

## CHAPTER SIX

### The Armistice, memorialisation and community identity after the War

#### Introduction

The theme of this study has been the mutual sense of identity between the fighting man and civilian community during the First World War. The strong links which existed at the outbreak of War become somewhat harder to track as the War progressed due in part to the changing nature of the evidence. However, they did not disappear and, at the close of hostilities, they quite suddenly become visible again. This can be seen in the desire for an all-inclusive involvement in the Armistice, Peace and subsequent Remembrance events. It can also be seen in the memorialisation process in Southport, Bootle and Givenchy. In the adoption of Festubert, Southport demonstrated a direct and continuous identification with the Battalion. The veterans of the Battalion and the Division exhibited a similar desire to maintain their shared identity. The physical impact on the geography of both Lancashire and France confirms that, as Winter said, 'Remembrance is part of the landscape'.<sup>1</sup>

The exhibition of remembrance in Southport and Bootle reinforced the local importance of the military unit. Armistice parades, reunions, erection of memorials, histories and links with the battlefields all formed crucial but competing elements. Lloyd has established that the concept of 'battlefield tourism', for example, both confirmed and challenged the notion of any division between the Home and War Fronts.<sup>2</sup> Confirmed, because civilians did not fight and their perspectives on the battlefields were always one step back from the men who had done so; but challenged because the relatives and the bereaved went as pilgrims with direct links, rather than spectators at a tourist attraction. The organisation of Armistice and then the Peace celebrations gave a central role to the Battalion, although not all had returned from France and Flanders until April 1919. Some individual veterans remonstrated about their involvement or priorities but to the local communities the expression of a shared War experience was unquestioned. Tensions which did exist never reached the level seen in some other parts of the country. During the short but bitter police strike, both sides paraded veterans in support, demonstrating that there

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<sup>1</sup> Winter *Sites of Memory Sites of Mourning* p.1

<sup>2</sup> Lloyd *Battlefield Tourism* p.8

was a universal acceptance in having men, who had so recently made a valued and valued contribution in the War, associated with either side of the cause.

The extensive development of memorials, costing many thousands of pounds, the creation of ex-comrades associations and societies, and the commitment to assist in rebuilding a village in France, were all demonstrations of the enduring sense of identity felt by the local communities with 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion and 55<sup>th</sup> Division.

After the Armistice in November 1918, the return of troops to civilian life could take up to six months. There were difficulties and frustrations associated with the demobilisation of not only the men, but also of women and substitute labour, as those returning soldiers wanted their old jobs back – and generally got their wish. There was also the impact of the dead and wounded for families and communities to contend with. The fact of the death of a soldier was often only fully recognised by the family as life returned to normal for those around them. There were new hopes and expectations raised by legislation on housing and work, and the extension of the voting franchise to include women. There was also industrial conflict and a retrenchment by governments as economic pressures mounted. Above all, there was a period of readjustment to peace; but it was a return to normality marked by tension and a debate about creating a land fit for heroes.

This return to normality for the communities from which 7<sup>th</sup> King's was drawn was a re-moulding on the basis of a shared War experience now being confronted by still changing times. The community's response to difficult post-War conditions was to try to bring everyone into the fold rather than exploiting fault lines and divisions between different groups. The continuity of community life and community institutions, which is so clearly apparent after 1918, is an indication that the myth of a division between Home and War Fronts, particularly in 1917 and 1918, is based merely on the limited evidence, rather than any real reduction in commitment.

### **The Armistice, Peace Day and economic and social challenges**

The local activities around the Armistice, Peace Day and subsequent Remembrance Days indicate a commitment to recognise a shared War experience based on the local Battalion through a shared experience of commemoration for civilian and

veteran. Local and regional pride was to the fore while the economic and social concerns of veterans were evident but not overwhelming. Faced with the police strike in Bootle, both sides claimed the allegiance of old soldiers and their links to their contribution made for the community on the War Front. The establishment and maintenance of ex-service organisations and particularly the Divisional Association demonstrated the desire for many veterans to perpetuate elements of their War experience in peace time but these retained the importance of local identity in their formation and activity.

The news of the Armistice was greeted with great local enthusiasm and this continued over the months leading to the official Peace celebrations in July 1919. Both Bootle and Southport put on mass events involving the local community and the local Battalion. The evidence shows that the news of the Armistice itself was greeted with huge excitement in Southport, captured evocatively in the local press –

Boom! You heard that, and wondered if it was possible. And again: Boom! ... Then one of the girls from downstairs [a domestic servant] rushed into the room<sup>3</sup>, face aglow and eyes shining with joy and excitement ... You rose with a broad smile on your face, a foolishly inadequate expression ... and bolted into the street ... the sun was shining from a sky of crystal blue upon your face and upon the faces of all the other people ... It was the faces of these people that struck you, each one bathed in sunshine and a set smile of breathless joy.<sup>4</sup>

The reporter continued in much the same vein, rehearsing the Mayor's speech from the Town Hall steps to a 'crowd so dense it was impossible to gain the ... steps by frontal attack ... but by a more strategic route.' The writer went on to comment knowingly in his own militaristic prose. The *Bootle Times* was more prosaic but no less enthusiastic in describing the bells from the Town Hall, chiming for the first time in four years. At least this reporter paused to reflect on the magnitude of the sacrifice:

we thought of the hundreds of thousands of our dearest and best who would never return to share the blessing that their blood had purchased - and for a moment utterance was strangled. But now our pent emotions broke their barriers and we cheered, and cried, and sang, and cheered again without restraint and without shame. Indeed, why be shamefaced for our joy.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> An interesting comment on the social class of the reporter himself.

<sup>4</sup> *Southport Guardian* 13th November 1918 p.2

<sup>5</sup> *Bootle Times* 15th November 1918 p.5

Bootle dockland stopped work as sirens and whistles blew, flags hung in every house and bunting in every street. The dock area filled with 'cheering, laughing crowds of workers' where 'there had evidently been a spontaneous cessation of work.'<sup>6</sup> The report referred to hundreds of people going to Liverpool, but thousands staying on the streets of Bootle to celebrate.

Thanksgiving services were held, including a civic one at Bootle Town Hall, where the Mayor, Councillor Pennington, whose son Lieutenant Stanley Pennington had just won the Military Cross, offered thanks for the success of the armed forces. Admiral Beatty spoke, followed by Brigadier General Edwards, Officer commanding the Mersey Defences who praised the Regular Army, the Territorials, the Royal Defence Corps, the Examination Service and the Volunteer Service.<sup>7</sup> Similar events were held across the area, and almost everything was turned into a celebration - although these increasingly became more about thanks for deliverance than opportunities for rejoicing - a routine meeting of the Merchant Seaman's League became a thanksgiving meeting and a sale of work at Westminster Road Congregational Church, planned for some weeks, turned into a special occasion.<sup>8</sup>

The official Peace celebrations did not take place until July 1919, and in fact it had taken until April for the last group of 93 men and twenty-two officers to come home.<sup>9</sup> The Peace Day was an opportunity for rejoicing before everything else became a ritualised remembrance.<sup>10</sup> The celebrations were heralded in Bootle with a Victory march, children's festival, reception of widows and relatives of the fallen, and a gala.<sup>11</sup> The Victory procession in Bootle on 19th July 1919 had a range of bodies led by the police and the naval services, followed by 7<sup>th</sup> King's, the walking wounded and demobilised sailors and soldiers. There was a reluctance to parade the casualties of the War; equally, many were reluctant to be 'on display'. The 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion's

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<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Bootle Times* 22nd November 1918 p.2

<sup>8</sup> *Bootle Times* 15th November 1918 p.7

<sup>9</sup> WO95/2910 55<sup>th</sup> Division War Diary A&Q Branch Returns of units fighting strengths April 1919

<sup>10</sup> Bourne *Britain and the Great War* p.242

<sup>11</sup> *Bootle Times* 18th July 1919 p.5

contingent was split into four, consisting of pre-War Territorials under Marriot, and the three Line Battalions under the overall command of 'their popular commanding officer',<sup>12</sup> Colonel Hemelryk. Non-walking wounded had seats at the grandstand. This Victory procession, on Saturday 19th July 1919, was followed by events on Monday and Tuesday. The 'Peace Rejoicings' were widely and fully reported, with thousands witnessing the events - although the reports were anxious to refer also to the 'deeper note of gratitude' to those 'who have suffered so much and given so bravely'.<sup>13</sup>

