Remembering the South African War

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Chapter 4

Alternative Affiliations:
Remembering the War in Families, Workplaces and Places of Worship

Although the nineteenth century was a period of change in memorialisation practice with a move towards the democratisation of the process occurring, the celebration of the individual remained at the heart of commemorative activity throughout this period. Yet, with the volunteer movement of 1899–1902 playing such a prominent role in the public imagery of the army, the South African War was, undoubtedly, a crucial stimulus for civilian organisations to celebrate the contributions of their members to the collective war effort. Thus, at every level of society where people shared a common identity or could perceive a unifying bond, communities were eager to raise monuments to their war dead and to honour those who served.

i Memorials to Individuals

The bonds of kinship were, and are, for most people the ties that most firmly connect them to others and, therefore, it should come as no surprise that memorials in honour of individuals were by far the most common commemorative sites constructed during and in the immediate aftermath of the South African War.¹ Where raised by members of the fallen’s immediate family, these sites were relatively straightforward both in terms of design and purpose. Typical was the memorial window in St Oswald’s Church, Malpas, in honour of Lieutenant George Lockhart of the Shropshire Company Imperial Yeomanry. Commissioned by his parents and siblings and designed by the renowned stained glass artist, Charles Eamer Kempe, the figurative representations of Bravery, Duty, Love and Faith in the lower lights of the window presented a comforting message of martial prowess underscored by Christian

¹ Jones, ‘A Survey of Memorials to the Second Anglo-Boer War’.
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Memory tablets or panels were also considered particularly apt for the commemoration of individuals. An especially fine memorial plaque was the centre-piece of the Bertie Moeller memorial at his parish church of St Peter, Belsize Park, London. Moeller, an Honourable Artillery Company man, was commemorated by his father who commissioned the tablet as part of an impressive improvement scheme to the church which included a chancel screen and steps in marble and that most Victorian of funerary materials, alabaster. That these types of memorials were largely the preserve of the affluent is shown by the Lockharts’s ability to secure the services of such a highly fashionable and exclusive artist as Kempe and by Moeller’s address in a well-to-do London suburb and his membership of the socially elite Honourable Artillery Company.³ Indeed, Moeller’s status was reinforced still further by his father’s decision to have his South African diaries, Two Years at the Front with the Mounted Infantry, confirmed by the fact that Moeller’s memorial was chosen to be the centre-piece of the church.

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² Gildea, For Remembrance, p. 22.
³ Such commemorative sites were not, however, exclusively the preserve of the rich. A grant of £100 for the erection of a memorial plaque was provided to the next of kin of each of the seventy-two men from the City of London Imperial Volunteers who had died in the war. Designed by Frederick Wheeler, the bronze plaques were framed with the coat of arms of the City of London and engraved with the name of the deceased, the unit from which he had volunteered and the date and full circumstances of his death. Jones, ‘A Survey of Memorials to the Second Anglo-Boer War’.
posthumously published and the willingness of the Bishop of Kensington to unveil the memorial.⁴

Occasionally whole communities looked to preserve the memory of individual members. The officers and men of the 1st battalion, the Royal Sussex Regiment, chose to commemorate the death of Lieutenant-Colonel Louis Eugene du Moulin, who was killed leading a charge against Boer positions at Abraham’s Kraal on 28 January 1902, by completing and publishing his unfinished regimental history of the war under the title, *Two Years on Trek: Being Some Account of the Royal Sussex Regiment in South Africa*.⁵ The residents of the small West Yorkshire community of Elland, led by the chairman of the parish council, Lewis Mackrell, raised sufficient money to pay for not only a memorial tablet but also a drinking fountain in the public baths in honour of Sergeant Joshua Hemingway, who had been the first person from the village to volunteer for active service and who had died at Kimberley in February 1901. The unveiling ceremony, in June 1902, combined tributes to Hemingway’s personal qualities with messages of comfort for grieving friends and relatives. Mackrell was anxious to stress the community’s high regard for the deceased by underlining the purity of emotion that had seen the memorialisation project through to fruition. The fact, he told the assembled crowd, that ‘the work had not been carried through by any club or organisation, and no subscription list had been published and canvassing had been debarred’, should be seen as proof that the ‘motivation for the memorial was entirely one of sympathy and love’.⁶ For Major Edwards, the recently retired commanding officer of Elland’s volunteers, the manner of Hemingway’s death meant that sorrow could be mitigated by pride: ‘This was no wasted life; he gave it to his country – he lived a good man; he died a hero. What more can be wished for?’⁷

Unsurprisingly, these twin themes of love and condolence underscored the vast majority of commemorative schemes at this highly charged individual level. The intimacy of the connections between deceased and mourners ensured that the needs of grieving family members played a much more prominent part in proceedings than they did at collective tributes to regimental or civic fallen. At the unveiling of the memorial to Bertie Moeller, the Bishop of Kensington

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⁴ For the Moeller memorials’ history see HACA Court Minutes, 20 January, 17 February, 1 December 1902; HACA, Moeller Papers; British Library Grant Richards Archive, Moeller correspondence, which shows the increasingly tense relations between Moeller’s father and the Grant Richards company; L. R. C. Boyle, *Two Years at the Front with the Mounted Infantry. Being the Diary of Lieutenant B. Moeller. With a Memoir by Lieutenant-Colonel L. R. C. Boyle, HAC* (London: Grant Richards, 1903); *Hampstead and Highgate Express*, 20, 27 December 1902; *Hampstead Advertiser*, 18, 23 December 1902.


⁶ *Halifax Courier*, 21 June 1902.

⁷ *Halifax Courier*, 21 June 1902.
sought, first and foremost, to comfort the congregation of friends and relatives gathered in St Peter's Church:

In this case Lieutenant Moeller had not died in vain. His country’s greatness was being built-up by the death of her sons, and the shutting of the doors of their young lives meant probably the swinging back of the door of South Africa for fuller civilisation and Christianity. By his death, too, Lieutenant Moeller had shown the beauty of self-sacrifice; the reality of life to come was forced upon one by it, and had established a stronger and more tender bond of brotherhood, and had sealed and cemented regimental cords of sympathy. The memorial did not tell of what was premature and untimely, but that in the greatest tragedies of life God did see one thing over and against another.⁸

Lieutenant-Colonel L. R. C. Boyle reinforced the bishop’s theme by reassuring the bereaved that: ‘Lieutenant Moeller was a dutiful, affectionate son, a kind brother, and a warm-hearted and true comrade. Well might his family and his country be proud of such a son!’⁹ A similar line was adopted at the dedication of the stained glass window in St Peter’s Church, Bennington, to the memory of Second Lieutenant George Mills of the Sherwood Foresters. Having first had the full details of the deceased’s eighteen months’ service in South Africa outlined by Lieutenant-Colonel Viscount Cranbourne, who unveiled the window, the address by Dr John Cox Edghill, a former chaplain-general, ‘dwelt upon the good soldiery qualities exhibited by Lieutenant Mills, his courage and well deserved popularity’.¹⁰

