpool Life, National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, 1982.250, interview transcript with Arthur

- Critchley, 7th Battalion KLR, at King's Regiment Collection (hereafter Critchley transcript); coming from a poem by Lieutenant L.G. Wall, A Battery 275 1st West Lancashire brigade, who was killed on 9 June 1917: 356 FIF/57 'A history of the Rose', 55th Division papers; IWM Ref. 72/82/1, Jeudwine MSS.
68. TNA, WO95/2899 55th division war diary, letter from Jeudwine to XIV Corps HQ, 24 Jan. 1916.
  69. Liverpool Record Office, 356 FIF/42, letter from Jeudwine to Derby, 2 Mar. 1916, 55th Division papers.
  70. Critchley transcript.
  71. 356 FIF/45, letter from Jeudwine to Derby, 28 Aug. 1918.
  72. TNA, WO95/2910, 55th Division A&Q branch war diary, 23 Jan. 1918.
  73. J.G. Fuller, *Popular culture and troop morale in the British and dominion forces 1914–1918* (Oxford, 1990), p. 4; IWM MS/E/S 851, *Sub Rosa* (June 1917 and June 1918).
  74. Critchley transcript.
  75. TNA, WO95/2927, 1/7th Battalion King's Liverpool regiment war diary, June 1917.
  76. W.V. Tilsley, *Other ranks* (London, 1931), p. 90 [a narrative based on experience in 164th Brigade, 55th Division].
  77. Daglish correspondence in *Stand To! the Journal of the Western Front Association*, 61 (April 2001), pp. 44–5.
  78. 356 FIF 15 Memo from Jeudwine, 28 June 1918.
  79. *Boote Times*, 2 Aug. 1918, p. 2.
  80. Stones did not start to arrive in France until 1920 according to P. Longworth, *The unending vigil: a history of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission 1917–1984* (London, 1985), p. 72.
  81. P. Griffith, *Battle tactics of the Western Front: the British army's art of attack 1916–18* (New Haven, CT; 1994), p. 82. Not all commentators shared his view. Simkins was more sanguine about the inclusion of 55th Division, providing a much wider list of claimants and thus diluting Griffith's elite spearhead: P. Simkins, 'Co-stars or supporting cast? British divisions in the "Hundred Days", 1918', in P. Griffith (ed.), *British fighting methods in the Great War* (London, 1996), p. 64.
  82. Griffith, *Battle tactics of the Western Front*, pp. 79, 83.
  83. TNA, CAB 45/132, Cochrane to Edmonds, 8 Jan. [1934].
  84. 356 FIF 56, letter from Cochrane to Jeudwine, 1933.
  85. TNA, WO95/2900, 55th division war diary notes on recent operations, 21, 24 Aug. 1916.
  86. J.O. Coop, *The story of the 55th Division* (London, n.d.), p. 41.
  87. TNA, WO95/2925, 165th Brigade war diary, 31 July 1917.
  88. Critchley transcript.
  89. *Southport Guardian*, 1 Sep. 1917, p. 6.
  90. TNA, WO95/2903, 55th Division war diary report on operations, 29 July–4 Aug. 1917.
  91. Coop, *The story of the 55th Division*, p. 54.
  92. R. Neillands, *The Great War generals on the Western Front, 1914–1918* (London, 1992), pp. 395–6.
  93. TNA, WO95/2900, 55th Division war diary report on operations east of Ypres, 19–24 Sep. 1917.
  94. TNA, WO95/2927, 1/7th King's Liverpool regiment war diary, 30 Sep. 1917.
  95. M. Samuels, *Command or control? Command, training and tactics in the British and German armies, 1888–1918* (London, 1995), p. 203. Strangely, there is no mention of the committee or Edmonds' role in it in Andrew Green's *Writing the Great War: Sir James Edmonds and the official histories, 1915–1948: Military history and policy* (London, 2003).
  96. G.D. Blades, 'The battles of the Lys: the British army on the defensive in April 1918' (unpub. MPhil thesis, King's College London, 1999), p. 43.
  97. TNA, WO95/883, XI Corps war diary notes of conference, 25 Mar. 1918.
  98. TNA, WO95/883, XI Corps war diary notes of conference, 25 Mar. 1918.
  99. TNA, CAB 45/123, Jeudwine copy letter to Edmonds, 21 Aug. 1918.
  100. TNA, WO95/883, XI Corps war diary brief narrative of events, 20 Mar.–30 Apr. 1918.