There were less ostentatious events in Southport, where official celebrations were restricted to the old folks and children. The elderly were entertained at the Cambridge Hall with a band and vocal performances. Nearly 9,000 children taking part in a demonstration in the municipal gardens. The editorial of the *Southport Guardian* referred obliquely to 'the circumstances which necessitated' a more restricted programme. This was a reference to the bigger parade in Bootle taking the limelight.<sup>14</sup> The focus on old people and children somewhat excluded the ex-servicemen. Gregory commented that: 'If ex-servicemen retained a place in the popular perception of what 11th November was about...it was a subordinate place'.<sup>15</sup> This unfortunate fact was noted by the *Southport Guardian*, although much more time was spent reporting all the events in the various churches of the Borough, including the children's festival and especially the 'Joy Procession' in Churchtown and Marshside. It was this event which had most attention with photographs of fancy dress competitions and the procession. There were also aerial stunts from Avro, fireworks, and celebrations at Formby, Birkdale and Litherland.<sup>16</sup> Absent from any local Victory procession, however, were the colours of 1/7<sup>th</sup> King's - they had been invited to represent Lancashire in the Victory Parade in London, and were carried by Captain Roper and Lieutenant Nesbitt. The colours of 2/7<sup>th</sup> were paraded in Bootle.<sup>17</sup>

In granting the Freedom of the Borough to Sir Douglas Haig, Southport reaffirmed its

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<sup>12</sup> *Bootle Times* 25th July 1919 p.5

<sup>13</sup> *Bootle Times* 25th July 1919 p.5

<sup>14</sup> *Southport Guardian* 19th July 1919 pp.4 and 5

<sup>15</sup> Gregory *The silence of memory* p.51

<sup>16</sup> *Southport Guardian* 23rd July 1919 p.7 – 10, *Bootle Times* 25th July 1919 p.6

<sup>17</sup> *Bootle Times* 18th July 1919 p.5

allegiance to the War effort and the significance it had for the local community. He responded by confirming the importance of the local community's sacrifice and specifically referred to the 55<sup>th</sup> Division and the Liverpool Regiment at Givenchy.<sup>18</sup> He had witnessed a Divisional march past in Liverpool the previous week although 7<sup>th</sup> King's had withdrawn from that as only thirty-six men had registered to take part. Hemelryk recognised that the main source of local pride was not Liverpool but the local communities: 'after all, the Battalion is not recruited in Liverpool, but between Bootle and Southport'.<sup>19</sup>

There was some confusion and concern about the position in the community of ex-servicemen which went on for some time. This was demonstrated by the creation of a range of comrades associations, some of whom took different stances on the role of veterans in the Peace celebrations. In relation to the debate about whether the anniversary of the Armistice should be marked as a celebration or a time of reflection, Gregory has suggested that for the more secure and affluent, the first five years after the War were marked by veterans' festivities, citing the Leeds Rifles as an example.<sup>20</sup> For others, however, such revelry was either unseemly or mocking of the poverty of the majority of ex-servicemen. It was no surprise, then, that there appeared to be some confusion in the minds of ex-servicemen about their involvement in the Peace celebrations. A procession of veterans, including several wounded, walking and in bath chairs, marched in their own recognition of Peace Day, but they were equally met by crowds of well-wishers and supporters. Representatives of the Discharged and Demobilised Sailors and Soldiers attended the numerous church services in Southport over the weekend.<sup>21</sup>

Officially, the National Federation of Discharged and Demobilised Sailors and Soldiers took no part in the Peace Celebrations and the Bootle organisation was adamant in its support for that national position. They had refused to take part in the Mayoral Thanksgiving Service, enumerating various grievances in their reply to the

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<sup>18</sup> *Southport Guardian* 9th July 1919 p.7

<sup>19</sup> *Southport Guardian* 5th July 1919 p.2

<sup>20</sup> Gregory *The silence of memory* p.66

<sup>21</sup> *Southport Guardian* 23rd July 1919 p.10

invitation - unemployment, inadequate pensions and allowances, delays in processing claims and a lack of housing.<sup>22</sup> One veteran letter writer from Bootle commented that they should not be forgotten and that six months after the Armistice 'there are still ex-soldiers parading the streets in search of employment; the pensions awarded disabled men and the widows and dependants of those who have fallen are still woefully inadequate; the treatment meted out to the returned soldier is still unfair and unjust'.<sup>23</sup>

The economy became a focal point in Southport at the annual Armistice Day, or Remembrance Day as it quickly became. For example, after the Mayor, Miss Hartley, and the officials had left the gardens following the 1921 Act of Remembrance, the unemployed took over the Bandstand and made speeches to a rally of local people.<sup>24</sup> The *Southport Guardian* used the occasion the following year to warn of the 'spectre of economic anarchy', and raised a fundamental question for the national conscience - 'They won the war. What have we done to win the Peace?'.<sup>25</sup> This unsubtle piece of electioneering, criticising Lloyd George's Coalition, came only days before the General Election confirmed a Government under Bonar Law with a slim Conservative majority.<sup>26</sup> Similar sentiments were expressed in Bootle where the claims of the men who returned had been ignored. How extreme the thoughts of one mother were, however, is unclear: 'God knows I'd rather have my boy at peace than see him tramping the streets looking for work'.<sup>27</sup> In 1923, the Mayor of Southport dedicated his year to a hope that the twenty-three disabled ex-servicemen in the Borough would gain employment.<sup>28</sup>

It was these signs of discontent which Gregory noted as the roots of the transformation of local bands of unemployed ex-servicemen into more active local

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<sup>22</sup> *Bootle Times* 11th July 1919 p.4

<sup>23</sup> *Bootle Times* 25th July 1919 p.4

<sup>24</sup> *Southport Guardian* 12th November 1921 p.5

<sup>25</sup> *Southport Guardian* 11th November 1922 p.5

<sup>26</sup> Mowat *Britain between the wars* p. 145

<sup>27</sup> *Bootle Times* 17th November 1922 p.9

<sup>28</sup> *Southport Guardian* 14th November 1923 p.6

associations at the end of 1920.<sup>29</sup> Initially, these associations, primarily of the 'other ranks', were variously attached to one of three centrally organised bodies of the National Association of Discharged Sailors and Soldiers, the National Federation of Discharged and Demobilised Sailors and Soldiers, and the Comrades of the Great War. Given that the latter was formed by the Conservative Party and heavily promoted by Lord Derby amongst Lord Lieutenants and the Territorial Associations,<sup>30</sup> it is significant that despite the amalgamation into the apolitical, conservative and traditionally low membership organisation of the British Legion by 1923,<sup>31</sup> a 'Comrades of the Great War' club survives in both Ormskirk and Waterloo.

In addition to these ex-servicemen's organisations and social clubs, specific Divisional and Regimental Associations were also being established. The 55<sup>th</sup> Divisional Association, formed under General Jeurwine's presidency in Belgium in December 1918, underlined the importance of loyalty and identity within the Divisional structure.<sup>32</sup> By the time of its first Annual Meeting - significantly on 10th April 1920 - the Association claimed 12,075 members.<sup>33</sup> Even with the 'election' of a committee, Jeurwine's endorsement reinforced the organisation as one designed to replicate the hierarchy of the Army. The intent of this may have been to make the members feel comfortable and secure in an organisation now that they were cut adrift in society; or it may have been about the control and direction of the organisation.

