



UNIVERSITY OF KENT

“Y RHWYG O GOLLI’R HOGIAU”:
COMMEMORATION OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR IN WALES,
1914 — 1939

Jennifer Ann Turner

20901710

School of History

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2025

“Y RHWYG O GOLLI’R HOGIAU”:
COMMEMORATION OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR IN WALES,
1914 — 1939

Word count: 100, 264 (excluding footnotes and all supplementary material)

Acknowledgements

The writing of this thesis has been, at times, a difficult and seemingly endless task. Many people, however, have helped to make the process easier, and it is not only a necessity but my pleasure to thank them.

To Professor Mark Connelly and Dr Stefan Goebel, my supervisory team, I offer my sincere thanks for your guidance, support, and tireless enthusiasm throughout the entire project. This thesis is stronger for your involvement, and I hope you find it an enjoyable and rewarding read.

I am grateful to the historians and archivists at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, and in particular to Max Dutton for the use of his headstone inscription database; to the staff at Bangor University Archives and Special Collections, Caernarfon Record Office, Ceredigion Archives, Glamorgan Archives, Meirionnydd Record Office, the National Library of Wales, and the War Memorials Register; and to the librarians at Cardiff Central Library and Swansea University Library.

Thanks must also go to Dr Megan Kelleher, for her practical help and her friendship, and to my cheering team at the Tafarn Gwarcefel, and in particular to Tony Keenan. The weekly greeting “Finished it yet?” was, genuinely, a powerful motivator.

I am indebted to Jill, Mark, and Dr Helen Turner, for reasons that it would take another hundred thousand words to explain. In return, I offer my thanks, and my love, always.

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of Bombardier Frederick Turner, Sergeant Leonard Kennard, and of all those named in these pages.

Abstract

This thesis explores the intricacies and specificities of commemoration of the First World War in Wales and by Welsh people from 1914 to 1939. It acknowledges the contribution of the existing literature on war memory and commemoration, but also moves to set itself apart both narratively and methodologically. Utilising a wide range of archival and printed primary sources, as well as the previously underexplored commemorative texts inscribed on war graves and war memorials, it examines and interprets a variety of commemorative forms and rituals, and considers whether Welsh commemoration reveals divergent attitudes towards war, death in war, and the experience of bereavement.

The conclusions reached in this thesis demonstrate that Welsh people showed a determination to remember the war and the war dead in a specifically Welsh way. Certain rituals took on a Welsh character when performed by Welsh people, while from other commemorative forms a distinct Welsh memory of the war emerges, one that was expressed through the Welsh language. This thesis therefore emphasises the necessity of further research, and poses questions about the future of commemoration in Wales.

Contents

Acknowledgements	i
Abstract	ii
Contents	iii
List of illustrations	vi
List of tables	vii
Notes	viii
1 Introduction	1
2 “YR HIRAETH YN AROS”: <i>IN MEMORIAM</i> NOTICES	22
2.1 The deceased: identities and narratives	29
2.2 The bereaved: voices and hierarchies	42
2.3 Reflections on <i>in memoriam</i> notices	47
3 “PILGRIM THROUGH THIS BARREN LAND”: BATTLEFIELD VISITS	48
3.1 Early battlefield visiting	49
3.2 Pilgrimages to war graves	70
3.3 Visits to sites of particular interest	88
3.4 Battlefields, cemeteries, and the tourism industry	113
3.5 Reflections on battlefield visits	122
Interstice I	123
4 “LET THAT STERN LESSON BE HANDED DOWN”: SERVICES OF REMEMBRANCE	126
4.1 Memorial unveiling ceremonies	128
4.2 Remembrance services	157
	iii

4.3 Reflections on services of remembrance	179
5 “CYMRO MEWN GWLAD ESTRON”: INSCRIPTIONS ON WAR GRAVES	181
5.1 The Welsh-speaking war dead	183
5.2 The inscriptions	194
5.2.1 Religious inscriptions	197
5.2.2 Poetic inscriptions	219
5.2.3 Patriotic and martial inscriptions	234
5.2.4 Anti-war inscriptions	253
5.2.5 Generic inscriptions	260
5.2.6 Individualised inscriptions	269
5.3 Reflections on headstone inscriptions	307
Interstice II	309
6 “O GOFADAIL GOFIDIAU”: INSCRIPTIONS ON WAR MEMORIALS	313
6.1 Memorialisation in Wales	317
6.2 War memorial inscriptions	340
6.2.1 Dedicatory phrase	343
6.2.2 The people commemorated	352
6.2.3 The nature of their deaths	372
6.2.4 The circumstances in which they died	385
6.2.5 Quotations	399
6.3 Reflections on war memorial inscriptions	432
Interstice III	434
7 Conclusion	438

Appendices	442
Appendix 1: List of First World War casualties with Welsh-language personal inscriptions	442
Appendix 2: List of war memorials in Wales recorded and studied for this thesis	462
Bibliography	479
Archival sources	479
Primary sources	483
Secondary sources	488

List of illustrations

Figure 3.1	Visit of Welsh and Scotch “Fishwives”
Figure 3.2	Visit of Welsh and Scotch “Fishwives”
Figure 4.1	A portion of the crowd which assembled in front of the City Hall in Cathays Park, Cardiff, 11 November 1918
Figure 5.1	The headstone marking the grave of Hedd Wyn in Artillery Wood Cemetery, taken 31 July 2017
Figure 6.1	The memorial at Aberbanc, a sculpture of a soldier in mourning pose, a common sight in west Wales
Figure 6.2	A portion of the inscription on the Welsh National War Memorial, Cathays Park, Cardiff, showing the words ‘feibion Cymru’
Figure 6.3	The memorial at Beddgelert, which describes those named as ‘gollwyd’
Figure 6.4	The memorial at Bethesda, inscribed with the poem composed by Robert Williams Parry
Figure 6.5	The inscription on the memorial at Llangynog

List of tables

Table 5.1	Welsh-language inscriptions on war graves
Table 6.1	The introductory phrase
Table 6.2	Descriptions of those commemorated
Table 6.3	Descriptions of those commemorated (Anglesey only)
Table 6.4	Descriptions of those commemorated (Glamorgan only)
Table 6.5	Descriptions of those commemorated (Cardiganshire only)
Table 6.6	How did they die?
Table 6.7	The circumstances in which they died
Table 6.8	The themes of additional quotations

Notes

The Welsh and English languages belong to separate language families, and are therefore fundamentally different, posing a challenge in the task of translation. Furthermore, the Welsh of 1925 is very different to the Welsh of 2025. The writing of this thesis has consequently involved two layers of translation: conveying the often formal and archaic Welsh of the primary sources into modern Welsh, and then converting this Welsh into English. I have done my best to incorporate both the literal definition and the deeper meaning of the Welsh texts cited. Any errors are mine alone.

When referring to villages, towns, and cities across Wales I have used the names and spellings which reflect Welsh rather than English orthography (for example, *Llanelli* instead of *Llanelly*, or *Conwy* instead of *Conway*), except where the community is still known to English speakers in its Anglicised form (such as *Swansea* instead of *Abertawe*, or *Wrexham* instead of *Wrecsam*), for the purposes of recognition in both cases. When mentioning a specific place which existed during this specific time, however, I have chosen to use contemporary names and spellings (thus, *Cardiganshire* is used instead of *Ceredigion*, *Merionethshire* instead of *Meirionnydd*, and *Ypres* instead of *Ieper*).

Although I have translated all the Welsh included throughout this thesis, and provided explanation where necessary about certain Welsh figures, practices, or events, I have deliberately not included a context chapter. To do so would, I believe, perpetuate the idea that Welsh history is somehow a fringe subject. For a general overview of the period 1914 to 1939, however, readers may wish to refer to *A History of Wales* by John Davies, or *Rebirth of a Nation* and *From Revolution to Devolution* by Kenneth Morgan. For more detail on the First World War, *Wales and World War One* by Robin Barlow, and *Wales and War*, a volume edited

by Matthew Cragoe and Chris Williams, may prove useful to English speakers, while *Cymry'r Rhyfel Byd Cyntaf* by Gwyn Jenkins, and *Creithiau*, a volume edited by Gethin Matthews, are available to Welsh speakers.

I Introduction

The title of this thesis—Y RHWYG O GOLLI'R HOGIAU, which, translated into English, means THE WRENCH OF LOSING THE BOYS—is taken from an *englyn* composed by the celebrated poet Robert Williams Parry in the aftermath of the First World War. It depicts grief as a physical as well as psychological pain, a rupture and an ache that would be kept alive by the memorial on which the poem was inscribed.

Composed for the war memorial in Penygroes, Caernarfonshire, and inscribed on a small number of other memorials as well, the poem is, in wording and tone, representative of memorial inscriptions in Wales—or, rather, those written in Welsh. Across the country, and across all types of memorial, the wording of Welsh inscriptions is subtly but significantly different from that of English inscriptions, revealing a current of opposition to the war, deep sorrow in its aftermath, and above all a determination to remember those named on the memorial in a specifically Welsh way. In short, it points to the existence of an experience and memory of the war shared by Welsh speakers that was, crucially, separate from that shared by English speakers in Wales and elsewhere in Britain.

Although the literature on war, memory, and commemoration is vast, with numerous local, regional, national, and comparative studies published every year, it does not seem that historians have yet entertained the possibility that commemoration in Wales is worth researching. Within the existing literature Wales is either entirely absent or is used to provide merely illustrative examples, reflecting an Anglocentrism that is unwilling to see Wales as a

distinct nation and unwilling to learn its language and its political, social, and cultural specificities. Other resources concerned with commemoration do not treat Wales and the Welsh language with the same regard that is shown to England and English: the War Memorials Register, intended to be a comprehensive database of war memorials in the United Kingdom, contains many records in which the words “[inscription in Welsh]” appear alongside a faithfully transcribed English text. It is assumed that what is true for England is true for Wales.

The content and direction of this thesis emerged from a very cursory study of war memorial inscriptions in Wales. Once it was established that the differences in tone between the two languages were consistent enough to constitute a pattern, the question naturally arose whether other forms of commemoration occurring in Wales or performed by Welsh people were also noticeably distinct, and, if so, why?

This thesis demonstrates that there was a noticeably Welsh character to First World War commemoration in Wales. At times, this was a result of unique political, cultural, and economic circumstances, while at other times, it developed along linguistic lines, where language acted as proxy for a person’s cultural background and identity, political affiliation, and religious belief. This thesis argues that it was entrenched attitudes and experiences, as well as the more recent realities of war and its aftermath, that influenced the nature of commemoration in Wales.

*

This thesis is organised into two broad sections. The first is focused on commemorative rituals, namely, *in memoriam* notices, battlefield visits, and services of remembrances, and explores the Welsh character of these acts of remembrance when performed by Welsh people. The second is concerned with memorial texts inscribed on war graves and war memorials, and probes the differences between the Welsh and English languages.

A wide variety of primary sources were consulted. The first section draws mainly on printed sources such as newspaper articles and entries, war memorial committee papers, and the material generated by local communities for unveiling or remembrance ceremonies. The second section extracts and analyses the commemorative texts inscribed on war graves and war memorials, and supplements this information with census records, the files of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission archive, newspaper articles, and war memorial committee papers. This research presented several challenges. Memorial entries on the War Memorials Register often included incomplete or incorrect inscriptions, inaccurate locations, and other misleading or wrong information. Where a record was felt to be flawed—where there were obvious spelling errors, fields left empty, and no accompanying photographs, for example—it was necessary to consult other sources, including contemporary newspapers, war memorial souvenir booklets, or digital resources such as War Memorials Online or various family history websites, in order to corroborate the information given by the WMR. I also performed fieldwork, once the coronavirus restrictions were lifted in Wales, to confirm or correct memorial inscriptions, to determine the placement of each language on the memorial, and to note any other details given with the names listed. There are also vast gaps in archival collections where material was destroyed as part of archival weeding processes. Many war memorial committee papers, for instance, are no longer in existence, possibly disposed of during the reorganisation of local government in Wales in the 1970s. Thousands of historic

enquiry files of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, containing the correspondence between staff and the next-of-kin about a particular casualty, were discarded in two stages, and comparatively few remain. Some informed speculation has therefore been unavoidable, but I have avoided making generalisations or, in some cases, reaching a definitive verdict, and indeed have cautioned against this.

As well as the archival and primary source research, this thesis utilises and builds on existing historical studies. The key literature will be discussed and assessed in a literature review below. But this thesis also breaks new ground, particularly in the analysis of war grave inscriptions and war memorial inscriptions, which have rarely been considered in any depth—although war *cemeteries* and war *memorials* are each the subject of a vast body of work. Above all, its particular contribution to the literature on war commemoration lies in its focus on Wales and Welsh people, thereby providing new perspectives, challenging established conclusions, and opening up countless new avenues for further research.

*

This thesis is, primarily, a response to *Aftermath* by Angela Gaffney, the first—and, to this date, the only—comprehensive study of memorialisation in Wales.¹ Drawing on a wide range of war memorial committee documents and numerous Welsh newspapers, Gaffney identifies and explores the tensions and conflicts that characterised the building of war memorials across the country. Some of these conflicts were typical of memorialisation as a whole, such as the

¹ Angela Gaffney, *Aftermath: Remembering the Great War in Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998).

disagreements over the form and purpose of a memorial, while others were specific to Wales, such as the relationship between the (newly disestablished) Church in Wales and the various Nonconformist denominations. Ultimately, however, she concludes that a comparison of commemorative processes in Wales and the rest of Britain “reveals more similarities than differences”.² Memorialisation in Wales was not utilised to articulate a distinctive Welsh identity and sense of nationhood, but instead revealed a society “determined to place commemoration of the individual within local communities”, Gaffney writes, echoing Alex King, whose study on memorialisation across Britain as a whole also demonstrates that commemoration was thought of as “a matter of specifically local importance”, the honouring of local people by local people.³

This aspect of her argument may be correct. First World War commemoration was complex, fragmented, and spontaneous, reflecting the differing and competing needs and concerns of groups within the community, such as local elites, bereaved families, ex-servicemen and women, activist groups, and others. The influence of local dynamics and priorities did not stop at Offa’s Dyke.

There is, however, also a sense that in some places Gaffney suppresses her own evidence. She seems to push back against the nationalist narratives of Welsh history which view the First World War as the catalyst in the emergence of a more serious and more militant Welsh independence movement, but she erases any nuance in the process. This is most evident in her treatment of the Welsh language and her discussion of Welsh identity. The use of the Welsh

² Ibid, p. 173.

³ Ibid, pp. 67-68; Alex King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain: The Symbolism and Politics of Remembrance* (London: Berg, 1998), p. 237.

language on war memorials was a “notable difference”, but only in terms of its presence and not the actual wording: inscriptions “invoked notions of honour, sacrifice, and loyalty [...] whether the sentiments were expressed in Welsh or English”.⁴ Her chapter on the use of Welsh in commemoration, however, includes more than one case where memorial inscriptions were not direct translations of each other, but Gaffney chooses to use this as evidence of the many complications of the memorialisation process, rather than interrogating the significance of the differing wording.⁵ Elsewhere, it is said that commemoration in Wales communicated “pride in the Welsh contribution” and provided “tangible evidence of a nation at ease with its own position within the British state and the empire”.⁶ She claims that “an individual may have enlisted, fought, and died as a Welshman, but he was commemorated as a British citizen”, which contradicts her own argument that local identities took precedence.⁷ Her interpretation of Welsh national and cultural identity is moulded to fit her overarching narrative, which is that there is nothing exceptional about Wales.

This is an attitude shared by other commentaries on Wales during and after the First World War. A study on Welsh national identity and military service by Chris Williams demonstrates, with thorough quantitative research, that Welsh regiments were not formed of exclusively Welsh-born soldiers, but in fact were characterised by considerable ethnic heterogeneity, just as some English regiments had Welshmen in their ranks.⁸ Drawing on scholarship by Peter Simkins and J. G. Fuller, Williams suggests that, while there was no universal experience of the trenches, the diverse composition of British units created a “sense of shared experience and

⁴ Ibid, p. 173; 174.

⁵ Ibid, pp. 147-149.

⁶ Ibid, p. 168.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Chris Williams, ‘Taffs in the Trenches: Welsh National Identity and Military Service, 1914—1918’, in Matthew Cragoe and Chris Williams (eds.), *Wales and War: Religion, Society, and Politics in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), pp. 126-164.

of common understanding” between soldiers in Welsh regiments, “whether they were ‘genuine Taffies’ or not”.⁹ This conclusion is not entirely convincing, however, particularly as it is not supported by any substantial qualitative research. That Welshmen served alongside Englishmen in both Welsh and English regiments is a fact, but it does not automatically follow that their experiences of military service were the same. Like Gaffney, Williams seems to minimise any differences and instead emphasises similarities between Wales and the other constituent nations of the United Kingdom.

A more insightful examination of Welsh war memorials has been produced by linguist Gwenllian Awbery in an article focused on the inscriptions of memorials in Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire, and Ceredigion.¹⁰ Awbery studies each component of an inscription in great detail, drawing out the subtle but significant differences in wording and tone, and concludes that

the two languages are used in subtly different ways. The English memorials tend to stress pride and honour, as they commemorate the death of men who willingly gave their lives in a conflict blessed by God and the king. The Welsh memorials remember with love and respect the young lads from the community who lost their lives fighting for their country. It may well be that these differences are a marker of divergent views within the community about the experience of war and loss, with language acting as a proxy for social class or political affiliation.¹¹

⁹ Ibid, p. 157. See also J. G. Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies, 1914—1918* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990); Peter Simkins, ‘The Four Armies 1914—1918’, in David Chandler and Ian Beckett (eds.), *The Oxford Illustrated History of the British Army* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 235-255.

¹⁰ Gwenllian Awbery, ‘The Language of Remembrance: Welsh and English on First World War Memorials’, *Folk Life* 55:2 (2017), pp. 112-136.

¹¹ Ibid, pp. 129-130.

The article thus challenges the assertion made by Gaffney that Welsh and English inscriptions did not differ, and points to the existence of two separate narratives about the conflict, depending on the linguistic ability, and, by extension, class and cultural background, of an individual. Although the study is limited to the memorials of west Wales, it provides a solid foundation for the content and structure of the final chapter of this thesis.

These two pieces of research each have strengths and weaknesses, but are united in that war memorials are the sole focus: other forms and rituals of commemoration are not included. Unfortunately, apart from a chapter by Gethin Matthews on the aftermath of the conflict, published in the Welsh-language edited volume *Creithiau*, there is very little else published on war commemoration in Wales, a gap that this thesis seeks, partially, to fill.¹² Other studies, however, provide an example of how to approach more localised commemoration, and show that there is room in the historiography for a diversity of scope.

Commemoration in the other constituent countries of the United Kingdom has received some attention. The work of Jenny Macleod and Gill Plain illustrates how the negotiation between the local and the national, the concept of national unity, and the importance of mythic-historic narratives characterised commemoration in Scotland.¹³ Catherine Switzer, Brian Graham, and Peter Shirlow, meanwhile, demonstrate the centrality of the 36th (Ulster) Division and the Battle of the Somme to the memory of the war in Northern Ireland, meaning that war

¹² Gethin Matthews, ‘“Buddugoliaeth”/ Dadrithio/ Creithiau’, in Gethin Matthews (gol.), *Creithiau: Dylanwad y Rhyfel Mawr ar Gymdeithas a Diwylliant yng Nghymru* (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 2016), pp. 258-269.

¹³ Jenny Macleod, ‘Memorials and Location: Local versus National Identity and the Scottish National War Memorial’, *The Scottish Historical Review* 89 (2010), pp. 73-95; Jenny Macleod, “‘By Scottish hands, with Scottish money, on Scottish soil’: The Scottish National War Memorial and National Identity”, *Journal of British Studies* 49 (2010), pp. 73-96; Gill Plain (ed.), *Scotland and the First World War: Myth, Memory, and the Legacy of Bannockburn* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2017).

commemoration in the new state was bound up with a particular cultural and religious identity, and the desire to articulate the contribution of a specific group of people to Britain and the British Empire.¹⁴ The study of national memorial schemes and commemorative practices more broadly can therefore illuminate the complex relationships between local, regional, national, and imperial identities.

Elsewhere, research on memorialisation and commemoration across particular counties or regions has produced some interesting studies. The work of Keith Grieves on Sussex, of Peter Donaldson on Kent, of Mark Connelly on the City and East London, and of Denise Coss on the north-east of England have shown how local identities and local political, social, and economic circumstances influenced the nature of remembrance.¹⁵ Indeed, Coss argues that communities drew on local culture and traditions to ‘personalise’ remembrance and make commemoration more meaningful, an observation that has immediate relevance to this thesis.¹⁶ In a different national context, the research of Karen Shelby on war commemoration by Flemish nationalists highlights the connection between commemoration and separatist politics, and charts the development of a Flemish experience and memory of the war, separate from a broader Belgian national memory.¹⁷ There are certainly many parallels between Flanders and

¹⁴ Catherine Switzer, *Unionists and Great War Commemoration in the North of Ireland 1914–1939* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2007); Brian Graham and Peter Shirlow, ‘The Battle of the Somme in Ulster Memory and Identity’, *Political Geography* 21 (2002), pp. 881–904; Catherine Switzer and Brian Graham, ‘“Ulster’s Love in Letter’d Gold”: The Battle of the Somme and the Ulster Memorial Tower, 1918–1935’, *Journal of Historical Geography* 36 (2010), pp. 183–193.

¹⁵ Keith Grieves, ‘Investigating Local War Memorial Committees: Demobilised Soldiers, the Bereaved, and Expressions of Local Pride in Sussex Villages, 1918–1921’, *Local Historian* 30 (2000), pp. 39–58; Peter Donaldson, *Ritual and Remembrance: The Memorialisation of the Great War in Kent* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006); Mark Connelly, *The Great War, Memory, and Ritual: Commemoration in the City and East London, 1916–1939* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2002); Denise Coss, ‘First World War Memorials, Commemoration, and Community in North-East England, 1918–1939’, unpublished PhD thesis, Durham University, 2012.

