

## Honouring the Brave

### Patriotic Gathering in Weir Village

#### Unveiling of Public Shrine and Roll of Honour

From a spectacular point of view, it was unfortunate that unpropitious weather should be associated with the unveiling of a public war shrine and Roll of Honour in Weir Village on Saturday last.

What promised to be an impressive and auspicious event was, to a great degree, spoiled by the incessant downpour of rain, but it speaks much for the ardour of the promoters of the affair and those participating in it that the arranged programme was carried out in its entirety though ere the outdoor proceedings closed many of the scouts and spectators must have been thoroughly drenched.

The proceedings commenced with a procession from Northern School to the site of the memorial. The procession was headed by a contingent of Boy Scouts, and here it might be said that had it not been for the bad there would doubtless have been a bigger attendance both of Scouts and interested persons from outside the prescribed area of Deerplay, Weir and Broadclough.

Behind the scouts and members of the committee, walked the Mayor, wearing his chain of office, Sir Henry Maden, M.P. Alderman Cropper J.P. Councillors Thompson, Greenwood, Nuttall and Stevenson, and a number of ladies and gentlemen of the district.

The shrine has been erected in a recess at the gable end of the branch shop of the Co-operative store, and when unveiled presented an arresting appearance, the floral embellishments lending a pretty and appreciative effect. The shrine, which is the work of Mr James W Sutcliffe (joiner) and has been artistically lettered and painted by Mr M L Foulds Junior, bears at the head the words "Weir and District Public Shrine and Roll of Honour they answered their King and Country's Call." Then follows the names of those who have joined the forces, enclosed in a glass panel, and allowing for further additions as time goes on, and at the foot the words, "Greater love hath no man than this-that he lay down his life for his friends." At each side are pedestals for vases, which, it is intended, shall be the receptacles of complimentary gifts of flowers, etc. The project has been well conceived, and despite the unfavourable climatic conditions the organisers are deserving of credit upon the successful outcome of their efforts.

#### The opening ceremony

After reading a letter from Father Kiely regretting inability to be present, the Chairman (Mr F.E. Larton) said that was a red-letter day in connection with the people of Weir Village. Never before had they held such a gathering as was assembled there that day. As they were aware, they were met to do honour to whom honour was due, and the interest displayed by the people showed that they had a real interest in the lads who had gone from that district. It might be necessary to state how the war shrine and roll of honour had come about. The social committee in connection with the Weir Liberal Club thought that something should be done to show appreciation of the lads who had gone from that district to fight for King and Country.

Continued.....

Several "feelers" were sent out to various men in the district and the replies were favourable. The social committee then issued invitations to the Sunday Schools- Doals Baptist, Heald Wesleyan and the Catholics, and also to the committee of the club. When the social committee met again there was a unanimous feeling that something should be done to commemorate and perpetuate the services which the lads from that district had given in their behalf. The committee set about the task, and the result was the shrine and roll of honour which the Mayor would shortly unveil.

He (the chairman) might mention that the district reached from Deerplay to Broadclough, and they also took in the surrounding districts in that area. There were 113 men, who had gone from that area to fight for King and Country, and 10 had paid the supreme sacrifice, 13 had been discharged and 1 was reported missing. Weir district had done its fair share for the cause which was before the nation at the present time in the shape of the Great War. (Applause)

#### Regret, Admiration and Pride

The Mayor, who was cordially received, said it was his duty as Mayor and representing the public of Bacup to perform the unveiling ceremony. He did so with great feeling of regret, admiration and pride. Regret, that it should be necessary in this 20<sup>th</sup> century of Christianity that these brave lads should have been called upon to pay the supreme sacrifice in the interest of civilisation, that Germany should have forced this terrible war upon this country for her own aggrandisement, and made great military preparations over a long number of years for that purpose, and that in waging this war Germany should have resorted to methods worthy only of murderers, brigands and even worse. (Hear Hear) Admiration, to think that our brave lads had risen to the occasion and shed their blood in the sacred cause the nation was fighting for. It had proved to them that we in this generation had inherited and even exalted the bravery our ancestors had shown in days gone by. There were braver deeds done in the present war every day than, for example, the Balaclava Charge. Instruments of war in those days were playthings compared to the terrible engines of destruction now in use. Pride, that even a small village like Weir shall have given of its best to the Mother Country, as shown by the object of that day's proceedings, that against such great odds, Germany being the biggest military nation the world had ever known, Britain and her Colonies set their backs to the wall and produced an army of gallant men, proved to be second to none in this great fight for liberty, and through sacrifices like those lads had made had kept the German hordes from over running their native land. (Hear Hear)

They, the people at home must put their whole energy in to the struggle which had now become one for the very existence of the state. They would have to suffer cheerfully discomfort in the way of shortage of food and coal. They could not all fight. Some, of course, must always be left at home to carry on as best they could under very difficult circumstances, but compared to the men who had given all, their lot was an easy one, and they must bear with patience what was only discomfort and anxiety for those near and dear to them, and so help to win the war. (Hear Hear)

It was necessary that we should keep up a stout heart, save all they could, and grow all the food they possibly could. Everyone could do something, and the least they could do was to support those who were continuing the fight until victory final and complete, was attained. Sacrifices already made had been so great that they who were left behind would be traitors to those who had gone if they did not use every ounce of energy they possessed in carrying on until their aim was accomplished.

Continued

## The Future Generation

Let them think of the Future Generation and save them having to fight this war all over again. (Hear Hear) There would be no more trying time than the present, if they could not hold until their noble ally, America, could put almost unlimited force on their side, and that would need all the fortitude they had at their command, then victory was assured.

(Hear Hear)

They had great sympathy with all those who had lost their dear ones, but there was some little satisfaction in the knowledge that they had given their lives for those they loved.