The Association was primarily set up as an unemployment bureau for discharged servicemen. The secretary, CQMS Mercer, reported that there had been 673 requests for assistance to the Divisional Aid Fund, which had already been set up while in France. There are many requests for testimonials and introductions from officers now unemployed amongst General Jeurwine's papers and also amongst Lord Derby's papers.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Gregory *The silence of memory* p.56

<sup>30</sup> King *Memorials of the Great War in Britain* p.79

<sup>31</sup> De Groot *Blighty* pp.268-270

<sup>32</sup> WO 95/2907 55<sup>th</sup> Division War Diary 2nd December 1918

<sup>33</sup> *Southport Visiter* 13th April 1920 p.6

<sup>34</sup> IWM Ref. 72/82/2 Jeurwine MSS; 920 DER (17) 21/3-5 Derby MSS



By 1924, the Association had around 600 registered members of whom 530 were officers. 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 metal cocardes placed in 1919 and 1920. 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>35</sup>

The Association had merged with the Second Line (57<sup>th</sup>) Division and had their Annual Dinner at the Midland Adelphi Hotel in Liverpool in 1921.<sup>36</sup> After a pause between 1932 and 1935 due to the economic depression, Association Dinners restarted in 1935, but a separate Divisional Dinner Club was also established, meeting in London as so many of the attendees (including Marriott and Major Heaton from 7<sup>th</sup> King's) lived there.<sup>37</sup> Lord Derby's involvement had initially been craved. When he was unable to attend the 1929 Dinner, the organisers had moved it to suit him, although only fifteen tickets were then sold.<sup>38</sup> By 1936, in an indication that the influence of the landed gentry had waned still further, the Dinner was not moved, even though it clashed with Derby's own 71st birthday. The guest list indicated that, perhaps inevitably, the organisation was by now restricted to serving or retired officers.<sup>39</sup> The twentieth anniversary of Givenchy was marked by the Dinner Club on 13th 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 55<sup>th</sup>'s inspiring wartime record.<sup>40</sup> The following year over 230, including Lord Derby, attended the 20th Annual Dinner of the Association on 15th

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<sup>35</sup> IWM Ref. 72/82/2 55<sup>th</sup> Divisional Association Year Book 1924 Jeudwine MSS

<sup>36</sup> 356 WES 8/1 WLTAf 55<sup>th</sup> and 57<sup>th</sup> Divisional Dinner Committee Minutes 1924-39

<sup>37</sup> IWM Ref. 72/82/2 Menu card, Second Annual Dinner 4th April 1936 Jeudwine MSS

<sup>38</sup> 356 WES 8/1 WLTAf 55<sup>th</sup> and 57<sup>th</sup> Divisional Dinner Committee Minutes 25th March 1929

<sup>39</sup> 356 WES 8/1 WLTAf 55<sup>th</sup> and 57<sup>th</sup> Divisional Dinner Committee Minutes 3rd April 1936

<sup>40</sup> *Southport Guardian* 13th April 1939 p.4

April 1939 at the Exchange Station Hotel, Liverpool.<sup>41</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.

The continuity of structures and values which Jeudwine was keen to preserve through the Divisional Association can also be seen within the civilian community. A good example occurred during the Bootle police strike which showed that the handling of an industrial dispute was largely along the same lines as those before the War. The additional factor was the involvement of veterans, providing support to both sides.

The (last) national police strike broke out in London, on 31st July 1919, soon spreading to Liverpool and Birmingham. Support was sparse except in Liverpool where 932 out of 1,860 were on strike, and in Bootle, where 63 of the 77-man force came out.<sup>42</sup> The editorial in the *Bootle Times* the following week called it 'indefensible' and 'a mutiny'.<sup>43</sup> The newspaper praised the community for the maintenance of law and order during the strike although there were disturbances and looting of shops and property, particularly in Marsh Lane.<sup>44</sup> The damage was reminiscent of the looting during the **Lusitania** strikes in 1915 and direct references were made although the newspaper appeared to have forgotten its ambivalent stand on the so-called 'patriotism' of that time, talking now of the 'undesirable hooligan-class' which 'infests all large centres of population'.<sup>45</sup>

As the strikers were sacked and a new force reconstituted the *Bootle Times* reported that some of these recruits were ex-servicemen, with one still in khaki, reinforcing the uprightness and respectability of soldiers serving within the community, as opposed to the mutineers amongst the police ranks.<sup>46</sup> This emphasis on community solidarity

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<sup>41</sup> 356 WES 8/1 WLTA 55<sup>th</sup> and 57<sup>th</sup> Divisional Dinner Committee Minutes 1924-39  
Photographs are included with the Minutes of later Annual Dinners.

<sup>42</sup> Waller *Democracy and Sectarianism* p.284

<sup>43</sup> *Bootle Times* 8th August 1919 p.4

<sup>44</sup> *Bootle Times* 8th August 1919 p.5; Bootle Borough Watch Sub-Committee Minutes 19th August 1919

<sup>45</sup> *Bootle Times* 8th August 1919 pp. 4-5

<sup>46</sup> *Bootle Times* 22nd August 1919 p.5

against the strikers was contrasted by reports of support, in the form of meetings and correspondence. The War record of the strikers was reported, with 48 of the 63 Bootle strikers having seen active service. Both sides claimed the respectability of having War service, including one of the speakers at a rally of supporters for the strike, ex-Sergeant Major Hands DCM, of the Liverpool Police.<sup>47</sup>

In a further characterisation of the continuity of pre-War social divisions between the two communities of Bootle and Southport, Mr. MacLeod, Secretary of the Bootle Trades Council, attacked the Borough Council 'half of whom should be in bath chairs at Southport – elderly gentlemen who were too effete to efficiently look after the affairs of the Borough'.<sup>48</sup> In one short sentence MacLeod highlighted the differences between the old guard and the new Labour politicians as well as the differences between the two Boroughs. Despite several public meetings organised by the Bootle Trades and Labour Council, sometimes comprising several thousand according to one report, which 'unanimously' passed resolutions against reconstitution of the force and for the reinstatement of the strikers, the campaign dissipated.

The local communities' identification with the local Battalion continued into the peacetime commemorations and activities with organisers keen to involve veterans, if they were not too badly wounded, and their families. The veterans themselves were largely compliant in this process, reintegrating in their community while proudly displaying their 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion heritage. The creation of social organisations maintained a certain separation from the civilian community but the evidence of the Divisional Association is one of continued emphasis on local identity. When economic concerns of the community erupted into industrial dispute, as in the police strike, both sides claimed the allegiance of veterans whose sacrifice had been on behalf of the whole community. Their involvement on both sides of this civil dispute, rather than in a dispute between civilian and veteran, emphasises the almost seamless continuation of pre-War society where the significant divisions lay along political, social and economic lines.

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<sup>47</sup> *Bootle Times* 15th August 1919 p.6

<sup>48</sup> *Bootle Times* 15th August 1919 p.6

## **Community War Memorials**

The concept, design and subscription of War memorials, in Britain and France, and the associated commemorative events, are significant in terms of their number, size and publicity as they demonstrate fully the effort and contribution of the whole of the local community in the War. The memorials, in concept and often in reality, were more than simply blocks of stone. The importance of the memorial for the maintenance of the community link between Home and fighting Front is exemplified by the extent to which memorialisation involved both local civilian and service communities demonstrating a shared sense of the importance of marking the ultimate sacrifice for that community. This was the direct link with the local men killed in the War, and left in a foreign graveyard. It is further seen in the co-operation of the civilian communities and the veterans in the commemorations and building of the memorials, and in the emphasis on the local Battalion in Bootle, Southport, and indeed across the area of recruitment.

War memorials proliferated after the First World War for several reasons. There was a wish to memorialise the dead, as with any deceased. There was a need to commemorate the dead because they were not buried locally. There was also a spiritual need – religious or civic - to communicate the loss, sacrifice and recognition of the gap left in the local community. In Bootle and Southport there was a shared sense of community ownership and a wish to commemorate the sacrifice with permanence. It was important for the local community to have a constant reminder of the sacrifice which they had made. Three memorials serve to typify this response: Southport for its size, solidarity with the local Battalion and its utilitarian attributes; Bootle, again for its links with the Battalion and ex-servicemen; and the Divisional memorial in Givenchy, France, for its significance to continued regional community identity. The micro-politics of how the memorials were developed and opened also demonstrates the reintegration of veterans within local society.

The reasons for the flourishing of memorials after the Great War were mixed.

Moriarty has said that their primary purpose was to console the bereaved, particularly important due to the lack of a body to grieve over.<sup>49</sup> Dyer recognised their function as giving shape to the past.<sup>50</sup> Memorials could praise the dead and their sacrifice, their heroism. They could weep for the dead and the loss. They could mark respect for the dead and make a statement that said it should never happen again. The Divisional memorial's emphasis was on the first function; Bootle's the second; and Southport's aim was the last, although there are elements of each function in all three.