Messages of consolation were frequently buttressed by memorial symbolism. The assertion by the vicar of St Mary’s Church, Wootton, that Lieutenant Charles Henry Dillon had died ‘a true soldier’s death, a hero’s death’ found visual realisation in the commemorative stained glass window erected in Dillon’s honour.¹¹ Based on Sir Noel Paton’s painting, Mors Janua Vitae, the window’s twin lights depict ‘an angel showing the uses of life to a young knight’.¹² An equally comforting motif was adopted by the family of Lieutenant Francis Sowerby, of the Durham Light Infantry, for the memorial window in St Peter’s Church, Luton. Designed by the well-known stained glass firm of Heaton, Butler and Bayne, the window portrays an elaborate scene of the Ascension bearing the inscription, ‘Suffer hardship with me as a good soldier of Christ’.¹³ Such chivalric tropes in commemorative art served to remove the fallen from the harsh realities of life and death on the veldt and re-site them in a mythical

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⁸ Hampstead Advertiser, 23 December 1902.
⁹ Hampstead Advertiser, 23 December 1902.
¹⁰ The Times, 27 January 1902.
¹¹ Wootton parish magazine, July 1901.
¹² Gildea, For Remembrance, p. 2; Wootton parish magazine, July 1901.
¹³ Gildea, For Remembrance, p. 83.
age when warfare adhered to a more gentlemanly and noble code of behaviour. Implicit in this depiction of the fallen as Christian warriors was not only a certainty about the righteousness of Britain’s cause in South Africa but also an unshakeable faith in the promise of resurrection. The popularity of the Christian soldier-hero in familial memorial imagery in this period not only reflected a heartfelt desire by the bereaved to receive some form of mitigation from their grief but also mirrored a growing acceptance of, and admiration for, the army by civil society.¹⁴ As Stefan Goebel, in his study of medievalism in the remembrance rituals of the interwar years, has shown, commemorative imagery of this type was to become one of the dominant themes in the memorialisation of the Great War.¹⁵

It was not only, however, the self-sacrifice of men that was remembered. The war was also an important chapter in the development of British nursing, with over 1,800 nurses serving in civilian and military hospitals in South Africa and twenty-nine dying as a result of disease.¹⁶ For many, such an egregious manifestation of loyalty to the imperial cause merited some public recognition. Authorities in Leeds, Rochdale, St Helens and Yorkshire decided to include the names of nurses who had contributed to the war effort on the civic rolls of honour.¹⁷ There was also a memorial tablet in honour of the fallen of the Army Nursing Service and Army Nursing Reserve erected in St George’s Church, Aldershot.¹⁸ For the editor of the St Helens Advertiser there was little to differentiate the service of the combatant and non-combatant. Choosing to announce the death of local army nursing sister Clara Evans, who had died from enteric while working in a hospital in Bloemfontein, alongside the news that three of the town’s volunteers had been injured in action, he made explicit the connection between the two events:

We couple the lady’s name with the names of the Yeomanry because it cannot be doubted that, in going to South Africa as she did, Miss Evans was doing just as much to advance her country’s cause as were the men who shouldered

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¹⁵ Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory*; see particularly chapter 4.
¹⁷ Indeed, not only were the names of two nurses inscribed on the bronze plates at the foot of the Yorkshire County Memorial but one of the eight niches on the upper portion of the Edwardian Cross set aside for the figures of service personnel was occupied by the statue of a nurse. Although it should, perhaps, be pointed out that it was one of the last figures to attract a financial backer and was not ready in time for the memorial’s unveiling. *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 3 October 1905.
the rifle in the field. Her conduct is equally worthy of the highest admiration
and respect: and this the townspeople will, I am sure, readily accord.¹⁹

This latter assumption proved correct. At a meeting of the borough council the
following week it was unanimously agreed that an earlier resolution to have the
names of all local volunteers inscribed on a commemorative tablet should be
amended so that, ‘the word “men” might also include women’.²⁰

Equality of sacrifice was also the leitmotif of the dedication service for a
memorial window in Clara Evans’s honour at St John’s Church, Ravenhead in
December 1901, although this time, unsurprisingly, it was service to Christ not
Empire that was the focus. Taking as the text for his address ‘devotion to duty’,
the vicar of St John’s, the Reverend J. S. Bolton, reminded the congregation
how, in the final reckoning, their lives would be judged:

The speeches of orators, the exploits of warriors, the works of poets or
painters shall not be mentioned on that day, but the least work that the
weakest Christian woman has done for Christ or his remembrance shall be
found written in the book of everlasting remembrance. Not a single word
or deed, not a cup of cold water, not the binding up of a wound, or a box
of ointment, will be omitted from the record. Of silver and Gold [Clara
Evans] may have had but little; of rank, power, and influence she may not
have possessed much, but if she has loved Christ and confessed Christ, and
worked for Christ, her memorial shall be found on high and she shall be
commended before assembled worlds.²¹

The memorial, designed by the well-known London-based firm, Whitefriars
Glass, further reinforced this message. Paid for by her sisters and consisting
of three lights, the window depicted Evans in nursing uniform flanked on the
left by fighting at Bloemfontein and on the right by the tending of the sick
in hospital.²²

Occasionally, friends and families opted to remember their fallen by
constructing utilitarian memorials. However, where this course of action
was followed it was still considered important that a memory site’s function
should be associated with a noble or worthy purpose. Thus, Lieutenant F. G.
Tait, twice Scottish amateur golfing champion, who was killed in action at
Kookoosberg on 7 February 1900, had a wing of St Andrew’s Memorial
Hospital named in his honour following the raising of subscriptions by friends

¹⁹ *St Helens Advertiser*, 8 June 1900.
²⁰ *Nursing Record and Hospital World*, 16 June 1900, p. 478. The fact that Evans was
the sister-in-law of the mayor of St Helens, Alderman Joseph Massey, may have also had
some part to play in the decision of the council to include her name on the role of honour.
²¹ *Prescot Reporter*, 7 January 1902.
²² *Nursing Record and Hospital World*, 22 February 1902.
and fellow players.²³ The wealthy financier and chairman of the South West Africa Company, George Cawston, endowed his home village of Cawston with a memorial institute in memory of his son, Cecil, a lieutenant in the 18th Hussars.²⁴ To safeguard the institute’s function as a place for the wholesome recreation of the villagers, Cawston established a board of trustees whose task was ‘to ensure that the provision of the Trust shall be fulfilled, in that the entire Premises and Recreation Grounds shall be retained for all time … for the purpose of recreation in strict accordance with the spirit and letter of the rules and regulations originally laid down’.²⁵ Equally keen to preserve the purity of his memorial gift to Middlesbrough town council was the steel magnate, Arthur Dorman. To commemorate his son, Lieutenant Charles Lockwood Dorman, who had died of enteric at Kroonstad military hospital on 30 March 1901, Dorman had provided the £15,000 required to finance the council’s plans to construct a natural history museum.²⁶ To ensure that the monumental function that underpinned such largesse should not be lost as a result of the local government’s involvement in the project, it was stipulated in the agreement transferring responsibility for upkeep to the Corporation that the building would ‘be called the Dorman Memorial Museum and an inscribed marble tablet affixed to the wall thereof setting forth the commemorative purpose of the Institution shall for ever hereafter be preserved and kept up, and the purpose expressed by the inscription thereon observed’.²⁷ To safeguard further the sanctity of the site, Dorman was appointed ‘Life Protector’ with the power of veto over any move to amend the museum’s founding charter.²⁸

