

Bacup Times November 17th 1928

"THEIR NAME LIVETH FOR EVERMORE"

BACUP WAR MEMORIAL UNVEILED

HOMAGE TO THE FALLEN

Ten years after the Armistice Bacup's War Memorial, erected to perpetuate the memory of her gallant sons who fell in the Great War, was unveiled on Saturday a day which will go down to history for two reasons, the ceaseless, drenching rain during the whole outdoor proceedings, and the crowning homage which rose superior to the adverse climatic conditions.

It was a day which brought back vivid remembrances of the rain and mud of Flanders, but the courage which triumphed over difficulties on the various battle-fronts, on the road to Môt's and Amiens seemed to live again, and the ceremonial passed off with exemplary order and reverence. After ten years of waiting, Bacup commemorated the heroism and sacrifice of its men-folk in those valorous days and remembered.

Following the brightness of the proceeding day, the weather on this long-looked for occasion was a tragic disappointment. But the arrangements had been made and a solemn steadfastness to "see the thing through" permeated all hearts. The poppy sellers pursued their self appointed tasks whilst inwardly praying for the skies to cease weeping, and those whose duty it was to apply final touches to the purple and other trimmings of the memorial, went about their work with stoical indifference to the elements. The people refused to be depressed.

EX SERVICEMEN'S DAY

After the noon day hour had passed there was a noticeable quickening of the public interest. One of the first sights was the appearance of a fine muster of ex-servicemen, wearing medals and badges, who marched down Market Street with military bearing and swinging tread. At the head were ex-Lieut J Cook in charge of the British Legion, Surgeon F W Rigby and Mr Edwin Bayliss the prospective Liberal candidate for Rossendale, and they were followed by others who in days of warfare attained conspicuous rank. Sergeant McGuinness was in command of members of the United Service Club.

Altogether the ex-servicemen made a brave show, and the rhythmic action of their marching sent a quiver through the heart of onlookers. These were they who had borne " the heat and Burdon of battle " some of them bore on their bodies the scars of strife and conflict and they marched with breasts forward and chins up. This was THEIR day, and fellow-feeling and native instinct made us proud of the,

Then the beat of the drums and the sound of the bugles of the boy scouts on their way to the meeting place at Stubylee, arrested attention. They also swung along merrily, hearts attuned to the biggest event and the motto of their movement, and the girl guides likewise mustered in strong force minus the exuberance and gusto of the Scouts. Uniformed bandsmen smart looking ambulance men and nursing sisters (representatives of all the voluntary public service

betokening self sacrifice and practical sympathy) swelled the throng Stubylee Wards, and there were also the strengthening arms of members of the Police Force and Fire Brigade and the auxiliary helpfulness of the Special Constabulary.

All rank of the force rendered signal service and worthily contributed to the success of the organisation. Members of the Town Council Corporation officials, representatives of the Magistracy and public bodies added by their presences to the general throng. A rightful place was given to the members of the British Legion and United Services Fund Benevolent Committee, because the days commemoration saw the culmination of a scheme they had long and earnestly laboured for.

A TOUCHING SITE

Military pomp and glory was represented by the detachment of E.L Territorial Regiment under the command of Capt H. B Worswick. Mayor R.P Hargreaves was also present. They moved into position with remarkable precision, entering into the true spirit of the event and carrying themselves with soldiery bearing. By far the most touching feature of the procession was the presence of children of men killed, etc in the war and wearing their fathers medals. Shivering in the rain and trying to keep back the tears which silently flowed, and grasping lovingly the posies "In memory of Daddy" they presented a spectacle which vividly stirred the emotions. No one person in the multitude of onlookers could repress a thought for the descendants of those who had "passed on" and sleep peacefully in a foreign field. It brought home afresh the anguish of personal sorrows, yet re-kindled the meaning of holy words. "Inasmuch as ye do it to one of these" and the transcendent note was that of homage and humility. Who can ever forget? Who cannot solemnly rededicate themselves to the cause of peace? For the sake of the children who will henceforth be the men and women of the homeland. The following is a list of the children of the fallen who took part in the procession:

Emily Cursson, Annie Jennings, Nellie Jennings, Mary Sturt, Florrie Duerden, Ronald Duerden, Clifford Barrett, John Flynn, Arthur McMullan, Herbert Crisp, Leslie Clegg, John T Foulds, Cyril Hargreaves, John A Clegg, John A Holt, James Mitchell, Willie Bell, Richard Roberts, John H Roberts, Joseph Earnshaw, Willie Clawson.