There is no missing the memorial in Southport. There are few like it around the country, in terms of size and central position. It was built so that everyone would pass it and have to think about it and what it meant. This was what the War Memorial Committee wanted when they said it had to be 'lofty and well set-up, visible from a distance'.<sup>51</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. Emphasising 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 c.10,000 of Southport's men and women had served in the War, from a total population of 72,500.<sup>52</sup> The memorial had been expected to contain 800-1000 names, and when it was opened in 1923, actually listed 1,133. A further 150 were added the following year.<sup>53</sup>

The Southport War Memorial Committee appeared very egalitarian and pertinent, including four representatives of the Soldiers and Sailors Fund, two from the Comrades of the Great War Association and three serving officers. They were clearly anxious to involve and commit the veterans in the process, however arguments over the inscriptions to be used betrayed more interest in highbrow civic pride. This memorial was always going to be a major statement about the

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<sup>49</sup> Moriarty "Christian iconography" p.63

<sup>50</sup> Dyer *The missing of the Somme* p.65

<sup>51</sup> Southport Borough Council War Memorial Committee Minutes 25th July 1919

<sup>52</sup> *Southport Guardian* 21st November 1923

<sup>53</sup> Southport Borough Council War Memorial Winding-Up Sub Committee Minutes 4th January 1924

commitment and sacrifice shown by the local community and it needed to be sufficiently imposing to emphasise the scale of Southport's contribution to the War. The design competition was judged by Sir Reginald Blomfield RA.<sup>54</sup> Public involvement was guaranteed firstly through the subscriptions which were required to fund the project - £17,474 had been raised by November 1919<sup>55</sup> - and secondly by requesting names to be sent in to be included on the list. Liverpool sculptor, GH Tyson Smith, was chosen to implement the Grayson and Barnish design.<sup>56</sup>

The opening on Armistice Day 1923 was a grand affair.<sup>57</sup> The involvement of Battalion, Regiment and Division emphasised the importance of all elements of the War establishment to just one of the local community memorials. Lord Derby was invited to open it, stressing his local significance. The procession was led by the 55<sup>th</sup> Divisional band, standard bearers came from the King's Liverpool Regiment and the Divisional RASC Train, and official invitees included the 7<sup>th</sup> 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 they did not have reserved places. Priority at the front of the site was given to the subscribers to the Fund,<sup>58</sup> demonstrating a prevailing deference to the local establishment. Ex-servicemen were encouraged to take part in the procession, although tickets for the enclosure were restricted.<sup>59</sup> Reportedly, 2,000 people walked in the procession and 30,000 lined the streets.<sup>60</sup>

The significance of the occasion cannot be overstated. The *Southport Guardian* was

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<sup>54</sup> The design competition was judged by Sir Reginald Blomfield RA who had designed the 'Cross of Sacrifice'. Blomfield, Herbert Baker and Edwin Lutyens were the three principal architects chosen by the War Graves Commission to design the war cemeteries: Longworth *The unending vigil* pp. 36-7

<sup>55</sup> Southport Borough Council War Memorial Committee 3rd November 1919

<sup>56</sup> Boorman *At the going down of the sun* p.142. Boorman also identified Tyson Smith as the sculptor of Accrington's memorial: p.141

<sup>57</sup> The north east end of the cenotaph was still uncompleted at the unveiling - *Southport Guardian* 17th November 1923 p.5

<sup>58</sup> Southport Borough Council War Memorial Committee Minutes 26th September, 20th October, 5th November, 9th November 1923; War Memorial Opening Committee Minutes 2nd October, 8th October 1923

<sup>59</sup> *Southport Guardian* 14th November 1923 p.4

<sup>60</sup> *Southport Guardian* 21st November 1923 p.6

not unusual in devoting several pages to reports and photographs, and to a full list of the names on the cenotaph. Ironically, this edition of the newspaper itself has become a memorial. The paper emphasised in particular the 320 'Hero' children who took part, listing them all with their ages and addresses. Aged between five and fourteen, they laid wreaths for their dead fathers, many of them with their medals pinned to their coats. One inscription was reported 'In remembrance of the daddies who did not come back, from one whose daddy did come back'.<sup>61</sup> In a separate report a veteran who walked in the procession wrote that there were reckoned to be over 1,000 ex-servicemen on parade. If accurate, that would mean around half of the procession was made up of local veterans. Maintaining the class and status afforded military officers during the War, the newspaper published a long list of officers in full.<sup>62</sup>

The unveiling of the memorial was an opportunity to re-emphasise the role of the whole local community in the War. It was estimated that 10,000 people had been with the forces, and in addition there were the VAD hospitals, troop billets, the Red Cross and the voluntary and charitable organisations all contributing to the War effort. The stress laid on the children reflected not only the sacrifice of their fathers, but also the continuing community and the hope for the future.

The memorial which can best be compared to that in Southport is the one unveiled a year earlier in King's Gardens, Stanley Road, Bootle. The two major centres of the area and bases for the Battalion had very different memorials. Southport opted for a large, sprawling secular monolith. The Bootle War Memorial Committee<sup>63</sup> went for a more figurative, though still secular, approach with an imposing set of figures, identifying with the people who had fought - soldier, sailor, airman - and who they had fought for - a woman and her child.

Work began to clear the site in late May 1922 and by October of that year the

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<sup>61</sup> *Southport Guardian* 21st November 1923 p.7

<sup>62</sup> *Southport Guardian* 21st November 1923 p.6

<sup>63</sup> Consisting of Alderman Mack JP, who had sat on the Military Tribunal and whose son had been killed, Councillors King and Rafter, Mr. JWDoodson, Mr. James Rogerson, Mr. Hugh McQuaker, Mrs. WA Jones, Mrs. Annie Malcolm and Mrs. MH Hazlewood

memorial was ready for unveiling. The ceremony was widely covered in the newspaper, with photographs and a full list of the names of the dead from Bootle, listed on the memorial.<sup>64</sup> Local Councillors and dignitaries were present, but few from the military establishment. In fact, although 7<sup>th</sup> King's - 'Bootle's Own' - formed a guard of honour, Colonel Hemelryk OC was unable to be present. The choice of Major Burnie to unveil the memorial was an interesting one, given that other candidates may have included Haig, Lord Derby or possibly Jeudwine. Burnie had ended the War commanding 2/7<sup>th</sup> Battalion and Hemelryk was unavailable. Burnie was still a local Bootle man, who also happened to be the Parliamentary candidate for the Liberal Party in the forthcoming elections. He spoke movingly as he unveiled the memorial. 'He had known so many of those whose names were there; like them he was not a professional soldier; he had gone out and suffered with them, but he was spared to return. "What words can I use to express the thoughts that come from my heart when I think of these my comrades, playfellows at school, comrades of my youth?"' He went on to make a rather more controversial plea:

I am fit. I am strong, and many like me returned fit, but many others returned maimed in body, ruined in health, and weakened in mind. To those who have this world's goods I say give of 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>65</sup>

This closing appeal - which emphasised the veterans who returned in a way apparently not reflected in Southport - was picked on by Alderman Turner at a meeting during the following week when he 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>66</sup> Another wrote: '[Dr. Turner's sarcastic remarks] are uncalled for and ill become a man of his position.'

A number of correspondents emphasised Burnie's credentials as a local man, and

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<sup>64</sup> *Bootle Times* 20th October 1922 p.5. A further 300 names were collected over the following months and added later - *Bootle Times* 25th May 1923 p.5

<sup>65</sup> *Bootle Times* 20th October 1922 p.5

<sup>66</sup> *Bootle Times* 10th November 1922 p.2



said they would vote for him even though they were usually Conservative. Burnie's War record was clearly an important factor in this decision:

He is an old Volunteer and territorial, just a private until war came, when he immediately gave up home life and business and was given a commission in 7<sup>th</sup> King's. He trained hundreds, perhaps thousands of men at Blackpool and Canterbury, and then went out himself. Thus he rose from the ranks to be temporary Lieutenant-Colonel, and was demobilised with the rank of Major. How he won his MC is a very fine example of coolness and devotion to duty under heavy fire.

The same writer ended: 'there is no real Conservative to vote for here, so I shall vote for the next best thing'.<sup>67</sup>

Two more ordinary complaints were also made. A veteran, Edward Cox, 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 was then forcibly ejected by the police. The editor thought it necessary to point out that there was limited space in the gardens and that if it had been practicable, room would have been made for all the ex-servicemen to honour their dead comrades.<sup>68</sup> Another letter writer, a bereaved mother, was upset that her son's name had been almost permanently obscured by flowers and wreaths laid against the names on the memorial, rather than on the steps.<sup>69</sup>

The memorialisation process continued throughout 1920 and 1921 as the fruition of the establishment across the area of local war memorial committees. There is evidence of a desire to create something which would be an organic memorial, relevant and useful to the living but established in the names of the dead. A very limited example of this was at Ince Blundell where their main civic memorial was a drinking fountain, 'Erected by public subscription to remember the men of Ince Blundell who served in the Great European War AD 1914 to AD 1918'.