¹⁶ Coss, ‘First World War Memorials’, p. 316.

¹⁷ Karen Shelby, *Flemish Nationalism and the Great War: The Politics of Memory, Visual Culture and Commemoration* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Karen Shelby, ‘Little Flemish Heroes’ Tombstones: The Great War and Twenty-First Century Belgian Politics’, in Bart Ziino (ed.), *Remembering the First World War* (London & New York: Routledge, 2015), pp. 186–206.

Wales: the deep-rooted tensions between different linguistic-socio-cultural groups, the emergence of a distinct memory of the war and distinct commemorative practices, and the efforts to mark out Flemish or Welsh soldiers by utilising language and cultural symbols.

Although the literature on commemoration in Wales specifically is scarce, there are several studies on commemoration in local, regional, or national communities that provide an existing framework for future research on Wales and opportunities for comparison.

*

Other studies have influenced the content of this thesis in more focused ways. The doctoral thesis of Sonia Batten on memorial text narratives in Britain provides a useful foundation for my discussion of *in memoriam* notices, inscriptions on war graves, and inscriptions on war memorials.¹⁸ She charts the difficulties faced by bereaved relatives when composing memorial texts such as *in memoriam* notices, letters of condolence, and headstone inscriptions, and identifies the multitude of narratives that emerged from this process, both of which are noticeable in a Welsh context. Its main drawback is that it often becomes a catalogue of texts, with multiple inscriptions grouped under a broad heading but not analysed in depth, but in the absence of a comprehensive body of work on the subject the thesis remains the principal point of reference for discussion of commemorative inscriptions.

¹⁸ Sonia Batten, 'Memorial Text Narratives in Britain, c. 1890—1930', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Birmingham, 2011.

As well as commemorative texts, this thesis includes the study of commemorative rituals. The work of Adrian Gregory on the observance of Armistice Day was drawn upon for the chapter concerned with services of remembrance.¹⁹ Gregory describes and analyses the changing nature of remembrance through the annual ritual of the Armistice Day service, and concludes that it was shaped and constantly reshaped by political, economic, and diplomatic developments.²⁰ This reading stands in contrast to the arguments made by George Mosse and Bob Bushaway, for example, who view the memory of the war as instrumental in determining postwar politics.²¹ Of these two approaches, I find Gregory's interpretation most nuanced and convincing, but I recognise the merits of Mosse and Bushaway's arguments. In other words, I believe that the memory of the war and broader political life existed in a symbiotic relationship, and that it is not an evasion to state that commemoration was fluid, ambiguous, and able to accommodate multiple narratives.

Studies of, or with relevance to, the phenomenon of battlefield visiting were also highly influential to the writing of this thesis. Publications by David Lloyd and Mark Connelly discuss the development of battlefield visiting, the varying ways in which people experienced the former battlefields, and the terms in which they defined themselves.²² Indeed, the classifications 'pilgrim' and 'tourist' carried immense importance, and there was much conflict between the two groups, even though, as Lloyd and Connelly point out, they had a great deal in common. John Pegum identifies a third category of visitor, the ex-serviceman, neither

¹⁹ Adrian Gregory, *The Silence of Memory: Armistice Day, 1919—1946* (Oxford: Berg, 1994).

²⁰ Ibid, p. 5.

²¹ George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Bob Bushaway, 'Name Upon Name: The Great War and Remembrance', in Roy Porter (ed.), *Myths of the English* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1992), pp. 136-167.

²² David Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism: Pilgrimage and the Commemoration of the Great War in Britain, Australia, and Canada, 1919—1939* (Oxford: Berg, 1998); Mark Connelly, *Postcards from the Western Front: Pilgrims, Veterans, and Tourists after the Great War* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2022).

pilgrim nor tourist, but also both at the same time.²³ His study is a narrative of dislocation and disorientation, describing how veterans returned to a reconstructed and thus unfamiliar landscape, an interpretation contradicted by a doctoral thesis by Tim Godden, which demonstrates how wartime topography and toponymy was preserved in the war cemeteries designed and built by the Imperial War Graves Commission.²⁴ A recent study by Ian Atherton explores battlefield preservation, battlefield visiting, and the commemorative rituals performed on battlefields across a much longer period of time, thus placing the activity of the 1920s and 1930s into a historical tradition.²⁵

Within these broad works, the journeys of Welsh people to the former battlefields, and the importance of their national and cultural identity to their itinerary, behaviour, and interpretation, are not discussed, but there are other works which provide a basis for exploration and comparison. The work of Jeremy Foster on the South African memorial at Delville Wood, Bart Ziino on Australian war graves, and Jacqueline Hucker on the Canadian memorial at Vimy Ridge, as well as Mark Connelly and Stefan Goebel's study of Ypres, all consider how certain locations on the former battlefields became hallowed sites for particular combatant nations.²⁶ The relationship between war, battlegrounds, nationhood, and national identity is particularly relevant to the chapter on battlefield visiting.

²³ John Pegum, 'The Old Front Line: Returning to the Battlefields in the Writings of Ex-Servicemen', in Jessica Meyer (ed.), *British Popular Culture and the First World War* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2008), pp. 217-236.

²⁴ Tim Godden, 'Designing Memory: The Junior Architects of the Imperial War Graves Commission and the Creation of a Spatial Memorial in the British War Cemeteries on the Western Front', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Kent, 2020.

²⁵ Ian Atherton, *Britons and their Battlefields: War, Memory, and Commemoration since the Fourteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2024).

²⁶ Jeremy Foster, 'Creating a Temenos, Positing 'South Africanism': Material Memory, Landscape Practice, and the Circulation of Identity at Delville Wood', *Cultural Geographies* 11:3 (2004), pp. 259-290; Bart Ziino, *A Distant Grief: Australians, War Graves, and the Great War* (Crawley: University of Western Australia Press, 2007); Jacqueline Hucker, 'Battle and Burial': Recapturing the Cultural Meaning of Canada's National Memorial on Vimy Ridge', *The Public Historian* 31:1 (2009), pp. 89-109; Mark Connelly and Stefan Goebel, *Ypres* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

Other pieces of research may not have been explicitly referenced or discussed but have nonetheless been considered throughout this thesis. There is a vast body of literature on bereavement, grief, and mourning, which provides useful terminology as well as vital background. Although the literature has emerged from a range of disciplines, it is generally understood that bereavement is the objective status of a person who has suffered a loss through death, grief refers to the subjective response to loss, involving diverse psychological and physical symptoms, and mourning consists of acts or practices that signal bereavement and express grief, and are guided by the traditions and expectations of a given society or cultural group.²⁷

The literature on bereavement and mourning during and after the First World War is dominated by the debate over the extent to which the conflict altered mourning practices and attitudes towards death. Patricia Jalland, for example, argues that the war had a profound impact, leading to a complex shift from nineteenth-century culture, where grief was openly expressed, to a twentieth-century world of repression and privacy.²⁸ Her interpretation is supported by Thomas Laqueur, who views the twentieth century as a time when a distance opened up between the living and the dead in both reality and the imagination.²⁹ But there are also scholars who suggest the opposite. David Cannadine, for instance, argues that “interwar Britain was probably

²⁷ See Margaret Stroebe and Henk Schut, ‘Culture and Grief’, *Bereavement Care* 17:1 (1998), pp. 7-11; Jenny Hockey, Jeanne Katz, and Neil Small (eds.), *Grief, Mourning, and Death Ritual* (Buckingham & Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2001); Charles Corr, Donna Corr, and Kenneth Doka, *Death and Dying, Life and Living*, eighth edition (Belmont: Wadsworth, 2018), pp. 219-221.

²⁸ Patricia Jalland, *Death in War and Peace: A History of Loss and Grief in England, 1914—1970* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

²⁹ Thomas Laqueur, *The Work of the Dead: A Cultural History of Mortal Remains* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015).

more obsessed with death than any other period in modern history”, contradicting the claim that death had been increasingly distanced from ordinary life.³⁰ As with most things, the reality likely lies somewhere in the middle: traditional acts and rituals endured, but newer practices emerged alongside these.

Another avenue of enquiry focuses on the ways in which mourning and bereavement was gendered during wartime and in the aftermath of conflict. The privileging of female over male grief has been identified and examined by Susan Grayzel, Suzanne Evans, Corinna Peniston-Bird, Lucy Noakes, and Nataliya Danilova and Emma Dolan, to name only a handful of scholars who have worked or are working on this subject.³¹ Grayzel, Evans, and Noakes have shown that women—and especially mothers—were the face of mourning and bereavement, while Peniston-Bird has explored the silencing of the male mourner in memorialisation and other cultural representations of war, pointing to the strength and pervasiveness of “gender hierarchies of war, heteronormativity, and the gendering of mourning”.³² The literature on gendered hierarchies of bereavement is highly relevant across this entire thesis.

There is also another vast body of literature on memory—too vast, in fact, to even summarise, let alone discuss here. Of particular significance, however, is the model developed in the 1980s by the Popular Memory Group, which recognises the interplay between private and public

³⁰ David Cannadine, ‘War and Death, Grief and Mourning in Modern Britain’, in Joachim Waley (ed.), *Mirrors of Mortality: Social Studies in the History of Death* (London: Europa, 1981), pp. 187-242 (p. 189).

³¹ Susan Grayzel, *Women’s Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France during the First World War* (Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Suzanne Evans, *Mothers of Heroes, Mothers of Martyrs: World War I and the Politics of Grief* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2007); Corinna Peniston-Bird, ‘The Grieving Male in Memorialisation: Monuments of Discretion’, *Journal of War & Culture Studies* 8:1 (2015), pp. 41-56; Lucy Noakes, ‘Gender, Grief, and Bereavement in Second World War Britain’, *Journal of War & Culture Studies* 8:1 (2015), pp. 72-85; Nataliya Danilova and Emma Dolan, ‘Scottish Soldier-Heroes and Patriotic War Heroines: The Gendered Politics of World War I Commemoration’, *Gender, Place & Culture* 27:2 (2020), pp. 239-260.

³² Peniston-Bird, ‘The Grieving Male in Memorialisation’, p. 55.

memories, and the dialogue between individuals and holders of power in a society.³³ The Group stresses that public or dominant representations of the past are always “open to contestation” and are never “monolithically installed or everywhere believed in”.³⁴ Nonetheless, the Group acknowledges that there are “real processes of domination” at work which actively silence, marginalise, or manipulate some private recollections.³⁵

This circular relationship has been identified in practice by scholars who have considered memory from a feminist perspective. Juliette Pattinson, Penny Summerfield, and Lucy Noakes point out that women’s memories—particularly women’s recollections of wartime—are often excluded from public discourses or representations, or are included only when they can fulfil a preconceived narrative.³⁶ In contrast, Alison Fell, writing about female First World War veterans in Britain and France, shows that many women inserted themselves into interwar commemoration and into national memories of the war.³⁷ “It was not the case that women were denied a voice in relation to the war”, she writes, but accepts that “some women’s stories counted more than others”.³⁸ The emergence of a public memory involves forgetting as well as remembering, and can be misleading at best, and oppressive at worst—but it is important to remember that private memory can always challenge or subvert this dominant narrative.

³³ Popular Memory Group, ‘Popular Memory: Theory, Politics, Method’, in Richard Johnson, and others (eds.), *Making Histories: Studies in History-Writing and Politics* (London & New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. 205-252.

³⁴ Ibid, p. 207.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ See, for example, Lucy Noakes, *War and the British: Gender and National Identity, 1939–1991* (London: IB Tauris, 1997); Penny Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women’s Wartime Lives: Discourse and Subjectivity in Oral Histories of the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998); Lucy Noakes and Juliette Pattinson (eds.), *The Cultural Memory of the Second World War in Britain* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

³⁷ Alison Fell, *Women as Veterans in Britain and France after the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

³⁸ Ibid, pp. 200-201.

As well as the literature on bereavement and mourning, and on memory, there is a huge body of work on memorialisation and commemoration. It is important, firstly, to define the terms, which are often used inconsistently and interchangeably. In this work, ‘memorialisation’ refers to the building of structures or the preserving of defined sites where acts of mourning and remembrance may occur, while ‘commemoration’ encompasses the activity of remembrance, such as rituals and ceremonies, as well as the process of memorialisation itself.

Multiple disciplinary approaches and differing viewpoints within the fields of cultural history and memory studies have generated extensive discussion on the origins, nature, and purposes of commemoration. One recurring debate focuses on the extent to which it is driven by grief or shaped by the activity of the state and social elites. Indeed, two main paradigms exist within the research: the ‘social-agency’ or psychological approach, and the ‘state-centred’ or political approach. The state-centred approach emerged in the 1980s and was developed by Eric Hobsbawm, Terence Ranger, and Benedict Anderson, who stress the role of the nation-state in restoring social cohesion and legitimising authority through the invented traditions of war remembrance.³⁹ Their interpretation was furthered by George Mosse, Bob Bushaway, and Michael Heffernan in the 1990s, who argue that the language and rituals of remembrance, emphasising sacrifice, glory, and the debt owed by the living to the dead, glorified the experience of the war and suppressed any feelings of dissent.⁴⁰ War cemeteries and memorials were spaces in which approved and harmless narratives about the war were preserved, literally, in stone.

³⁹ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition (London & New York: Verso, 2006).

⁴⁰ Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*; Bushaway, ‘Name Upon Name’; Michael Heffernan, ‘For Ever England: The Western Front and the Politics of Remembrance in Britain’, *Ecumene* 2:3 (1995), pp. 293-323.

More recent studies have also demonstrated that the war dead were appropriated for overtly political purposes. Thomas Laqueur explains that the repatriation of bodies from the battlefields was refused by the British government and military authorities; instead of returning home, the war dead would be buried in military cemeteries or named on memorials constructed by the Imperial War Graves Commission, in locations close to where they died.⁴¹ In effect, the bodies and names of the war dead were no longer the responsibility or even the property of their families, but of the state, marking a politicisation of burial and commemoration, and imbuing the dead with a political purpose. The political, and specifically imperial, character of the Commission has also been emphasised by Andrew Keating and David Crane, contradicting earlier studies which depict the organisation as apolitical or purely altruistic.⁴²

For the proponents of the social-agency approach, however, the commemorative activity of the interwar period originated from within communities, united in universal bereavement, in order to acknowledge the loss of life and to recover from their grief. Jay Winter is one of the leading historians of this school of thought. In his research Winter highlights the devastating experience of loss for millions of people across Europe, and claims that commemoration, characterised by traditional languages and motifs, flourished precisely because it was able to console the bereaved.⁴³ His analysis of art, film, poetry, rituals, and war memorials is subordinated to this central theme of mourning. Indeed, he argues that sites of memory are expressions of the force of civil society, not reflections of political authority.⁴⁴ Memorials, then, are concerned with

⁴¹ Laqueur, *The Work of the Dead*, pp. 470-472.

⁴² Andrew Prescott Keating, 'Empire of the Dead: British Burial Abroad and the Formation of National Identity', unpublished PhD thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 2011; David Crane, *Empires of the Dead: How One Man's Vision Led to the Creation of WWI's War Graves* (London: William Collins, 2014). The official history of the Commission, Philip Longworth, *The Unending Vigil: The History of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2010) often neatly sidesteps the subject of imperial politics.

⁴³ Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

⁴⁴ Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan, 'Setting the Framework', in Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (eds.), *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 6-39 (p. 10).

mourning and bereavement, and were places where people grieved: that is to say, they are memorials, never monuments.⁴⁵ Commemoration is an extension of mourning.

Both the state-centred and the social-agency perspectives are problematic. The political approach privileges the role of the state in organising commemoration, and ignores the agency of individuals in creating sites and rituals, as well as the primary purpose of those sites and rituals, which was to honour and mourn the dead. But the psychological approach is equally flawed. It assumes that there is a shared response to bereavement and a typical or linear process of grieving, in which commemoration assists with the working through of emotion. In emphasising the importance of individual grief, the historians of the psychological school ironically disregard the multitude of responses to war and loss. Furthermore, this approach reasons that, because it originated out of the need to publicly acknowledge loss, the focus of commemoration remained strictly on the mediation of grief. It equates intention with practice. In fact, remembrance was ambiguous enough to accommodate diverse emotions and narratives: of sadness and pain, of course, but also of pride, anger, disillusionment, patriotism, or indifference. It is also important to point out that changing political and economic contexts during the interwar period shaped the tone of commemoration, and a site or ritual initially intended to recognise loss could come to represent something very different if a particular narrative was later imposed on it.

Above all, the two schools of thought create a false dichotomy between politics and mourning. The reality lies in between the two approaches, in that “the politics of war memory and

⁴⁵ Jay Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War Between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 79.

commemoration *always* has to engage with mourning” and “wherever people undertake the tasks of mourning and reparation, a politics is *always* at work”.⁴⁶ A third paradigm can therefore be identified: the ‘popular-memory’ approach, inspired by the theories of the Popular Memory Group, which demonstrate the complex symbiotic relationship between private recollections and public narratives. Using this interpretation, historians argue that the expression of grief and the performance of private forms of remembrance was deeply personal, but remembrance involved acts of social and cultural significance, the acceptance of a particular version of the past, the establishment of social networks, and the collaboration of a range of groups in the public sphere, and was therefore inherently political.⁴⁷ Moreover, these scholars show that grief and politics, and the work of individuals and of the state, were not mutually exclusive.

The literature examined here has shown that war remembrance was—and still is—fluid, complex, and ambiguous, and commemorative sites and rituals could accommodate multiple, contradictory narratives. This point is especially pertinent when looking at commemoration in Wales during the interwar period. In fact, as we will see, Wales provides the perfect real example to substantiate the theories of the popular-memory approach.

*

⁴⁶ Timothy Ashplant, Graham Dawson, and Michael Roper, ‘The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration: Contexts, Structures, and Dynamics’, in Timothy Ashplant, Graham Dawson, and Michael Roper (eds.), *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 3-86 (p. 40).

⁴⁷ Stefan Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory: War, Remembrance, and Medievalism in Britain and Germany, 1914–1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 5-6.

The subject of war memory and commemoration has received a vast amount of scholarly attention in the century since the First World War was fought. Debates continue, and no consensus has been reached—if, indeed, it is possible to reach one. Remembrance was such a personal act, shaped by an individual's politics, class, gender, cultural background, religion, age, marital status, familial attitudes and upbringing, language ability, and their own experience of the war. What has emerged from this literature review is that Wales is almost entirely absent in what is a truly vast body of academic work on war commemoration, or is discussed in a manner that plays down or refuses to engage with any sense of distinctiveness.

It would be wrong to claim that commemoration in Wales was wholly unique, but, as this thesis shows, there were certain variations and specificities which existed alongside the similarities with the rest of the United Kingdom—and it is important to acknowledge and explore these differences, in order to gain a fuller understanding of First World War commemoration, and to treat Wales as a nation deserving of scholarly attention.

PART I

COMMEMORATIVE RITUALS

2 “YR HIRAETH YN AROS”: *IN MEMORIAM* NOTICES

Perhaps the first act of public commemoration a bereaved family could make was the placing of a death notice in a newspaper. These notices served two functions: firstly, to record and publicise the death of a serviceman or woman, and secondly, to communicate that the family of the deceased was now in mourning, signalling to their network of friends, acquaintances, and colleagues that certain conventions—such as the sending of a letter of condolence, or flowers—would need to be followed.

Death notices appeared in newspapers relatively soon after the next-of-kin received official notification of death. The family of Second Lieutenant Nicholas Griffiths, for example, published the news two weeks after he was killed:

GRIFFITHS.—Ar faes y frwydr, yr Ail Lifftenant Nicholas Griffiths, South Wales Borderers, mab Mr. D. Griffiths, Windsor Road, y Barri.

(GRIFFITHS.—On the battlefield, Second Lieutenant Nicholas Griffiths, South Wales Borderers, son of Mr D. Griffiths, Windsor Road, Barry.)⁴⁸

This rather concise text was listed in the Births, Marriages, and Deaths column of the Calvinistic Methodist weekly *Y Goleuad*, alongside other war deaths—most of whom were, like Nicholas, casualties of the Battle of the Somme—but also alongside civilians who had passed away. The phrase ‘faes y frwydr’, describing the nature of his death, and the naming of

⁴⁸ *Y Goleuad*, 28 July 1916, p. 12. Second Lieutenant Nicholas Griffiths, South Wales Borderers. Buried in Bapaume Post Military Cemetery, France.

his rank and regiment differentiate this notice from those submitted for deceased civilians, but the format is otherwise typical.

At other times, the announcement of a death could appear in a ‘war news’ or ‘local news’ column, rather than in the usual list of births, marriages, and deaths. The death of Private Richard John Lewis was first published under the heading “Military News” in the *North Wales Chronicle*:

News has reached his home that Private Richard J. Lewis, elder son of Mr and Mrs Owen Lewis, 91, Cameron-street, Edge-lane, Liverpool, and late of West End, Bangor, has succumbed to his wounds. He was a young man of great promise.⁴⁹

This information was repeated in Welsh in *Y Genedl* eleven days later, along with other news from or relating to Bangor:

MARW O’I GLWYFAU.—Mae’r newydd wedi ei dderbyn fod Pte. Richard J. Lewis, mab hynaf Mr. a Mrs. Owen Lewis, 91, Cameron St., Edge Lane, Lerpwl, a chynt o West End, Bangor, wedi marw o’i glwyfau.

(DIED OF HIS WOUNDS.—News has been received that Private Richard J. Lewis, eldest son of Mr and Mrs Owen Lewis, 91 Cameron Street, Edge Lane, Liverpool, and formerly of West End, Bangor, has died of his wounds.)⁵⁰

The wording of these two notices strongly suggests that the Lewis family were not directly involved in publishing the news, but rather that Richard’s death was part of the usual reportage

⁴⁹ *North Wales Chronicle*, 15 September 1916, p. 8.