101. TNA, WO95/2925, 165th Brigade war diary narrative of battle, 9–15 Apr. 1918: Lieutenant T.A. Lyon, O.C. 9 Platoon C Company.
102. TNA, WO95/883, XI Corps war diary brief narrative of events, 20 Mar.–30 Apr. 1918.
103. TNA, CAB 45/122, correspondence in compiling the *Official history*: Major General J.S. Brind CB CMG DSO BGGs, XI Corps, to Edmonds, 3 Jan. 1932.
104. TNA, CAB 45/122, Lieutenant Colonel Crump DSO to Edmonds, 30 Dec. 1931.
105. Captain J.W. Cook MC won a bar to his Military Cross for leading the recapture of Le Plantin: Spalton private collection, citation in *The Times*, 19 Sep. 1918.
106. TNA, WO95/2925, 1/7th Battalion Kings Liverpool regiment war diary report of Colonel Potter, 17 Apr. 1918.
107. Critchley transcript.
108. TNA, CAB 45/179, correspondence in compiling the *Official history*: Letter from Colonel Buckley, 5th Battalion King's Liverpool regiment to his brother, 20 Apr. 1918 emphasizing the precariousness of the situation by starting 'Don't on any account let any of it get into print'. The official historian duly obliged.
109. TNA, CAB 45/122, correspondence in compiling the *Official history*: Brind to Edmonds, 3 Jan. 1932.
110. TNA, WO95/2927, 1/7th Battalion King's Liverpool regiment war diary; 165th Brigade report of Colonel Potter.
111. Coop, *The story of the 55th Division*, p. 115.
112. Southport Library, Southport Borough Council War Memorial Committee minutes, 25 July 1919.
113. *Southport Guardian*, 21 Nov. 1923.
114. Southport Library, Southport Borough Council War Memorial Winding-Up Sub Committee minutes, 4 Jan. 1924.
115. Dubbed 'King of Lancashire', Derby's hereditary lands and influence in the North West in particular, was significant. Secretary of State for War in 1916 and ambassador to Paris during the peace negotiations, he was also honorary colonel for a number of Lancashire regiments, a past lord mayor of Liverpool and a force in social, political and economic life in the first half of the twentieth century: R.S. Churchill, *Lord Derby, 'King of Lancashire': the official life of Edward, seventeenth earl of Derby 1865–1948* (London, 1959).
116. The north-east end of the cenotaph was still uncompleted at the unveiling: *Southport Guardian*, 17 Nov. 1923, p. 5.
117. Southport Borough Council War Memorial Committee minutes, 26 Sep., 20 Oct., 5 Nov., 9 Nov. 1923; War Memorial Opening Committee minutes, 2 Oct., 8 Oct. 1923.
118. *Southport Guardian*, 14 Nov. 1923, p. 4.
119. *Southport Guardian*, 21 Nov. 1923, p. 6.
120. Consisting of Alderman Mack JP, who had sat on the military tribunal and whose son had been killed, councillors King and Rafter, Mr J.W. Doodson, Mr James Rogerson, Mr Hugh McQuaker, Mrs W.A. Jones, Mrs Annie Malcolm and Mrs M.H. Hazlewood.
121. *Bootle Times*, 20 Oct. 1922, p. 5.
122. *Bootle Times*, 10 Nov. 1922, p. 2.
123. *Bootle Times*, 20 Oct. 1922, p. 2.
124. For an earlier war, there is the King's Liverpool regiment memorial to the dead of the South African wars in St John's Gardens, Liverpool.
125. *Southport Guardian*, 9 Apr. 1921, p. 4.
126. D.W. Lloyd, *Battlefield tourism: pilgrimage and the commemoration of the Great War in Britain, Australia and Canada, 1919–1939* (Oxford, 1998), p. 42, quoting from 'The Loos Battlefield Revisited', in E. Swinton (ed.), *Twenty years after: the battlefields of 1914–18, then and now*, vol. 1 (London, 1936–7), p. 531.
127. WO95/2907, 55th Division war diary, 2 Dec. 1918.
128. *Southport Visiter*, 13 Apr. 1920, p. 6.
129. IWM, ref. 72/82/2, Jeudwine MSS; Liverpool Record Office, 920 DER (17) 21/3–5, Derby MSS [hereafter Derby MSS].
130. IWM, ref. 72/82/2 55th divisional association year book, 1924, Jeudwine MSS.
131. *Southport Guardian*, 13 Apr. 1939, p. 4.
132. 356 WES 8/1 WLTAf 55th and 57th divisional dinner committee minutes,