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<sup>67</sup> *Bootle Times* 10th November 1922 p.2. The election on 15th November 1922 had been caused by the prolonged collapse of Lloyd George's post-War Coalition. Bonar Law's new Cabinet, which included Lord Derby, was confirmed as the sole Party for Government. However, there was division within the Conservatives as some had wanted to remain in Coalition with the Liberals, to keep the socialists out. The Liberals themselves had been split between Asquith and Lloyd George's followers, since midway through the War. A vote for Burnie would be a vote for the Coalition which had won the War – but had, arguably, lost the Peace.

<sup>68</sup> *Bootle Times* 20th October 1922 p.2

<sup>69</sup> *Bootle Times* 17th November 1922 p.2

Litherland Council agreed to set up a memorial committee before the Armistice was signed to erect a permanent war memorial.<sup>70</sup> Unusually, the War Memorial Committee had all Council members invited, as well as local religious ministers, employers and representatives from ex-servicemen. Additionally, there were representatives from the Dockers' Union, Merchant Service Guild, Allotment Holders Association, Oddfellows, Friendly Societies, Tramway Workers Union, schoolteachers and chairmen of political clubs. Even after such a range, the question of representatives from workmen of local firms was deferred.<sup>71</sup>

However, in May 1923, a War Memorial Committee was re-established to look at endowing beds in a local hospital as a suitable memorial. The Chairman of the Council wrote that 'Cenotaphs do not appeal, as they are painful reminders. I would prefer some form of recognition to benefit the living, whilst at the same time being a memorial to the dead.... Such a memorial would be a true commemoration'.<sup>72</sup> His words echoed the nature of a debate, common by 1923, which balanced remembrance of the War with the economic crisis. In the end, Litherland erected a Doric style column outside the Town Hall. It included the words: 'Erected to the Glory of God in Fond memory of the men of Litherland who made the Supreme sacrifice for God, King and Country in the Great War 1914-1919' - a strangely religious tone for such a secular beginning.

The memorialisation in Southport was not just the stone edifice. Original costs for the London Square Memorial were not to exceed £14,000, but the total cost of the memorial to the fallen of Southport was not to exceed £30,000. As well as the monument, the War Memorial Committee wanted to balance that spending with an ongoing benefit for the local community. In this vein, a victory scholarship was established for children of men or women who had been killed, and also an additional wing to the Southport infirmary, costing around £12,000, was envisaged.<sup>73</sup> The annex was opened by Lord Derby following the unveiling of the main memorial

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<sup>70</sup> Litherland UDC Minutes Vol.X 4th November 1918

<sup>71</sup> Litherland UDC War Memorial Committee Minutes 21st January 1919

<sup>72</sup> *Boottle Times* 11th May 1923 p.5

<sup>73</sup> Southport Borough Council War Memorial Committee Minutes 17th and 25th March; 25th July 1919

in London Square.<sup>74</sup> The first applications for the Victory Scholarship Fund were agreed in October 1924 and applications continued to be approved up until 1935.

The majority of stone memorials however, mixed the quasi-religious with public duty. A Celtic cross was an understated religious motif, found at Formby, Ainsdale and even Crossens, where it stands within a churchyard. Ainsdale's tribute, which has one of the few women commemorated - Sister Stella Blandy - was also 'Erected by the residents as a mark of respect and affection 1914-1919'. At Crossens, where it stood within St.John's churchyard, the memorial was also 'Erected by the people of Crossens to the Immortal memory of [names] who gave their lives for their country in the Great War 1914-1918'. Great Crosby provided a civic and secular memorial while Hightown and Waterloo had angels, weeping and triumphant respectively. These last two, not far apart, demonstrate the different attitudes, the one stressing grief and sacrifice, the latter, the 'Five Lamps' of Waterloo, concerned with victory and glory.

The 55<sup>th</sup> Divisional memorial was established in Givenchy further reinforcing General Jeudwine's continued emphasis on the importance of loyalty and identity in the Division and its constituent units after the War. This emphasis can also be seen in reunions and Divisional dinners, the writing of a Divisional History and Jeudwine's own 'conversion' to the usefulness of the Territorial Force. Jeudwine's concern for Divisional identity - and identity in Lancashire - went further, to include those who had died. He had already insisted that the dead were treated with honour and respect during and after battle. In his final order to the Division, he stated:

Many, I am glad to say, who saw the formation of the Division are with us now, but very many more ... are not. There are some still suffering from wounds, and some whose graves we have left on hard-fought fields and behind grim trench lines, where they faced the enemy with such splendid courage and determination. They are not forgotten.<sup>75</sup>

Jeudwine had been keen to mark the graves of all his troops as memorials. In instigating grave markers for his Divisional heroes Jeudwine was unique, and combined the loyalty of the Division with the importance of respect for the dead.

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<sup>74</sup> *Southport Guardian* 14th November 1923 p.4

<sup>75</sup> Jeudwine Special Order of the Day 3rd January 1919 - quoted in Coop *The Story of the 55<sup>th</sup> Division* p.161-3

Canon Coop led two expeditions to place Divisional 'cocardes' on graves of men from the West Lancashire Division, in February and October 1919. While a further visit in 1920 was also planned it is not known if this went ahead. The visits were with the full co-operation of the Graves Identification Committee and travel was provided, at a reasonable fee, by Thomas Cook and Son.<sup>76</sup> According to Coop, they were the only Division to do something like this. The cocarde was 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>

The cocardes had first been planned by Jeudwine in the summer of 1918. In a memo to staff he had expressed concern about the treatment of the dead, desiring more reverence to be paid. While he acknowledged the difficulties of the times, and the tendency of war to make its participants appear callous, he believed that honour and reputation demanded more thoughtful treatment. This would be achieved by railing off the area, keeping them tidy and well maintained wherever possible. Additionally, 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 55<sup>th</sup> 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> While Coop took 3,000 markers in October they only used half that number, largely because there were so many unknown soldiers buried. Coop was particularly upset at this 'appalling' feature, though he noted that it mainly occurred on the Somme, when the men were still casual about wearing identity discs.<sup>80</sup>

At this stage, the graves all had wooden crosses and it would have been easy to nail on the cocarde.<sup>81</sup> It was equally easy to remove them and Coop found that many

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<sup>76</sup> Lloyd has emphasised the commercial significance of Battlefield Tourism to such agents as Thomas Cook: *Battlefield Tourism* pp. 28-31

<sup>77</sup> Daghish correspondence in *Stand To! the Journal of the Western Front Association* No.61 April 2001 p.p.44-5

<sup>78</sup> 356 FIF 15 Memo from Jeudwine 28th June 1918 Jeudwine MSS

<sup>79</sup> *Boottle Times* 2nd August 1918 p.2

<sup>80</sup> *ibid.*; IWM Ref. 72/82/1 Coop to Jeudwine 16th October 1919 Jeudwine MSS

<sup>81</sup> Stones did not start to arrive in France until 1920 - Longworth *The unending vigil* p.72

placed at Gorre in February 1919 had later been removed for souvenirs. Coop also expressed concern at the practice of the Graves Commission in bringing in men from smaller cemeteries into large, new cemeteries - he saw it as the only sensible answer, but it meant that men they had buried in a known spot were now difficult to find, such as the twenty Liverpool Regiment men killed between January and May 1915, reburied in February 1920 from King's Claire cemetery in Cuinchy – also known as King's Liverpool Graveyard<sup>82</sup> - at the Woburn Abbey Cemetery.<sup>83</sup>

In erecting a memorial in France, the Division followed the pattern of many other army units.<sup>84</sup> The memorial to the men of the 55<sup>th</sup> Division stands in Givenchy at the edge of the village. To see it now, not too prominent at the edge of the village, one could concur with the sentiment of a tourist in the 1930s who said 'why did they put it here of all places, right off the beaten track?', perhaps not realising that it was sited to commemorate their stand in April 1918.<sup>85</sup> Initially, the 55<sup>th</sup> Divisional Association had wanted the memorial to be on the mound where Givenchy church had stood, or at Windy Corner but the Mairie 'begged us to have it in Givenchy'.<sup>86</sup> It was unveiled by Marshal Joffre at a ceremony on Whit Sunday 1921.<sup>87</sup> Visiting arrangements for members of the Divisional Association to attend were made by Thomas Cook's, third

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<sup>82</sup> There are seventeen Liverpool's buried at Woburn Abbey Cemetery, killed between January and October 1915. Eleven were from the 1/5<sup>th</sup> Battalion and three from 1/7<sup>th</sup>. Although Woburn Abbey expanded as a result of reburials from a number of local smaller cemeteries, only the five mentioned above are known to have come from 'King's Claire': *War Graves of the British Empire* Vol. 24 Imperial War Graves Commission (1929) and research correspondence. Note also references to Kingsclere being used as a Battalion Headquarters for the Royal Sussex Regiment in 1916: Blunden, E *Undertones of War* Penguin London 2000 (1928) p.26

<sup>83</sup> The Graves Commission's practice is well documented by Philip Longworth in *The Unending Vigil*. For the Somme area, Martin and Mary Middlebrook's guide provides brief analysis of the differences between battlefield, communal and concentrated cemetery sites. It also gives details of the history of each cemetery in the sector - Middlebrook M & M *The Somme Battlefields: A comprehensive guide from Crecy to the two World Wars* Penguin London 1994.