More senior officers were frequently commemorated beyond the bounds of the immediate family through the opening of subscription lists to a wider public. In such cases memorials served a more complex function than simply providing solace for the bereaved. The unveiling, at Windsor Castle on 6 November 1903, of Goscombe John’s bronze statue of Prince Christian Victor

²³ McFarland, ‘Commemoration of the South African War in Scotland’, p. 202; the sixteenth hole of the Jubilee Course at St Andrew’s was also renamed in honour of Tait.
²⁴ The fact that George Cawston and the village where he lived had identical names is no more than coincidence.
of Schleswig-Holstein, who had died of enteric in a military hospital in Natal on 29 October 1900, was used to disseminate wider messages about duty and patriotic self-sacrifice. Although the subscriptions had been raised by ‘the school fellows, college friends, comrades-in-arms and admirers of the late Prince’, the dedication addresses focused on didactic lessons rather than personal reminiscences.²⁹ For the Dean of Windsor, the statue ‘would be a perpetual stimulus to others to follow the Prince’s good example’, while Lord Roberts, seizing on the chance to advance, albeit obliquely, the cause of national service, insisted that the Prince’s death ‘was another instance of the readiness of all the King’s subjects to lay down their lives in the defence of their country’.³⁰

The commemoration of Colonel Lord Airlie, a major landholder in Perthshire who died while leading the 12th Lancers at Diamond Hill in June 1900, was similarly suffused with the high rhetoric of personal honour and national glory. At the laying of the memorial stone on Tulloch Hill, Cortachy, on 31 August 1901, the Reverend Mr Paisley expressed the hope that Airlie’s death may be ‘the means of stirring the hearts of young and old with more fervent loyalty, and devoted patriotism, with a growing and strengthening sense of duty’.³¹ An acrostic, composed especially for the occasion by D. D. Beaton, the Provincial Grand Bard of Forfarshire, elevated Airlie into the pantheon of Scottish national heroes:

Angus worthy sons and daughters sadly mourns to-day
In deep and loving sympathy with those dear hearts,
Reaved of their best belov'd, so deeply, keenly pierced!
Long may dear Scotia raise such worthy gallant sons!
Incitingly this pile on Tulloch Hill proclaims
‘Excelsior! Ye Angus youths, Excelsior!’³²

Beaton’s sentiment was reinforced by the monumental iconography. In Scotch Baronial style, the memorial took the form of a traditional Border beacon complete with signal platform which was to be lit ‘on occasions of national or estate rejoicings’.³³

To ensure that the lessons to be drawn from the loss of such a privileged elite resonated as deeply as possible, it was not uncommon for great emphasis to be placed on the strength of the bonds that existed between the deceased and those over whom they held sway. At the initial public meeting in Kirriemuir

²⁹ The Times, 7 November 1903.
³⁰ The Times, 7 November 1903.
³³ Forfar Herald, 6 September 1903.
to discuss the proposed Airlie memorial, the chairman, John Ogilvy, made a point of noting that the impetus for the project had come from the tenantry of the Airlie estates. Ogilvy proceeded to underline further the Earl’s credentials as a man of the people, by informing those gathered that:

it was one of the noblest features of Lord Airlie’s character that he was ever ready to do all in his power for those in less favourable circumstances than himself. There were none who loved him more than the rank and file of the army, and had he been spared he would doubtless, in a more exalted sphere in the army, have done all he could in the reorganisation which would likely take place for the benefit of the British soldier.³⁴

An equally philanthropic claim underpinned a public appeal for subscriptions in the memory of Prince Christian Victor. Announcing, through the letters’ columns of the national press, the launch of the Prince Christian Cottage Homes for Disabled Soldiers and Sailors Fund, Sir Redvers Buller and Field Marshal Lord Roberts sought to recommend the utilitarian nature of the scheme by observing that it was ‘in harmony with the spirit and aims of the young Prince, who always had the interests of soldiers at heart’.³⁵ It was not just in the rhetoric of remembrance that such professions of cross-class empathy were made. The inscriptions on the memorials to both the Marquis of Winchester and Lionel Fortescue, the third son of the Earl of Fortescue, laid great stress on the fact that tributes had come from across the social spectrum. The plaque at the base of the Octagon Cross in Filleigh Church in honour of Fortescue noted that the monument had been ‘erected by his friends and neighbours of all conditions in the county of Devon’, while the inscription beneath Winchester’s memorial tablet in Amport parish church informed the viewer that funds had been contributed by ‘Coldstreamers of all Ranks, by whom he was universally beloved’.³⁶ Such claims not only spoke highly of the deceased’s personal qualities but also went some way towards legitimising aristocratic authority in an increasingly meritocratic world.

Occasionally, parochial pride could be stirred by a perceived slight to the reputation of a local commander. Major-General Andrew Wauchope was the subject of veiled criticism in the despatches of Lord Methuen, and subsequently the national press, following his death at the head of the Highland Brigade during its ill-fated assault on Boer positions at Magersfontein on 11 December 1899.³⁷ Communities associated with Wauchope, already a Scottish national

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³⁴ Forfar Herald, 29 June 1900.
³⁵ Star, 2 May 1901.
³⁶ Gildea, For Remembrance, pp. 43, 77.
³⁷ TNA, WO132/14, Lord Methuen’s Despatches, 4 January 1900; London Gazette, 16 March 1900; The Times, 17 March 1900; Daily Mail, 17 March 1900. In fact Methuen edited out some of the more explicit criticism of Wauchope in his final despatch but
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hero for his role in the reconquest of the Sudan in 1898, quickly sprang to his defence with a flurry of commemorative activity. Stained glass windows in his honour were placed in St Giles’s Cathedral, Edinburgh, the Presbyterian Church, York, Liberton Kirk, Niddrie and Newcraighall parish church as well as monuments at Perth, Yetholm and on the village green at Niddrie. The dominant leitmotif in all these memorials was Wauchope as the archetypal hero-warrior meeting a glorious battlefield death and as such, as Elaine McFarland has noted, ‘represented a defiant endorsement of his military reputation’.³⁸

Regional pride in a tarnished local hero was also on show at the unveiling of the equestrian statue in honour of Sir Redvers Buller in Exeter on 6 September 1905, although the memorial’s gestation had proved to be considerably more contentious than the harmony of the occasion suggested. Buller had commanded the British forces in South Africa during the disastrous early stages of the war before being superseded by Lord Roberts’s arrival as commander-in-chief in January 1900. Although Buller retained responsibility for the defence of Natal, eventually relieving the beleaguered garrison town of Ladysmith on 28 February 1900, doubts continued to be aired about his professional competence and, on his return to England in November 1900, he faced a concerted press campaign against his reappointment as general officer commanding at Aldershot. The matter came to a head during a luncheon thrown in Buller’s honour by the Queen’s Westminster Volunteers on 10 October 1900. Still smarting from a particularly vitriolic attack by Leo Amery which had appeared in The Times a few days earlier, Buller used the platform of his after-dinner speech to defend his record in the Ladysmith campaign by quoting confidential military telegrams. This minor, but nonetheless public, breach of military discipline provided his critics at the War Office with the excuse they had been looking for and on 21 October it was announced that he had been relieved of his command.³⁹

Buller’s cause was immediately taken up in the letters’ column of his local paper, the *Devon and Exeter Gazette*.⁴⁰ Citing the example of an earlier West Country hero who had suffered unjust treatment at the hands of the established powers, a ‘Colonial Colonel’ demanded some explanation for such shoddy treatment of a faithful public servant:

⁴⁰ Sympathy for Buller as the forgotten hero of the war had already been expressed in the pages of the *Devon and Exeter Gazette* in June 1900 in the aftermath of Roberts’s victorious entry into the Transvaal capital, Pretoria. In a parody of Kipling’s *The Absent-Minded Beggar*, the paper published the following poem in which Buller’s role in the British forces’ changing fortunes was made abundantly clear.