A LENGTHY PROCESSION

As the procession moved off from Stubylee Hall, Irwell Springs Band played the tune "Bradford" and Stacksteads band supplied alternate music. Flanked by Police Constables Wild and Bennington carrying the Halberd the mayor had as companions the Deputy Mayor and the Town Clerk and Trooper Wilfred Birch (late 1st Life Guards), who was accompanied by his wife, and there was an escort of ex-servicemen. As previously stated trooper Birch is a native of Stacksteads, who lost his sight through the effects of war, and was trained at St Dustan's for the position of telephone operator, which eh now occupies in London. Of striking physique his was a commanding figure, and his steps tenderly piloted by his partner made the lump rise in ones throat and they to be moist with tears. Oh ! the tragedy of war!.

When the fore part of the procession had reached the Park Hotel the " tail end" had not emerged through the Park gates, so and idea can be gained of its length. It is safe to say that the procession was half a mile long and certainly one of the most representative and imposing of any in Bacup for a long time past. Despite the drenching rain, Market Street was thronged with sight-seers, ands the crowd in Burnley Road numbered five or six thousand. Whether the

multitude would have been greater on a fine, crisp day is a matter of conjecture, as it was it overflowed into St Johns churchyard, where many were accommodated, and a few daring spirits clambered on to projecting woodwork and window sills of the shops facing the Memorial. The arrangements for the marshalling of the crowd and the various units of the procession was a tribute to the organising ability of Chief Constable Sturt, who was ably supported by Inspector Bunn and other grades of the police force and special constabulary, several of the cheerfully accepting street duty.

AT THE CENOTAPH.

The scenes at the cenotaph were of imperishable memory. Nothing like them have been seen in Bacup before. With admirable exactness, the ex-service men the Territorials, the ambulance men etc, took up the positions allotted to them and during the whole of the ceremony the detachments of soldiers stood attention with fixed bayonets. A little before the main bit of the procession arrived, there was a lull in the storm, but directly afterwards the rain lashed by a cold wind, again came on furiously. There seemed an uncanny application in the singing of "O God our help in ages past " to the tune of St Ann played by "Springs Band. The words " Our shelter from the stormy blast" had a peculiar setting. A little waveringly at first, the crowd took up the singing reverently, and the supplication in the last verse. " Be Thou Our Guard while life shall last, and our Eternal Home ". was given in louder tone simultaneous volume.

The singing of the well known hymn was followed by prayer by the Vicar of Bacup Rev V. English, L Th.,M.A and the repeating of the Lord's Prayer by the congregation. Then the Rev.H.A.Hodgson (superintendent Wesleyan minister) read a portion of scripture Revelation,xxi, 1-7 beginning "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth". By the way, the clergy and ministers of all denominations were well represented in the throng.

THE UNVEILING

Alderman J.H.Lord, who was presided by virtue of the fact that he was Mayor of the Borough during the war period, then said: Without detaining you in this inclement weather, I will now ask Mr Wilfred Birch, one of our own Bacup lads, to unveil this, our town's memorial.

(Applause.)

Mr Wilfred Birch, who received a sympathetic greeting, said: Mr Chairman, ladies and gentlemen - Today you have conferred upon me a great honour in asking me as your representative, to unveil this war memorial to the men of Bacup who fell in the Great War.