<sup>84</sup> 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

<sup>85</sup> Lloyd *Battlefield Tourism* 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

<sup>86</sup> IWM Ref.72/82/1 Revd. Coop to Jeudwine, 19th August 1920, Jeudwine MSS

<sup>87</sup> *Southport Guardian* 9th April 1921 p.4

class travel for the weekend costing £8-10s-0d.<sup>88</sup> Liverpool later adopted the village, under a scheme addressed below, and built a memorial hall close by the Divisional cross, opened by Liverpool's Lord Mayor on 28th September 1924.<sup>89</sup> This was followed by a later gift from the Divisional Comrades Association of stained glass windows and a peal of bells.<sup>90</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>91</sup>

The location of the memorial was a deliberate reference to the action which firmly established the combat effectiveness of the Division and confirmed the significance of its Lancastrian identity, both of which Jeudwine was so keen to rely upon and develop. Givenchy was as important to the Division as a whole as Festubert was to Southport in establishing and maintaining that sense of community identity.

### **Festubert: Association and Adoption**

Both Givenchy and Festubert were significant places for the 1/7<sup>th</sup> King's Battalion and 55<sup>th</sup> Division, marked by memorials and associations. At its most obvious level, the Divisional Comrades Association had their first Annual Meeting on 10th April and the Festubert Association held its annual events around 15th May. In pursuing the adoption of the villages by Liverpool and Southport, the link with the community identity which had grown during the War was firmly maintained. In fact, only a new conflict in 1939 stepped in the way.

Other battalions had a claim to the connection with Festubert - 5<sup>th</sup> King's, for example, were also in the battle in 1915, and the Berkshires had also been in the first attack - but Southport's 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion reunions were called the 'Festubert

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<sup>88</sup> IWM Ref. 72/82/4 Invitation and visit details, Jeudwine MSS

<sup>89</sup> *The Times* 29th September 1924 in IWM Ref. 72/82/1 Jeudwine MSS

<sup>90</sup> *Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury* 7th September 1931 - in IWM Ref. 72/82/1 Jeudwine MSS

<sup>91</sup> *Liverpool Courier* 22nd May 1929 p.7; *Daily Sketch* 20th May 1929 p.10; programme of the Blessing of the Trees, Whit Sunday 1929; Invitation and visit itinerary – IWM Ref. 72/82/2 Jeudwine MSS

Association' from the start. The Battalion had held reunions on Armistice night since 1920,<sup>92</sup> but prior to that a social club had already been established. Colonel Hemeryk advertised in the *Bootle Times* for comrades of all three units of 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion – perhaps as he had ended up as the Colonel of the Third Line – to gather together for ‘social intercourse and reminiscence under pleasant conditions’. His aim, according to the item, was to resume the Territorial Force connection, to promote welfare, and not lose the comradeship built up on the battlefield. The newspaper went on to report that Park Street Headquarters already had facilities which were being used by Battalion veterans. The social divide remained, however: the Sergeant’s Mess was ‘very well furnished’ while the men’s room was ‘more plainly furnished’, though of course ‘not less comfortable’.<sup>93</sup> In Southport the Soldiers’ Club, under the presidency of Miss Willett, had taken similar steps to be open as a free social centre for demobbed veterans.<sup>94</sup>

In 1922, again it was a group of officers of the Battalion who decided to establish the Association on a more formal footing. This automatically made it less attractive to the other ranks. The Association’s aim was to hold a celebration of survivors of Festubert, open to those who had fought there, and those who would have done if they had not been out of the line for some reason at that time. One suggestion was to hold a re-enactment of the battle at the war memorial. This suggestion was not pursued.<sup>95</sup>

The Festubert Association established a committee, still dominated by officers, with Captain Hodge as President, Major Blumberg, Captains Paton, Patterson and Pittendrigh as Vice-presidents, Captain Taylor as Secretary, Mr. (Lieutenant) Wainwright as Assistant Secretary, Mr. (Lieutenant) Hodson as Treasurer, and Messrs. Sharrocks, Arthur Butterworth, Walters and Cash on the Committee. The chief aim of the Association was 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>96</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> *Southport Visiter* 6th November 1920 p.6; 13th November 1920 p.7

<sup>93</sup> *Bootle Times* 4th April 1919 p.5

<sup>94</sup> *Southport Guardian* 15th March 1919 p.4

<sup>95</sup> *Southport Guardian* 8th April 1922 p.7

<sup>96</sup> *ibid.*

There appears not to have been the welfare role concerning the men to which the Divisional Association at least aspired. The first event, held in May 1922, was attended by over 100 people, with guests in Lieutenant Colonel White, MP, Colonel Formby, Lieutenant Colonel P.H. Hemelryk and the Deputy Mayor.<sup>97</sup> The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Potts, was largely responsible for driving the adoption of Festubert by Southport and a worthy guest in his own right who continued to be invited as years went on, but it can have been no coincidence that it was he as deputy, rather than the Mayor herself, who attended the inaugural reunion. The Mayor, Miss Hartley, would have been the only woman there.

The reunion continued in much the same vein each year. There were guests and toasts, and a speech about regimental tradition which reinforced the military aspect to what had become a very social affair. The Kings' regimental tradition was of more importance here than the 55<sup>th</sup> Divisional one, although undoubtedly many members were common to both Associations. This reaffirmation of the significance of morale and discipline was 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. The fayre rarely strayed from hot-pot, but after several years at the Queen's Hotel, they moved to the Imperial Hotel in 1925.<sup>98</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>99</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>100</sup>

The onset of high unemployment may have accounted for the low - 60 - attendance

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<sup>97</sup> *Southport Guardian* 17th May 1922 p.6

<sup>98</sup> *Southport Guardian* 16th May 1925 p.4

<sup>99</sup> *Southport Visiter* 17th May 1924 p.6

<sup>100</sup> *Southport Visiter* 20th May 1924 p.7



in 1924, but the outside world rarely seems to have played any part in the celebrations. That was not the case at the inaugural first dinner when the Deputy Mayor was speaking. Councillor Potts was explaining that the building of the War Memorial had been delayed due to costs of wages to the workers, when a heckler shouted that the wages were poor. A shouting match clearly ensued, which Potts was able to win.<sup>101</sup> The aim of the Festubert Association continued to be to get together with old comrades, reinforcing the importance and links with the battle and the place for Southport, and as Major Blumberg said in his presidential address in 1925, the laying of a wreath was 'not a passing phase, but a perpetual pilgrimage'.<sup>102</sup>

And so it proved, as reunions continued on the anniversary of the battle. The eighteenth Annual Reunion on 13th 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>103</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 1/7<sup>th</sup> King's Liverpool Battalion and Festubert, in May 1915, was immortalised by the whole community in Southport's choice of Festubert as its 'god-child' under the adoption scheme organised by the charity, the British League of Help for Devastated Areas of France.<sup>104</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

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<sup>101</sup> *Southport Guardian* 17th May 1922 p.6