(Hear Hear)

The townspeople were proud of them, and would without doubt do all in their power to put an end for all time to the possibility of a recurrence of those terrible times through which the world was now passing. In conclusion he (the Mayor) would like to quote the words of Ella Wheeler Wilcox:

“It is easy to be pleasant  
When life flows by like a song  
But the man worthwhile  
Is the one who will smile  
When everything goes dead wrong

For the test of the heart is trouble  
And it always comes with the years  
And the smile that is worth  
The praises of earth  
Is the smile that shines through tears”  
(Applause)

The Mayor then proceeded to unveil the shrine and received applause from the assembled company, after which the Boy Scouts gave a bugle call.

The Hymn, “O God our help in ages past,” was then sung, after which the Rev CS Rowland (Mayors Chaplain) dedicated the shrine and offered an appropriate prayer for the nation, the soldiers and sailors, etc. The fallen and the sick and wounded, and for those who mourn.

### Sir Henry Maden’s encouragement

On being called upon to move a vote of thanks to the Mayor for his services, Sir Henry Maden, MP, said he was heartily glad to take part in that ceremony, and he felt sure that all the people within the radius mentioned by the chairman would be thankful to the Mayor for what he had done that afternoon. The weather had turned out unpropitious, but still there was a large attendance, and he felt sure that those who had braved the inclement weather would tender appreciation to the Mayor for his services. Though it might not be quite the first time he had been up there, the Mayor had not been up very often, but when he came to know them better or as well as he (Sir Henry) did, he would find that Weir people truly appreciated anything which was done for them. (Hear Hear)

He (Sir Henry) wished to compliment the people on the spirit which had prompted the erection of that shrine and roll of honour. By that means they were showing their feelings as regards the boys who had gone from that district, and their motives ought to be appreciated in the district. (Hear Hear)

Continued

He was glad that the people of Weir had, in their own way, done something to show their appreciation of those lads who were fighting for the state. (Hear Hear)

The Mayor had told them that they all ought to be doing what they could to assist the nation, and he agreed with that expression.

#### Launching a Bill

Next week, he (Sir Henry) would be requested to take part in launching a bill which would call upon a lot of people who did not come within the provisions already, and possibly, it would demand service from the Mayor in some other capacity. (Laughter)

However, some of them could possibly do better national service by looking after things at home than in engagements elsewhere. His (Sir Henry's) experience was that during the last twelve months he had done less service for the state than what they could have done as Mayor of the Borough, or working in connection with various municipal affairs in Bacup or administrative efforts on behalf of the county. There might be an impression that they had not done their fair share, and that those in Parliament ought to be given the opportunity of doing more than they had done. They all ought to take to heart what the Mayor had said, and do all they possibly could to help the lads who were fighting on their behalf at the front. (Hear Hear)

Weir people had that day shown their appreciation of the services which were being rendered. Those at home hardly knew what those services really were. He (Sir Henry) had spoken to many soldiers who had been there, and they had said for nights and days they had been under shell fire. They hardly knew when they could have a rest, and the least they could do was to see that those lads received all the help they possibly could have and that their lot might be made as happy as possible under the circumstances. Believing that they appreciated the attendance of the Mayor he heartily moved a vote of thanks to him for his services. (Applauses)

#### For Freedom and Liberty

Councillor Thompson said it was a pleasant duty for him to second the resolution on behalf of the inhabitants of Weir, who had evinced a desire to commemorate the services of the lads who had obeyed the call. Those lads had gone out on behalf of King and country, to stand up for principles they held dearer than life-viz., freedom, liberty and in defence of the weaker nations of the earth. Their names would go down to posterity as men, they hoped, who helped to save the British nation from disaster and annihilation. (Hear Hear)

Some of them had already laid down their lives in the great cause, and to the families of those they tendered their sincere sympathy. "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." Some had been wounded in the strife, and their hope was that they might be restored to health and strength, and as for those who had lost limbs and been incapacitated, they hoped that the Government of the country would see to it that those heroes of the country would be well cared for after the war. (Hear Hear)

They hoped that the beautiful shrine which had been unveiled would be the means of causing the people of that neighbourhood to bear in mind how much those lads had done for them in that most terrible war of history. They hoped too, that the time was not far distant when all the lads would be enabled to return to their homes, and a righteous and enduring peace have been proclaimed. (Applause) The resolution was heartily carried.

Continued

## Responses

In Response, the Mayor said the little duty he had been asked to perform had afforded him great pleasure, indeed, he felt it a very great honour. When their representative came to ask him to carry out that ceremony, he felt only too pleased to be of any service. He appreciated to the full what they had done in Weir village. They had set an example to the rest of the borough in honouring the lads from that district, who in so brave and noble a manner had responded to the call. It would show to future generations what those lads had done for King and country. The words upon the shrine were strikingly appropriate. While those lads were rendering such valiant service, it was up to those at home to do all they possibly could to second their efforts. By erecting that memorial in Weir village had demonstrated their interest, and as in the past he believed that in the future they would only be too willing to help the lads to bear their burdens cheerfully and successfully. (Applause)

Thanks were accorded to the Chairman on the motion of the Mayor, seconded by Councillor Nuttall, and to Mr Rowland on the initiative of Alderman Cropper, seconded by Councillor Greenwood.

Both gentlemen made suitable response, and after the singing of the hymn, "God bless our soldiers," and the sounding of "The Last Post" by the buglers, the procession reformed and walked to Northern School. Prior to the processionists the Mayor, in a neat little speech, thanked the Boy Scouts for their attendance. His Worship's remarks being suitably acknowledged by Scoutmaster France, of Rawtenstall.