- 1924–39. Photographs are included with the minutes of later annual dinners.
133. *Southport Visiter*, 6 Nov. 1920, p. 6; 13 Nov. 1920, p. 7.
  134. *Bootle Times*, 4 Apr. 1919, p. 5.
  135. *Southport Guardian*, 8 Apr. 1922, p. 7.
  136. *Ibid.*
  137. *Southport Guardian*, 16 May 1925, p. 4.
  138. *Southport Visiter*, 17 May 1924, p. 6.
  139. *Southport Visiter*, 20 May 1924, p. 7.
  140. *Southport Guardian*, 17 May 1939, p. 7.
  141. For a more detailed study of the activities of the League of Help see A. Gregson, 'The British League of Help for Devastated Areas of France: a forgotten memorial of the Great War', *Stand To! The Journal of the Western Front Association*, 66 (Jan. 2003), pp. 23–7.
  142. Corporation of London Record Office, Common Council papers 1921, British League of Help publicity appeal brochure.
  143. Gwynne's correspondence with his proprietor has been edited and published in K. Wilson (ed.), *The rasp of war: the letters of H.A. Gwynne to the Countess Bathurst 1914–1918* (London, 1988). This correspondence provides a background to his motivation in running the League of Help, and Wilson makes interesting comment on him and his connections, referring to his anti-semitism and anti-libertarian perspective, and said he was 'never far from paranoia' (pp. 321–2, 329).
  144. *Ibid.*
  145. *Ibid.*
  146. *Ibid.*
  147. IWM, K33309 first annual report.
  148. Brotherton Library Leeds University, Bathurst Collection [hereafter Bathurst Collection] Ref. 2043; Armentières featured in Evesham's list but did not appear in Powney's itinerary. Armentières is now twinned with Stalybridge, Tameside. Although Stalybridge expressed an interest in adopting a French town in 1921, it is unclear whether this actually happened, and if so, with which town. The twinning arrangement arose in 1955, and there is no evidence that there had been any previous links between these two towns under the Scheme: Tameside Local Studies Library, ref. GP/5 Ca Sta 288/1–3.
  149. Worcestershire Record Office, ref. 261.5 BA 1344; a further set of photographs is in the Bathurst Collection, Ref. 2034 and 2035.
  150. Derby MSS, 920 DER (17) 38/4, correspondence on British League of Help.
  151. Brotherton Library Leeds University, Bathurst Collection, ref. 2031, letter 27 Sep. 1920, MS deposit 1990/1.
  152. Bathurst Collection, second annual report of the British League of Help, ref. 2040.
  153. Derby MSS, 920 DER (17) 38/4, correspondence with Gilmer, 5, 6 Jan. 1921.
  154. Corporation of London Record Office, publicity appeal brochure, Common Council papers 1921.
  155. Bathurst Collection, Ref. 2031, 27 Sep. 1920.
  156. Burnley: W. Turner, *Pals: The 11th (Service) Battalion (Accrington): The East Lancashire regiment* (London, 1991); Lancashire County Record Office, Burnley Council minutes CBBu/4/31 and 32. Malvern: Worcestershire Record Office, Landrecies associated with 1/8th Battalion Worcestershire regiment, *Berrow's Worcester Journal*, Dec. 1920. Evesham: Worcestershire Record Office, Hebuterne associated with 1/8th Battalion Worcestershire regiment, ref. 261.5 BA 1344; Southport: Southport Library, Festubert associated with 1/7th Battalion King's Liverpool regiment, *Southport Visiter* and *Southport Guardian*, 1920–1; Blackpool: Blackpool Central Library, Neuve Chapelle had no direct connection, but large numbers of Blackpool men fought with 7th Battalion Loyal North Lancashire regiment, 5th and 6th Battalions King's Own Royal Lancaster regiment and 8th Battalion King's Liverpool regiment (55th Division): *Blackpool Gazette and Herald*, 1920; Lancashire County Record Office, CBBl 56/33 and 34 Blackpool Borough Council minutes; Liverpool: Liverpool Record Office (et al.), Givenchy, Estaires and Gorre associated with territorial and regular battalions of the King's Liverpool

- Regiment, Derby Papers, 920 DER (17) 38/4.
157. IWM, ref. K33309, First annual report of the British League of Help, 1921.
  158. *The Times*, 29 Sep. 1924, in IWM Jeurwine MSS ref. 72/82/1.
  159. *Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury*, 7 Sep. 1931, in IWM, Jeurwine MSS ref. 72/82/1.
  160. *Liverpool Courier*, 22 May 1929, p. 7; *Daily Sketch*, 20 May 1929, p. 10; programme of the blessing of the trees, Whit Sunday 1929; IWM Jeurwine MSS, ref. 72/82/2, invitation and visit itinerary.
  161. Derby MSS, 920 DER (17) 38/4, correspondence 27 Jan. 1921.
  162. *Southport Visiter*, 7 May 1921, p. 2.
  163. Bootle held a lantern lecture in aid of the Fund for the War Devastated Villages of France in Nov. 1921, a separate organisation to the League, but one with similar aims and approaches: *Bootle Times*, 11 Nov. 1921, p. 5.
  164. Corporation of London Record Office, publicity appeal brochure, Common Council papers 1921.
  165. Bathurst Collection, ref. 2040, second annual report of the British League of Help.
  166. *Ibid.*
  167. *Ibid.*
  168. Liverpool Record Office, Derby Papers, 920 DER (17) 38/4.
  169. *Ibid.*
  170. Bathurst Collection, ref. 2040, second annual report of the British League of Help.
  171. Derby MSS, 920 DER (17) 38/4, correspondence with Gilmer, 28 May 1923.
  172. *Southport Visiter*, 12 May 1923, p. 6.
  173. *Southport Visiter*, 17 May 1923, p. 2; This first party consisted of Cyril Ardron, James Ainscough, Cuthbert Corcoran, Luke Woodward, R. Leadbetter, Leonard Smith, George Benson, L. Oldfield, James Howard and Albert Long: *Southport Visiter*, 26 May 1923, p. 7.
  174. *Southport Visiter*, 11 July 1964, p. 7.
  175. *Southport Visiter*, 26 May 1923, p. 7.