<sup>102</sup> *Southport Guardian* 16th May 1925 p.4

<sup>103</sup> *Southport Guardian* 17th May 1939 p.7

<sup>104</sup> For a more detailed study of the activities of the League of Help see: Gregson, A 'The British League of Help for Devastated Areas of France: A forgotten memorial of the Great War' in *Stand To! The Journal of the Western Front Association* No. 66 January 2003 p.p. 23-27

by British shelling, not just German bombardment.<sup>105</sup> The reference to the Spring Offensive may have had a particular resonance in Southport, but the Mayor was more concerned in his re-election campaign to promote any activity regarding such a scheme.<sup>106</sup>

The British League of Help was only one of a number of charities and organisations working to complement the Reparations. It was established by Lady Lilius Bathurst, owner of the *Morning Post*, and run by her editor there, H.A. Gwynne.<sup>107</sup> Amongst the patrons and committee members were a number of influential figures including Viscount Burnham, owner of the *Daily Telegraph*, Major General Seely MP and the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Bourne.<sup>108</sup> A key individual, however, was Lord Derby, who presided over the London Committee (which adopted Verdun) but had input to a number of other adoptions, notably those in the north west.<sup>109</sup>

The way the League operated lends further weight to the main point of this thesis. The League emphasised 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 who would be a suitable 'God child' and also historical information about the war record of appropriate battalions.<sup>110</sup> The list of adoptions demonstrated how effective this was in securing links between towns in Britain and France.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> British League of Help Publicity Appeal brochure, Common Council papers 1921 – Corporation of London Record Office

<sup>106</sup> *Southport Visiter* 28th October 1920 p.6 Unionist Councillor Robert Wright was so busy he was barely able to send out his election address. While the *Visiter* did not stint from hounding Wright on this matter, it was equally indignant that he should have had to fight an election at all in his mayoral year. (30th October 1921 p.6)

<sup>107</sup> Gwynne's correspondence with his proprietor has been edited and published in *The Rasp war: The letters of H.A. Gwynne to the Countess Bathurst 1914-1918* ed. K. Wilson pub. Sidgwick and Jackson 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'. (p.322, p.329 and p.321).

<sup>108</sup> IWM Ref. K33309 First Annual Report British League of Help

<sup>109</sup> 920 DER (17) 38/4 correspondence on British League of Help Derby MSS

<sup>110</sup> Ref. 2031 Letter 27th September 1920 Bathurst Collection

<sup>111</sup> Second Annual Report of the British League of Help Ref. 2040 Bathurst Collection.

Correspondence in the Derby papers reveals the extent of Lord Derby's 'facilitation' of the process. The towns of Festubert, Merville, Armentieres, Etricourt, Estaires and Givenchy were being actively promoted by the League for adoption at the end of 1920. The *Southport Visiter* campaigned for Merville.<sup>112</sup> In the face of some frustration from the League's secretary, Gilmer argued that a place like Southport 'untouched by the War', should commit to help. Derby stepped in and placated the organisers. He understood that 'these Lancashire people are funny to deal with' and rewrote Gilmer's draft.<sup>113</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.<sup>114</sup>

Gilmer had wanted Windsor, as the home of the Guards, to adopt Festubert - the Guards Cemetery at Windy Corner standing in the village.<sup>115</sup> Turton, near Bolton, had also been interested in adopting Festubert at the time Southport was making its decision. As both towns agreed the adoption on consecutive nights, unbeknown to each other, Turton bowed in favour of Southport as the wealthier of the two places and therefore more able to contribute effectively to its recovery.<sup>116</sup> Bootle, Litherland and Great Crosby dallied with the scheme, but only Southport went through with it.<sup>117</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>118</sup>

The League had been concerned to see Southport take on a bigger task and as Festubert had barely 400 inhabitants in 1920, compared to 1,347 in 1914, and

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<sup>112</sup> *Southport Visiter* 16th October 1920 p.5

<sup>113</sup> 920 DER (17) 38/4 Correspondence with Gilmer 5th and 6th January 1921 Derby MSS

<sup>114</sup> 920 DER (17) 38/4 correspondence 27th January 1921 Derby MSS

<sup>115</sup> A number of 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion men are buried in the Guards Cemetery at Windy Corner, Cuinchy. Some were killed in the 1918 attack, but mainly they are from the 1915 Battle of Festubert, including Lieutenants Kingston Adams, Gamble and McClelland and Captain Tweedale. – Index of Cemeteries Commonwealth War Graves Commission

<sup>116</sup> *Southport Guardian* 12th February 1921 p.5

<sup>117</sup> Bootle held a lantern lecture in aid of the Fund for the War Devastated Villages of France in November 1921, a separate organisation to the League, but one with similar aims and approaches - *Bootle Times* 11th November 1921 p.5

<sup>118</sup> IWM Ref. K33309 First Annual Report of the British League of Help 1921

Merville had over 4,000 returning people, the need in the larger town was greater.<sup>119</sup> As the mayor was 'indisposed', having less interest in the scheme than in his own re-election, the League's campaign was largely run by the *Southport Visiter*. An initial meeting was held at the end of November<sup>120</sup> and another public meeting addressed by Lord Derby in February 1921 agreed adoption of Festubert.<sup>121</sup> This gave an opportunity for the *Southport Guardian* to re-emphasise the appropriateness of the adoption and to reprint Private Carl Purser's account of the battle from 1915.<sup>122</sup>

The nature of the help provided came by way of raising money through public subscription to build a memorial hall in the village. Subscription lists were printed in the newspapers and letters from the Mairie reproduced, thanking the people of Southport and explaining what state Festubert was in following the War.<sup>123</sup> By May, the public fund had reached £938 5s 6d.<sup>124</sup> There was considerable delay in building the hall, to the frustration of the Southport Council who, in wanting to secure the recognition in everyone's minds, revealed another ulterior motive.<sup>125</sup>

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 propoganda for the friendship of the two nations'.<sup>126</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>127</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>128</sup> Ten children from Southport went on this first visit

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<sup>119</sup> *Southport Visiter* 7th October 1920 p.6

<sup>120</sup> *Southport Visiter* 27th November 1920 p. 5 and 8

<sup>121</sup> *Southport Visiter* 5th February 1921 p.6; *Southport Guardian* 5th February 1921 p.7

<sup>122</sup> *Southport Guardian* 12th February 1921 p.8

<sup>123</sup> *Southport Visiter* 19th February 1921 p.4

<sup>124</sup> *Southport Visiter* 7th May 1921 p.2

<sup>125</sup> *Southport Guardian* 17th May 1924 p.7

<sup>126</sup> Ref. 2040 Second Annual Report of the British League of Help - Bathurst Collection

<sup>127</sup> 920 DER (17) 38/4 Correspondence with Gilmer 28th May 1923 - Derby MSS

<sup>128</sup> *Southport Visiter* 12th May 1923 p.6

over the Whit weekend, receiving a mayoral send-off at the Town Hall.<sup>129</sup> In an item commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the War, the *Southport Visiter* described the links with Festubert and recorded that these trips continued every year up to the Second World War. In an item commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, *Southport Visiter* noted the important link with Festubert.<sup>130</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 7<sup>th</sup> King's - Sergeant Knowles at the Guards cemetery, and Sergeant Loveridge in Bethune.<sup>131</sup>

The adoption of Festubert and subsequent activity can be seen as a key aspect to the identification with the War Front by the local community. The notion of this 'community', however, was expanded to include the people of Festubert itself. These school visits developed into an exchange programme and children from Festubert came to stay in Southport the following August.<sup>132</sup> Such a development should be seen as the successful culmination of the work of the charity, tapping into the community need for wider demonstrations of its role in the War itself.

### **Festubert recherche**

In returning to France, one of the more privileged veterans, Colonel Marriott, emphasised the significance of Festubert for the men who survived. It had been their first taste of real action and the Battalion suffered great losses in that one event. Pilgrims, tourists and visitors in the years since have had a variety of motivations.

For the bereaved it was often a part of the grieving process, an attempt to get close to where their loved ones had last been. Lloyd suggested that while the visits were multi-faceted, they had something in common - they were an attempt by the individual to relate the tangible place to their own remembered experience of the War, be it Home or War Front.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> *Southport Visiter* 17th 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* 26th May 1923 p.7

<sup>130</sup> *Southport Visiter* 11th July 1964 p.7

<sup>131</sup> *Southport Visiter* 26th May 1923 p.7

<sup>132</sup> *Southport Guardian* 10th May 1924 p.5

<sup>133</sup> Lloyd *Battlefield Tourism* pp.217-8

Marriott revisited with a variety of motives but one of them seems to have been guilt at his own survival.<sup>134</sup> He mourned the loss of his friends and comrades in the attack, for many of whom he felt responsible. When he returned there in December 1918 he wrote two letters home, one to his wife Cicely - the sister of Kingston Adams - and a less censored version to his brother, Tom.