When you shout at news of victory,  
And you hip hurray for ‘Bobs’,  
When next you feel you’re ‘cheerily’ disposed  
Don’t forget the man who chose himself  
The hardest of the jobs,  
And ’fought it to a finish’ with ‘mouth closed’.

He’s a grim and silent soldier,  
And his luck was awful bad,  
But he never ‘squealed’  
Or blamed ‘the other man’,  
He shouldered blame and carping,  
And drove ‘the critics’ mad,  
‘Cause he looked as though he didn’t care a d__n.

When ‘some one’s blunder’ at Colenso lost his guns,  
Recovery meant fame – their loss disgrace  
Did he hesitate? Oh No! He said the lives  
Of Britain’s sons  
Were worth more than fame – the guns he could replace.

Then that cool and sturdy leader  
‘Hammered at it’ till he won,  
He never grumbled, or ‘despatches altered’,  
But took his ‘medicine’ silently,  
And when the work was done,  
Said ’twas due to men whose trust  
Had never faltered

Rough job, tough job,  
‘Nough to daunt anyone,  
He didn’t send somebody else to tackle it,  
When defeat looked near,  
’Twas ‘Buller the Bulldog’ who ‘hung right on’,  
And now that the job’s near done,  
Remember his silence, work and pluck –  
So cheer, cheer, cheer!
In the case of ‘Trelawney’ it was 20,000 Cornishmen would ‘know the reason why’ and now it will be something like 100,000 or more Devon men will know why Buller has gone, and would like to kick ‘Reformer’ of the ‘Times’ and a few other ‘tinkling cymbals’ to call them nothing worse.⁴¹

Further backing for Buller came from the mayor of Exeter, Mr A. E. Dunn, who announced that a public meeting would be held in the Guildhall the following day ‘to express unabated confidence in General Buller, and to consider what steps shall be taken to give effect to this feeling’.⁴² Yet local support was by no means universal. William Ball, the mayor of Torquay, Lord Morley, the chairman of Devon County Council and John Kennaway, Conservative MP for Honiton, all used the pages of the Devon and Exeter Gazette to express their misgivings about Dunn’s scheme and to make known that they would not be attending the Guildhall meeting. Ball and Morley were adamant that any public discussion of what they considered to be a matter of internal army discipline would be ultra vires, while Kennaway insisted that, ‘in this great crisis in our history, we should do nothing to weaken Lord Roberts’s hands and to endanger the prestige – I had almost said existence – of the British Army’. The editor of the Devon and Exeter Gazette, a staunch supporter of Buller, was equally unsure that Dunn’s scheme had been fully thought through. The likelihood was, he argued in the paper’s editorial, that the movement ‘will be utilised in Radical circles for the purposes of making party capital’.⁴³ Such a concern was evidently shared by the Pall Mall Gazette, although it fell short of explicitly articulating it. Having roundly condemned Dunn’s proposal, the paper alerted its readers to the possibility of political undercurrents by concluding somewhat disingenuously that ‘A. E. Dunn happens to be a Radical and unsuccessful Parliamentary candidate, but we will not lay any stress upon his political past’.⁴⁴

In his opening remarks to those assembled at the Guildhall on 26 October, Dunn attempted to deflect this criticism by insisting that the meeting was ‘devoid of political significance’ and had been called ‘in no antagonistic spirit, nor for the purposes of condemning or criticising the actions of His Majesty’s Ministers or the commander-in-chief of His Majesty’s forces, but simply to show their high appreciation of the services rendered to the commonwealth by Sir Redvers Buller’.⁴⁵ To further underscore the prevailing mood of civic

⁴¹ Devon and Exeter Gazette, 25 October 1901.
⁴² Devon and Exeter Gazette, 25 October 1901.
⁴³ Devon and Exeter Gazette, 25 October 1901.
⁴⁴ Pall Mall Gazette, 25 October 1901. Dunn had unsuccessfully contested Exeter for the Liberal Party at the 1892 general election. He was eventually elected as MP for Camborne in the Liberal landslide of 1906. F. Craig, British Parliamentary Election Results, 1885–1918 (Chichester: Parliamentary Research Services, 1989), pp. 109, 239.
⁴⁵ DRO, 2065Madd28/29, Official Souvenir of the Unveiling of the Buller Memorial, 6 September 1905.
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harmony, the meeting appointed, in absentia, a representative committee of county notables to oversee the commemorative work. Yet, if Dunn thought this move towards inclusion would silence his adversaries he was quickly disabused of such a notion. Lord Clinton, the Lord Lieutenant of Devon, immediately informed him that he could ‘take no part whatever in proceedings which appear to question a decision of the War Department in a matter connected with military discipline’, while the mayors of Plymouth, Devonport and Barnstable all chose to make their disapproval clear by simply not acknowledging their nomination to the memorial committee. With, as the editor of the Devon and Exeter Gazette noted, support for the scheme only coming from ‘those who share the political views of the mayor’, the project appeared to have become fatally tainted by Dunn’s Liberal sympathies. In the opinion of the Gazette, the whole matter had become so ‘party and one-sided in character’ that it would be better if responsibility for completion was deferred to Buller’s immediate neighbours in Crediton as they were ‘more intimate and, therefore, less controversial’.

Despite this unpropitious beginning, a reconfigured committee of political allies from the Liberal controlled Exeter council, under the chairmanship of Dunn, persevered with the task of raising funds for the memorial. In an attempt to capitalise on Buller’s reputation as the soldier’s general, and to promote the memorial as a thanks-offering from all citizens not just the privileged elite, a ceiling was imposed on subscriptions with the launching of a shilling fund in November 1901. Although a large number of the regional and national papers, including the Devon and Exeter Gazette, refused to run the committee’s call for donations, the response was, nonetheless, enthusiastic. Over £2,000 was raised from 50,000 subscribers.