⁵⁰ *Y Genedl*, 26 September 1916, p. 7. It is interesting to note that these two reports appeared in the press the month after Richard died, in contrast to the death notice of Nicholas Griffiths, which was published two weeks after he was killed. There is a more than a hint of class hierarchy about this timing: in general, the families of officers were sent telegrams to notify them of the death, while the families of those in the ranks received letters, a slower form of communication.

of the newspapers. This, however, was not abnormal, as the deaths of civilians in peacetime could also be announced through the voice of a detached narrator, as well as through the more personal voice of the bereaved. We can see, then, that—whether through the direct involvement of the family or through normal war reportage—death in war was announced in much the same way as death in peacetime, through the continuation of the tradition of the death notice, and its long-established format.

Death notices were succeeded, in the following years, by *in memoriam* notices. These appeared in newspapers on significant dates throughout the year: the anniversary of the death, the birthday of the deceased, or Armistice Day. Bereaved families were incredibly consistent in the placing of these notices, and most rewrote the text each year, implying that the writing and publishing of an *in memoriam* notice was an important and cathartic annual commemorative ritual.⁵¹ The Lewis family, for example, placed *in memoriam* notices for Richard, and later for his brother Owen, in *Y Brython*, a weekly for the Liverpool Welsh, from 1917 onwards.⁵² Looking at these notices over even just the first three years reveals the consistency of the ritual alongside the individuality of each text:

Er serchog goffadwriaeth am y diweddardd Private Richard John Lewis, R.W.F. a fu farw o'i glwyfau yn Ffrainc, Awst 22, 1916, yn 22 mlwydd oed. Mab hynaf Owen a Margaret Lewis, 91 Cameron Street, Edge Lane. Galerir yn drwm amdano gan ei Dad a'i Fam a'i Frawd a'i Chwaer.

(In loving memory of the late Private Richard John Lewis, RWF, who died of his wounds in France, August 22, 1916, aged 22. Eldest son of Owen and Margaret

⁵¹ Batten, 'Memorial Text Narratives', p. 115.

⁵² Private Richard John Lewis (40066), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Puchevillers British Cemetery, France. Driver Owen Lewis (695741), Royal Field Artillery. Buried in Merville Communal Cemetery Extension, France.

Lewis, 91 Cameron Street, Edge Lane. He is heavily mourned by his Father and Mother and Brother and Sister.)⁵³

Er serchog gôf pen blwydd (Tach. 28, yn 24 mlwydd oed) y Pte. Richard John Lewis, R.W.F., a fu farw o'i glwyfau yn Ffrainc Awst 22, 1916. Mawr yw'r hiraeth amdano gan dad a mam a brawd a chwaer. 90 [sic] Cameron Street, Lerpwl.

Hun bellach, fy machgen, yn y "rhywle pell,"
Ni gawn gwrdd cyn bo hir gyda'r glannau gwell;
Bydd utgorn Tangnefedd yn galw pob gwlad
I undeb a Chariad tragwyddol y Tad!

(In loving memory on the birthday (Nov 28, 24 years old) of Private Richard John Lewis, RWF, who died of his wounds in France, August 22, 1916. He is greatly missed by father and mother and brother and sister. 90 Cameron Street, Liverpool.

Sleep now, my boy, "somewhere far away"
We will meet before long on better shores:
The trumpet of Peace will call all countries
To the union and eternal Love of the Father.)⁵⁴

Er serchog goffadwriaeth am Pte. Richard J. Lewis, R.W.F., fu farw o'i glwyfau yn Ffrainc, Awst 22, 1916. Hefyd, ei annwyl frawd, Dr. Owen Lewis, R.F.A., fu farw o'i glwyfau yn Ffrainc, Gorffennaf 7, 1917. Yr amser yn mynd, ond yr hiraeth yn aros yng nghalon Tad a Mam, Brawd a Chwaer, 91 Cameron Street.

⁵³ *Y Brython*, 23 August 1917, p. 4.

⁵⁴ *Y Brython*, 29 November 1917, p. 7.

Rhywle yn Ffrainc 'hed ein meddwl yn hir,
Mae'n fan cysegredig ein calon yn wir;
Ple bynnag mae'ch beddrod, ein plant, rhoed y Nef
Ei hadn garedig yn llawn trosto ef.

(In loving memory of Private Richard J. Lewis, RWF, who died of his wounds in France, August 22, 1916. Also, his beloved brother, Driver Owen Lewis, RFA, who died of his wounds in France, July 7, 1917. Time passes, but longing remains in the heart of Father and Mother, Brother and Sister, 91 Cameron Street.

Our thoughts linger long on somewhere in France:
It is indeed a hallowed place in our hearts.
Wherever your grave is, our children, may Heaven put
Its kindly wing entirely over it.)⁵⁵

ER SERCHOG goffadwriaeth am ein hannwyl feibion, Private Richard J. Lewis, R.W.F., a fu farw o'i glwyfau yn 22 oed, Awst 22, 1916, ac a gladdwyd yn British Cemetery, Puchevillers, Ffrainc. A hefyd Driver Owen Lewis, R.F.A., a fu farw o'i glwyfau yn 21 oed, Gorffennaf 7, 1917, ac a gladdwyd yn Cemetery Extension Merville. Byth yn angof gan eu Tad a'u Mam, brawd a chwaer, 91 Cameron St., Edge Lane.

Wrth eich cofio fechgyn annwyl,
Mae ein dagrau fel y lli,
Newydd trwm a thrist oedd clywed
Am eich diwedd sydyn chwi:
O! mor chwith yw teimlo'ch colli

⁵⁵ *Y Brython*, 22 August 1918, p. 6.

Heb ddim gobaith [dewch] yn ol;
Nid oed neb ond Duw yn gwybod
Maint ein hiraeth ar eich hôl.

(In loving memory of our beloved sons, Private Richard J. Lewis, RWF, who died of his wounds at the age of 22, August 22, 1916, and was buried in the British Cemetery, Puchevillers, France, and also Driver Owen Lewis, RFA, who died of his wounds at the age of 21, July 7, 1917, and was buried in Merville Cemetery Extension. Never forgotten by their Father and Mother, brother and sister, 91 Cameron Street, Edge Lane.

Remembering you beloved boys
Our tears are like a flood
It was heavy and sad news to hear
About your sudden end.
Oh! How strange it is to feel your loss
Without any hope of you coming back
No one but God knows
How great our longing is for you.)⁵⁶

These notices were placed in the newspaper around the same time each year, marking the anniversaries of their deaths, and contain roughly the same information each time, about both the brothers and the family. The wording of the texts, however, changes from year to year. Note, for example, the inclusion of their places of burial in the 1919 notice, given, perhaps, in the hope that someone visiting the battlefields now that hostilities had ceased would also visit their graves. Furthermore, although the theme of loss and longing is a constant throughout, the

⁵⁶ *Y Brython*, 10 July 1919, p. 6.

commemorative poems included beneath the *in memoriam* text reflect the development of grief: in 1917 the poem strikes a note of hope at the thought of reunion, but in 1919 the poem dwells on the pain of remembering and the ache of their continued absence.

The blend of consistency and impermanence is crucial to the importance of *in memoriam* notices. Placing a notice was an annual ritual for the bereaved, and moreover one that was familiar to them from a civilian or prewar context. At the same time, it allowed for alterations and changes of emphasis—and this, coupled with the lack of restrictions on the length of the notice, meant that there was less pressure to choose the perfect and definitive commemorative text, as there was in the process of selecting a headstone inscription. Above all, *in memoriam* notices allowed the bereaved to present the dead and themselves on their own terms and in their own voice, in contrast to other forms of commemoration which involved mediation or negotiation with others.

Ephemeral these texts may have been, but they were a significant ritual for the bereaved, and should therefore not be overlooked by historians. They reveal the changing, or constant, emotions of bereavement, give an insight into family hierarchies and how these might have been adjusted in the wake of loss, and they demonstrate the strength of both conventional commemorative phrases and wartime inventions. We can also learn a great deal about the religious or political affiliations of a particular family by the newspaper in which the notices were placed. Finally, in a Welsh context, *in memoriam* notices can suggest how a particular family perceived the purposes of the English and Welsh languages. The Lewis family, for example, wrote the notices in Welsh, but submitted an inscription in English for Richard's headstone (and, interestingly, no inscription at all for Owen's headstone). This may indicate a

belief that English was the language of public life and official administration, and Welsh the language of personal life and more intimate interactions.

There are many ways of categorising or studying *in memoriam* notices, but this chapter will consider the texts in terms of their focus: do they foreground the deceased, and thus reflect how the bereaved wanted to depict them, or do they foreground the bereaved, and thus speak to how the bereaved wanted to depict themselves? This chapter therefore builds on the work of Sonia Batten, who identifies three main narratives present in British memorial texts, namely, the ‘wartime narrative’ (in which the dead were commemorated in their military roles and praised for their deeds), the ‘bereavement narrative’ (in which the focus was on the grieving relatives and the loss they had suffered), and a combination of the two (which is concerned with remembrance). As we will see, however, the dead were not always depicted as heroic and dutiful soldiers who sacrificed their lives for the war effort, but could be portrayed instead as people who just happened to die in a war, pointing to the existence of another narrative, one that refused to engage with certain ideas about war and death in war.

2.1 The deceased: identities and narratives

The wartime narrative, Batten writes, “took the deceased as its central focus” and constructed an image using “several key elements”.⁵⁷ Rank and regiment were the first elements, placing the deceased very firmly into a military role and identity. The way in which they had entered military service was another important element, as the families of volunteers as opposed to conscripts could lay claim to a certain prestige or status. Finally, the manner of death often features in memorial texts representative of the wartime narrative, speaking to a hierarchy of

⁵⁷ Batten, ‘Memorial Text Narratives’, p. 162.

death documented by Joanna Bourke in *Dismembering the Male*, in which deaths from disease or accidental deaths were positioned as less heroic than being killed in action.⁵⁸ A sacrificial death was the highest form of bravery and honour.

Batten's wartime narrative is perfectly exemplified in a notice placed in the *Brecon County Times* to the memory of Lieutenant Charles Geoffrey Noel Morris, who was born in Hay-on-Wye, Breconshire, and was killed during the Battle of the Somme in 1916:

IN MEMORY OF Lieutenant Geoffrey N. Morris, Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry,
killed in action, October 7th, 1916.

Two years ago with patriot heart,
Whatever might befall,
He hastened to fulfil his part,
At Duty's call!

To France he went to join the fight,
Not thinking [a]ught of fame,
But eager to uphold the right,
And play the game!

Four weeks in France. Then in the strife,
'Mid storm of shot and shell,
For England's sake he gave his life,
And fighting fell!

Until in that far land of peace,
Where now at rest you dwell,
We meet, when wars on earth shall cease,

⁵⁸ Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain, and the Great War* (London: Reaktion, 1996), pp. 248-249.

Geoffrey, farewell!⁵⁹

Both the main text and the commemorative poem included beneath paint a very definite picture of Geoffrey Morris. His officer rank and regiment are given, and no mention is made of his upbringing or education, implying that his wartime service was the most significant aspect of his life. The first stanza of the poem stresses that he joined up voluntarily in 1914, marking him out as particularly patriotic and dutiful. Describing his death, the main text uses the official and evocative wording “killed in action”, with its connotations of heroism and movement, reinforced by the line in the poem which declares “For England’s sake he gave his life, / And fighting fell!”

The effect is heightened by the somewhat overwrought tone of the poem and its references to other literature. For example, the phrase “play the game” is clearly derived from the 1892 poem *Vitai Lampada* by English poet and novelist Sir Henry Newbolt, which popularised the metaphor of war as sport, the playing field and the battlefield requiring the same virtues.⁶⁰ Furthermore, the line “Mid storm of shot and shell” is most likely inspired by *The Charge of the Light Brigade* by Alfred, Lord Tennyson, a poem which celebrates a suicidal cavalry charge as an act of bravery and sacrifice. The wartime service and death of Geoffrey Morris are coloured, implicitly, by these influences and associations, along the explicit wording and meaning of the actual text.

⁵⁹ *The Brecon County Times*, 23 November 1916, p. 2. Lieutenant Charles Geoffrey Noel Morris, Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry. Commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, France.

⁶⁰ Jonathan Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997), p. 97.

Overall, the text encapsulates the ideal of military masculinity, an association between men and the values of patriotism, strength, heroism, and sacrifice, which developed out of Victorian and Edwardian ideas about manliness meaning industriousness, independence, virility, and steadfastness.⁶¹ As Julie Powell observes, men were “to be soldiers, fulfilling their duty to the nation”.⁶² Geoffrey Morris, the text declares, lived as a soldier, died as a soldier, and should be commemorated as a soldier, despite his military service taking up just two years of his twenty-two years of life.

Other *in memoriam* notices are less vigorous in their allusion to martial masculinity, but nonetheless depict the deceased in their military role, and thus suggest that this was their primary identity. The family of Private D. E. Garfield Watkins of Bridgend, Glamorgan, wrote the following text to mark the first anniversary of his death:

In loving memory of Pte. Garfield Watkins, the dearly-beloved son of Mr. and Mrs.
David Watkins, Vernon Street, Bridgend, who was killed in action June 10th,
1916.—Never forgotten by Dad, Mam, Sisters and Brothers.⁶³

The wording was altered slightly for the second anniversary of his death, but retained the key information:

In loving memory of Pte. D. E. Garfield Watkins, 3 Vernon Street, Bridgend, who
was killed in action in France, June 10th, 1916.—Fondly remembered by Dad, Mam,
Sisters and Brothers.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Julie Powell, *Bodies of Work: The First World War and the Transnational Making of Rehabilitation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), pp. 5-6.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁶³ *Glamorgan Gazette*, 8 June 1917, p. 3. Private D. E. G. Watkins (22446), Gloucestershire Regiment. Buried in Bethune Town Cemetery, France.

⁶⁴ *Glamorgan Gazette*, 14 June 1918, p. 3.

Both notices position him within a family framework, telling us that he was a beloved son and brother, but still choose to describe him as Private Watkins. Furthermore, both notices stress that he was “killed in action”, tapping into the implication of heroism and sacrifice, despite the fact that he was first reported as having died from wounds received in action.⁶⁵ He is therefore depicted as a soldier, and one who died a soldier’s death.

A similar formula was used by the family of Private Ernest Wise, from Llanelli in Carmarthenshire:

Sacred to the memory of Pte. Ernest Wise, dearly beloved elder son of Mr. and Mrs.
Wise, Robinson street, Llanelly, who fell in action in France, April 18th, 1918, only
19 years of age.

One year has passed our hearts still sore,
As time rolls on we miss him more.
Somewhere in France among the brave
Lies our dear boy in a hero’s grave.
A loving son, a brother kind,
A beautiful memory left behind.

Sadly missed by his sorrowing Father, Mother, Sisters and Brother.⁶⁶

The notice seems to blend grief and pride: emphasis is placed on his youth, and both the main text and the poem stress that the Wise family were still mourning his death, but Ernest is nonetheless portrayed as a soldier and a hero. Like Private Watkins, he is named with his

⁶⁵ See *Glamorgan Gazette*, 30 June 1916, p. 8.

⁶⁶ *Llanelly Star*, 19 April 1919, p. 1. Private Ernest Wise (65279), Welsh Regiment. Commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium.

military rank, and he is described as having fallen in action, a choice that foregrounds his status as a soldier on active service.

Other families likewise used military rank and regiment, but chose to focus on the meaning of death, rather than the manner of death. The siblings of Private Philip Williams from Cwmbach, Glamorgan, wrote the following *in memoriam* notice a year after his death:

Er cof anwyl am Pte. Philip Williams, R.A.M.C., Tirfounder Road, Cwmbach, yr
hwn a rhoddodd ei fywyd i lawr dros ei wlad yn Ffrainc Tachwedd 5ed, 1916.

Er gorwedd wyt, ein hanwyl frawd,
Ymhell mewn estron wlad,
Mae d'enaïd fry, hyderwn ni,
Yn ddiogel gyda'th Dad.

Oddiwrth ei anwyl Frodyr a Chwiorydd.

(In loving memory of Private Philip Williams, Royal Army Medical Corps,
Tirfounder Road, Cwmbach, who gave his life in sacrifice for his country in France,
November 5 1916.

Although you lie, our dear brother,
Far away in a foreign land,
Your soul is on high, we hope,
Safe with your Father.

From his loving brothers and sisters.)⁶⁷

⁶⁷ *The Aberdare Leader*, 10 November 1917, p. 4. Private Philip Williams (66438), Royal Army Medical Corps. Buried in Grove Town Cemetery, France.

The exact nature of his death is not described in the text, but it is framed as a willing sacrifice for his country, highlighting his patriotism, sense of duty, and selflessness, values that held enormous weight during the war and into the interwar period. Indeed, it was, Sonia Batten says, “important to the bereaved that their sons had died for an ideal or a purpose”, an observation reinforced by Jay Winter, who argues that traditional ideas, languages, and images contributed to the process of healing.⁶⁸ The idea that Philip Williams had died for a purpose seems, then, to have been a consolation for his brothers and sisters.

These notices are representative of a particular interpretation of the war, those who fought it, and death in war. It was an interpretation shaped by the popular and dominant rhetoric of the war years, but one that also drew upon conventional ideas about masculinity, patriotism, and duty which had previously been used to commemorate death in a nineteenth- and early twentieth-century imperial context. David Monger, writing about the concept of patriotism in wartime propaganda, points out that “sacrificial rhetoric” was common to Britain, having been used to ascribe meaning to the deaths of British imperial heroes such as Horatio Nelson and Robert Falcon Scott.⁶⁹ Similarly, Batten recognises the importance of (male) sacrifice, heroism, duty, and patriotism in the memorial texts written to commemorate the dead of imperial wars, British polar exploration, and tragedies such as the sinking of the RMS *Titanic*.⁷⁰ These values, and the significance attached to them, could very easily be reshaped and reused for the context of the First World War. The ‘wartime narrative’ identified by Batten is, then, a much older narrative, which retained its power and relevance during and after the war.

⁶⁸ Batten, ‘Memorial Text Narratives’, p. 163; Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, p. 227.

⁶⁹ David Monger, *Patriotism and Propaganda in First World War Britain: The National War Aims Committee and Civilian Morale* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012), p. 106.

⁷⁰ Batten, ‘Memorial Text Narratives’, pp. 21-59.

Despite its longevity and strength, however, it was not something universally believed in. Other *in memoriam* notices do not engage with the ideals of martial masculinity, heroism, and sacrifice, but instead describe the deceased as they would a civilian in peacetime. The focus remains on the deceased, but in terms of tone and content these texts are the opposite of the wartime narrative. Here is a narrative therefore not identified by Batten.

Take, for example, the *in memoriam* notice written by David Jones to commemorate the death of his son, Private John Goronwy Jones:

ER SERCHOG GOFFADWRIAETH

Am John Goronwy, anwyl fab David Jones, Fronlwyd, Glyndyfrdwy. Ganwyd
Mawrth 12fed. 1894; bu farw Tachwedd 6ed, 1918, yn Ffraingc.

‘Llais un gorthrymydd byth ni ddaw
I’w deffro i wylo mwy,
Na phrofedigaeth lem, na chroes—
Un loes ni theimlant hwy.’

(In loving memory of John Goronwy, beloved son of David Jones, Fronlwyd,
Glyndyfrdwy. Born March 12, 1894; died November 6, 1918, in France.

‘Never more will the voice of an oppressor come
To provoke them to tears,
Nor severe affliction, nor suffering—
They will feel no more anguish.’)⁷¹

⁷¹ *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, 8 November 1919, p. 4. Private John Goronwy Jones (4068), Welsh Guards. Buried in Villers-Pol Communal Cemetery Extension, France.

This wording, including the phrases ‘er serchog goffadwriaeth’ (‘in loving memory’), ‘anwyl fab’ (‘beloved son’), and ‘bu farw’ (‘died’), is typical of peacetime *in memoriam* notices and monumental inscriptions. Furthermore, the lines beneath the main text are taken from the nineteenth-century hymn *Gorffwys yn y Bedd* (Resting in the Grave) by Ieuan Glan Geirionydd (Evan Evans): the image of rest after labour or suffering does fit the war context, but the hymn was often engraved on civilian gravestones as well. It is only the words ‘yn Ffrainge’ (‘in France’) that hint that this was a war death.

The war is similarly absent from the *in memoriam* notice written by the siblings of Private Trevor John:

Er cof am Trevor, ein anwyl frawd, yr hwn a fu farw yn Ffrainc, Hydref 21, 1918.—

Oddiwrth Jane a Willie, Morris-street, Treforis.

(In memory of Trevor, our beloved brother, who died in France, October 21, 1918.

From Jane and Willie, Morris Street, Morriston.)⁷²

Again, apart from the words ‘yn Ffrainc’, there is nothing about this text that makes it clear that Trevor was a serviceman and that he was killed during the war. He is named without his rank and regiment, depicted instead as a beloved brother. His death is described in straightforward and muted tones, a contrast to the more emphatic language of the notices explored above.

⁷² *The Cambria Daily Leader*, 22 October 1919, p. 5. Private Trevor John (162165), Machine Gun Corps. Buried in Mont Huon Military Cemetery, France.

Some families made clearer reference to the circumstances in which their loved ones died, but stopped short of portraying them in their military roles. The parents of Private Thomas Glyn Gough Williams of Birkenhead, England, wrote the following text to mark the first anniversary of his death:

ER COF CU

Am ein hannwyl fab, T. Glyn Gough Williams, a gwmpodd ar faes y gad yn Ffrainc flwyddyn i heddyw (Awst 19, 1916), gan adael craith annileadwy yng nghalon ei dad a'i fam.—Preswylfa, Laird Street, Birkenhead.

