

The Fallen of Embleton

After the War

Appendix

Acknowledgements

A tribute to the men of Embleton

who fell in the Great War

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Chapter 7

After The War

So ends the stories of the 'Embleton' men who died in the Great War. Many others served in the Army and Navy and returned to tell the tale, but this book is dedicated to those who didn't return.

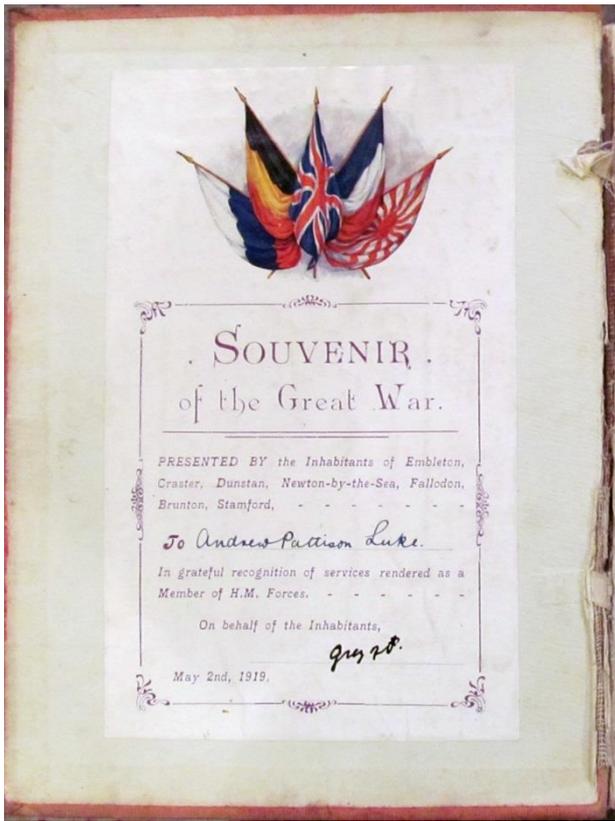
Although fighting ended on November 11th 1918 some forces had to remain in France because the war was not officially ended until a peace treaty had been signed. The formal end of the Great War came on June 28th 1919 with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles.

Every city, town, village and hamlet wanted to welcome their men home and plans were set in motion for celebrations. Embleton



was no different, and in March a meeting was held in the schoolroom to consider the possibility of offering a public welcome to the men back from the Forces. It was agreed that this would be arranged by a committee chaired by the Vicar

and that this committee should raise the necessary funds. Generous subscriptions brought the fund up to £150 (today's equivalent would be £4,500). The Alnwick and County Gazette reported that 'On May 2nd an enthusiastic welcome was given to the 150 men who returned safely to the Parish from the War. It opened with a tea given to the returned heroes in the Creighton Memorial Hall followed by a crowded meeting and entertainment, with an address of welcome and presentation of souvenirs by Viscount Grey of Fallodon, and



concluded with a dance. Every returning man received a copy of 'The Illustrated War Record' (see left), published at 21 shillings, and the festivities which had begun in the afternoon continued until 2 a.m.

In late June another public meeting, convened by the Parish Council, was held in the school to consider how the declaration of peace should be celebrated. It was decided that the celebrations should take the form of a festival lasting two days and that a house-to-house

collection would be taken to finance it. A tea for all would be organised, the children from the school and persons over 66 years of age to be free of charge. A concert and dance would be arranged and sports for the children and ex-members of H.M. Forces were foreseen. The festival took place in August.

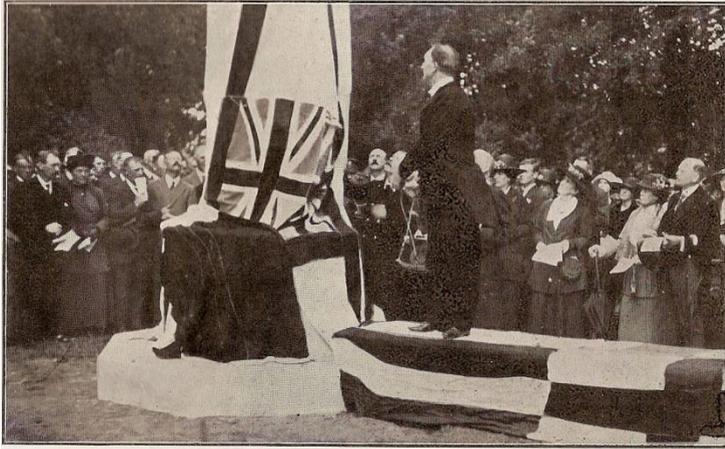
The Great War lasted longer than anybody expected and the number of British men killed was very much greater than was ever foreseen. The Government was overwhelmed by the numbers of dead and refused to bring the bodies home, although it would probably have been impossible for them to do so had they had deemed it advisable. Faced with this situation some wealthy families tried to organise the return of their dead relatives via other channels, something that ordinary families couldn't consider doing. Foreseeing the upset this might cause, the Government decreed that no bodies were to be returned.

In Britain people traditionally overcame bereavement by burying their dead, but this was now denied to everybody. The erection of War Memorials was a Government-inspired initiative which offered people something to focus on. The Memorials became surrogate tombstones which people could visit and pay their respects and the unveiling ceremonies became substitute funeral services. The creation of the Memorials was organised locally, there being no Government directive or funding. The question of who was, or was not, commemorated was held to be a local decision since there were no definite 'rules'. Those who had moved away, or wanted to get on with life, or hoped their men would return, didn't offer names for inclusion; others had the name included in several places. The Memorials erected were not all outside - some were plaques in village halls, churches, libraries etc. The variety of memorials was astonishing.