### The vagaries of memorialization *Liz Moore and Bob Moore*

1. Hollingworth Lake Rowing Club, minute book, July 1913.
2. [demolyremy.fr/dictionnaire\\_doubs\\_francois\\_lassus\\_2.htm](http://demolyremy.fr/dictionnaire_doubs_francois_lassus_2.htm), accessed 26 Mar. 2014.
3. The RMS *Empress of Ireland* later gained notoriety when she sank in the St Lawrence Seaway on 29 May 1914 after a collision, with the loss of 1,012 passengers and crew. See, for example, J. Croall, *Fourteen minutes: the last voyage of the Empress of Ireland* (London, 1980).
4. Stan Sauerwein, *Fintry: lives, loves and dreams. The story of a unique Okanagan landmark* (Canada [n.p.], 2000), pp. 62–3. The authors gratefully acknowledge the help of Janet Moore in researching the sources for his career in Canada.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 63–4.
6. Louis Lailavoix, *La farce de Paquin fils. A play for children* (London, 1909); and *idem*, *Contes de ma jeunesse. Upsala les trois étapes* (London, 1909).
7. Émile Legouis, *Geoffrey Chaucer*, trans. Louis Lailavoix (London and New York, 1913), originally published in Paris in 1910.
8. University of Manchester Archives: Vice Chancellor's Archive VCA/7/317, Lailavoix Fund 1916–1917.
9. *Rochdale Observer*, 20 May 1916, Obituary of Capt. Leonard Renshaw.
10. Hollingworth Lake Rowing Club, minute book, 1914–1926, p. 31, Apr. 1916, 'In Memoriam'.
11. H. Margot, *79e Régiment d'Infanterie, 1914–1918* (n.p., n.d.), p. 5.
12. [http://vestigis.1914.1918.free.fr/Rgt\\_inf\\_51.htm](http://vestigis.1914.1918.free.fr/Rgt_inf_51.htm), accessed 24 Mar. 2014.
13. Margot, *79e Régiment d'Infanterie*, p. 11.
14. *Manchester Guardian*, 27 Apr. 1916.
15. University of Manchester, (Unconfirmed) Senate Minutes, 4 May 1916, p. 109.
16. *University of Manchester roll of honour*, No. 46. pp. 39–40. He was also remembered in the roll of honour at

University College, London where he had studied for his MA. See R.W. Chambers *et al* (eds), *This book is a record of those members of University College London and University College Hospital and Medical School who were killed or died on service, 1914–1919* (London, 1922–24).

17. *Manchester University Magazine*, 12:7, 21 June 1916, p. 96. Manchester University Archives: Vice Chancellor's Archive VCA/7/317, Lailavoix Fund, 1916–1917.
18. Leon E. Kastner and Henry B. Charlton, *The poetical works of Sir William Alexander* (Manchester, 1921).

### **The Great War in the North West: a historiography**     *Stephen Roberts*

1. It has been argued that he was actually talking about the French protests of 1968. See Richard McGregor, 'Zhou's cryptic caution lost in translation', *Financial Times*, 10 June 2011.
2. This is a crude calculation based on the population of the United Kingdom having been about 45.5 million during the war and the total number of men having served in the British armed forces being about 7 million.
3. See Kendal Pals: <http://www.freewebs.com/kendalpals/> and Lonsdale Pals: <http://www.freewebs.com/granatloch/>, both accessed 24 Mar. 2014.
4. <http://www.obs.org.uk/memorials-world-war-1>, accessed 24 Mar. 2014.

### **'A Land Fit For Heroes: War and the Working Class, 1914–1918': Exhibition at the People's History Museum, Manchester 24 May 2014 – 1 February 2015**     *Chris Burgess, Josh Butt, Beccy Crosby and Helen Antrobus*

1. A. King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain: the symbolism and politics of remembrance* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 198–9.

# Long reviews

## Adam Seipp

*The ordeal of peace: demobilization and the urban experience in Britain and Germany, 1917–1921* (Farnham, 2009). 291pp.

The years approaching the centenary of the First World War have witnessed a renewed interest in the elusive and controversial issue of war enthusiasm. Books detailing general attitudes such as Adrian Gregory's *The last Great War*, David Silbey's *The British working class and enthusiasm for war*, and Catriona Pennell's *A kingdom united* have been complemented by more localized, regionally specific analyses such as Bonnie White's work on Devon, Stuart Dalley's on Cornwall, and Cyril Pearce on Huddersfield. Adam Seipp's book, which offers a comparative assessment of Manchester and Munich during and after the war, is a welcome addition to this field.

Seipp adequately conveys the deep and widespread nature of support for the war, noting on page 70 that 'the war bond drives, so successful that they later threatened to undermine public finances completely in the postwar years, underscores how deeply this appeal to communal national feeling resonated in the hearts and pockets of ordinary Britons'. Indeed, so successful were the war loans that some left-leaning publications such as the Manchester-based *Co-operative News* attacked the high interest rates paid by the government, arguing that these only benefitted rich investors and that patriotism alone would have been sufficient to motivate working-class loan holders.

Seipp rightly identifies the critical nature of the food issue, arguing on page 59 that 'it was in the area of food supply and price control that the first and clearest collapse of the wartime consensus took place'. It was the demand for wage increases to keep in step with food prices that led to the engineers' strike of May 1917, during which, on 18 May, the police raided union buildings in Manchester, and the two large cotton stoppages which occurred towards the end of 1918.