By the time of the statue’s unveiling in September 1905, the elapse of time had allowed passions to cool. Even the editor of the Devon and Exeter Gazette was prepared to admit that the paper’s earlier opposition to the scheme might have been over hasty: ‘We have to stand away from the mountain to see its size. Genius and work are often more highly valued when looked at through the vista of long years, and when the din of controversy, which attends the life and acts of most great men, has died away’. The Sunday Times was equally sure that the dedication of the monument in Exeter should be taken as the

46 Devon and Exeter Gazette, 27 October 1901.
47 Devon and Exeter Gazette, 31 October 1901.
48 Devon and Exeter Gazette, 7 September 1905; Observer, 10 September 1905.
49 The Official Souvenir programme suggests that many papers were reluctant to open up their columns to the appeal for funds ‘through fear that the scheme would be a failure’. Although this may well have been the case, the contentious nature of the project must also have had a large part to play in the lukewarm response of the press. DRO, 2065Madd28/Z9, Official Souvenir.
50 Devon and Exeter Gazette, 7 September 1901.
51 Devon and Exeter Gazette, 7 September 1905.
signal for a reassessment of Buller’s role in South Africa. In an article entitled ‘Devonia’s Tribute to Her Soldier Son’, the paper argued for the rehabilitation of Buller’s reputation:

We are forcibly reminded of the hard measures meted out at times to our generals by the tribute just paid to Sir Redvers Buller at Exeter, in the unveiling of an equestrian statue raised in his honour. The events, some untoward, some notably the reverse, in which he was the central figure are even now too near for decisive comment, but it is perfectly clear from the following he has in this country that a large section of the public is satisfied that he was hardly used. Fifty thousand subscribers have testified to this by a memorial that proves their appreciation of a man who always, to use his own words, ‘did his level best’. It is not easy, indeed, to understand the acrimony with which he has been attacked ever since those dark days when he stood as the chief scapegoat to bear the sins of an effete Government and an enraged people clamouring for a victim to suffer for their own sins. Let it be granted that in the earlier phases of the Colenso campaign the failure was lamentable in at least two instances, but Buller subsequently vindicated his generalship, and his advance through the Eastern Transvaal, and the successful action at Machadodorp was distinctly creditable. There was nothing really to justify the virulence with which Buller was subsequently assailed.⁵²

The traditional heroic motif of the completed memorial provided visible proof of such sentiments. Designed by Captain Adrian Jones, the twelve feet high statue of a mounted Buller, resplendent in general’s uniform complete with Victoria Cross, exuded power and authority.⁵³ Engraved on the granite pedestal was the unambiguous inscription, ‘He Saved Natal’.

The unveiling of Jones’s equestrian statue further confirmed Buller’s reintegration into the Pantheon of British war heroes. In stark contrast to the divisions and acrimony that had punctuated the early stages of the scheme, the dedication service on 6 September 1905 was suffused by a harmony borne of local pride and solidarity. With the list of those invited to attend serving as a roll-call for Devon’s political and social elite, the late replacement as officiating dignitary of a flu-stricken Sir Garnet Wolseley with Lord Ebrington, the Lord Lieutenant of the Country, was viewed as something of a blessing in disguise. Not only, according to the Devon and Exeter Gazette, was Ebrington’s appointment more in keeping with the regional nature of the occasion but it had the additional advantage of averting any threat of discord. Reminding his readers that the ‘existence of rings’ within the army had resulted in ‘a tendency to pit one distinguished soldier against another and to indulge in contrasts

⁵² The Sunday Times, 10 October 1905.
⁵³ For more on the heroic imagery of the equestrian figure see Borg, War Memorials, pp. 37–39.
and comparison’, the Gazette’s editor was insistent that any disappointment at Wolseley’s absence was more than compensated for by the fact that his indisposition had ‘relieved us from the risk of disharmony’. With unanimity of purpose assured, the way was clear for the focus of the day to fall firmly on Devonian glory. Speech after speech extolled the virtues of Buller and, by extension, the region. Typical was the address by the mayor of Exeter who, having taken custody of the memorial on behalf of the municipal council, made clear for a receptive audience the site’s significance as a symbol of local pride:

There is no part of His Majesty’s dominions where greater love and admiration is shown for Sir Redvers Buller than in the city of Exeter. He is a very near neighbour of ours and is a very large landowner in our midst. He is, and his ancestors before him have been, upon our roll of freemen for many years. Devonshire has produced many great men who, in all the various walks of life and in all climes, have contributed materially to our beloved Sovereign. (Applause.) It is peculiarly fitting that in this old city, which has played so very important a part in the history of the country, and within and without whose walls so many valiant deeds have been done on behalf of the country, that you should have unveiled this statue and asked the city to accept it.

Indeed, so universal were such sentiments, and so dramatic had been the transformation in the attitude of the local elite over the course of the memorial’s gestation, that the committee felt able to conclude the souvenir programme on the following self-congratulatory note: ‘So after a long and stern fight against prejudice and hostility, the Buller Memorial Committee have brought their labours to a successful issue, and by their labour of love have earned the thanks and gratitude of all who appreciate the paying of “Honour to whom Honour is due.”’

ii Memorials in Places of Work and Worship

Although the family played a defining role in much of the commemoration of the South African War, the ties of kinship were by no means the only bonds of belonging that connected the fallen to their pre-war civilian identities. Beyond the obvious attachments to locality, be they civic or county, we have already

54 Devon and Exeter Gazette, 25 August 1905. In this period, the army high command appeared divided into two opposing cliques. On one side was a group of officers who had built their careers campaigning under Garnet Wolseley in Africa, the ‘African Ring’, and, on the other, a group whose service had primarily been on the Indian sub-continent with Frederick Roberts, the ‘Indian Ring’. See Miller, Lord Methuen and the British Army, pp. 18–19.

55 The Sunday Times, 10 September 1905.

56 DRO, 2065Madd28/Z9, Official Souvenir.
seen how schools and colleges looked to claim the dead as unique products of institutional tradition and ethos. Equally important in this layering of memory was the commemorative activity in sites of worship and employment. For the vast majority of the population, religion and work were central in defining identity and belonging. Although churchgoing had been declining since the mid-nineteenth century, attendance by the turn of the twentieth century remained relatively buoyant amounting to between a quarter and a third of the population. Yet, the reach of the church and religion went beyond the purely spiritual. Despite the dramatic changes in urban topography brought about by the rapid industrial growth of the preceding half century, residential solidarities for much of Edwardian Britain were still based on parish boundaries. Evidence for this can be found in the unlikely field of association football and the proliferation of amateur and semi-professional teams in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. As Richard Holt, in his excellent survey of sport in Britain, has noted the vast majority of these new teams, most of which were based in the new urban centres, were either directly organised by or had strong affiliations to local churches. In a rapidly changing urban landscape, parish churches and religious institutions provided threads of continuity to the more tightly defined communities of a pre-industrial age; they served as symbols of community, as sites to which a sense of belonging and identity could be attached. In much the same way work and the workplace were vital components in tying the individual into the collective. Fellow workers functioned as an alternative family based on the shared experience of employment. The role of the workplace as a communal focal point has been noted by the sociologists Willmott and Young in their study of attitudes to work in London:

> Whether or not labour is, in Marx’s terms, a ‘commodity’, it is a link with the collective life. Work also creates a time-ordering of the sort that is necessary not only to social structure. Routines in the way people organise their lives are indispensable to almost everyone.