By the end of 1919 most parishes had started to organise the erection of their chosen War Memorial, but Embleton was late. The Alnwick and County Gazette of May 14th 1920 reported that 'A large public meeting was held on February 6th in the schoolroom at Embleton to consider the question of erecting a memorial to those belonging to the parish who have fallen in the war. After Lord Grey had addressed the meeting on the duty of the inhabitants of the district to perpetuate the memories of those who had fallen, it was decided that a memorial for the Parish of Embleton be erected in the cemetery and that the cost be defrayed by subscription given definitely for that purpose. A committee representing the different parts of the parish was appointed to carry out the above resolution.'

The War Memorial erected to commemorate the dead of the ecclesiastical parish of Embleton is located within the graveyard at Spitalford. It takes the form of an 18ft (5.5m) tall octagonal shaft with the cross imposed upon the East and West sides and stands upon an octagonal base and steps. At the foot of the shaft on the East and West sides are two sunk and decorated panels. The East panel contains the inscription 'To the Glory of God and in grateful and lasting remembrance of the men of the ecclesiastical Parish of Embleton who fell in the Great War 1914-1919. Erected by the

Parishioners'. The West panel contains the words 'Lest we forget'. On the base are inscribed the names of the 41 Fallen from the villages of: Brunton, Craster, Christon Bank, Dunstan, Embleton, Fallodon, Newton-by-the-Sea and Stamford.

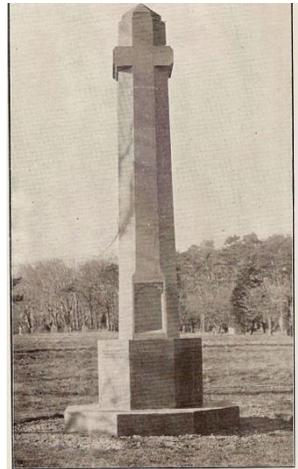


The Memorial was unveiled by the Rt. Hon. Viscount Grey of Fallodon K.G. on Sunday July 24th 1921 at 3 p.m. The Alnwick and County Gazette on Saturday July 30th reported 'There was a large

gathering of people present, and the weather was fine with a steady breeze. A combined choir consisting of the choirs from Embleton Parish Church, Embleton Presbyterian Church, Craster Church of England, Craster and Christon Bank Primitive Methodist Churches also took part and there was a large gathering of ex-service men'.

The Memorial 1921

The Memorial was renovated in 1949 and the names of 11 men from the same eight villages who fell in the 1939 – 1945 war were added. This was unveiled on Sunday September 25th 1949 at 3 p.m. by Captain J. S. Salter D.S.O., R.N., a relation of Viscount Grey.



The fund set up to build and maintain this Memorial was finally closed in December 1996 when the sum of £113.99p was sent to the Royal Star and Garter Home by the Parochial Church Council.



The School Manual from the Vincent Edwards school, Embleton for 19th July 1921 records that ‘after a year’s discussion regarding the purchase of a ‘war memorial of a simple character’ dedicated to former pupils, the Governors agreed to buy an oak tablet at a cost of £5.10.0’. The names of 17 former pupils were inscribed on this tablet in gold paint. Originally this War Memorial hung in the school but now is mounted within the

Creighton Memorial Hall.

The U.R.C. Church of Embleton purchased its own Memorial in the form of a Communion wine tray made of oak with metal fittings. It was inscribed ‘To the glory of God and in grateful memory of (seven names) who died for us in the Great War 1914 – 1918’. The tray was donated to the Bailiffgate Museum in Alnwick after the closure of the URC church.

It is possible that other men who had some association with Embleton died in the war but are not recorded on any Memorial, having been forgotten or deliberately left off.



Appendix

Military Formations

To aid understanding of the organisation of the British Army, the following is a simplified description of its formations:-

Army – each commanded by a General and at times there were five Armies on the Western Front and others elsewhere. There were usually four *Army Corps* in an Army.

Army Corps – each commanded by a Lieutenant General. The Corps commander had two or more *divisions* under his command

Divisions – each commanded by a Major General. Each division had under its command three *infantry brigades*.

Infantry Brigades – each commanded by a Brigadier General. At the start of the War there were four infantry *battalions* in a brigade but in 1918 this was reduced to three.

Battalions – each commanded by a Lieutenant Colonel. Each battalion consisted of four *companies*. In 1914 an infantry battalion would number about 1,000 officers and other ranks, including battalion headquarters and support staff, but later could be less.

Companies – each commanded by a Captain and totalled about 230 officers and men.

Illustrations

A British Recruiting Poster on page iii and contemporary postcards, both British and German, have been inserted for general interest on pages v, vii, 6, 10, 18, 28, 29, 39, 46, 48, 52, 66.

Page 22 – Royal Fusiliers (City of London) Regiment memorial.

Page 71 – Invitation to the public welcome for returning servicemen.

Back cover - Medals of David Ferguson Welsh.

Acknowledgements

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The picture of Herbert Luke is reproduced with the permission of Northumberland Archives.

The information in this book is included in good faith and is believed to be correct at the time of publication. No responsibility is accepted by the authors for errors or any loss or injury however caused.

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Admiralty,
London, S.W. 1.
19th, April 1923.

Mr. J. S. Welsh, R.N. Ret. No. 1195 E.S.

Sir,

I am directed by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to transmit to you the accompanying 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal which would have been conferred upon the above-named had he lived, in memory of his services with the British Forces during the Great War.

In forwarding these Decorations, I am commanded by the King to assure you of His Majesty's high appreciation of the services rendered.

I am to request that you will be so good as to acknowledge the receipt of these Decorations on the attached form.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

Mr. J. S. Welsh,

T. Murray