However, his claim on page 44 that 'the

influence of the Russian Revolution on ordinary Europeans cannot be overstated' is simply not supported by the evidence. Additionally, it is an exaggeration to say that 'by September 1918, the tenuous peace between labor and industry that dated from 1914 was in tatters'. Strikes and other forms of discontent were never revolutionary or defeatist in nature, and were nearly always linked to pragmatic, prosaic demands relating to wages, food prices and rent control. Indeed Seipp acknowledges this in respect of the soldiers' strikes and mutinies following the Armistice, when he writes that while there was 'sympathy for the Russian revolutionaries in Britain and Manchester [...] the strikes in early 1919 were the product of disquiet over demobilization conditions'. In this he concurs with earlier investigations of these incidents by Gladden Dallas, Douglas Gill and Andrew Rothstein.

One of his main arguments is that the 'language of reciprocity' helped with the adhesion of post-war society and acted against subversive or revolutionary sentiments amongst ex-servicemen and civilians alike (p. 3). It is true that the Left in Manchester found its position enhanced after the war: at the start of the conflict the Manchester Co-operative Society consisted of 15,000 members; four years later this had risen to 21,400 (p. 153), and Co-ops not only expanded, but also became more radical. Similarly, Labour was notably successful in Manchester at the 1918 general election, with J.R. Clynes winning in Miles Platting, John Hodge returned in Gorton, and Ben Tillett successful in North Salford, although it is worth noting that all three men were staunch patriots during the war, and had drawn criticism from some on the pacifistic Left. Furthermore, the largest May Day celebration yet witnessed in Manchester, held in 1920, had the feel of a family outing, with sports, food and drink all prominent and politics rather pushed to the backseat.

Thus Adam Seipp has produced a valuable book on the First World War and its aftermath in Manchester, even if he does somewhat overstate

the sympathy of the British working-classes for revolutionary sentiment.

*D.J. Swift*

*University of Central Lancashire*

## **Nick Mansfield**

*Buildings of the labour movement* (Swindon, 2013). 134pp.

This new book by Dr Nick Mansfield is a much needed and very welcome addition to the literature of the labour movement. Whilst the book is essential for its wonderful and evocative collection of photographs, it is much more than a picture book. Each chapter has a brief history of the subject matter setting the illustrations in the context. The buildings illustrated range from the primitive-looking Railwaymen's Hut at Craven Arms based on a 'tin tabernacle' to the huge shopping emporia of the co-operative movement and the offices of some of the larger trades unions.

As would be expected, most of the buildings illustrated are part of the urban environment but that doesn't always hold true. Clearly the chapter on the rural labour movement has a different emphasis. The chapters on Chartism and the Clarion movement have a mixed geographic base; that on Chartism includes a section on the Chartist land movement and that on the Clarion movement covers the Clarion cycle club with its tea rooms as well as the city-based cafes.

Some of the historical material remains relevant to current debates. In this time of the threatened privatization of the National Health Service it is well to be reminded by this book that Aneurin Bevan modelled his post-war service on the hospital and convalescent facilities which were available to coal miners in many parts of the country including his own South Wales. One of the most evocative chapters for this ex-Lancashire coalminer includes photographs of the Lancashire and Cheshire Miners Convalescent Home. It was inevitable

that with the decline of the mining industry the home would cease to be viable. It is some consolation that the building still stands proud on Blackpool's sea frontage even if it is now forty-seven apartments.

'Labour movement buildings continue to be the Cinderella of architectural conservation' (p. 133). What is of most concern is that many of the buildings illustrated in this book have been demolished or irretrievably altered whilst in the ostensible guardianship of Labour-controlled councils. Two examples in my own city [Manchester] come to mind: Christ Church on Every Street, a key Chartist monument demolished in 1986; the Free Trade Hall, a major monument to the memory of Peterloo. Whilst its original exterior survives, the addition of a storey when being converted into a hotel has ruined the well proportioned structure and the interior has been virtually destroyed. In both of these examples, the city council ignored the well led and popular campaigns against its plans.

Although there is much to find depressing through most of this book in recognizing the buildings and material culture which the labour movement has lost, chapters 18 and 19 represent an expression of hope in what has been, and is still being, preserved and what may be visited by those interested in our history. This book is a delight to browse through as well as to read, and Mansfield is to be congratulated in writing it and English Heritage for publishing such an important text.

*Eddie Cass*

# Short Reviews

Edited by Chris Makepeace

J.M. Bentley, *Over the Peak. Part 1: Chinley to Peak Forest (Peak Dale)* (Nottingham, 2013). 104pp. Illus. Map. £19.99. ISBN: 9781907094651.

Although books of railway photographs do not appeal to everyone, there is a whiff of nostalgia about this book when steam hauled trains were dominant on the lines through Chinley. An important junction for passenger trains heading towards Sheffield, the East Midlands and London, Chinley saw many freight trains carrying limestone from the Peak District. The well reproduced photographs in this book cover not only the days of steam operation, but also more recent diesel-hauled trains. Each photograph is accompanied by an informative caption together with an interesting account of the construction of Dove Holes tunnel and a list of accidents relating to this. For those who used this line in the middle of the last century, it will bring back memories of a by-gone age.

J. Lloyd, *Beyer Peacock's Garratts: articulated locomotives sent worldwide* (Hyde, 2013). 234pp. Illus. Diags. Bibliog. Price available from the publisher at 18 Primrose Avenue, Hyde SK14 5BU.