I found Kingston's grave, by a destroyed German pill box. Lieutenant Gamble is there too and 4 of the King's lead company. The Germans had a little graveyard in the same field. I retraced all the events of 16-19 May. I found several other graves including Major Hughes and Captains Tweedale, McLelland, Hannon. I went 'over the top' where I led the Company over. Then turned south and walked for hours through an unimaginable country of trenches shell holes and all the debris of battle: skulls, skeletons, equipment right on to Givenchy. Here I inspected the mine craters, dozens of them some nearly 100 yards across, and then on to the La Basse Canal and on to ... Brick Stacks at Cuinchy. Could not locate the old Headquarters and with difficulty located old front line between the brickstacks ... of 1915 are still there. The line had remained stationary there since the beginning until the last retreat, and the back areas are simply dotted with huge cemeteries. I could not find the grave of Captain Chisholm in Festubert. I did find many of the earlier graves of 1914 and 1915. I made my way back through le Plantin and Gorre to Bethune, walking all the way. There is not a single house standing either in Gorre or Essars, places we knew so well in 1915.<sup>135</sup>

While Cicely was given a clear picture of the physical devastation, Tom also learnt of the grim reality:

the old ground is desolate beyond description, not a soul for miles, and the place strewn with upturned skeletons, heads and boots with feet in them. I was glad to come away. I actually found the old trench bay I was lying in when a runner crept up with an order to 'go over the top' and I went over.<sup>136</sup>

Through letters like these from Colonel Marriott, the Home Front got to hear from soldiers directly about the War they were fighting, from beginning to beyond the end. At the same time, Marriott's correspondence appears to indicate that the soldiers themselves survived much of the experience by being able to tell their families and friends and feel part of that wider community.

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<sup>134</sup> This was a not uncommon experience: Gregory *The silence of memory* p.19; Lloyd *Battlefield Tourism* p.133; van Emden, R and Humphries, S *Veterans: the last survivors of the Great War* Leo Cooper London 1998 p.10

<sup>135</sup> Marriott letter to wife, Cicely 10th and 11th December 1918

<sup>136</sup> Marriott letter to brother, Tom Marriott, 12th December 1918

## Conclusion

The declaration of the Armistice was felt in Bootle and Southport, as across the country, as a bitter-sweet experience; relief and rejoicing mixed with the trauma of the bereaved and disabled. The key aspect in marking it, with the Peace Day and in subsequent anniversaries, was the continued connection these gave the community with the experience of the War. They provided further opportunities for the community to single out the 1/7<sup>th</sup> Battalion as the important element in the formal events. This extended beyond the formality of the unit to individual soldiers, although the extent to which attention was paid to the veterans and especially to War casualties, was mixed. Nonetheless, the erection of monuments to the dead and the number of charitable ventures for the living indicated that the locality was committed to mark and respect the men who had fought and died.

The limited amount of opposition to these processes, even in the context of an increasingly failing economy, strengthens the significance of that commitment. Even on opposite sides of an industrial dispute, such as the Bootle police strike of 1919, claims and links to servicemen were blatant. Opposition by veterans to demonstrations of remembrance was limited, but it appears that any high level involvement by veterans in the organisation or development of memorialisation was restricted mainly to the officers. Even the association into, albeit smaller, comrade groups had limited common appeal, except perhaps for the creation of social club premises. Nonetheless, those Associations did maintain the loyalties and traditions forged in the trenches by linking themselves to key battle honours. These links were also continued and reinforced by the local communities who took part in the adoptions scheme of French villages, the links with Festubert proving to be one of the most enduring in the country.

The evidence of this chapter has demonstrated that the links and notion of identity between the community, the 1/7<sup>th</sup> Battalion, and its War experiences were maintained for some considerable time after the War ended. The Battalion was the closest and most visible contribution to the War effort and the dead of the Battalion were remembered as having made the ultimate sacrifice in defence of that community.





Review of the 55th (West Lancashire) Division by the King of the Belgians, Brussels 3rd January 1919.  
 (Third anniversary of the formation of the Division in France).

Three  
 postcards of  
 the 55<sup>th</sup>  
 Division review  
 by the King of  
 the Belgians,  
 3rd January  
 1919.  
 Jeudwine is on  
 the dark horse,  
 taking the  
 salute with the  
 King.  
*Postcards from  
 Gregson  
 collection*



Review of the 55th (West Lancashire) Division by the King of the Belgians, Brussels 3rd January 1919.  
 (Third anniversary of the formation of the Division in France).



Review of the 55th (West Lancashire) Division by the King of the Belgians, Brussels 3rd January 1919.  
 (Third anniversary of the formation of the Division in France).

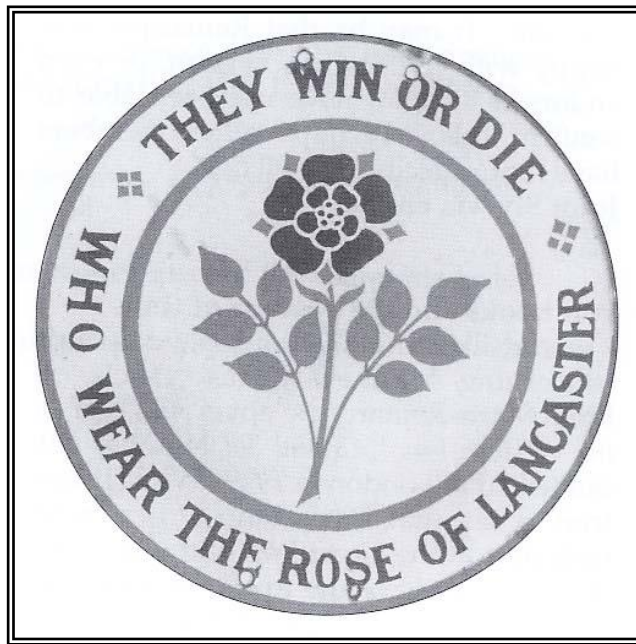




Postcard of London Square, Southport [1920's], showing the War Memorial



The airman on Bootle War Memorial  
*Photograph from Gregson collection*



Above: The cocarde to mark 55<sup>th</sup> Division graves, planted by Rev. Coop, noted in Stand To!

Below: The 55<sup>th</sup> Divisional Memorial, Givenchy, also showing dedication panel. Note the red rose on the base surround.

*Photographs from Gregson collection*





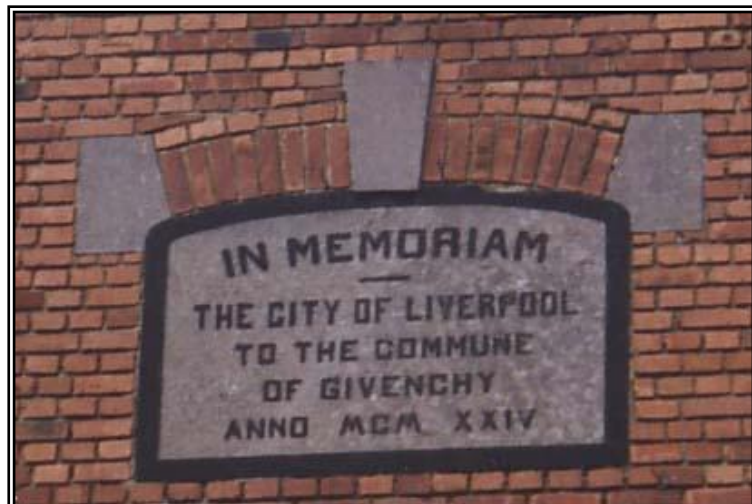


**Top:** The community hall at Festubert.

**Middle:** The community hall at Givenchy, which stands opposite the Divisional memorial.

**Bottom:** Detail from the Givenchy hall, noting its benefactor, Liverpool.

*Photographs courtesy Gregson collection*





The grave of 202768 Rifleman Harry Hulm, 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, King's Liverpool Regiment, who was killed on 20th September 1917, Tyne Cot Cemetery, Belgium.

The gravestone bears the motto 'They win or die who wear the rose of Lancashire'.

*Photograph courtesy Gregson collection*