Although the influence and importance of both workplaces and sites of worship in local communities went well beyond their formally prescribed functions, the decision to construct a memorial was invariably left to a few leading individuals. Unsurprisingly, at parish level, it was more often than not the local vicar who took the lead. In Tonbridge in Kent, Cuckfield in Sussex and the Nottingham suburb of Lenton, sole responsibility for initiating the

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memorialisation schemes lay with the local vicars.⁶⁰ Indeed in Lenton, the local vicar, the Reverend Alan Watts, not only first raised the idea of constructing a memorial but even presented the parish council with a fully worked and costed proposal which it unanimously accepted.⁶¹ Elsewhere, collaboration between a few influential parishioners and the vicar was the order of the day. The memorial committee for Holy Trinity, Barkingside, a village on the edge of Ilford Urban District, was chaired by the vicar and included a local JP and councillors.⁶² In the parish of St Jude, Kensington, the presence of a number of affluent parishioners and vestry members must have played an important part in memorial activity, particularly as the membership contained a major, two colonels, a major-general and General Lord Chelmsford.⁶³ A small group of influential British Jews also controlled the scheme to erect a London memorial to mark the sacrifices of British Jewry. Chaired by Isidore Spielmann of the Jewish Historical Society of England, the committee also included many of the scions of Anglo-Jewry: J. Waley Cohen, Cecil Sebag-Montefiore, S. J. Solomon and Colonel A. E. Goldsmid, founder of the Jewish Lads’ Brigade in 1895.⁶⁴

Similar structures can be found in works’ communities. The memorial proposed by the London and North Western Railway (LNWR) for its Euston station main terminus was instigated by the chairman of the company, Lord Stalbridge, and organised by his fellow directors.⁶⁵ The same held true for the leatherworks firm Turney Brothers, where the managing director, Sir John Turney, chaired a committee of senior executives to oversee the erection of a commemorative plaque at its Trent Bridge factory.⁶⁶ Frederick Taylor, the senior physician at Guy’s Hospital, co-ordinated the task of his institution’s memorial committee; while a special sub-committee of the Institute of Journalists was established to oversee its plans to commemorate the war correspondents lost in South Africa.⁶⁷

An exception to this top-down model appears to have occurred at the London and North Western Railway’s Crewe works. In a special edition to celebrate the unveiling of the memorial in 1903, the Crewe Chronicle charted the gestation of the scheme, pinpointing its genesis in the unrestrained rejoicing that greeted

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⁶¹ Lenton Times, No. 18 (May 2002), p. 3.
⁶² Ilford Recorder, 26 December 1902.
⁶³ London Metropolitan Archives, P84/JUD/58 Vestry Minutes Book, St Jude, Kensington, 1901; Kensington News, 27 June 1902.
⁶⁴ Jewish Chronicle, 24 March 1905.
⁶⁵ The Times, 24 April 1903.
⁶⁷ The Times, 5 November 1902; 16 January 1905.
the news of the relief of Mafeking in May 1900. It was, the paper noted, this manifestation of unbridled patriotic fervour that encouraged representatives of the various workshops to explore ways in which the ‘artisans’ enthusiasm’ might be brought under some sort of control and turned into a proper and at the same time popular channel. A subsequent meeting of works’ foremen agreed to arrange ‘a series of processions’ at which collections would be made ‘with the object of founding some memorial to commemorate in a permanent way the services which Crewe railwaymen had rendered the Empire’.⁶⁸ It should, however, be noted that, notwithstanding the scheme’s apparently spontaneous grass-roots origins, formal control was quickly passed on to a self-appointed committee presided over by the president of the works, James Atkinson.

One of the first tasks of these largely self-appointed committees was the establishment of the boundaries of the community. This was a two-fold process which involved determining who was eligible for inclusion on the memorial and who had the right to contribute to the various schemes. Establishing eligibility for inclusion was a potentially challenging task as it touched upon issues of membership and also forced committees to consider whether the memorial was solely for the dead or for all who had served. At the parish level decisions had to be made whether to include all residents or only the active parishioners. The latter course was adopted at the parish churches in Tonbridge and Cuckfield while at St Jude’s, Kensington, Lenton parish church and Holy Trinity, Barkingside, the decision was taken to embrace the wider community.⁶⁹ In the case of Barkingside, contributions were sought from across the parish, but it is highly likely that the majority of the money was raised by active parishioners given that the scheme originated with members of the church. Similarly, in Lenton, although two house-to-house canvasses were organised, a significant percentage of the funds appears to have come from a few well-to-do stalwarts of the congregation.⁷⁰ For the British Jewish community, the clear definition of belonging complicated the issue of contribution. Having agreed that a central Jewish war memorial should be erected in the Central Synagogue, Upper Regent Street, the problem lay in making the memorial seem relevant to those outside the immediate congregation. A major form of assistance came from the support given by the Jewish charitable organisation, the Maccabean Society, which largely circumvented this potential problem.⁷¹

Disputes occasionally broke out over inclusion and contributions. The writer, Hammond Hall, was annoyed by a misunderstanding concerning the War

⁶⁸ Crewe Chronicle, 15 August 1903.
⁶⁹ Tonbridge Free Press, 15 April 1904; Cuckfield parish magazine, July 1903; Ilford Recorder, 26 December 1902; Lenton Times, No. 18 (May 2002), p. 3; Gildea, For Remembrance, p. 146.
⁷⁰ Lenton Times, No. 18 (May 2002), p. 3.
⁷¹ Jewish Chronicle, 29 January 1904.
Correspondents’ memorial. He wrote to The Times stating that initially he was informed that the memorial was to be erected by the Institute of Journalists, to which he did not belong, and so was ineligible to contribute. However, having been assured that that was not the case, he made his donation, but now believed the tablet would include the words, ‘Erected by the Institute of Journalists’. Pointing out the fact that a good many of the contributors on the subscriptions list were not members of the institute, he was upset by the implication that the memorial was its work alone and he hoped ‘that before Lord Roberts unveils the memorial the misleading line will have been erased’.⁷² The offending line was not on the unveiled memorial, although it is uncertain whether this was because the allegation was incorrect, or whether it was indeed erased.

For the London and North Western Railway memorial in Crewe a blurring of the boundaries between work and civic communities saw the scope of the memorialisation scheme extend beyond the margins established by those eligible to subscribe. Although, as we have already seen, the funds for the project were raised at a series of works’ festival days, it was unanimously agreed by the memorial committee that the site should be dedicated to not just those veterans of the war who were employees of the railway company but to all the men of Crewe who had served. Such a move was, in many ways, simply a reflection of the LNWR’s dominance of the town’s civic culture. The company’s decision to relocate its engineering works from Liverpool to Crewe in 1843, and the inevitable demographic transformation this had had on the locality, had encouraged the LNWR’s board of directors to assume responsibility for a range of civic amenities from the provision of fresh water and medical services to the upkeep of the public baths and the construction of Christ Church parish church.⁷³ Yet, this extension of the remembered community to encompass citizens as well as employees was not allowed to detract from the scheme’s origins in the workplace. The memorial’s location in Queen’s Park, land gifted to the town by the LNWR in 1889, the choice of Lord Stalbridge, the company’s chairman, to undertake the unveiling and the timing of the ceremony, on the works’ annual festival, all served to underline with whom ownership resided.⁷⁴