This latest volume compiled by Joe Lloyd on the locomotives produced by Beyer Peacocks of Gorton has been compiled to mark the death of Herbert Garratt in 1913 whose ideas and patent led to the construction of over 1,000 of these remarkable articulated locomotives. The book begins with a short biography of Garratt followed by reproductions of some of the publicity material published by Beyer Peacock, details of the benefits of this type of locomotive and a list of companies that purchased these locomotives. The majority of the book consists of copies of general arrangement drawings, photographs,

technical details and details of specific orders. In addition, there is a brief outline of other, non-Garratt locomotives built by the company. This fascinating book is an important tribute to Garratt and Beyer Peacock's who had the fore-sight to implement Garratt's ideas and produce a remarkable locomotive. It is also an important contribution to the material available on Manchester's engineering industry.

M.W. Lees, *Bennett Street Sunday school 1801–1966: a Manchester history* (Bowdon, 2013). 205pp. Illus. Bibliog. £12.99. ISBN: 9780956508959.

One of the aims of the Sunday school movement was to teach children to read the bible and prayer book, but many Sunday schools went on to play an important place in local society by providing facilities for the wider community. The book traces the history and work of one of Manchester's best known Sunday schools – Bennett Street – which operated in one of the poorest parts of central Manchester, namely around New Cross and Ancoats. Although the teaching of reading was important, Bennett Street undertook important work in the field of social welfare, helping some of the poorest in Manchester with advice, and providing facilities as an alternative to the pub when not at work. It drew its membership from those living locally, but it attracted support from the more socially-minded members of Manchester society. This well written and informative publication traces the history and the work of Bennett Street Sunday School from its foundation in 1801 until its closure in 1966. There is a wealth of information in the book that makes a significant contribution to that which already available on Ancoats and lives of those who lived and worked there.

B. McGarr, *The Manchester book of days* (Stroud, 2013). 368pp. £9.99. ISBN: 9780752483085.

In the nineteenth century W.E. Axon compiled his *Annals of Manchester* that listed some of the events that took place in Manchester each year. Since its publication in the 1886, corrections have been made and various people have extended its coverage into the twentieth century. Axon's approach is ideal if you want to know what happened in a particular year, but not if you want to know what happened on a particular day. Ben McGarr, the compiler of this book, has attempted just this by listing some of the events that took place in Manchester on a daily basis. It is not merely a list of events, as each entry has a brief paragraph written about it. However, as there is only one page per day, the author has been selective in what he has included. This will be a useful publication for those interested in what happened on a specific day in Manchester's past. Doubtless it will lead to a further volume for events and news items that could not be included in this one.

S. Nichols, *St Anne's Home: a history of the Bowdon branch of the Manchester Hospital for consumption* (Altrincham, 2010). 124pp. Illus. Bibliog. Map. £12.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, consumption – or TB as it is known today – was a very infectious disease that spread rapidly as a result of sneezes and coughs affecting rich and poor, young and old alike. It was also a major cause of death amongst many working people in the country's industrial towns and cities. Special hospitals were established to treat patients, often in rural areas away from the heavily polluted industrial atmosphere of towns, where it was believed the fresh, clean air could aid recovery. One such hospital was St Anne's home in Bowdon. This book traces the history of the site where the hospital was eventually to be established in the house formerly occupied by Joseph Sidebotham and his family, and its history after it became a hospital. This interesting and informative book is an important contribution not only to the history of medical facilities in

the Manchester area, but also on the history of Bowdon. It is well illustrated and includes a useful chronology that puts its development into context.

G. Phythian, *South Manchester remembered* (Stroud, 2012). 125pp. Illus. Map. £12.99. ISBN: 9780752470023.

This book consists of a series of short articles on various aspects of south Manchester's history including travel, entertainment, customs and south Manchester at war. The articles originally appeared in the *South Manchester Gazette* and were intended to provide a popular historical feature in this paper. The articles are well written and, like items produced for newspapers, easy to read. This book, together with the series that Diana Leitch has privately published based on her articles for the same paper, provides information on this part of Manchester that might otherwise be overlooked by historians whilst at the same time drawing attention to the fact that events and activities that some might regard as being contemporary are, in fact, part of history, especially to the younger generation. It should encourage others to record their own experiences and memories for future generations.

J.M. Gratton, *The Parliamentary and Royalist war effort in Lancashire 1642–1651* (Manchester, 2010). 381pp. Maps. Bibliog. ISBN: 9780955427619.

To many people, the English Civil War of the mid-seventeenth century consisted of four major battles, a few skirmishes, the execution of Charles I and the rule of Oliver Cromwell, but this is far from the truth. Events took place in many parts of the country including Lancashire and Cheshire. There is far more to the Civil War than just battles. The first account of the Civil War in Lancashire was published in 1910 and compiled by Ernest Broxap. Since that time, there has been a lot of research into the subject, but nothing has been published that brings it all together. The research undertaken

by J.M. Gratton and published by the Chetham Society brings together the research that has taken place during the last hundred years not only on the military side of the Civic War in the county, but on many other important aspects such as the local political scene and finance and administration relating to both sides in the conflict. This book is essential reading for all those interested in what was going on in Lancashire in the middle of the seventeenth century, providing a balanced picture of this important time.

J. Cronin and F. Rhodes, *Britain in old photographs: Longsight* (Slough, 2010). 128pp. Illus. Map. £12.99. ISBN: 9780752446554.