(In dear memory of our beloved son, T. Glyn Gough Williams, who fell on the battlefield in France one year ago to the day (August 19, 1916), leaving an indelible scar on the hearts of his father and mother.—Preswylfa, Laird Street, Birkenhead.)⁷³

The wording was pared down for the second anniversary of his death, but the tone of the text was similar:

ER COF [...]

WILLIAMS.—Glyn Gough, annwyl fab Mr. a Mrs. Williams, Preswylfa, Laird St, Birkenhead, syrthiodd yn Ffrainc, Awst 19, 1916. Yr amser yn mynd, ond yr hiraeth yn aros.

(In memory of Glyn Gough Williams, beloved son of Mr. and Mrs. Williams, Preswylfa, Laird Street, Birkenhead, who fell in France, August 19, 1916. Time has passed, but the longing remains.)⁷⁴

⁷³ *Y Brython*, 23 August 1917, p. 4. Private Thomas Glyn Gough Williams (40044), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Serre Road Cemetery No. 2, France.

⁷⁴ *Y Brython*, 22 August 1918, p. 6.

The same distinction is made in the notice commemorating the death of Private Lewis James of Cwmbach, Glamorgan:

Er cof am Lewis, anwyl fab James a Mary Ann James, 15 Aberdare Road, Cwmbach, yr hwn a gwympodd yn y rhyfel yn Ffrainc, Hyd. 8, 1918. “Hir fydd cwyn ar fedd cynar.”

(In memory of Lewis, beloved son of James and Mary Ann James, 15 Aberdare Road, Cwmbach, who fell in the war in France, October 8, 1918. “Long is the lament over an early grave.”)⁷⁵

Both men are remembered with their given names, not their rank, and are positioned within a loving family, not their regiment. While both texts make it clear that these men died on the battlefield, they are not imagined as heroic warriors who gave their lives in sacrifice, indicating a limited acknowledgement of the conflict and their military service.

Other families struck a different note altogether. The relatives of Private John Thomas Humphreys from Rhostryfan, Caernarfonshire, *did* call attention to the war, but subverted the narrative of glory, heroism, and willing sacrifice:

ER COF SERCHOG

Am y diweddar John Thomas Humphreys, Tan y Ffordd, Rhostryfan, a fu farw ar faes y gwaed ym Mhalestina, yn 31 mlwydd oed.

⁷⁵ *The Aberdare Leader*, 11 October 1919, p. 4. Private Lewis James (93863), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Commemorated on the Vis-en-Artois Memorial, France.

(In loving memory of the late John Thomas Humphreys, Tan y Ffordd, Rhostryfan,
who died on the field of blood in Palestine, aged 31 years.)⁷⁶

Here, the writer of the text replaces the phrase ‘maes y gad’ (‘field of battle’) with ‘maes y gwaed’ (‘field of blood’), a chilling play on words that leaves no doubt as to what they thought of the conflict. It is an extreme example, but not unusual: in fact, several other commentators used the same or similar formulations to describe the battlefield or the war as a whole. For example, reporting on the memorial service held for Private Rowland Hughes, a young man from Tregarth, Caernarfonshire, killed on 16 August 1916, the Wesleyan weekly *Gwyliedydd Newydd* described the battlefield as “faes y gyflafan ofnadwy” (‘the field of terrible massacre’).⁷⁷ By the time Private David Richard Jones, from Bangor in Caernarfonshire, was killed on 2 July 1918, the newspaper was referring to the entire war as “gyflafan erchyll yma” (‘this dreadful massacre’).⁷⁸ By calling the battlefield a field of blood, and the war a dreadful massacre, these texts imply that the men were slaughtered, constituting a completely different vision of warfare and death in war.

The *in memoriam* notices discussed above do not represent the men they commemorate as heroic warriors, nor even as citizen soldiers. Instead, they depict them as people who just happened to die in war. This effect is achieved through the deliberate use of first names, the choice of more muted phrases to describe the manner of their death, and even outright horror at the circumstances in which they died. There are connections to be made with many of the headstone inscriptions and war memorial inscriptions written in the Welsh language, explored

⁷⁶ *Y Dinesydd Cymreig*, 14 August 1918, p. 3. Private John Thomas Humphreys (266486), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Beersheba War Cemetery, Israel & Palestine.

⁷⁷ *Gwyliedydd Newydd*, 12 September 1916, p. 6. Private Rowland Hughes (33348), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in AIF Burial Ground, France.

⁷⁸ *Gwyliedydd Newydd*, 24 July 1918, p. 8. Private David Richard Jones (36297), East Surrey Regiment. Buried in Aire Communal Cemetery, France.

in Chapters 5 and 6, which also portray the war dead in these terms. It seems that amongst some Welsh speakers there was a reluctance to imagine the dead in their military role, and a refusal to engage with the rhetoric of sacrifice. A sense of reclamation is present in these *in memoriam* notices, and in the inscriptions studied elsewhere in this thesis.

*

The *in memoriam* notices above are all focused primarily on the deceased, but the deceased are not depicted in the same ways. In fact, two very different ways of imagining the dead emerge from the information given in the texts. The notices explored at the beginning of the section envision the dead in their military roles, and as part of their military units, whereas the notices discussed towards the end of the section portray the dead as civilians, members of a family or a community. Alongside these two identities are two corresponding narratives about death in war. The dead who are described in their military roles are associated with masculinity, heroism, and sacrifice: death is seen as an act of service to the nation. In contrast, the war dead who are depicted in the same way as the civilian dead are said to have simply *died*: death is unadorned by idealism or meaning, or is occasionally something terrible, a massacre. We can see, then, that amongst Welsh people there were diverse views about the war, those who served in it, and death in war, and that these could be expressed through the personal and unrestricted *in memoriam* format.

2.2 The bereaved: voices and hierarchies

The bereavement narrative, Batten argues, was structured in a different way to the wartime narrative.⁷⁹ Within texts that are representative of the wartime narrative, the deceased are the primary subject, but in texts that typify the bereavement narrative, the emphasis is shifted, and the bereaved become the main focus instead. Where the wartime narrative centres on certain ideas about war and death in war, the bereavement narrative is largely concerned with the experience of loss. This involved feelings of sorrow, pride, and emptiness, naturally, but also complex family dynamics and hierarchies of bereavement, the focus of this section.

Some *in memoriam* notices are very straightforward and refer to a single relationship, such as the relationship between parents and child. William and Caroline Jones, the parents of Private Edward Jones, wrote the following text to mark the first anniversary of his death:

ER COF—

Am ein hannwyl fab, Tedi, yr hwn a syrthiodd yn Ffrainc Awst 31ain, 1918. [...]

Ei Rieni.

Arran Road,

Dolgellau.

(In memory of our beloved son, Tedi, who fell in France August 31st, 1918. [...])

His parents. Arran Road, Dolgellau.)⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Batten, 'Memorial Text Narratives', p. 180.

⁸⁰ *Y Dydd*, 5 September 1919, p. 5. Private Edward Jones (42533), Suffolk Regiment. Buried in Écoust-Saint-Mein British Cemetery, France.

This text was written by two parents—note that they are presented as a joint entity, not split into mother and father, or father and mother (the distinction is important, as we will see below)—to commemorate their son. Family roles are clearly defined here.

In contrast, other notices reveal more intricate family dynamics. These texts are suggestive of efforts to present certain family members as the primary mourners. Take, for example, the *in memoriam* notice written by the Morgan family to commemorate the death of Corporal Evan Lewis Morgan and Private Cyrus Morgan:

In Loving Memory of Evan Lewis, Welch Regiment (Cardiff Pals), killed 18th September, 1918; also Cyrus, R.W.F., killed October 29th, 1918, the beloved sons of J. and L. Morgan, Colluma-road [sic], Tonyrefail.—Ever remembered by Mam, Dad, Sisters, and Brothers.⁸¹

Jane Morgan is twice listed ahead of her husband Lewis and the rest of the family, perhaps reflecting the belief that, in bereavement, mothers took precedence over all other relations and friends, as scholars such as Susan Grayzel and Suzanne Evans have discussed.⁸² But this was not a rule, as the following text demonstrates:

In Loving Memory of our dear and only son, Thomas Layton Prichard, Glamorgan Yeomanry, killed in France September 18th, 1918.—Father, Mother, Sister.⁸³

Here, William Prichard is listed before the rest of the family, illustrating his role as head of the family and perhaps the fact that he was responsible for writing, submitting, and paying for the

⁸¹ *Western Mail*, 10 November 1928, p. 1. Corporal Evan Lewis Morgan (19341), Welsh Regiment. Buried in Doiran Military Cemetery, Greece. Private Cyrus Morgan (94151), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Englefontaine British Cemetery, France.

⁸² Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War*; Evans, *Mothers of Heroes, Mothers of Martyrs*.

⁸³ *Western Mail*, 10 November 1928, p. 1. Corporal Thomas Layton Prichard (320717), Welsh Regiment. Commemorated on the Vis-en-Artois Memorial.

text. Gender roles could influence the wording and structure of a text both ways: the privileging of female over male grief leading to a mother being listed first, or the perception that men were the head of the family resulting in a father taking primary position.

Relationships and dynamics in a biological family were complex enough, but the hierarchies of bereavement when a soldier was married were further complicated. Wives were officially recognised as next-of-kin, but parents, obviously, were invested in the commemoration of their son as well. At times, it is clear that an *in memoriam* notice was composed following discussion with all family members, where it names wife, possibly children, parents, and siblings together—though the ordering of this naming does still indicate whether the deceased was being remembered primarily as a husband or son. At other times, as Batten writes, the issue was sidestepped with an inclusive phrase such as REMEMBERED BY ALL AT HOME.⁸⁴ But there are also texts which suggest that, rather than a mutual negotiation, commemoration involved a jostling for superiority.

The death of Second Lieutenant John Edwyn Hughes was reported in *Y Dinesydd Cymreig* in August 1916. It was said:

Gedy weddw ieuanc, a thad a mam, a chwiorydd i alaru ar ei ol [...].

(There is a young widow, and father and mother, and sisters to mourn him.)⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Batten, 'Memorial Text Narratives', p. 122.

⁸⁵ *Y Dinesydd Cymreig*, 30 August 1916, p. 5. Second Lieutenant John Edwyn Hughes, Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Dive Copse British Cemetery, France.

Here his wife is given precedence over his parents and siblings. A different impression, however, appears in the *in memoriam* notices that were published in the newspaper on the anniversaries of his death:

ER COF

Am ein hunig fab John Edwyn, gwmpodd ar y Somme, Ffrainc, Awst 20, 1916.

(In memory of our only son John Edwyn, who fell on the Somme, France, August 20, 1916.)⁸⁶

ER COF

Am ein hannwyl fab, John Edwyn Hughes, B.A., Augusta Place, Port Dinorwic, gwmpodd ar y Somme, yn Ffrainc, Awst 19eg, 1916.

(In memory of our beloved son, John Edwyn Hughes, BA, Augusta Place, Port Dinorwic, who fell on the Somme, in France, August 19th, 1916.)⁸⁷

In these texts, John is remembered solely as a son, and his status as a husband is absent.

The records of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission show that his widow, Sydney, had remarried sometime between 1916 and the early 1920s, becoming Sydney Ellen Williams. Did she voluntarily surrender her position as primary mourner to her in-laws? Or did the Hugheses consider her remarriage as a termination of commemorative responsibility, and therefore exclude her from the *in memoriam* notices they composed? It is difficult to

⁸⁶ *Y Dinesydd Cymreig*, 21 August 1918, p. 8.

⁸⁷ *Y Dinesydd Cymreig*, 20 August 1919, p. 8.

reconstruct exactly what happened between Edward and Mary Hughes and Sydney Williams, but the wording of these notices speaks to the fractious relationships between family members, and the competing claims of ownership over the dead, that influenced commemoration.

*

The *in memoriam* notices explored in this section are shaped by the loss of a loved one, but are focused primarily on the bereaved. Parents, siblings, and wives are presented in a number of different ways, reflecting the dynamics specific to that family, the hierarchies of bereavement shaped by popular discourse and imagery, and the practicalities of mourning conventions. The texts highlight the tensions and difficulties involved in describing the dead, and the family, friends, and acquaintances they left behind, a theme that returns in the final two chapters of this thesis.

2.3 Reflections on *in memoriam* notices

In memoriam notices are a fascinating, yet underexplored, form of commemoration. Bereaved relatives utilised the tradition to mark the deaths of their loved ones in their own words and with very few restrictions or negotiations with official bodies involved. We have seen that a number of narratives emerge from these texts. The deceased could be remembered as soldiers who died heroic deaths for their country, or as people who just happened to die in war, mirroring trends present in inscriptions on war graves and on war memorials. The bereaved, meanwhile, could depict themselves in various ways, thus representative of the hierarchies of bereavement and the ways in which mourning was gendered during and after the First World War. It is therefore important not to ignore *in memoriam* notices, but rather to explore their wording and meaning, alone or alongside other memorial texts.

3 “PILGRIM THROUGH THIS BARREN LAND”: BATTLEFIELD VISITS

Private Carl Lloyd of Colwyn Bay, in the historic county of Denbighshire, was killed in action on 17 June 1915. In his last letter home, written four days before his death, he told his parents:

This morning I have visited some graves of the fallen. A little wooden cross at the head of the grave identifies them. When peace is restored, where possible, I think relatives should visit these spots. To them it would be a holy pilgrimage. It would be a very sad pilgrimage, but, to some extent, a satisfactory one... They would discover the reality of war, and what war means.⁸⁸

The phenomenon of battlefield visiting is one of the most interesting aspects of the commemorative activity of the interwar period. It was anticipated during the war, as the letter above shows, and indeed began during the war, but thrived in the aftermath of the conflict. Many thousands of people from all over the world travelled to the major theatres of war, some having made their own arrangements, others relying on the assistance of various benevolent associations, and others again utilising the services of commercial travel agents.

Whether a person travelled as a pilgrim or a tourist—the designation mattered, even though the lines between them were blurred, as we will see—battlefield visiting reflects their deep fascination with the war. The British people were far from disinterested, as popular memory would have it. Visitors to the battlefields wanted to see the reality of war, as Carl Lloyd wrote,

⁸⁸ *North Wales Weekly News*, 8 July 1915, p. 7. Private Carl Heeps Lloyd (63561), Canadian Infantry. Commemorated on the Vimy Memorial.

while those at home eagerly received their letters and postcards, read newspaper articles, and attended lantern slide lectures and looked at photographs, sharing the experience vicariously.

An individual experience of the battlefield was highly personal, and generalisations cannot be made about the behaviour, thoughts, and emotions of visitors. That being said, this chapter does show that the journeys of Welsh people were shaped by their Welsh identity, adding a new perspective to our understanding of battlefield visiting.

3.1 Early battlefield visiting

Visiting the battlefields was by no means an activity limited to the relative safety and freedoms of peacetime. Mark Connelly notes that people came and went throughout the conflict for a variety of reasons: some were relatives, visiting the wounded or seriously ill in hospital, some were politicians, correspondents, war artists, or other officials, on publicity and propaganda tours, and some were simply curious, wanting to see for themselves what the war was like—though these sightseeing visits were certainly the preserve of the wealthy and influential, and were concentrated in the first half of the conflict before the military authorities regulated civilian travel to the theatres of war.⁸⁹

Soldiers, too, could be tourists. War service took countless men and women overseas for the first time in their lives, and the different peoples, climates, cultures, and sights they encountered were a source of wonder, entertainment, and, at times, confusion. Occasionally, their sightseeing trips only served to remind them that they were far from home, prompting feelings

⁸⁹ Connelly, *Postcards from the Western Front*, pp. 18-19.

of loneliness and homesickness. British troops were also observers of their more immediate surroundings: the battlefields, the ruined towns and countryside through which they passed, and war graves on or behind the front lines. Many men and women used their rest hours or periods of leave to visit military cemeteries and the graves of friends or relatives, and conveying to those at home the details of their visit and assurances that the grave was in good condition was considered of great importance.

The sightseeing activities and pilgrimages of civilians and service personnel during the conflict reflect a great interest in the war, foreshadowing the emergence of the major travel industry of the interwar period. While the journeys made during the war cannot compare to the number and scale of those undertaken after the war was over, the accounts written by these early visitors provide details about the arrangements made by the British government and military authorities, and give us an insight into how people observed and experienced the battlefields in combat conditions, and what lessons they drew from their visit when Allied victory was still not certain.

*

Travel to and across the battlefields during wartime was extremely difficult. Even for those on official visits, who had the luxury of leaving their own travel arrangements and itinerary to others, the entire process—gaining documentation, travelling overseas, and traversing the battlefields, to say nothing of more harrowing experiences such as enduring air-raids or shelling—was an arduous one.

The first hurdle that visitors to the front had to navigate was passing background checks and acquiring passports and official travel documentation. Thomas Richards, Member of Parliament for West Monmouthshire and Secretary of the South Wales Miners' Federation, travelled to the Western Front with other miners' representatives in late 1915. In an article in the *Western Mail*, he commented on the "strict and intelligent investigation to which intending voyagers were subjected before they were provided with passports".⁹⁰ Filling in the details on his papers gave him some amusement, and he described the process with wry humour:

It was an entirely new experience, I believe, to most of us to fill in a description of ourselves upon our passports. We have been portrayed in characters and hues as varied as those of the rainbow during our long connection with the Welsh miners' organisation, and perhaps we were fortunate that the particulars asked for upon our passports had relation to our physical peculiarities rather than to our political or mental aberrations [...]. I can almost hear some people ask, "What of their cheek?" and hasten to satisfy them by stating that that was taken as read in every individual case.⁹¹

Administrative demands for overseas travel during wartime were also something of a novelty for Alderman David Davies, the editor of the *South Wales Daily Post*, who went out to France for three weeks in July 1915. When back in Swansea, he delivered a series of lectures, which began with a description of "the conditions under which an ordinary British subject was able to cross over to France during a state of war", with his passports, "signed and countersigned many times", used as a prop to illustrate his remarks.⁹²

⁹⁰ *Western Mail*, 25 November 1915, p. 4.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *South Wales Weekly Post*, 9 October 1915, p. 3.

Once visitors were furnished with the appropriate documents and their travel instructions, the journey to the battlefields began. John Hughes, a member of the Caernarfon branch of the Dock, Wharf, Riverside, and General Workers' Union, was part of a delegation who visited the Western Front for a week in March 1918. A remarkably detailed account of his visit was published in four parts in *Y Dinesydd Cymreig*, the Welsh-language weekly for the Labour Party in north Wales. The first instalment deals entirely with his outward journey, and serves as an important reminder that to visit France, Welsh people first had to visit England:

It took me eight hours to reach Euston. Here I am alone in the world's greatest city, London. [...] Everything seems to go for all they are worth. How was I to find Shaftesbury Hotel in such a place as this. Here was a policeman, and he told me the way the best he could. I was to take the underground train. So I got a ticket, and into a cage I went. This took me down beneath the ground somewhere, and to my astonishment this place seems to be as busy as the surface. Trains were going like lightning. When I got out of the train I had to follow the crowd. I had to go up some stairs. I had only to stand on these stairs than they took me to the top. By this time I was starting to see stars. When out of the station I had to cross the street. But how could I cross, I wondered when motors and other various things were going and coming like lightning every minute. Here I saw a gap, and across I went. Oh, how proud I was. I had crossed the busy street of London. After inquiring a hundred times where Shaftesbury Hotel was, I found the place at last.⁹³

Tired, overwhelmed, and wishing he was back in Wales, John Hughes met the other delegates and asked if there were any other Welshmen amongst them, but to his disappointment there were none. The next morning, the group were woken early and travelled by train to Dover, prompting more observations on the different landscape of south-east England.

⁹³ *Y Dinesydd Cymreig*, 1 May 1918, p. 2.

However strange England was, though, it was nothing compared to the military hustle and bustle of the Channel ports of Dover, Calais, and Boulogne, or the total and apocalyptic devastation of the battlefields beyond. At Dover, John Hughes was captivated by the sight of aeroplanes flying overhead, the “various types of battleships” in dock, and “hundreds of soldiers marching for the boat to go over to France”.⁹⁴ Thomas Richards and his fellow miners’ leaders were similarly struck by the number of ships patrolling the Channel: the presence of a “string of apparently lifeless dogs of war, grim and terrible in their silence” made the crossing strikingly different from those they had made in peacetime, and dominated their conversation “to the exclusion of everything else”.⁹⁵ Admittedly, Richards had an ulterior motive for emphasising the vigilance of the Royal Navy, as his visit to the front came not long after Welsh miners went on strike in an attempt to secure an increase in wages, during which appeals made to the miners frequently focused on the impact on the Navy if the supply of coal was disturbed. His account highlights the propaganda value of battlefield visits.

Across the water, the descent into a different world continued. The scale of military activity was immediately noticeable to wartime visitors, and their proximity to the fighting was obvious. Thomas Richards wrote that, as soon as his group landed, “there could be no mistake about our being nearer the scene of the terrible conflict of nations, with all its horrors and devastations”.⁹⁶ His group observed hundreds of mud-covered, battered, and worn-out ambulances, their “stained and rent interiors” speaking of unimaginable “agonies”, and seeming to protest against “man’s inhumanity to man”.⁹⁷ In addition to sobering sights like these ambulances, the immensity of the military infrastructure and the vast number and variety

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ *Western Mail*, 25 November 1915, p. 4.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

of military personnel made a lasting impression. The presence of women, working as nurses or belonging to one of the women's auxiliary services, was frequently commented on. John Hughes and the other union delegates were welcomed to their camp by women of the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps, and he was full of praise for them and the "grand work" they were doing:

Their lives are in as much a danger every day as the Tommies who braves [sic] the foe, and yet you can hear them singing gaily as they toil. Their camp is kept spotlessly clean, and no doubt their presence have [sic] helped many a Tommy in their hard and trying task.⁹⁸

An account by 'D. T. D.', contributed to *The Rhondda Leader* after a visit to France in January 1918, also mentioned the role of women. His group were taken to a "huge laundry" supplying the needs of hospitals, staffed by thousands of women and "so successful" that they concluded "our country has not fully appreciated the service that women can do".⁹⁹ 'D. T. D.' urged young women to come forward for war work, again demonstrating the propagandist nature of these organised visits.