When I received the invitation I felt it my duty, and that it was impossible for me to refuse. It was also a great pleasure to me to feel that i w3as not forgotten in my native town. (Hear Hear.) Bacup was second to none in responding in the Great War and as one who took part I must say that no person except those who took part in the war fully realise what those men, whose death we are commemorating today, and thousands of other men maimed and wounded, suffered during those four years. Those of you who served in the Great War and are still able to carry on your ordinary duty, I ask to DO YOUR BEST TO HELP those who,

through no fault of their own, cannot help themselves. In conclusion, I wish to thank you, one and all, for the great honour you have done me today. (Hear Hear, and applause.)

Rev F.J.Peach (Mayors Chaplain) then offered up a prayer of thanksgiving and dedication, in which he said. "In the faith of Jesus Christ we dedicate this memorial to the glory of God and in the memory of men of Bacup who gave their lives for us in the Great War, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen".

"TELL YE. YOUR CHILDREN".

Alderman Lord then said: Mr Mayor on behalf of the people of Bacup and the Memorial Committee. I hand over to your safe keeping this Cenotaph, to be cared for by this town for evermore, in remembrance of those fellow citizens who have fallen in the Great War. May it ever be a reminder to us and our successors for generations to come of the devastation of war, and may it be our hope and the hope of all looking upon this cenotaph that such a war shall be no more. (Hear Hear.) "Tell ye your children" is on the cenotaph, and let them never forget that. Instil it into their minds, to help forward the cause of peace and brotherly love throughout this land and all the world. Mr Mayor to you, as representing this town I hand over this cenotaph.(Applause)

The Mayor: As Mayor of the Borough, and as the representative of the inhabitants of the Borough, it affords me very great pleasure to accept this war memorial from the War Memorial Committee, and I undertake to see that it is kept in good condition and receives all necessary attention, so that it as Alderman Lord has said, of the heavy toll war placed upon us.

I also move that our best thanks be given to the War Memorial Committee and to Mr Birch for coming to unveil this memorial. I think he has discharged his duty well (Hear Hear.) and I am only sorry he is one of those who has suffered through the war. Like Alderman Lord, I hope, as the rising generations come along and look at the memorial, it will show them what war is, I again thank you. Mr Birch, on behalf of the inhabitants of the town for coming here to unveil the memorial.

Mr J.A Stocks: (Chairman of the Benevolent Committee) said it gave him great pleasure to second the resolution.

When Mr Birch's name was mentioned, they felt that as he was the only Bacup young man at St Dustan's no one was more fitted to unveil the memorial. (Hear Hear.)

The Chairman, in putting the resolution, said he was sure they all wished Mr Birch to have all happiness that was possible in the future. The resolution was carried with respectful unanimity.

Mr Birch: Thank you very much.

The Chairman said Mr Birch was too full to say more.

The congregation then sang " Abide with me " to the tune "Eventide" after which there was a tense silence while Buglers sounded the " Last Post" followed by further quietness for a minute as a tribute to the dead. Only a sob here and there could be heard until the Buglers

took up "The Revele " which was sounded with great impression. Then came the Benediction, pronounced by the Vicar, and the official proceedings closed with the singing of the National Anthem.

MAYORESS LAYS A WREATH

At the conclusion of the ceremony the Mayoress (Mrs Nuttall) laid a wreath at the base of the Memorial on behalf of the people of Bacup, and other wreaths were laid by representatives of the British Legion, Territorials, Ambulance Association, and the following clubs:- United Service Club, Victoria Workingmen's Club, Britannia Workingmen's Club, Conservative Club, Bacup Irish Club, Rose Mount Club, Stacksteads Liberal Club, Mr Arthur Law Prospective Labour Candidate laid a wreath on behalf of Bacup and Stacksteads Labour Party.

There were also numerous floral tokens from bereaved families, and in a short while the lower portion of the Cenotaph was a mass of beautiful flowers. Not the least important indeed, perhaps the most affecting and significant was the laying of posies by the children. As the weather had improved, crowds lingered to scan the flowers and inspect the Memorial. Truly remembrance was at the flood-tide. Everyone seemed to be animated by the spirit of the words: They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old.

Age shall not weary them nor years condemn;

At the going down of the sun and in the morning

We will remember them!.