After a brief introduction outlining the history of Longsight, this book comprises of around 200 photographs, engravings and items of ephemera to give a picture of this Manchester district that lies astride the main road south towards Stockport. The photographs, some of which come from private family collections, are accompanied by captions that vary in length and in the information they provide. As Longsight is an area that is not well covered in print, this is a worthwhile addition to the material available on this part of Manchester that has undergone many changes in the last few decades.

S. Collins, *James Crossley: a Manchester man of letters* (Manchester, 2012). 338pp. Bibliog. ISBN: 9780955427633.

Anyone interested in Manchester's literary history will have come across the name of James Crossley whose presence dominated literary life in Manchester throughout much of the nineteenth century. As well as being a solicitor, Crossley wrote and collected books, the latter activity bringing him into conflict with Edward Edwards, Manchester Public Libraries first librarian, when the two were purchasing stock for the new public library. In addition, Crossley was involved with the foundation of the Chetham Society and was its president from 1848 until his death in 1883, seeking to make

manuscripts and other items of literary and local interest available to a wider audience. This monograph is not only a biography of Crossley, but portrays his involvement with the Tories in Manchester and their opposition to the creation of the incorporation of the borough in 1838. Anyone interested in Manchester at this critical time in the town's development should read this publication. It will also appeal to those whose interest is in literature generally as Crossley was a keen advocate for the writing of Daniel Defoe.

J.M. Virgoe, *Thomas Eccleston (1752–1809): a progressive Lancastrian agriculturalist* (Manchester, 2012). Bibliog. 242pp. ISBN: 9780955427626.

During the latter half of the eighteenth century, agricultural practice underwent a series of changes that was to enable production to be increased, a move that was necessary as the industrial towns of south-east and north-east Lancashire began to expand. Food shortages could lead to food riots and machine breaking, events that frightened factory owners and small businessmen. Although Eccleston lived at Scarsbrick, his expertise in improving land and encouraging better health care for livestock was known nationally. This biography examines not only his life but also his achievements in the field of agriculture where it is said he was not so much an innovator, but an implementer of ideas tried elsewhere.

A. Brooks, *A Veritable Eden: the Manchester botanic garden – a history* (Oxford, 2011). 160pp. Illus. Maps. £25. ISBN: 9781905119 370.

During the nineteenth century there was a movement that gave birth to subscription botanic gardens, leaving us in the twenty-first century with several important such gardens. But Manchester is not one of them. The idea of establishing a botanic garden in Manchester dates from 1827 when the Manchester Botanic Society was established. Land was obtained in Old Trafford and work started on creating the gardens that were opened in June 1831. This

book traces the rise and fall of the Botanic Society and its gardens during the nineteenth century. Although the society had support from the local landowners, the gradual movement of the wealthier members of local society to the surrounding suburbs and parts of north Cheshire where they could establish their own gardens meant that interest in the botanic gardens waned, resulting in its ultimate closure in 1907. Brooks carefully fits the history of the society into the wider context of Manchester's history. It is well illustrated with examples of the type of facilities that the founders were trying to achieve and with illustrations of some of the plants that were grown and that might have been displayed in the gardens. The book fills an important other gap in the material available on the many aspects of Manchester in the past.

D. Hodgkins, *The diary of Edward Watkin* (Manchester, 2013). 288pp. Bibliog. ISBN: 9780955427640.

Diaries can provide a wealth of information not only on the private life of the compiler, but also on what was going on in the community

in general. It is fortunate that this diary has survived as most of Watkin's papers were destroyed in the 1940s. The surviving diary covers 1844, 1845 and part of 1846 and is reproduced here together with extracts from 1841 and 1843 that have survived in another publication. The book begins with a biographical account of Watkin's life, placing it in context with Manchester during the 1830s and 1840s. Not only are domestic events included in the diary, but also details of political events and the economic situation. A useful feature is that Hodgkins has added explanatory notes on the people, places, businesses and events mentioned so the reader is not left wondering who or what is being referred to. The diaries themselves paint a picture of the lifestyle of a local businessman who interests included railways, politics, social activities and public parks. The value of this publication is enhanced by the addition of an appendix that deals with Watkin's interest in public parks and articles by him published in the *Manchester Guardian*. This book will provide a lot of addition material for those interested in Manchester in the 1840s when, as the author points out, Manchester was approaching a high point in its history.

# Article abstracts and keywords

## **Adrian Gregson**

*From docks and sand: the maintenance of community identity in a territorial battalion in the First World War*

This article focuses on the significance of community and identity for 1/7th Battalion, King's Liverpool regiment in the Great War. Their sense of identity was based on the area of recruitment, notably the quite radically different boroughs of Bootle and Southport. The Battle of Festubert was particularly important in forging an identity which was encouraged by the Lancastrianisation of the 55th Territorial division, on the Somme and then at Givenchy in 1918. It was a community link fostered by the British League of Help for Devastated Towns and one that lasted until the outbreak of the Second World War.

**Keywords:** *Festubert, Givenchy, King's Liverpool Regiment, British League of Help, Southport, Bootle*

## **Helen B. McCartney**

*North-West infantry battalions and local patriotism in the First World War*

This article seeks to examine the nature of local patriotism amongst soldiers serving in battalions from the North-West of England in the First World War. It argues that local patriotism was a multi-faceted phenomenon, existing at familial, county and regional levels. A desire to protect their family, home and way of life, coupled with a sense of local pride, helped to motivate many citizen soldiers to join the armed forces in the first years of the war and continue to fight to its conclusion.