The sight of troops and labourers from across the world was also remarked on. 'D. T. D.' and his group met Māori and white New Zealand soldiers returning from the trenches, who were "really fine specimens of manhood in excellent condition" and "of exceptionally fine disposition and intelligence".¹⁰⁰ John Hughes observed Chinese labourers at work in the camp workshops, but, in language typical of the period, was less than complimentary, saying that

⁹⁸ *Y Dinesydd Cymreig*, 8 May 1918, p. 6.

⁹⁹ *The Rhondda Leader*, 23 February 1918, p. 4.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

they were good workers and very strong, but “mischievous and sly” and “more like animals than men”.¹⁰¹

Visitors were then prepared by their chaperones for travelling to the battlefields. For Edwin Evans, the Milford Haven delegate for the National Amalgamated Labourers’ Union, who visited France in March 1918, this involved “a number of physical exercises [led] by a drill sergeant in order to fit them for the arduous week before them”.¹⁰² Each man was supplied with a helmet, gas-bag, and mackintosh.¹⁰³ John Hughes went out the week after Evans, and was clearly on a similar programme:

After tea we were ordered out and to line up; a steel helmet and a gas bag was handed to every one of us, a sergeant instructing us how to put the gas bag on our faces, illustrating the effects of the gas and its danger. We were marched to a room filled with gas; we had these masks on our faces, yet, directly we got in our eyes began to water, and we were all compelled to leave the room. Information was given us that we had to carry these articles of war for the rest of our journey. I can honestly say that I don’t want another gas attack after this experimental dose.¹⁰⁴

Gas-mask drill was, of course, a sensible measure, and impressed upon the union delegates just how risky front-line service was, but, reading between the lines, it also seems likely that the military personnel in charge of these visiting parties wanted to give their guests a taste of excitement and danger.

¹⁰¹ *Y Dinesydd Cymreig*, 8 May 1918, p. 6.

¹⁰² *The Haverfordwest and Milford Haven Telegraph*, 15 May 1918, p. 3.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ *Y Dinesydd Cymreig*, 8 May 1918, p. 6.

Official visitors were given a chaperone and the trips were carefully organised, incorporating sites or areas that were a mile or two behind the front lines and not under any immediate threat. Despite this, visitors frequently found themselves under shellfire and enduring air-raids, and, whilst tramping over the old battlefields, they were faced with barbed wire, collapsed trenches, unexploded ordnance, the ruins of villages and towns, and the sight of bones or body parts.

Wherever a visitor was taken, their chief and lasting impression was of the scale, intensity, and destructive nature of the conflict. In a lecture delivered at the Swansea Public Library in October 1915, Alderman David Davies spoke of the change that had come over the continent. Paris, the city of light, had been transformed into “a city of sorrow and gloom”, while France as a whole was “a country sad but heroic to the last degree”.¹⁰⁵ For the trade unionists visiting the Western Front three years later, the change was more than merely atmospheric. ‘D. T. D.’ and his group were taken to an unnamed town, where the place was “in ruins” and the ground was “disgorged by shells, without a vestige of growth, shrub nor tree”.¹⁰⁶ Desecrated nature caught the imagination, Connelly notes, and the alien landscape created by shattered, skeletal trees and churned-up mud features in the accounts of nearly every battlefield visitor.¹⁰⁷ John Hughes similarly described the wreckage of houses and roads and the sight of shelled trees, but also took time to note the presence of skylarks, “singing for all they were worth as if all were at peace”.¹⁰⁸ The persistence of nature was also a common observation amongst battlefield visitors, a contrast and an incongruity, and, later, a promise that flora and fauna would conceal and even reverse the manmade devastation.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ *South Wales Weekly Post*, 9 October 1915, p. 3.

¹⁰⁶ *The Rhondda Leader*, 23 February 1918, p. 4.

¹⁰⁷ Connelly, *Postcards from the Western Front*, pp. 26-27; 110; 135-138.

¹⁰⁸ *Y Dinesydd Cymreig*, 15 May 1918, p. 7.

¹⁰⁹ Connelly, *Postcards from the Western Front*, pp. 127-129.

Ruined towns and villages were striking enough, but it was the former battlefields that provoked the most intense emotions. Shock, awe, disbelief, wonder, pride, and sadness—and usually a mixture of some or all of these—shape the accounts of wartime visitors. Touring the Somme battlefields, which he described as “one vast cemetery”, Edwin Evans felt sadness at the “immense cost of human life”, but also pride that “the doers of these deathless deeds were fellow countrymen of our own”.¹¹⁰ In contrast, John Hughes was greatly disturbed by his experience at Vimy Ridge. Walking past old trenches and dug-outs, he saw several graves, including one, marked by a cross, which held the bodies of two Canadian soldiers whose names were not known. “The words ‘two unknown’ are still ringing in my ears”, he wrote.¹¹¹ Hughes and some of his party then went looking for souvenirs but, before he got very far, he saw “the ribs of a man, and further on a hand, a foot, and so on”.¹¹² On seeing these remains, he asked himself, “Does God rule in France?” and answered, “I doubt it”.¹¹³

As well as visiting military camps, workshops, and hospitals, and travelling across the old battlefields and recently captured towns, military chaperones ensured their Welsh guests saw sites of local importance or met with Welsh soldiers. Thomas Richards, along with Alfred Onions, the Treasurer of the South Wales Miners’ Federation (SWMF), spent time with the 6th (Glamorgan) Battalion, Welsh Regiment, in the trenches, and the 3rd Battalion, Monmouthshire Regiment, at their billets.¹¹⁴ While they were with the Monmouthshires, they paid tribute to Second Lieutenant Wilfred Onions, the son of Alfred Onions, who had been killed in April 1915.¹¹⁵ An official visit to France at the beginning of 1916 also afforded Charles

¹¹⁰ *The Haverfordwest and Milford Haven Telegraph*, 15 May 1918, p. 3.

¹¹¹ *Y Dinesydd Cymreig*, 15 May 1918, p. 7.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Western Mail*, 25 November 1915, p. 4.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

Butt Stanton, miners' agent and Member of Parliament for Merthyr Tydfil (following the death of Keir Hardie in 1915), an opportunity to reunite with one of his own sons, Second Lieutenant Frank Stanton.¹¹⁶ James Winstone visited France in the early summer of 1917 in his role as acting president of the SWMF, travelling with other Labour leaders on the invitation of the British government.¹¹⁷ There was no personal element to his visit, but, a Monmouthshire man, he found the experience of meeting soldiers from Monmouthshire particularly emotional. Upon his return, he delivered a lecture on his visit at Tabernacle Chapel in Pontypool, and described how "he felt no fear as he stood on Vimy Ridge under the fire of German guns", but "broke down when he saw some of the Monmouthshire boys".¹¹⁸

Meeting with Welsh soldiers undoubtedly had a propaganda value. It boosted morale amongst relatives hungry for news from the front, and made the point to those at home—particularly the miners and workers that these trade unionists represented—that their contribution towards the war effort would directly help their loved ones and friends at the front. The interest in the Welsh participation in and experience of the war also foreshadowed the nature of battlefield visits in the interwar period: certain locations were of particular interest to Welsh people because they provided an access point for understanding the war.

*

¹¹⁶ *Llais Llafur*, 15 January 1916, p. 1.

¹¹⁷ *Llais Llafur*, 19 May 1917, p. 1.

¹¹⁸ *Llais Llafur*, 14 July 1917, p. 1.

The union delegates from Wales who visited France and Belgium during the war returned home united in the conviction that the Allies had to win. Alfred Onions, speaking in late 1915, asserted that he was confident that “sooner or later victory will be with the allies”.¹¹⁹ He urged “our men at home” to do their part “by sending everything that is necessary to our brave fellows there, both in ammunition and other respects”.¹²⁰ Charles Butt Stanton was even more persuasive: he also declared that “we are bound to win the war” but used his interview to stress that the “future depends upon what we do at home in sending more men there to reinforce those who are so valiantly fighting for us”.¹²¹ Strongly in favour of the war, and a staunch campaigner for conscription, Stanton used his visit to the front to reiterate the need for compulsory military service to the miners of south Wales, many of whom were opposed to it.¹²² His account demonstrates just how tightly battlefield visits were intertwined with politics and propaganda at this time.

Upon his return from France in the spring of 1918, John Hughes maintained that defeating the Germans was the only way to ensure a lasting peace, but was clearly disturbed by his visit to the front. The war was a “punishment”, brought about by “the sins of men”, he said, and, although he had been back in Wales for three weeks, the grave of the two unknown Canadian soldiers was still on his mind.¹²³

¹¹⁹ *Western Mail*, 25 November 1915, p. 4.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ *Llais Llafur*, 15 January 1916, p. 1.

¹²² After conscription was introduced, a miner called J. Evans wrote a scathing open letter to Stanton which was published in the socialist newspaper *Pioneer*. He argued that Stanton had betrayed the miners, saying, “In the name of patriotism you are prepared to hand the workers over to their exploiters for their complete subjection”. *Pioneer*, 5 February 1916, p. 7.

¹²³ *Y Dinesydd Cymreig*, 22 May 1918, p. 6.

Above all, these men all agreed that no one at home could comprehend the reality of war unless they had seen it for themselves—thus getting to the heart of the phenomenon of battlefield visiting. People were drawn to the former battlefields for a whole host of reasons, but underpinning their motivations was the desire to witness and to understand.

*

The official visitors named above—and others like them—were invited by the government to witness the war as it was being fought. Men and women on and behind the front lines did not have to travel to see what the war was really like: it was their lived reality. It is no surprise that many of them used their periods of rest or leave to turn away from the battlefields and to seek out more pleasing sights, particularly in locations that would have been beyond their reach in peacetime. The Welsh press was full of letters from Welsh soldiers, writing from France, Italy, Egypt, the Middle East, and the Balkans, describing to their families or to the newspaper editors where they were and their impressions of the area. These letters are an invaluable resource, helping us to understand how British soldiers interacted with local people and their surroundings, where their interests lay, and the value of sightseeing or educational trips when servicemen and women were not otherwise occupied with military duties.

Soldiers did, however, comment often on the battlefields. They were combatants but also observers of their more immediate surroundings: trenches, ruined towns and villages, and war cemeteries in particular. Visiting the graves of relatives, friends, and people from their local area was a common practice, but stopping in cemeteries—and seeking out the graves of Welsh people—was also a frequent occurrence.

Gunner Howell Tudor Hughes was killed in October 1917 and was buried in a cemetery in the village of Voormezele, Belgium.¹²⁴ A day or two after his death, his brother, the Reverend Edward Hughes, serving as a chaplain with the Canadian Expeditionary Force, went looking for him and instead found the chaplain who had buried him: a “very trying experience”, the *Denbighshire Free Press* reported, for him to visit, “instead of his brother alive, his newly made grave”.¹²⁵ While at the cemetery, he met several other men from Denbigh, men that he knew personally, as he named one of them in a letter sent to his parents.¹²⁶ The newspaper report does not explain whether these men were visiting Howell’s grave, or had simply stopped by the cemetery, but it shows that going to see war graves could be something personal, an act of pilgrimage, or a matter of curiosity.

The experience was undoubtedly extremely difficult and emotional, but also important, allowing Reverend Hughes to grieve, to pray, and perhaps to speak with and be comforted by the other chaplain and the men from Denbigh. Other servicemen and women may not have had a particular connection to a cemetery or burial ground, but visiting such sites was equally important, not only for them, but for people back in Wales as well.

Visits to graves or cemeteries therefore feature in countless letters, such as a note sent by Seamen D. T. Jenkins and J. Daniel to Regimental Sergeant Major Thomas Richard Fear, the founder of the Aberystwyth Weekly Comforts for Fighters Fund. In it, the two men thanked him for the parcels they received, mentioned that they had seen some other men from

¹²⁴ Gunner Howell Tudor Hughes (184403), Royal Garrison Artillery. Buried in Voormezele Enclosures No. 1 & No. 2, Belgium.

¹²⁵ *Denbighshire Free Press*, 27 October 1917, p. 3.

¹²⁶ *Denbighshire Free Press*, 17 November 1917, p. 3

Aberystwyth, and informed him that they “had the privilege of visiting Captain Harris’ grave”.¹²⁷ They added that he was “buried in an English cemetery, which is very well kept”.¹²⁸ It certainly seems that there was a genuine desire, perhaps also a sense of obligation, to visit the graves of local people, and an awareness of the importance of relaying to those back in Wales that the graves were in good condition. The two seamen stressed that the cemetery was “well kept”; furthermore, the mention of an “English cemetery” implies that ‘proper’—namely, Christian—burial rites and customs had been observed, another comfort to the Harries family in Aberystwyth.

Bereaved families were, naturally, very anxious to know the location and condition of the graves of their loved ones. Sometimes, as above, this information reached relatives through other people or through the press; at other times, families actively sought out these details. In one instance, the parents of a soldier from Bontnewydd in Caernarfonshire requested more information, and their wishes were conveyed to Captain R. Lloyd Jones, from Caernarfon, who was known to have recently been in the area of the cemetery.¹²⁹ Captain Lloyd Jones reassured the parents of the soldier that his grave was in good condition, saying that he saw “neat mounds arranged in orderly rows and blocks, each mound surmounted by a wooden cross to which was affixed a metal tablet giving regimental number, rank, name, regiment, and date of death”.¹³⁰ He also described the cemetery and the surrounding area in careful detail:

Standing in the avenue and looking across the graveyard, I had a most pleasant and soothing view. In the far distance is high ground, along which runs another tree-

¹²⁷ *Welsh Gazette*, 13 June 1918, p. 8. ‘Captain Harris’ is probably Captain Eric Guy Harries, Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in East Mudros Military Cemetery, Greece.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ The newspaper does not name the soldier or his parents, but from the information given it is probable that he was Private Thomas Glynn Hughes (29447), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in La Chapelette British & Indian Cemetery, France.

¹³⁰ *Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald*, 13 July 1917, p. 8.

lined road and on the ground sloping towards it are a few plantations set in waving grass. This intermediate ground had been the scene of a very rapid retreat on the part of the Germans early this year, so rapid that they were unable to cut down all the trees as usual. The ground is honey-combed with trenches and shell holes, and a great part is covered with wire entanglements, but these are now hidden by nature, which has asserted itself in a most wonderful manner. Where there was only brown earth in April last can now be seen knee-high grass and hay, amidst which wild flowers of brilliant and varied hues vie with each other. The despised dandelion and mustard plant are doing their share of successfully concealing the traces of war, and, as for the poppy, the cornflower, and the [marguerite], they have no need to be [jealous] of the [rarest] of orchids. The whole combine to form a most beautiful carpet between which and the burial ground flows the Somme, but a very different Somme to that of a few months ago.¹³¹

The officer was clearly keen to let the bereaved parents know that the grave was in a peaceful and beautiful location, with the long grasses and wildflowers concealing any traces of conflict.

Captain Lloyd Jones did not merely observe, however. He also “took the liberty of pencilling on the cross, ‘Bontnewydd, Carnarvon, N. Wales.’ [...] in the hope that this address may meet the eye of some Carnarvonites”.¹³² As we will see in Chapter 5, home addresses were included in the headstone inscriptions written by the next-of-kin, frequently and consistently enough that we can conclude it was a matter of importance: firstly, to indicate where the deceased was born and grew up, and secondly, to catch the attention of other people from that area. The letter from Captain Lloyd Jones shows that the naming of addresses was significant to serving soldiers, too, and for the same reasons. He then “gathered a bunch of wild flowers and placed

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

them on the grave to represent the regimental colours of the Welsh Fusiliers, viz., royal blue and blood red”.¹³³ Placing flowers on graves is a conventional way of showing love for and respect to the dead, but in this case also acted to emphasise regimental loyalty and national identity.

These actions brought something of Wales to the gravesite, but Captain Lloyd Jones noted that Wales was also already present in the cemetery space. He made a point of adding that there were a few other Welshmen buried there, as well as men belonging to units which had camped in and around Caernarfon “before this awful war broke out”.¹³⁴ Interestingly, he also found similarities between the Somme and the landscape around Caernarfon, writing that the river now “looks as peaceful as does the Seiont between Penllyn and Pontrhyallt. It vividly reminded me of the same with its bullrushes and water lilies”.¹³⁵ The Somme is, in wartime and postwar sources, usually compared to the chalk downlands of southern England, but this officer only saw the area in north Wales with which he was familiar.

It is a fascinating letter, telling us how this particular Welsh officer saw and experienced the cemetery space and the surrounding landscape, and describing the rituals he performed and the meaning he attached to them. We can also draw comparisons between the thoughts and actions of this officer and those of Welsh people visiting during the interwar period, suggesting that Welsh people engaged with the battlefields in similar ways.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

Other servicemen and women did not specifically seek out war graves and cemeteries but came across them in the course of their war service or during periods of leave or rest. The sight of these graves, and the battlefields or ruins surrounding them, was nonetheless a matter for comment. In 1915, Marjorie Williams of Bridgend, Glamorgan, serving as a nurse in France, sent her parents a photograph of British graves in the cemetery at Bois-Guillaume. She wrote that she wished each mother could have a photograph, “so that they might see how well their boys’ graves are cared for”, and added that they “all subscribed and had a lovely white wreath put on each grave on All Saints’ Day”.¹³⁶ There is a note of sadness in her letter, but also a reassurance that the graves were not neglected or forgotten.

For other Welsh people, graves were part of the wider desolation. Private David Hughes, writing to a friend in the autumn of 1918 as his unit marched over recaptured ground, described the “villages and towns which had been levelled to the ground by the enemy, with nothing but a sign-post to indicate their former positions”, amongst which were many graves of “heroic Welshmen”.¹³⁷ Thomas Jones observed similar sights while constructing light railways over the battlefields of France in early 1918. He and his unit saw

nothing but one long trail of destruction, and the entire countryside laid waste. [...] Farms, hamlets, villages and towns are naught but heaps of ruins, and, in more than one instance, wiped out. The old battlefield is one network of broken trenches and smashed dug-outs, and dotted with the graves of the dead, where they lie single and by the hundreds—sad and silent witnesses to the horrors of war.¹³⁸

¹³⁶ *Glamorgan Gazette*, 26 November 1915, p. 4.

¹³⁷ *Prestatyn Weekly*, 5 October 1918, p. 1.

¹³⁸ *The Amman Valley Chronicle and East Carmarthen News*, 7 February 1918, p. 3.

Although plants, flowers, and weeds were “endeavouring to hide its hideousness”, the “appalling desolation and ruin that war has brought in its wake” deeply saddened him.¹³⁹ Even though these two men were serving soldiers, and were closer to the reality of the war than civilians, they were still impressed by the scale and intensity of the destruction.

Reminders of the war could also be found amongst other attractions overseas. Lieutenant Einion Evans of Dolgellau, Merionethshire, on service in Egypt from 1916 to 1918, wrote his family many long letters which were published in the Welsh-language newspaper *Y Cymro*.¹⁴⁰ He described his trips into the desert and along the Nile, and visits to ancient wonders like the Pyramids of Giza, the Great Sphinx, and the city of Thebes, as well as to the sights in Alexandria such as Pompey’s Pillar and the Catacombs, and attractions in Cairo including the museum and various mosques.¹⁴¹ There was always something new to see and hear and so many wonders to visit, he wrote, that he felt he could write an interesting letter every day.¹⁴² But as well as the hustle and bustle and the historic sites, Einion also wrote about a service he attended at the military cemetery in Alexandria:

Heddyw yr oeddwn yn y gladdfa filwrol Brydeinig, lle y mae cyrff llawer o filwyr o Loegr, Cymru, a Scotland yn gorwedd mewn beddau syml iawn,—tebyg iawn i feddau cyffredin eu gwlad eu hunain. Diwrnod pen blwydd cyhoeddiad y Rhyfel yw hi, ac am bedwar o’r gloch, daeth M. Bonzon, cynrychiolydd Ffrainc, i’r fynwent a chroes o flodau hardd i’w gosod ar fedd y milwyr Prydeinig fel arwydd o barch y Ffrancod sy’n byw yn Alexandria. Derbyniwyd y groes gan General Boyle, ac yr oedd yno filwyr yn cynrychioli pob adran o’r Fyddin Brydeinig. Seremoni fach

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ His father, Evan Williams Evans, was the editor of *Y Cymro* at the time.

¹⁴¹ See, for example, *Y Cymro*, 7 February 1917, p. 4; 19 September 1917, p. 12; 28 November 1917, p. 4; 12 June 1918, pp. 5-6.

¹⁴² *Y Cymro*, 28 November 1917, p. 4.

ddigon syml oedd hi,—dim ond dwy araith fer; ond ni welais ddim mwy tyner a phrydferth erioed. Mae yma lawer o Gymry wedi eu claddu, a hwyrach y bydd yn foddhad prudd i rieni neu berthynasau rhywrai ohonynt i glywed am y digwyddiad bach yma ar ben blwydd y Rhyfel. Mae gofal mawr yn cael ei gymryd o feddau'r *boys*, ac y mae'r fynwent yn cael ei chadw yn llawn mwy trefnus a gofalus nag unrhyw fynwent gartref.