The definition of community in workplace and religious schemes may not always have been precisely identified, but the intimacy of the ties that bound fellow workers or co-religionists together nonetheless ensured that, in sharp

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⁷² The Times, 11 January 1905.
⁷³ ‘Crewe History’, Crewe Chronicle, 29 July 2008. An indication of just how central the railway was to Crewe can be gleaned from the towns’ demographics. In the sixty years following the relocation of the engineering works, the population grew from 498 in 1841 to 42,000 by 1901. Allan Redfern, ‘Crewe: Leisure in a Railway Town’, in John K. Walton and James Walvin (eds), Leisure in Britain, 1780–1939 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), p. 118.
⁷⁴ Crewe Chronicle, 15 August 1903; Crewe Local Studies Centre, CP/Crew/O Crewe Memorial Unveiling Programme, no date.
contrast to civic commemoration, concentration on grief and mourning were much more pronounced. At parish level, Christian messages of self-sacrifice and ever-lasting life provided some measure of comfort and catharsis for the bereaved. Typical was the Reverend W. S. Lach-Szyrma’s address at the unveiling of the memorial plaque in Holy Trinity Church, Barkingside, in which he referred to the dead as Christian martyrs and implied their joyful resurrection.⁷⁵ Frequently, this language of consolation and hope was reinforced by the iconographic symbolism of the memorials. The central Christian symbol, the cross, perfectly served this purpose but was, surprisingly, a relatively rare choice.⁷⁶ Financial expediency may, at least in part, account for this; the construction of a cross involved considerably greater outlay than a simple plaque or tablet. However, the relative rarity with which the cross was used as a symbol compared with the Great War may also reflect the generally lower emotional temperature experienced during the South African War, aside from a few major outbursts such as Mafeking night. Unlike the Great War, the South African War did not lend itself to the idea that the whole of the civilised world was in danger. The thundering sermons of Bishop A. F. Winnington-Ingram and the widespread use of apocalyptic imagery during the Great War made the cross, as the symbol of Christian redemption, much more applicable and ubiquitous.⁷⁷

The provision of comfort and solace through commemorative iconography was still evident in other forms of memorial, however. The bronze mural tablet in Tonbridge parish church to the thirteen local men who fell in the war was an artful admixture of sorrow and pride. The central frieze depicting a recumbent soldier holding the palm branch of victory was flanked on either side by reliefs of two angels, ‘the figure on the left in the attitude of prayer and grief, symbolical of a nation sorrowing over her soldiers that are no more; while that on the right may be described as representing the nation showing her pride in the victories of her armies and her gratitude to those who died for their country’.⁷⁸ William Goscombe John’s War Correspondents’ memorial plaque in St Paul’s Cathedral addressed the same themes. The bronze panel encased in marble featured a figure of Victory holding a laurel wreath, but hooded in mourning, set against the South African landscape.

Although sorrow and mourning were significant features of commemorative practice for these tight-knit communities, pride remained the key leitmotif, in particular institutional pride. The London and North Western Railway, the Institute of Journalists and Guy’s Hospital all laid claim to corporate

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⁷⁵ Ilford Recorder, 26 December 1902.
⁷⁶ Meurig Jones has estimated that just 4.2 per cent of memorials took the form of a cross. Jones, ‘A Survey of Memorials to the Second Anglo-Boer War’.
⁷⁷ For a general discussion of Christian symbolism and war memorials during the Great War see Moriarty, ‘Christian Iconography and First World War Memorials’, pp. 63–76.
⁷⁸ Tonbridge Free Press, 15 April 1904.
ownership by recalling the fallen as employees rather than combatants. Thus, on the memorial plaque at the LNWR’s Euston terminus the fallen were listed along with their grades and the stations at which they served; the Institute of Journalists chose to include the names of the companies for whom the thirteen correspondents who had lost their lives in the conflict had worked; on the Guy’s Hospital memorial the names of the dead were arranged by order of the dates they had commenced their student internships. Ownership could be further reinforced by the choice of monumental form. The decision of the Guy’s Hospital memorial committee to opt for Frederick Wheeler’s classically designed drinking fountain was particularly apt as it played on firmly embedded notions about civic obligation. Not only were water fountains extremely common forms of Victorian street ornamentation but the provision of fresh, clean drinking water was regarded as a great public service to the health of the nation which would cause the drinker to reflect on the qualities of those who provided it.⁷⁹ John Whitehead’s standard bronze figure of a khaki-clad trooper for the LNWR’s Crewe works’ memorial was firmly located within the confines of the company by the inclusion of a model of the latest locomotive. For their memorial in the Central Synagogue in London, the British Jewish community signalled institutional ownership by opting for a variant on the highly traditional Victorian funerar form of a commemorative plaque. Much advice was taken on the design of the memorial including comments from the Jewish artist, Solomon J. Solomon, and Sir Purdon Clarke of the Victoria and Albert Museum. The result was a diptych of bronze plaques in an elaborate

frame which deliberately recalled the Mediterranean roots of Judaism as its decoration drew on Moorish and Byzantine forms.\(^80\)

Yet, for the Jewish war memorial committee, it was not just the form that warranted attention, but the precise location was of extreme importance and provoked much discussion. Highly sensitive to any accusation of unpatriotic or alien sympathies, the leaders of the Anglo-Jewish community were very keen to promote the Jewish role in the war. During the course of the conflict there had been anti-Semitic sentiments expressed by those who believed that the British were fighting to secure the mining rights of Jewish-owned companies.\(^81\) The war’s end had seen a continued debate about the role of Jews in British society and culminated in the Aliens Act of 1905, which was aimed mainly at curbing Jewish emigration from Eastern Europe.\(^82\) It was against this backdrop that the Jewish war memorial was debated and formed. At the initial meeting to discuss the memorial it was noted that some had ‘said that the Jewish community did not do enough in the way of sending men to the South African campaign and it was right that some record should be kept of those who went to the front’.\(^83\) One participant then suggested that the memorial should be placed in a Jewish cemetery, but others demurred believing it would lack visibility to the wider world. Yet another took exception to the idea of the memorial being public, explaining that Jews had played a proud role in the war and there was no need to advertise it so overtly. The interior of the Central Synagogue, he went on to advocate, was a perfectly good place where a memorial could be inspected by anyone interested in Jewish affairs. Isidore Spielmann, the chair of the committee, took the opposite position. For him, an exterior site clearly proclaiming the Jewish contribution was vital, for the memorial would commemorate men who ‘had not only fallen as Jews, but as English Jews, and, therefore, the exterior of the building did not seem improper’.\(^84\) As a warning he added that if it was not erected at the Central Synagogue, then it might well end up being placed in an East London synagogue. Spielmann’s remarks reveal a pronounced concern about the nature of the Jewish community. The East End was home to a significant number of poor, unassimilated Eastern European Jews and formed the main target of anti-Semitic comment in Britain. He was therefore highly sensitive to the idea that the memorial might be located in the ‘wrong’ sort of synagogue. For Spielmann, it was important that assimilated, affluent, respectable, anglicised Jewry make the public statement. British Jews

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\(^80\) Jewish Chronicle, 24 March 1905.
\(^83\) Jewish Chronicle, 15 July 1904.
\(^84\) Jewish Chronicle, 15 July 1904.
were to be caught in precisely the same bind after the Great War when the same arguments were rehearsed in an almost identical fashion.⁸⁵