**Keywords:** *patriotism, infantry, First World War, motivation, family*

## **Liz Moore and Bob Moore**

*The vagaries of memorialization*

In the commemoration and remembrance of the fallen during the Great War it is instructive to look carefully at the names and inscriptions on the memorials. It is well known that many British

regiments contained numbers of volunteers from the dominions, but less well known are the stories of allied nationals commemorated by universities, clubs and companies in the United Kingdom. Louis Lailavoix, an expatriate Frenchman who was a lecturer at Manchester University in the years before 1914 is one such example. Answering the call to the colours in 1914, he served with distinction in the French army before his death in the defence of Verdun. Thus he is honoured on the University's war memorial and also on a similar plaque at Hollingworth Lake Rowing Club, where he was briefly a member, but not in any material form in his native France save for his grave at the Farry military cemetery

**Keywords:** *memorials, France, Hollingworth Lake Rowing Club, Manchester University*

## **Martin Purdy**

*The Commonest of Men: Gallipoli and the East Lancashire legacy*

The Gallipoli campaign of 1915 holds a unique place within Britain's annual commemorative calendar, and yet there are clear winners and losers in what remains a strongly contested legacy. As we approach the centenary of this ill-fated campaign, this paper looks at the international, national and regional factors which lie at the heart of the ongoing battle for ownership of the Gallipoli legacy and the reason why the sacrifice of tens of thousands of 'part-time' soldiers from East Lancashire appear to have been lost in the process.

**Keywords:** *Gallipoli, East Lancashire territorials, Gallipoli and legacy, 42nd Division, Gallipoli Day*

## **Neil Redfern**

*Labour failure and Liberal survival: the impact of the Great War on the labour movement in Mossley*

Mossley was a small cotton community a few miles from Manchester where its location in a small Pennine valley tended to isolate

it from wider influences. The town was only marginally affected by the class conflict and turmoil of the years 1917–1921. But inflation, conscription, profiteering and so on did stir up discontent and Mossley's cotton workers did take part in the national cotton strike of 1919. Labour movement activists started to move their political allegiance away from the Liberals towards Labour but remained ideologically wedded to the progressive Liberal/Labour alliance. They failed to take advantage of the radical moment of 1919, fighting that year's municipal elections as junior partners of the Liberals. Labour's chance had passed: in Mossley, the Liberals continued to be one of the two main parties.

**Keywords:** *Great War, Mossley, social reform, Labour Party, Liberal Party*

### **Alison Ronan**

#### *The Women's War Interest Committee in Manchester and Salford: a snapshot of feminist activism in the First World War*

The establishment of the Women's War Interest Committee in 1915 was a reconfiguration of suffrage, socialist and trade-union women activists who were concerned about the erosion of working-women's rights and the possibility of subsequent dilution of hard won pre-war labour rights. The paradox here is that these women were simultaneously campaigning for a negotiated peace and were active in the anti-war movements both regionally and nationally. The committee drew on the suffragist strategies of parliamentary lobbying, holding local meetings and conferences and networking within the male-dominated unions to achieve their objectives. It is a snapshot of feminist activism during a time of total war.

**Keywords:** *suffrage, socialism, trade unions, women's rights*

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**Adrian Gregson** is archival policy and collections manager for Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service, based at The Hive. His doctorate on the 7th Battalion, King's Liverpool regiment was awarded in 2006. Adrian is also a local councillor and is currently leader of Worcester City Council.

**Helen McCartney** is a senior lecturer in the Defence Studies Department, King's College London, based at the Joint Services Command and Staff College. She is author of two books on the First World War: *The Somme: an eyewitness history* (co-authored with Robert T. Foley, 2006); and *Citizen soldiers: the Liverpool territorials in the First World War* (2005). She has also published on British military-societal relations and is currently writing a new history of the social and cultural myths of the Great War for Oxford University Press.

**Liz Moore** is currently studying English Literature at the University of Exeter. Bob Moore is Professor of Twentieth Century History at the

University of Sheffield and both are members of Hollingworth Lake Rowing Club.

**Martin Purdy** is a doctoral student working with Lancaster University and Westfield War Memorial Village (Lancaster) on the challenges – social, cultural and practical – encountered in the past century by disabled ex-servicemen, their families and charitable flag-bearers. He worked for a number of years as a freelance First World War advisor for the BBC's *Who Do You Think You Are?* Magazine and has published two books, along with numerous magazine and newspaper articles, on the First World War.

**Neil Redfern** is now semi-retired, having taught at Bolton, Manchester Metropolitan and Salford universities. Until recently his main research interest was communism – he is the author of *Class or nation: communists, imperialism and two world wars* (2005). Now he is engaged in wider labour history, in particular the relationship between imperialism and the British labour movement. He is currently at work on a study of the Lancashire working class and the two world wars.

**Stephen Roberts** is head of history at the Queen Katherine School in Kendal. He has written two works of local history – *Hoyle and Meols past* and *A history of Wirral* – and is currently researching a PhD about Wirral during the Great War at the University of Central Lancashire.

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