(Today I was in the British military burial ground, where the bodies of many soldiers from England, Wales, and Scotland lie in very simple graves—very similar to the common graves of their own country. It is the anniversary of the declaration of war, and, at four o'clock, M. Bonzon, the French representative, came to the cemetery with a cross of beautiful flowers to be placed on the grave of British soldiers as a sign of respect from the French who live in Alexandria. The cross was accepted by General Boyle, and there were soldiers representing every section of the British Army. It was a simple enough little ceremony—just two short speeches—but I never saw anything more tender and beautiful. There are many Welsh people buried here, and perhaps it will be a pleasure, albeit a sombre one, to the parents or relatives of some of them to hear about this small event on the anniversary of the War. Great care is taken of the boys' graves, and the cemetery is kept more orderly and carefully than any cemetery at home.)¹⁴³

There are similarities here to the letter written by Captain Lloyd Jones, even though Einion visited the cemetery for a different purpose. Both men noted the presence of Welsh soldiers buried in the cemetery, and made an assurance that the graves were well kept and not forgotten.

¹⁴³ *Y Cymro*, 19 September 1917, p. 12.

Private Idwal Davies of Corris, Merionethshire, working in the 17th British General Hospital in Alexandria, spent a day with friends and an Egyptian guide visiting Pompey's Pillar and the sphinxes at the Serapeum, the Catacombs, and the museum in Alexandria. On their way back to camp, they stopped at the cemetery at Hadra,

[...] lle mae nifer fawr o fechgyn Cymru wedi eu claddu. Torcalonnus oedd gweled
ambell fedd a'r gair "Unknown" ar y groes nodai'r fan gorweddai llwch rhyw wron.

(... where a large number of Welsh lads are buried. It was heartbreaking to see some
graves with the word 'Unknown' on the cross, marking the place where the remains
of some brave man rest.)¹⁴⁴

In contrast to Einion Evans, who was keen to emphasise the orderly appearance of the cemetery, knowing it would be a consolation to those at home, Idwal added that he returned to camp in a contemplative mood:

[...] a phan chwythid 'last post,' 'lights out,' 'lights out,' teimlwn fod nodau lledf
[sic] y 'cornet' yn cydgordio a'm teimladau, wedi treulio prynhawn yng nghwmni a
fu.

(... and when the Last Post and 'lights out', 'lights out' were blown, I felt that the
mournful notes of the cornet were in harmony with my feelings, having spent an
afternoon in the company of the past.)¹⁴⁵

Before signing off, he mused that while time had blown 'lights out' on the ancient world, there would come a morning when the trumpet would sound again for the men of Wales buried in the cemetery at Hadra, a reference to the Resurrection.¹⁴⁶ His sightseeing trip and the visit to the cemetery were not separate in his mind; rather, his impressions of one site helped to

¹⁴⁴ *Y Cymro*, 5 December 1917, p. 5.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

interpret the other. A year after his letter was published in *Y Cymro*, Idwal himself was buried in Hadra Cemetery, having died from illness in October 1918.¹⁴⁷

*

The Welsh men and women who wrote the accounts featured above differ in several ways. Some were specifically seeking out war graves, the places where relatives or friends were buried. Others were passing through the devastated landscape, observing ruins, trenches, barbed wire, shell craters, and isolated graves as well as cemeteries. A few were sightseeing, visiting other attractions, but were still surrounded by traces of the war. But despite these contrasts in how and why they were engaging with the battlefields and war cemeteries, a number of similar themes emerge. Each visitor expressed shock and wonder at the scale and intensity of devastation, but, in the midst of this, there were assurances that graves and cemeteries were neat and tidy and not forgotten. Significantly, too, each visitor sought out the graves of Welsh casualties, and performed rituals which acknowledged and reaffirmed the Welshness of the casualty, and perhaps of themselves as well. As we will see, this behaviour was echoed by the Welsh people who followed in the footsteps of these early visitors and journeyed to the battlefields throughout the interwar period.

¹⁴⁷ Private Idwal Davies (81762), Royal Army Medical Corps. Buried in Alexandria (Hadra) War Memorial Cemetery, Egypt.

3.2 Pilgrimages to war graves

To be considered a pilgrim, Mark Connelly writes, “was the single most important badge of honour a battlefield visitor could attain”.¹⁴⁸ In contrast to ‘tourists’, who were considered mere day-trippers, sightseers, and souvenir-hunters, and generally portrayed as loud, vulgar, and disrespectful, ‘pilgrims’ were bereaved relatives, people with “a genuine, rather than sensationalist, interest” in the nature of the fighting, its chronology and geography, the devastation left in its aftermath, and the various and numerous sites of commemoration along and around the old front lines.¹⁴⁹ Pilgrims had a special relationship with the landscape, and indeed could lay claim to certain sites: the spot where their loved one was killed or last seen, the grave in which they were buried, or a particular panel of a memorial on which the name was inscribed.

Recent scholarship—by David Lloyd, Mark Connelly, Jennifer Iles, and Tim Godden in particular—has pointed out that this dichotomy between pilgrim and tourist is, of course, unfounded.¹⁵⁰ Even the most solemn and dedicated pilgrims engaged in tourist activities, such as taking photographs, seeking out refreshments, and sending postcards home; meanwhile, those designated (and denigrated) as tourists were capable of suitably reverent behaviour, and, whatever their motivations for visiting, experienced an emotional response. Furthermore, John Pegum has identified a third class of visitor: ex-servicemen, “who were neither tourists nor pilgrims but [...] acted in turn as both”, demonstrating that attempting to categorise visitors to

¹⁴⁸ Connelly, *Postcards from the Western Front*, p. 178.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism*; Connelly, *Postcards from the Western Front*; Jennifer Iles, ‘Encounters in the Fields: Tourism to the Battlefields of the Western Front’, *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 6:2 (2008), pp. 138-154; Jennifer Iles, ‘Consuming the Contested Heritage of War: Tourism, Territoriality, and the Memorial Landscapes of the Western Front’, in Glenn Hooper (ed.), *Heritage at the Interface: Interpretation and Identity* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2018), pp. 39-55; Godden, ‘Designing Memory’.

the old battlefields is a difficult and unhelpful process.¹⁵¹ (The experiences of ex-servicemen will be discussed further in section 3.3.)

Nonetheless, the idea of pilgrimage was incredibly powerful in the interwar period. Bound up in it was the enhanced religious and spiritual belief of the war years, with all of its High Church influences, the medieval revival of the Victorian and Edwardian periods, and the need to ritualise and sacralise war remembrance. The word ‘pilgrimage’ gave the trips made by the bereaved the correct air of solemnity and devotion—and moral superiority—and transformed the former battlefields, the towns and villages located there, and the cemeteries and memorials built on them, into sacred space.

*

Visiting a grave or a memorial was the primary purpose and emotional climax of a battlefield pilgrimage. There the visitor could lay a wreath or a posy of flowers, take a photograph, pray or perform other rituals of remembrance, and touch or even take a rubbing of the name on the headstone or memorial panel. Although acts of commemoration such as these feature in many accounts of battlefield visits, showing that there were typical or accepted pilgrim behaviours, each pilgrimage was ultimately very different, dependent on personal circumstances, location, and the period of time in which the visit took place.

¹⁵¹ Pegum, ‘The Old Front Line’, p. 217.

Battlefield pilgrimages in the immediate aftermath of the conflict were characterised by unique challenges and hardships. Visitors were faced with almost total devastation in the form of barren countryside and ruined towns and villages, the difficulties associated with damaged infrastructure, and, in some cases, the sight of the Graves Registration Units busy in the task of the exhumation and reburial of remains.¹⁵² In the spring of 1920, Maud Morris travelled from south Wales to the French and Belgian battlefields, accompanied by her daughter and nephew, to find the grave of her son, twenty-one-year-old Major Charles Alan Smith Morris.¹⁵³ The trio caught a train from Boulogne, passing through Étaples, Abbeville, Amiens, and Albert on their way to Arras.¹⁵⁴ Arras, they noted, had been badly shelled, and the hotels they stayed in were damaged: although they were lucky enough to have glass in their windows, in many others “there was only a peculiar sort of yellow paper”.¹⁵⁵ They journeyed by car across the Somme battlefields, passing ruined villages and churches, “nothing but heaps of bricks and mortar”, amongst which people were living in wooden huts or in the cellars of what had been their homes—living “in places where you think no human being *could* live”, Mrs Morris wrote.¹⁵⁶ On the battlefields north of Arras, around Souchez, Lens, and Loos, the trio were faced with further devastation, the area barren but for large slag heaps and the debris of war. But nothing compared to the Ypres Salient.

“Words fail to describe its desolation,” Maud Morris wrote.¹⁵⁷ All she could do was list fragments of what she saw:

¹⁵² Connelly, *Postcards from the Western Front*, p. 191.

¹⁵³ Major Charles Alan Smith Morris, Bedfordshire Regiment. Buried in Point-du-Jour Military Cemetery, France.

¹⁵⁴ *Porthcawl News*, 17 June 1920, p. 4.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

Huge shell holes, some of them full of water, masses of barbed wire, corrugated iron, broken field telephone posts, shells, large and small, German shells in the wicker baskets in which they carry them, derelict tanks, and here and there a shattered tree; all this debris scattered about on either side for miles, as far as the eye could see.¹⁵⁸

In Ypres, “the whole place in ruins”, they

stood on the ramparts, which had once been divisional headquarters, now a tangle of rubbish, stones and nettles; looked where the banks of the canal had fallen in, locks gone, streets with no houses, and the ruins of the once beautiful Cloth Hall and Cathedral, their lovely rose windows undamaged.¹⁵⁹

The wasteland of the old battlefields made a lasting impression on Maud Morris. Her account in the newspaper finishes: “I wish everyone could see the [devastated] country of France and Belgium; they would then [realise] better what awful destruction and ruin the great war caused”.¹⁶⁰ She herself would never forget the desolation of the battlefields.

Amongst the devastation, however, was the grave of her son, located in the communal cemetery in Évin-Malmaison (and later concentrated into Point-du-Jour Military Cemetery), a village north-east of Arras. It was “covered with plants and flowers, planted and cared for by the kind, good French people in the village”.¹⁶¹ This is the only description of the grave that features in the account but it tells the reader that his grave—and, by extension, the others in the cemetery—had been beautified by flowers and plants and was being tended by the local people.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

These early pilgrims were keen to let others at home know that the graves of their loved ones were being cared for, either by the local people or by the staff of the Imperial War Graves Commission (IWGC). Almost every account written by a battlefield visitor expresses wonder and gratitude for the work of the IWGC, particularly in this immediate postwar period when each cemetery was, or was in the process of becoming, an oasis of order and pleasantness in a chaotic and desolate landscape. After a trip to France in the winter of 1921, Edmund and Sarah Ann Hughes of Blaina, Monmouthshire, “highly praised the manner in which the graves are being cared for”.¹⁶² They had visited the grave of their son, Private Arthur Hughes of the Welsh Regiment, who had died at the age of twenty in March 1918.¹⁶³ While in the cemetery, the Hugheses took a photograph of the grave, and also collected some soil and a flower which was growing on the grave to take home with them.¹⁶⁴ This was something that many bereaved people did, providing them with a tangible and permanent link to the site where their loved one was buried. Connections between home and the grave were incredibly important to the bereaved, whether physical or textual, as we will also see in Chapter 5.

A group from south Wales on a pilgrimage the following year—joining people from all over Britain and Ireland and assisted, like the Hugheses, by the YMCA—were even more effusive in their praise for the war cemeteries. “Remembering the pictures we had seen of the gaunt rows of stark wooden crosses that were the war-time shift for our fallen heroes’ tombstones,” ‘Nomad’, the spokesperson for this group, wrote, “we were prepared for military monotony.”¹⁶⁵ But to their “great joy” they found “not cemeteries, but gardens—the brightest spots in all that blasted countryside.”¹⁶⁶ ‘Nomad’ then gave a detailed description of the typical British

¹⁶² *South Wales Gazette*, 2 December 1921, p. 11.

¹⁶³ Private Arthur Hughes (285006), Welsh Regiment. Buried in Bancourt British Cemetery, France.

¹⁶⁴ *South Wales Gazette*, 2 December 1921, p. 11.

¹⁶⁵ *Merthyr Express*, 7 October 1922, p. 22.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

cemetery, explaining that there were no mounds over the graves, and no foot or coping stones, as in an English churchyard, but that the grass was kept like a lawn, save for the “freely blossoming flowers of various colours”.¹⁶⁷ The headstones were uniform in size and shape, but some variation was achieved through the regimental badges and personal inscriptions. Another “gratifying feature” of the cemeteries was that no distinctions of rank were made in terms of the position or decoration of the graves, and “Indians, Chinese, Canadians, Australians, Jews, Mahommedans, Englishmen, Scotchmen, Irishmen and Welshmen all lie together”.¹⁶⁸ Such a descriptive and positive account not only let bereaved relatives at home know that the graves of their loved ones were being cared for, regardless of their rank, race, or religion, but also served as useful favourable publicity for the IWGC.

This group, like countless other pilgrims, were also full of admiration for the various benevolent organisations that assisted their journeys and answered their enquiries. ‘Nomad’ acknowledged that a visit to the battlefields was a difficult and emotional journey to make, and that “many who have longed to see the actual places where their boys lie have, no doubt, been deterred by the mere thought of the length and worry of a journey into a foreign land”.¹⁶⁹ The YMCA, however, were on hand to facilitate the bereaved, a necessity in the devastated landscape, which contained hundreds of cemeteries, to say nothing of isolated graves in churchyards or burial grounds. Indeed, ‘Nomad’ warned their readers that it was “unwise in the extreme for anyone to set out on their own account to find a grave out there” and added that their group saw some people without a guide “wandering helplessly about”.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

Councillor David Davies and Eliza Davies, their son, and their friend Mrs Stephens, were also assisted by the YMCA when they travelled from Aberystwyth to the former battlefields of France and Belgium in the spring of 1921.¹⁷¹ The group visited the graves of the Davieses' son and of Mrs Stephens' husband, as well as those of the sons of several of their friends back in Aberystwyth, who were named in the newspaper.¹⁷² Councillor Davies was keen to let their friends and others at home know that the cemeteries were "well kept", and praised the arrangements made by the YMCA for the "convenience and comfort" of bereaved relatives, as well as the system adopted by the IWGC for the identification of the graves.¹⁷³ Visiting the battlefields in this early period could be challenging indeed, with difficulties at every stage of the journey, but visitors did not necessarily have to endure these difficulties alone. The IWGC and the various benevolent organisations were on hand to help the Davieses and other bereaved relatives, and they, in turn, were able to console each other and those at home.

In *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, Jay Winter writes about 'adoptive kinship', the bonds that formed between people related not necessarily by blood, but by experience or by grief, based on a moral obligation to comfort and support fellow human beings: these bonds existed between the bereaved and officials of the benevolent organisations that assisted them, and between the pilgrims themselves.¹⁷⁴ The accounts above demonstrate the consolation received by the knowledge that strangers were tending to the grave of a loved one, the emotional and practical support received by those working to host and direct pilgrims, and the affinity that developed between fellow visitors to the battlefield.

¹⁷¹ *Welsh Gazette*, 26 May 1921, p. 8.

¹⁷² *Ibid.* Sergeant David Rees Davies (14400), King's Shropshire Light Infantry. Buried in La Clytte Military Cemetery, Belgium. Mrs Stephens' husband is possibly Gunner William David Stephens (156560), Royal Garrison Artillery. Buried in The Huts Cemetery, Belgium.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, pp. 29-31.

The testimony of Welsh pilgrims also reveals the importance of the bond that arises between people of a shared national and cultural identity. A correspondent for the *Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald* visited Belgium in the autumn of 1919, and, as well as witnessing the remnants of conflict in Ostend, Langemark, and Ypres, came across a Labour Corps camp along the Menin Road where he “inquired for Welsh soldiers”.¹⁷⁵ He met a soldier from Port Talbot, who showed him around the barracks and then took him to the cemetery, where they “saw the graves of many Welshmen”.¹⁷⁶ This behaviour—the seeking out of other Welsh people and the graves of Welsh soldiers—mirrors that of the Welsh trade unionists who toured the front during the war, and that of many other Welsh pilgrims and tourists who visited in the interwar period, as we will see elsewhere in this chapter.

Back in the Labour Corps camp, “a soldier ran towards us and saluted”, a man called Owen Jones, from Caernarfon, who had worked with the newspaper correspondent for “some years”.¹⁷⁷ Jones spoke of his friend, William Lewis Owen, of Bangor, who “was glad to see us when he came in some time later”.¹⁷⁸ Then, passing a hut, the correspondent heard a greeting in Welsh, the word ‘shwmae’, which is primarily used in south Wales, as opposed to ‘sut mae’, which is more common in north Wales.¹⁷⁹ He therefore replied, “Bachgen o’r De ydych chi” (‘You are a boy from the south’) and the soldier answered “Northman ydych chwi” (‘You are a man from the north’).¹⁸⁰ The correspondent spent the rest of his time with “the Welsh boys”, before returning to Bruges.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁵ *Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald*, 19 September 1919, p. 8.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ Both phrases are informal greetings similar to the English ‘alright?’.

¹⁸⁰ *Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald*, 19 September 1919, p. 8.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

Welsh people found strength and solace amongst other Welsh people, and sought out the graves of Welsh people and other sites of Welsh interest on the former battlefields. They may have been strangers, and may never have known the dead, but felt connected through their shared national and cultural identity. Here is Benedict Anderson's 'imagined community': the affinity felt between members of the same nation, and their similar perspectives and priorities, despite not knowing or even hearing of most of their fellow members.¹⁸² The concept of the imagined community illuminates our understanding of battlefield visits made by Welsh people by providing an explanation for the importance of Welshness. Visitors went either as bereaved relatives or friends, or casual sightseers, but they all went as Welsh people, and were comforted by that identity.

As the years went on, the descriptions of devastation and desolation were replaced by comments on the transformation of the former battlefields. In 1920, Mr T. S. Goslin of Aberavon, who had worked "for the good of local soldiers during the war", paid a visit to the battlefields of the Western Front "to see what arrangements are being, and have been made, in regard to the burial of our dead heroes".¹⁸³ Goslin was certainly keen to emphasise to bereaved relatives in Wales "that the graves of their loved ones are not neglected and that cemeteries are being kept in good condition".¹⁸⁴ His account also dwells on the "absolute ruin" he saw "day after day and mile after mile". Towns and cities had been reduced to rubble, and between Vimy Ridge and Arras there were "thousands of tree stumps, blackened, branchless and leafless, shattered and splintered by shell-fire"—but not dead, for, "with an energy almost miraculous", the trees were "sprouting out at their roots", symbolic "of the spirit of the nation and its

¹⁸² Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 6.

¹⁸³ *Porthcawl News*, 27 May 1920, p. 2.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

people”.¹⁸⁵ It would be many years before northern France and Flanders approached anything like normality, but even as early as 1920 there were cheering signs of recovery in nature.

A year later, a correspondent from the *Western Mail* accompanied a group of pilgrims travelling from south Wales to the old Western Front. The group found immediately that France was vastly changed, with “[s]hattered roadways made fair, battered fields made bright and yielding rich harvests, the process of the reconstruction of levelled towns, villages, and hamlets in progress”:

Little remains in most sectors to point to the carnage that for years sullied the peace of the world beyond the abundant jagged ridges, which tell of the filled in trenches and shell holes, an occasional dump of war material, devastated towns and villages, and many, many cemeteries with their long lines of wooden crosses. [...] But all these still existent marks of war will vanish with the course of the next few years, excepting the cemeteries that shall for ever form one huge sepulchre embosoming the “remains of so much human excellence and glory.” And in travelling through France to-day it is the cemeteries that hold and rivet one’s attention, more so than the confusion and devastation the Great War has left in its train.¹⁸⁶

By the early 1920s, most of the obvious traces of war were disappearing, leaving only the cemeteries and memorials, stretching across the old Western Front as a visible record of the fighting, preserving the history and associations attached to specific sites and the surrounding

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ *Western Mail*, 12 August 1921, p. 6.

landscape. The cemeteries and memorials, constructed in their final, permanent forms, became embedded into the landscape, and retained their magnetic pull all through the interwar period.

*

The scale of pilgrimage activity increased throughout the 1920s, facilitated by the reconstruction of travel and hospitality infrastructure and the expanding work of the various benevolent organisations. Some pilgrims continued to make their own arrangements, or travelled in small groups. In June 1926, for example, Mr and Mrs Hughes of Nanthenfoel in Cribyn, Cardiganshire, travelled to France to find the grave of Private Thomas Davies, their relative, accompanied by the Reverend and Mrs Hughes of Brynamman, Carmarthenshire.¹⁸⁷ The group of four stayed at the Church Army hostel in Ypres, and engaged with the ex-servicemen now working as gardeners for the IWGC, but in the account of their visit there is no mention of a battlefield guide or a group tour, and so it seems that for the most part the group travelled by themselves.¹⁸⁸ In contrast, in March 1923, Thomas and Jane Davies from Llanfairfechan, Caernarfonshire, journeyed to Belgium along with over eight hundred other pilgrims as part of a pilgrimage organised by the St Barnabas Society. They attended a “special service” at Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery—in fact the opening and dedication ceremony—and visited the grave of Private Thomas Owen Davies, their son.¹⁸⁹ Pilgrims could therefore travel alone, in small or large groups, or in groups that fell somewhere in the middle, but their experiences were nonetheless extremely personal and highly significant.

¹⁸⁷ *Welsh Gazette*, 17 June 1926, p. 5. Private Thomas Davies (G/40115), Middlesex Regiment. Buried in Varennes Military Cemetery, France.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹ *North Wales Weekly News*, 29 March 1923, p. 8. Private Thomas Owen Davies (15502), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Belgium.