Having secured the Central Synagogue as the site for the memorial, the leading representatives of Britain’s Jewish community then seized on the unveiling ceremony as a crucial opportunity to promote an image of loyalty and conformity. In the course of his dedication address, Isidore Spielmann informed the congregation of the memorial’s meaning: ‘This memorial stands here in eloquent testimony to the fact that British Jews are inspired by a love of King and Country no less enthusiastic and no less devoted than that which animates their fellow-subjects’. Following on, the Chief Rabbi stated that ‘surely

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England deserves that we, her Jewish children, should gladly live and die for her … since here, as in no other empire in the whole world, there breathes a passionate love for freedom.⁸⁶

The organisers of workplace memorials were equally keen to use unveiling ceremonies to disseminate messages about corporate values and institutional worth. The presiding dignitaries at the dedication services for the Guy’s Hospital, the War Correspondents’ and the LNWR’s Euston station memorials were all quick to emphasise that the war service given by their fallen was no less valuable and heroic than that offered by combatants. General Sir Richard Harrison, a governor of Guy’s Hospital, having noted that with a 10 per cent attrition rate a high proportion of Guy’s men had lost their lives, stressed the impact medical volunteers had had on army practice: ‘members of the profession who went out to the war from the hospitals had let light into Army methods, and those whose names were inscribed on Guy’s and other memorials had not shed their blood in vain’.⁸⁷

The twin themes of honour and courage also underpinned the president of the Institute of Journalists’ address at St Paul’s. War correspondents had, he insisted, ‘all done their duty to their newspapers, to their country and to their Sovereign. They took their lives in their hands almost to an equal extent as did the officers and the rank and file of the Army, and if they died they laid down their lives in a noble cause’.⁸⁸ This sentiment was then endorsed by Field Marshal Lord Roberts. Something of an exception in the ranks of the high command for his cordial relations with journalists during the conflict in South Africa, Roberts seized the moment to eulogise on the press corps’ contribution to the war effort. Insisting that the invitation to unveil the commemorative plaque was a particularly pleasing one because it ‘gave him the opportunity of showing his appreciation of the work done for their country by [the fallen]’, he continued with a tribute to the work of the newspaper industry as a whole:

The men we are commemorating today died, as so many of their brethren had died before them, in the loyal performance of arduous duties, and they proved themselves worthy of belonging to a high and honourable profession, the members of which, in all quarters of the globe, had rendered valuable service, not only to the journals which they represented, but also to the public at large.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ *Jewish Chronicle*, 24 March 1905.
⁸⁷ *The Times*, 4 July 1903.
⁸⁸ *The Times*, 16 January 1905.
⁸⁹ *The Times*, 16 January 1905. For more on the role of the media in the war, and on Roberts’s relationship with the press, see Stephen Badsey, ‘The Boer War as a Media War’, in Peter Dennis and Jeffrey Grey (eds), *The Boer War: Army, Nation and Empire* (Canberra: Army History Unit, 2000).
A similar scene was played out at Euston station for the unveiling of the LNWR’s memorial to the ninety-nine railway volunteers who had died in the war. Adamant that, despite dying of disease, the men ‘had looked on death as their comrades in arms’, Lord Stalbridge, in his unveiling address, drew a parallel between the honourable self-sacrifice of the fallen and the selfless duty performed by the company in ‘maintaining, while the men were at the front, those who were near and dear to them’. His concluding hope that, as presiding dignitary, Lord Roberts would underline these points for the assembled crowd was, unsurprisingly, fully realised. Evidently carefully briefed, the Field Marshal’s address was a paean to the company’s largesse and patriotic spirit. The military authorities, he was happy to confirm, were not only fully aware of the generous arrangements made to support the volunteers’ families while they were at the front, but also conscious that, on their return, they had, ‘with few exceptions, all been reinstated in the service of the company, and some of them in higher and better paid positions than they had occupied before they went out’.⁹⁰ That the occasion was a corporate celebration rather than a rite of remembrance was further evidenced by the absence of the bereaved. Uninvited due to lack of space, the immediate families of the fallen were each sent a framed photograph of the memorial plaque so that, in the words of the company’s deputy manager, Frank Rees, ‘they might have something by them to show what had been done in memory of their relatives’.⁹¹

Four months later, on 8 August 1903, the company’s benevolence was once again celebrated, this time for the benefit of the vast crowds gathered to witness the unveiling of the Crewe Reservists’ and Volunteers’ Memorial in Queen’s Park. Scheduled to coincide with the town’s annual patriotic carnival, the day attracted between forty and fifty thousand people, with special trains being laid on from Liverpool and Manchester.⁹² The day began with a grand procession consisting of 104 displays led by the Crewe Carriage Works, while a series of sporting, musical and theatrical entertainments were staged to keep the visitors amused throughout the afternoon and early evening.⁹³ In such a festive atmosphere, it is hardly surprising that the unveiling and dedication of the memorial, sandwiched as it was between a ‘Bell and Balloon Contest’ in the morning and ‘a programme of dance music by the silver band’ in the late afternoon, had little to do with formal mourning. The tone for the occasion was set by Lord Stalbridge. Striking the same chord as he had at Euston in April, he attributed the high recruitment level in Crewe to the ‘public spiritedness

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⁹⁰ *The Times*, 24 April 1903.
⁹¹ *Crewe Chronicle*, 15 August 1903.
⁹² *Crewe Chronicle*, 15 August 1903.
⁹³ Crewe Local Studies Centre, C/Crew/C *Programme for the Crewe Patriotic Carnival and Demonstration to celebrate the Unveiling of the Crewe (South Africa) Volunteers’ and Reservists’ Memorial*, no date.
of the [LNWR] Board’ which had kept the men’s ‘places open for them’. Indeed, for Stalbridge, the lesson of the war was to be found in the actions of the survivors not the fallen. The high proportion of LNWR veterans who had resumed their former employment showed, he argued, ‘that their hearts were with the company’. Ringing endorsements of the workers’ loyalty and the Board’s governance followed on from the company’s general manager, Lieutenant-Colonel Sir F. Harrison, and his deputy, Frank Rees. The only discordant note was sounded by the town’s Liberal mayor, Mr H. Taylor. The only officiating dignitary with no formal connection with the LNWR, Taylor had taken a consistently anti-war line throughout the conflict and was not now prepared to let sleeping dogs lie. In reply to Stalbridge, he accepted that all were in agreement that ‘the men of Crewe did their duty nobly’, but was less certain that unanimity existed ‘as to the policy which culminated in the war; or as to the conduct of the war itself’.

As might be expected, commemoration at the familial, parish and work level was a much more intimate affair than it was in the grander schemes of civic communities and military organisations. It was in the tight-knit social structures of family, work and religious grouping that individuals were most sorely missed and grief and solace were most in evidence. Yet pride, be it regional or institutional, was never far away. Those being commemorated frequently served as representatives of their parent communities. As such, the qualities and characteristics which they were deemed to have embodied were used as proof of collective rather than personal worth.

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94 Crewe Chronicle, 15 August 1903.