It was not only the old Western Front that received bereaved relatives. Pilgrimages were also organised to the Middle Eastern theatre of war, with pilgrims and representatives of benevolent associations travelling to Gallipoli, Greece, Egypt, and Palestine throughout the interwar period. Despite the challenges posed by the length of the journey, the terrain and climate, and continued unrest and conflict, the battlefields of the Middle East attracted a surprising number of visitors. Gallipoli and Jerusalem in particular, David Lloyd writes, “captured the romance of the war”, as they were locations with meaningful classical associations and huge religious significance, respectively.¹⁹⁰

One of the first pilgrimages to Gallipoli was organised by the St Barnabas Society and took place in the autumn of 1926. The pilgrims travelled aboard a steamer called the *Stella d'Italia*, and the itinerary included the cemeteries, memorials, and battlefields at Salonika, Doiran, Lemnos, Suvla Bay, and Cape Helles.¹⁹¹ Nearly three hundred people took part, eleven of which were from Wales: Mr Maliphant and Mr Smith, from Swansea, Mrs Marsh, from Merthyr Tydfil, Miss Brocklehurst, of Deganwg, Mr and Mrs Evans, from Llangefni, Mr and Miss Powell, of Prestatyn, Miss Redfern, of Denbigh, and Mr and Mrs Rees Thomas, from Builth Wells.¹⁹² It was a diverse group, not only in terms of nationality, but of age, gender, and background as well. Marjorie Harrison, a member of the group, wrote to the *Western Mail* from Salonika on 30 August, and from somewhere on the Aegean Sea on 1 September, describing that the pilgrimage included ex-servicemen and their wives, several war nurses, widows—some with small children—and of course bereaved mothers.¹⁹³ Harrison was particularly full of praise for the “frail, elderly” mothers, who were so determined to see the graves of their sons

¹⁹⁰ Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism*, pp. 97-100.

¹⁹¹ *North Wales Weekly News*, 26 August 1926, p. 8.

¹⁹² *South Wales Daily Post*, 13 September 1926, p. 7.

¹⁹³ *Western Mail*, 6 September 1926, p. 7.

that they faced the long journey by sea and the arduous excursions on foot “undaunted”.¹⁹⁴ “No wonder our men were courageous who had such gallant mothers,” she wrote.¹⁹⁵

The elderly and delicate bereaved mother, who faced hardships without complaint, was one of the enduring images of battlefield pilgrimage, reflecting the gendered aspect to mourning and bereavement which involved a privileging of female over male grief. Several scholars have pointed out that, historically, women did indeed perform the majority of what Joy Damousi has termed ‘the labour of loss’, such as washing and laying out a body, adherence to the strict and elaborate rules of mourning dress, and the emotional performance of grief.¹⁹⁶ There was, however, a great deal of gender stereotyping at play. Corinna Peniston-Bird has demonstrated that men did, of course, grieve just as deeply as women, but in public coverage of commemorative activities were “invisible”.¹⁹⁷ Meanwhile, Mark Connelly observes that women “were shorn almost entirely of the active roles they had played during the conflict” and were portrayed instead as “passive sufferers”.¹⁹⁸ Alongside this can be identified a hierarchy of bereavement: women were privileged over men, but certain women were privileged over other women, and it was mothers who took precedence over widows, fiancées, sweethearts, or sisters.¹⁹⁹ Women, and particularly mothers, were the face of mourning and bereavement, and

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Joy Damousi, *The Labour of Loss: Mourning, Memory, and Wartime Bereavement in Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). See also Joy Damousi, ‘Mourning Practices’, in Jay Winter (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 358-384; Noakes, ‘Gender, Grief, and Bereavement in Second World War Britain’.

¹⁹⁷ Peniston-Bird, ‘The Grieving Male in Memorialisation’.

¹⁹⁸ Connelly, *Postcards from the Western Front*, pp. 206-207.

¹⁹⁹ See Grayzel, *Women’s Identities at War*; Evans, *Mothers of Heroes, Mothers of Martyrs*. The work of Kurt Piehler on American ‘Gold Star Mothers’ is also highly relevant here. Kurt Piehler, ‘The War Dead and the Gold Star: American Commemoration of the First World War’, in John Gillis (ed.), *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 168-185; Kurt Piehler, *Remembering War the American Way* (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995).

as such are highly visible in accounts of battlefield pilgrimage as objects of both pity and admiration.

In the spring of 1927 the *Stella d'Italia*, by now called the 'Ship of Remembrance', was chartered once again by the St Barnabas Society, this time for a pilgrimage to Egypt and Palestine.²⁰⁰ The itinerary incorporated the cemeteries at Alexandria and Cairo, and the cemeteries and memorials in Gaza, Beersheba, and Jerusalem, as well as the sights of the Holy Land such as Bethlehem and Nazareth, the River Jordan, and the Dead Sea.²⁰¹ The pilgrims also attended the consecration of Ramleh War Cemetery and the unveiling of the Jerusalem Memorial.²⁰² Over two hundred people joined the pilgrimage, including at least three couples from Wales.²⁰³ Marjorie Harrison, accompanying the pilgrims once more, referred to the "torrid heat" of the desert, but again stressed that the elderly mothers of dead soldiers made the journeys "gallantly".²⁰⁴ The sacrifice of the war dead could be echoed by the fortitude of the bereaved as they (quite literally) followed in the footsteps of their loved ones.

Sacrifice was certainly a powerful theme for pilgrims to the battlefields of the Holy Land. David Lloyd writes that comparisons were drawn between the sacrifice of Christ and that of the soldiers of the First World War; similarly, James Kitchen observes that "contemporary and historic sacrifices made in the Holy Land" were tied together.²⁰⁵ Connections were also made between the Crusades and the Sinai and Palestine campaigns in wartime propaganda and

²⁰⁰ *Western Mail*, 12 February 1927, p. 7.

²⁰¹ *Western Mail*, 24 May 1927, p. 9.

²⁰² *Ibid.*

²⁰³ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁵ Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism*, p. 98; James Kitchen, *The British Imperial Army in the Middle East: Morale and Military Identity in the Sinai and Palestine Campaigns, 1916–18* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), p. 64.

postwar rhetoric, as several historians have discussed at length.²⁰⁶ But whether British soldiers were imagined as Christlike, or as the crusaders of Christ, it is clear that pilgrimages to the battlefields of the Middle East were coloured by its religious and historical significance.

As well as these loftier associations, there was also a sense of recognition and belonging. It must be remembered that the sites visited or glimpsed by pilgrims in the course of their journey would have been familiar to them from their religious education and upbringing. J. R. Llewellyn, one of the Welsh members of the 1927 pilgrimage, writing to the *Western Mail*, commented that “Palestine is pretty well known to most people at home”—not just from war reportage, but from their religious education, and from the names of the chapels in every community.²⁰⁷ Indeed, the geography of the Holy Land may have been more familiar to Welsh people than the names of towns and villages on the Western Front, at least at the beginning of the war.

Ultimately, however, for most Welsh people, the Middle East was still very far away, and visiting the places where their loved ones had served, died, and were commemorated was an impossibility. This is reflected in some headstone inscriptions explored in Chapter 5: the next-of-kin draw no comfort from the fact that the deceased was buried in the Holy Land, but instead dwell upon the distance between home and the grave.

²⁰⁶ See, for example, Eitan Bar-Yosef, ‘The Last Crusade? British Propaganda and the Palestine Campaign, 1917—18’, *Journal of Contemporary History* 36:1 (2001), pp. 87-109; Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory*; Stefan Goebel, ‘Britain’s ‘Last Crusade’: From War Propaganda to War Commemoration, c. 1914—1930’, in David Welch and Jo Fox (eds.), *Justifying War: Propaganda, Politics, and the Modern Age* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 159-176.

²⁰⁷ *Western Mail*, 24 May 1927, p. 9. The names Bethesda, Bethlehem, Carmel, Hebron, Nazareth, Pisgah, and Seion, to give just a few examples, appear on hundreds of chapels across Wales. See Anthony Jones, *Welsh Chapels* (Cardiff: National Museums & Galleries of Wales, 1984).

Gallipoli and Palestine held great power over the imagination, but the Western Front remained the primary attraction and received the majority of battlefield pilgrimages.²⁰⁸ The largest and most ambitious of these was organised by the British Legion ten years after the end of the war in 1928. Eleven thousand pilgrims were conducted and billeted by the Legion, and an estimated further twenty-five thousand people travelled independently for the ceremony at the Menin Gate in Ypres.²⁰⁹ Amidst these tens of thousands of people was a contingent from Wales, consisting of around seven hundred people, including ex-servicemen and ex-servicewomen, bereaved relatives, and male and female representatives of the British Legion.²¹⁰

The Welsh contingent left Cardiff on 4 August 1928, met with the Irish contingent at Reading, as the Irish had asked to accompany the Welsh on the outward journey, and travelled to Tourcoing on the France-Belgium border, their headquarters for the pilgrimage.²¹¹ A correspondent for the *Western Mail* reported that the Welsh immediately made themselves known: “[a]s the Welsh legionaries stepped on French soil at Calais they sang, ‘Land of Our Fathers’”.²¹² Although the Welsh were part of a large group of people from across Britain and the British Empire, they were not subsumed within it, but retained their distinct national and cultural identity. The singing of Welsh songs was the primary declaration of identity, and was a recurrent activity throughout the pilgrimage, as both spontaneous and organised performances. Upon arrival in Tourcoing on 5 August, *Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau* was sung again, and in Hazebrouck on 6 August “550 Welshwomen and men held a mass concert in the great square”, which must have been a truly incredible experience.²¹³

²⁰⁸ Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism*, p. 100.

²⁰⁹ Connelly, *Postcards from the Western Front*, p. 183.

²¹⁰ *Western Mail*, 3 August 1928, p. 8.

²¹¹ *Western Mail*, 2 August 1928, p. 11; *Western Mail*, 6 August 1928, p. 7.

²¹² *Ibid.*

²¹³ *Western Mail*, 7 August 1928, p. 7.

In her 2020 study on the use and significance of music in the British armed forces during the First World War, Emma Hanna demonstrates that singing was essential to bolstering morale, proclaiming national, regional, and regimental identity, and strengthening community bonds.²¹⁴ Music was certainly important for Welsh servicemen and women: countless newspaper articles describe that Welsh troops were seen and heard singing songs and hymns at home and overseas, and, indeed, Hanna mentions that Welsh soldiers were noted for their hymn-singing ability.²¹⁵ It seems that music was similarly important for Welsh visitors to the battlefields, whether ‘pilgrim’ or ‘tourist’, and for the same reasons. Singing was a way to honour and memorialise the dead, to form an aural and emotional connection with their fellow visitors, and, crucially, to identify themselves and the dead as Welsh.

It was not only singing that was used to express Welsh national identity, however. The Welsh language played a role in the commemorative activity of the pilgrimage. At Tourcoing on 5 August, a detachment visited the local cemetery to lay two wreaths, one in memory of English and French troops, and the other “with an inscription in French and Welsh to the Welsh dead”.²¹⁶ The Welsh contingent were also able to visit sites of special importance to Wales, namely, Mametz Wood on the Somme battlefields. On 7 August, a day before the main service of remembrance at the Menin Gate, Major F. H. Shannons, the leader of the Welsh contingent, took a group to Mametz and laid a wreath in memory of the dead.²¹⁷ It is not specified in the newspaper coverage of the pilgrimage, but it is possible that this wreath also contained an inscription in Welsh.

²¹⁴ Emma Hanna, *Sounds of War: Music in the British Armed Forces During the Great War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

²¹⁵ Ibid, p. 126. For a selection of articles mentioning Welsh soldiers singing, see *The Cambria Daily Leader*, 8 October 1914, p. 5; *Llais Llafur*, 29 May 1915, p. 7; *Yr Adsain*, 25 July 1916, p. 2; *Holyhead Mail and Anglesey Herald*, 8 November 1918, p. 4.

²¹⁶ *Western Mail*, 6 August 1928, p. 7.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

*

Battlefield pilgrimages continued throughout the 1930s, but travel and accommodation arrangements were hindered by the financial strain of the Depression, and pilgrim activity never again reached the heights of the British Legion pilgrimage of 1928.

The behaviour of Welsh people on the 1928 pilgrimage is reflective of the activities of all Welsh people travelling to the battlefields in the interwar period. National and cultural identity were expressed through singing, speaking the Welsh language, and visiting sites of Welsh interest. There is a sense that solace was found in travelling in a group with a shared identity, but also that there was a desire to be seen and heard as Welsh while abroad, and to commemorate in a specifically Welsh way.

This is not to say that this was unique to the Welsh people—national and cultural identities were surely important to every group visiting the old battlefields—but it is a reminder of how intensely personal the ritual was. It is an impossible task for the historian, sociologist, or geographer to describe *the* pilgrim experience. This section has shown, for example, that for Welsh people their national and cultural identity was central to how they navigated, interpreted, and moved through the landscape, whether alone or as part of a group. It indicates that there was, at least to a certain extent, a *Welsh* pilgrim experience of the former battlefields.

3.3 Visits to sites of particular interest

The itinerary of a typical trip to the old battlefields incorporated much more than only war graves and cemeteries. There were stories to be learned and remembered in every collapsed trench, every shell and mine crater, every tangle of barbed wire, every devastated town or village, across vast battlegrounds like the Ypres Salient, the Somme, and Vimy Ridge, as well as the sites of smaller or less prolonged engagements.

Many visitors sought out sites that held some kind of personal significance. These may have been places mentioned in letters home or in conversations—the places where their loved one marched through, visited, or fought over—or the location where their loved one was killed. Often, too, these were places of local or national importance. Ex-servicemen and women, meanwhile, frequently travelled back to the sites they had known during the war.

This section focuses, firstly, on the experiences of Welsh veterans who returned to the battlefields in the interwar period, whether in the immediate aftermath of the war or several years after the Armistice, whether singly or in small groups or as part of a mass pilgrimage. It explores their feelings of recognition but also their sense of disorientation, and the variety of opinions held on reconstruction and the postwar activity on the former battlefields. The section then examines how certain sites became focal points for Welsh visitors, taking on a national and cultural significance alongside the places of personal interest.

*

The battlefields held a “mystical appeal” for veterans, Mark Connelly writes.²¹⁸ Former battlegrounds and the devastated areas were sites of trauma, naturally, but were also sites—in place and in time—of purpose and comradeship and excitement. It is little wonder that veterans returned in such large numbers throughout the interwar period. These trips could be an act of commemoration, involving visits to graves or memorials and attendance at remembrance services, or a reunion, allowing veterans to meet with former comrades, to revisit the places they had known, and to recapture the feeling of the old days. In reality, most visits were both commemoration and reunion, meaning that veterans could be both pilgrim and tourist.

A large group of former members of the 38th (Welsh) Division returned to Ypres in late July 1922 to mark the fifth anniversary of the Third Battle of Ypres—particularly the capture of Pilckem Ridge, which the *Western Mail* described as “the epic” of the division “in the book of glorious war deeds”.²¹⁹ The veterans formed up at the railway station and marched to the Cloth Hall, where they were received by the burgomaster and representatives of the Belgian Government for a civic welcome and a wreath-laying ceremony.²²⁰ Afterwards, “they felt free to go where they wished” and many “went to the estaminets to have ‘omelette and chips and coffee’ just for the sake of old times”.²²¹ Other former soldiers explored the old Salient, including collapsed trenches, craters, and war cemeteries, and brought back interesting souvenirs: the bulrushes which grew in old shell holes.²²² Here was a natural combination of reverence and remembrance with sightseeing and souvenir-hunting.

²¹⁸ Connelly, *Postcards from the Western Front*, p. 143.

²¹⁹ *Western Mail*, 31 July 1922, p. 5.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ *Western Mail*, 1 August 1922, p. 7.

²²² Ibid.

The blend of activities could produce a whirl of conflicting emotions. An ‘Ex-serviceman’ travelled to Ostend in Belgium in 1926 for a “holiday”, but, while he was there, he joined a charabanc excursion to the Ypres Salient.²²³ He and his fellow day-trippers first saw several German cemeteries, which were “well kept and orderly”, and the old German lines, where “the fields were under cultivation [and] young trees had been planted” and “there was very little to indicate that it had been the scene of such terrific fighting”.²²⁴ They sped on, coming to the former Allied lines, where they saw the monument at Saint Julien, followed by several British cemeteries. ‘Ex-serviceman’ informed his readers that the dead lay in “peaceful surroundings, in well ordered cemeteries, the grass cut, and English flowers on many of the graves” but added that the cemeteries were nonetheless a reminder of “the grimness of war”.²²⁵ The charabanc tour then took in Ypres, passing the Menin Gate under construction—it would be unveiled the following year—the Menin Road, and Hill 60.

Hill 60 was “the greatest attraction on the Ypres battlefields”, Connelly writes, and “became a magnet for visitors”.²²⁶ It was a spoil heap criss-crossed by trenches, tunnels, shell craters, and other remnants of the fighting, appealing to visitors keen to experience authenticity, but it was also a memorial landscape, featuring monuments to the Queen Victoria’s Rifles and the 1st Australian Tunnelling Company. ‘Ex-serviceman’ and the other visitors on the tour encountered a German family reading the inscription on one of the memorials, their heads bared in a mark of respect, prompting him to write:

Many may argue the putting up of these memorials is a waste of money, but if future generations as they gaze upon them, will be reminded of the horror, beastliness, and

²²³ *Glamorgan Gazette*, 10 September 1926, p. 4.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

²²⁵ *Ibid.*

²²⁶ Connelly, *Postcards from the Western Front*, pp. 253-254.

futility of war, then they will have served their purpose in leading men's thoughts into the paths of peace, and a more tolerant view, of not only their rights and duties, but also those of the inhabitants of other countries.²²⁷

The tour group returned to Ostend via the Belgian trenches at Diksmuide and Nieuwpoort, leaving this veteran to contemplate all that had happened to him during the war years. During his visit he had expressed amazement at the reconstruction of the devastated areas, had been reminded of the horrors of war and the importance of striving for peace, had marvelled at the remnants of the conflict still on show, and left Belgium with a sense of relief that "I got away with it".²²⁸ While on the battlefield tour, he had been a tourist, a pilgrim, a historian, and a voice of authority, and so it is no surprise that his emotions had changed with each new sight.

'Ex-serviceman' also remarked on the transformation of the Belgian landscape and the reconstruction of ruined towns. Arriving in Ostend, he was immediately struck by the "gaiety and life and laughter" after the "chaos of war [had] been cleared up".²²⁹ Travelling inland, he observed that the old battlefields had returned to farmland and were producing crops, despite the effects of poison gas. And at Ypres—"what a change", he exclaimed:

[...] gone are all the old landmarks, all that could now be distinguished in Ypres is the Cloth Hall, which the Belgians are leaving as a stern and solemn reminder of the horrors and beastliness of war. The town has been wholly rebuilt, and would hardly be recognised as the Ypres of 1918.²³⁰

²²⁷ *Glamorgan Gazette*, 10 September 1926, p. 4.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

His observations—that the places he once knew were being changed, and that it was difficult to recognise them—were shared by almost every ex-serviceman returning to the former battlefields in the interwar period.

This sense of disorientation and dislocation features strongly in a study by John Pegum.²³¹ He quotes a number of ex-servicemen—some were ordinary soldiers, but some were or became distinguished writers—who travelled back to France and Belgium, and encountered not the scenes they remembered, but newly rebuilt towns and villages, farms, and roads, and the countryside on its way to recovery, the trenches filled in, the fields ploughed over, and trees replanted. The landscape was reconstructed, and thus meaningless. Unable to recognise, navigate within, or connect to their surroundings, these veterans found themselves adrift in both place and time: the physical traces of the war were fast disappearing, and it seemed that their experiences were being erased as well.

As the years went by, the cemeteries and memorials constructed by the IWGC became the only tangible reminders of the war left on the old Western Front. But it is the cemeteries and memorials, Pegum argues, that most strongly represent the marginalisation of veterans in postwar commemoration:

The dead, who possessed the land as the ex-servicemen once had, possessed it still. Death had preserved, cast in the Portland stone of their headstones, their location and their identity. The survivors had lost their right to the land. It had been stolen away from them, along with their wartime identity, by the silence of peace. They

²³¹ Pegum, 'The Old Front Line'.

were left dislocated and dispossessed, strangers in their own vanished land and their own fragmented memories.²³²

So the dead remained fixed in place and time, and remained significant, while their former comrades were forced to fade into obscurity. Pegum takes the position that commemoration prioritised the dead—not veterans, not the civilian bereaved, and not refugees and internally displaced persons—because the dead, a conveniently silent group, could be utilised to tell a “general and universal” story about the war, while “personal and individual” experiences and memories were subsumed, and ultimately disappeared.²³³ It is a position shared by Bob Bushaway, George Mosse, and other historians of the ‘political school’, for whom commemoration intentionally prevented any criticism of the war, or of postwar society and politics, specifically because any criticism was regarded as disrespectful towards the dead and their sacrifice.²³⁴ For Pegum, the cemeteries are proof that the dead, not the survivors, held power over the living in the postwar world.

It is a compelling argument, and certainly there is plenty of evidence to demonstrate that some ex-servicemen found returning to the former battlefields a disorientating and upsetting experience. Welshmen were no exception. One man, a former member of the 38th (Welsh) Division, travelled to Ypres with his comrades in late July 1922 and found himself lost in what was once a well-known landscape:

I could hardly find my way about [...]. Shell holes and trenches have almost gone, and everywhere it was farms and fields. It was nothing like the Ypres that the soldiers knew, and at places it was difficult to believe it had been a battlefield. I had

²³² Ibid, p. 235.

²³³ Ibid, p. 223.

²³⁴ See Bushaway, ‘Name Upon Name’; Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*.

buried many comrades in that neighbourhood, and thought I could have walked to the spot blindfolded, but there were many I could not find.²³⁵

It is just as likely that it was the work of the Graves Registration Units in concentrating remains from isolated burials to the permanent cemeteries, rather than the rapid reconstruction of the old Ypres Salient, that prevented this ex-serviceman from finding the graves of his friends, but there is still a sense of loss in this account. The disappearance of wartime landmarks also signified an erasure of history and memory.

There is, however, an alternative interpretation. In his doctoral thesis on British war cemeteries and memorials on the Western Front, Tim Godden argues—very convincingly—that the sites constructed by the IWGC did not typify the erasure of the battlefield, as Pegum claims, but in fact preserved the wartime landscape and therefore counteracted the dislocation felt by returning veterans.²³⁶ This preservation was achieved “via a series of spatial and linguistic triggers” and was a deliberate choice on the part of the Commission architects.²³⁷

The first ‘trigger’ connecting the commemorative landscape of the postwar years with the geography of the battlefields was name. Godden identifies over two hundred and fifty cemeteries on the Western Front that retain wartime nomenclature in one of the following ways: by referencing a specific battlefield feature, by using an Anglicised or ‘Tommified’ version of a local name, by using a British name which was applied to the local area, or by reflecting the history of the war (as is the case with cemeteries named after certain regiments

²³⁵ *Western Mail*, 1 August 1922, p. 7.

²³⁶ Godden, ‘Designing Memory’.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

or medical posts).²³⁸ The IWGC made permanent the otherwise ephemeral language of the battlefields, and thus preserved the history and associations attached to specific sites and, by extension, the surrounding landscape.²³⁹ Here was continuity, not change.

Continuity between the wartime landscape and the memorial landscape could also be achieved through the cemetery layout and architectural treatment. This was another ‘trigger’, visual this time. Some cemeteries held echoes of the trenches in the linear arrangement of headstones and the use of long straight boundary walls, and some even retained the location and direction of old trenches in the alignment of the site.²⁴⁰ Other cemeteries were suggestive of shell holes and mine craters, with circular boundary walls, headstones arranged in circles, and focal points such as circular sunken lawns.²⁴¹ The trenches and craters may have been filled in and replaced by commemorative sites, but the cemeteries provided clues to visitors—veteran, pilgrim, and tourist—as to what had been there before.

The cemetery space was connected to the wider landscape in further, even more subtle ways. Godden shows that boundary walls were kept deliberately low to encourage visitors to lift their gaze beyond the cemetery, allowing them to engage with the surrounding area.²⁴² This, too, was facilitated by the architectural treatment of the cemeteries, with the Crosses of Sacrifice, present in every IWGC cemetery, acting as markers across the old battlefields, and thus linking cemetery to cemetery and the cemeteries to the landscape.²⁴³ The cemeteries were not separate

²³⁸ Ibid, p. 238. The term ‘Tommified’ comes from Ross Wilson, *Landscapes of the Western Front: Materiality during the Great War* (London: Routledge, 2012).

²³⁹ Ibid, p. 266.

²⁴⁰ Ibid, pp. 102-151.

²⁴¹ Ibid, pp. 152-188.

²⁴² Ibid, pp. 280-283.

²⁴³ Ibid, pp. 283-291.

and individual, but were integrated into the landscape and were also connected to one another as one vast memorial. Viewed as a whole, then, the IWGC sites served as a physical record of the war and the wartime geography and nomenclature, helping veterans to locate themselves within a particular area, and then to recall or reimagine the wartime landscape.

Godden also makes the point that veterans were in fact directly responsible for the transformation of the old battlefields into a commemorative landscape, because the junior architects who sited and designed the majority of the cemeteries were veterans themselves.²⁴⁴ To this I would add that almost every Commission employee—male and female—had served the war effort in some capacity. The former servicemen and women who built the cemeteries and memorials, maintained these sites through the postwar years, or supported this work in administrative roles were not, then, distanced from the process of memorialisation, nor was there a reluctance to get involved in this work, nor were there feelings of resentment towards the ‘lucky’ ones who had died. Furthermore, some veterans even found employment in the battlefield tourism industry: in 1922, a group of visitors from south Wales travelled to France with the YMCA and were taken under the care of the driver, an “ex-Tommy thoroughly conversant with the French language and also with the surrounding country”, to give one example.²⁴⁵

All of this contradicts Pegum’s suggestion that veterans were excluded in the reconstruction of the old Western Front and were somehow stripped of all agency in commemorating the war

²⁴⁴ Ibid, pp. 48-92.

²⁴⁵ *Merthyr Express*, 7 October 1922, p. 22.

and the war dead. It was, undoubtedly, a shock to return to the battlefields and find the landscape so changed, but this does not mean it was always a negative experience.

Certainly, some veterans were cheered by the return to normality. Artro Owen, a bank manager from Old Colwyn in north Wales, spent three weeks in France and Belgium in the spring of 1921. He was struck by the “great transformation” of the places “which had become during the war dismal scenes of desolation and destruction” and which, “to him, when serving at the front, gave but faint hopes, if any, that they would once again produce food for man and beast”.²⁴⁶ But, just three years after the end of the fighting, “the scenes of the fiercest engagements are now displaying nature at her best, and hopes are entertained of a magnificent harvest in the autumn”.²⁴⁷ The recovery of the countryside and the return of natural beauty did not signify the loss of the trenches and thus the erasure of memory, but meant that French and Belgian people could resume living and working.

Other veterans noted the changes that had come over the landscape, but nonetheless found plenty to recognise, and plenty that prompted memories of their experiences during the war. Writing for the *Western Mail* ahead of the vast British Legion pilgrimage of 1928, ‘Special Correspondent’ described the French towns and battlefield sites that the Welsh pilgrims would see, and interspersed his observations with his own recollections. At Beaumont Hamel, he walked through a preserved landscape, managed by the Newfoundland Government as a memorial park. Here was “stark realism”, everything “exactly as the war left it”: the old trenches, first of all, “up which gallant men of the South Wales Borderers, who are buried, a

²⁴⁶ *North Wales Weekly News*, 26 May 1921, p. 5.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

number of them, in ‘Y’ Ravine Cemetery in this enclosed park, walked to their death”, as well as rusted rifles, helmets, and shell cases, and the barbed wire in no man’s land which led him to remark “you are glad you are there only for the morning, and not ‘detailed’ for a raid or patrol at night”.²⁴⁸ It must have been eerie, all that activity in stasis, and indeed was enough to remind him of the dread and fear of trench raids, even a decade later.

‘Special Correspondent’ then looked over the countryside surrounding the memorial park. So firmly were his thoughts back in “those ‘up the line’ days—and nights—of 1916 and 1917” that he thought he saw “wave upon wave of Welsh and English troops advancing—and going down—‘over the top’, but it was only the waving corn in the fields”.²⁴⁹ This may have been an exaggeration, of course, but if there is some truth in the anecdote then we can see that even a taste of realism could trigger visions of the past.

Next on the itinerary was Vimy Ridge. The “intentional preservation here is not so realistic,” he remarked, “and certainly not on such an extensive scale, as in Newfoundland Park”.²⁵⁰ But while poet and author Edmund Blunden—quoted by John Pegum in his study—found the trenches, duckboards, and sandbags rendered in concrete artificial and meaningless, wondering whether the “representation of a duck-board in concrete can be considered a duck-board”, this veteran declared that, nonetheless, the preserved trenches would “last for all time as a permanent advertisement for no more war and evidence years hence of the crude manner of our fighting in the Great War”.²⁵¹ The trenches at Vimy Ridge were, perhaps, more *reproduced*

²⁴⁸ *Western Mail*, 6 August 1928, p. 7.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 7-8.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid*, p. 8.

²⁵¹ Edmund Blunden, quoted in Pegum, ‘The Old Front Line’, p. 230; *Western Mail*, 6 August 1928, p. 8.

than *preserved*, but in the opinion of this veteran the site was still realistic enough to impart a message to visitors, whether in the postwar years or in the distant future.

In one of the tunnels that were excavated by Canadian engineers, he lay down on a wire bed which “I thought never to see again, and on which, in other parts of the line, I took so many fitful hours of sleep between times in 1917”.²⁵² Again, he was able to clearly envisage the past: “I pictured the candles guttering fitfully again on the table which stood between the table where ‘chits’ were signed and zero hours fixed”.²⁵³ This veteran did not have to revisit the places he once knew in order to recall his war service, suggesting that the shared experiences of the frontline—preparing for a nighttime trench raid, going over the top, or catching a few hours of sleep in a dugout, for example—could be remembered without the veteran being located in the specific setting or context.

‘Special Correspondent’ embarked on his tour of the battlefields to discover what the pilgrims from Wales would see on their way to the main event in Ypres, but it is clear that he also had a deeply personal experience. Although he did not fight at Beaumont Hamel or at Vimy Ridge, the preserved wartime landscape and the detritus left over from the war prompted intense visions of the past. His account shows that sites such as these—whether intentionally preserved or simply left out of the wider reconstruction, whether realistic or with a touch of artifice—could counteract some of the disorientation felt by returning ex-servicemen.

²⁵² Ibid, p. 8.

²⁵³ Ibid.

It was not only preserved sites—or sights in general—that could transport veterans back to the war years. Amongst the Welsh contingent travelling to the battlefields with the British Legion pilgrimage in 1928 were a group of blind veterans. “We cannot see,” they told the *Western Mail*, “but at least we can smell the old air”.²⁵⁴ This comment reminds us that battlefield visiting was—and still is—a very sensory experience. Exposure to the changeable weather, the sensation of sloshing through Flanders mud or striding over sun-baked chalk on the Somme, the smells of clay, chalk, grass and wildflowers, and the watery scent of stone, and hearing birds singing, insects buzzing, or French or Flemish being spoken—all of this could trigger memories or the imagination, alongside or in place of visual stimuli. Although the wartime landscape had largely disappeared, there were still orientation points: preserved sites or landmarks, the cemeteries and memorials, and the natural environment.

*

Veterans were a distinct group amongst the battlefield visitors of the interwar period. They had a specific and complex relationship with the old battlefields, and their visits therefore had unique purposes and unique characters. These visits could provoke a multitude of intense and contradictory responses: disorientation alongside recognition; grief and anger mixed with hope and feelings of closure; keen interest giving way, perhaps, to boredom.

Welsh veterans were no different, as the articles featured above show clearly. They, too, engaged in the same activities and experienced similar emotions before, during, and after their

²⁵⁴ *Western Mail*, 6 August 1928, p. 7.

visits. It also seems that their Welshness was, in this context, inconsequential. They travelled back to the battlefields to seek out the places that were meaningful to them personally, but which may or may not have been meaningful to the Welsh people or the Welsh nation more broadly. In other words, their wartime experiences and wartime identity took precedence over their Welsh identity. It may be, however, that a more focused piece of research, involving a greater number of accounts than can be discussed here, would dismiss this suggestion. A comparison between the accounts of Welsh-speaking veterans and those of English-speaking veterans would certainly be a worthwhile study.

*

Welsh civilians had no personal ties to particular sites or areas, beyond those significant to the war service and death, if applicable, of a loved one, and so it is little surprise that certain locations which loomed large in the Welsh imagination of the conflict became focal points for Welsh visitors in the interwar period.

It was Mametz Wood on the Somme battlefield, which was taken by the 38th (Welsh) Division on 12 July 1916, at the cost of four thousand men, and the grave of Welsh poet Hedd Wyn in Artillery Wood Cemetery, near Boezinge in Belgium, that drew scores of Welsh visitors in the interwar period—and continue to do so to this day.

The name Mametz Wood, Robin Barlow writes, “is embedded deep in the Welsh psyche”, as evocative as Senghenydd or Aberfan.²⁵⁵ No soldier who fought there would ever forget the battle, but Welsh civilians, too, were more than familiar with the narrative and imagery of the battle, having read about it in newspapers, letters home, poems, and memoirs, and seen it represented in photographs, film, and artwork. The word *Mametz* entered the lexicon of daily life, becoming shorthand for loss and devastation: writing to the *Rhos Herald* in August 1926, perhaps with the tenth anniversary of the battle on their mind, a resident complained that several trees in the local cemetery had been cut down and split messily “until the place looked like Mametz [W]ood”.²⁵⁶ It seemed that the Welsh experience of the conflict could be distilled into this single battle, and so the woods and surrounding area became a site of national importance.

During the mass pilgrimage to the old Western Front organised by the British Legion in the summer of 1928, a special trip to Mametz Wood was put on for the Welsh contingent. The arrangements were detailed in the *Western Mail* a month before the pilgrimage began, informing readers that a party would be made up in order to lay a wreath there, and also to visit the memorial tablet in the church, which had been unveiled by Lord Treowen.²⁵⁷ On 7 August, a day before the main service of remembrance at the Menin Gate in Ypres, Major F. H. Shannons, the leader of the Welsh contingent, took a group to Mametz, “where the Welsh soldiers suffered so terribly in July, 1916”, and laid a wreath in memory of the dead.²⁵⁸ No other details of the visit were given in the newspaper, but it is likely that a religious element was included through a prayer or reading, and, as the Welsh contingent had sung anthems and hymns throughout the pilgrimage, it is also likely that music also featured.

²⁵⁵ Robin Barlow, *Wales and World War One* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 2014), p. 59.

²⁵⁶ *Rhos Herald*, 14 August 1926, p. 8.

²⁵⁷ *Western Mail*, 6 July 1928, p. 8.

²⁵⁸ *Western Mail*, 6 August 1928, p. 7.

Mametz Wood was also visited by pilgrims travelling by themselves or in small groups. George Harries, a veteran and a councillor for Port Talbot, travelled back to France in late summer 1928 “with strangely mixed feelings”.²⁵⁹ He noted the transformation that had come over places like Boulogne, Étaples, Arras, and Ypres, and the French countryside—now covered in “splendid crops of corn”—but also pointed out that the traces of war were still evident in many areas, not only the preserved sites such as Vimy Ridge and Hill 60, but also across the region around Béthune and Arras.²⁶⁰ With a group of fellow ex-servicemen, Harries toured the old battlefields of northern France and Flanders, passing hundreds of cemeteries, “the signs of the appalling loss of young life”, and many “splendid memorials”.²⁶¹ He was greatly impressed with the Menin Gate, and the memorials at Saint Julien, Beaumont Hamel, Delville Wood, and at Notre Dame de Lorette, but wondered “why a suitable memorial has not been erected to the memory of the Welsh troops, say at Mametz Wood” where “they made such a tremendous stand against overwhelming odds”.²⁶²

Another veteran, and correspondent for the *South Wales Daily Post*, visiting four years later in the spring of 1932, posed the same question. He noted that the 14th Battalion, Royal Welsh Fusiliers, had erected a memorial in Dantzig Alley British Cemetery, “in the form of an impressive seat, suitably inscribed”, but that there were no memorials to the Welsh Division as a whole, and no memorials commemorating the battle at Mametz Wood.²⁶³ “Some day,” he wrote, “Wales will think of its duty to build a worthy memorial upon the scene of the battle in which Wales first fought as a unit for centuries.”²⁶⁴ It would take until 1987 for this to be done,

²⁵⁹ *Glamorgan Gazette*, 7 September 1928, p. 6.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*

²⁶² *Ibid.*

²⁶³ *South Wales Daily Post*, 21 April 1932, p. 4.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

when the South Wales Branch of the Western Front Association commissioned a memorial following a public fundraising appeal, but it is clear that almost immediately after the battle there existed a special relationship between Wales and Mametz Wood, and a sense of ownership: Mametz Wood was for the Welsh.

*

A similar importance was placed on the grave of Welsh poet Ellis Humphrey Evans, located in Artillery Wood Cemetery, near Boezinge in Belgium. Writing under the bardic name Hedd Wyn, he had won many local poetry competitions and *eisteddfodau* in the years before the Great War, but the highest honour for a Welsh poet, the chair at the National Eisteddfod, eluded him until September 1917—just a few weeks after he was killed in the early morning of 31 July 1917, during the attack on Pilckem Ridge on the first day of the Third Battle of Ypres.

His death, announced at the National Eisteddfod and then publicised in the Welsh press, was met with an outpouring of grief and sympathy for his family. One man, speaking in October 1917, said that the death of Hedd Wyn was “yn golled nid yn unig i’r teulu ond i genedl gyfan” (‘a loss not only for the family but for the nation as a whole’).²⁶⁵ Poetry was written in his memory, by renowned bards as well as by amateur poets, letters of condolence were sent to his parents from people and communities across Wales, and many people travelled to the Evanses’

²⁶⁵ *Yr Herald Cymraeg*, 16 October 1917, p. 3.

farm, Yr Ysgwrn, just outside Trawsfynydd in Merionethshire, to express their sympathy.²⁶⁶ Just as his home became a site of pilgrimage, so did his grave, particularly for Welsh speakers.

The interest in the grave of Hedd Wyn was apparent almost immediately after his death. In November 1917, the Reverend Abi Williams, serving as a chaplain with the 17th Battalion, Royal Welsh Fusiliers, wrote to the editor of the Welsh-language weekly *Y Brython* to say

[...] ‘rwy’n sicr mai nid anniddorol i’ch darllenwyr fydd gwybod ei gladdu heb fod
nepell oddiwrth yr “Iron Cross” ar y “Pilkem Ridge.”

(... I am sure that it will not be uninteresting to your readers to know that he was
buried not far from the Iron Cross on Pilckem Ridge.)²⁶⁷

He added that the burial service had been performed in Welsh by his friend and fellow chaplain, Reverend David Morris Jones, and that:

Do, clywyd acenion yr hen Gymraeg uwchben bedd y bardd o Drawsfynydd; ac er
i’r bedd fod mewn tir estron ‘roedd yr awyrgylch a’r teimladau yn hollol Gymreig.

(Yes, the old Welsh accents were heard above the grave of the poet from
Trawsfynydd. Although he is buried in a foreign land, the atmosphere and emotions
at the service were entirely Welsh.)²⁶⁸

This letter demonstrates that there was a desire amongst the Welsh public, and an awareness of this desire, for information about Hedd Wyn. Reverend Abi Williams gave the precise location of his grave, and stressed that the burial service had been wholly Welsh in nature. As

²⁶⁶ For a very small number of these commemorative poems, see *Y Genedl*, 11 September 1917, p. 3; *Y Brython*, 13 September 1917, p. 3; *Y Darian*, 20 September 1917, p. 6. For a mention of the condolence letters the Evanses received, see *Y Cymro*, 17 October 1917, p. 7. For one account of a pilgrimage to Yr Ysgwrn, see *North Wales Weekly News*, 4 October 1923, p. 8.

²⁶⁷ *Y Brython*, 22 November 1917, p. 4.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

we will see, future pilgrims would similarly emphasise existing connections between Wales and the grave, and would perform acts and rituals that perpetuated the “entirely Welsh” atmosphere surrounding it. Interestingly, the chaplain also took the opportunity to write that:

Syrthiodd degau o Gymry ieuanc—gobaith Cymru Fydd—ym mrwydr Gorff. y 31ain, ac mae teimlad cryf yn y gatrawd Gymreig y dylid gwneud rhywbeth i gofio gwroldeb y Cymro yn y frwydr honno.

(Tens of young Welshmen—the hope of Cymru Fydd [a movement founded in 1886 which campaigned for Welsh self-rule]—fell in the battle of July the 31st, and there is a strong feeling in the regiment that something should be done to remember the bravery of the Welsh in that battle.)²⁶⁹

One of the first pilgrims to visit the grave of Hedd Wyn after the war had ended was Robert Silyn Roberts, a Calvinistic Methodist minister, poet, and the Secretary of the Hedd Wyn National Memorial Committee. He travelled to Belgium in September 1923, and again in August 1924, along with Councillor Joseph Williams of Blaenau Ffestiniog: this latter visit was described in detail in a column in the *Western Mail*.

In August 1919, the Graves Registration Units carried out exhumations and reburials in the Pilckem Ridge area, and the remains of Ellis Evans were concentrated into Artillery Wood Cemetery. Silyn Roberts gave the precise location of his grave: “Plot 2, Row F, in Artillery Wood, British Military Cemetery, on the Boesinghe side of Pilkem Ridge in Flanders”.²⁷⁰ It seems that Silyn felt this was necessary, because the two men later visited Bard Cottage

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ *Western Mail*, 14 November 1925, p. 6.

Cemetery, where they were told by a gardener of the IWGC that the site contained the grave of a “great Welsh bard” and that “the cemetery was called ‘Bard Cottage’ on that account”.²⁷¹ The gardener had been told this inaccurate story of Hedd Wyn by students from Cardiff College, and had repeated it to hundreds of visitors, “a good illustration of how quickly legendary matter accumulates and beclouds unquestionable historical fact”, Silyn commented.²⁷² It also demonstrates how quickly myths began to circulate around the figure of Hedd Wyn specifically.

In Artillery Wood Cemetery, Silyn and Councillor Williams “stood with bared heads” at the graveside, “the place where the shepherd poet sleeps”.²⁷³ Silyn described, movingly, that at his head “grew a small bed of white alyssum, a crown of white flowers” and that “the grass that covered him was dotted with white clover, his own native meillion.”²⁷⁴ On either side of Hedd Wyn are buried men of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, Welsh Regiment, and South Wales Borderers: thus, Silyn wrote, “though far from his native Merioneth, he is surrounded by his countrymen, just as he would have wished to be.”²⁷⁵

The sight of Welshmen buried together led Silyn, like the Reverend Abi Williams writing eight years earlier, to contemplate the lack of a memorial to the Welshmen who fought and died in the war. He finished his column by appealing to Welsh patriotism and national identity, writing:

The gravestones in France and Flanders are eloquent of the heavy toll of Welsh life
the Great War took. Many thousands of our men are sleeping everywhere out there.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Ibid. Note that Silyn titled Hedd Wyn ‘shepherd poet’, not ‘soldier poet’.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

But I failed to see any Welsh national memorial to them. The Canadians, the Australians, and the Scots have built magnificent national monuments in the war zone. On the canal bank by Essex Farm Cemetery, between Boesinghe and Ypres, the people of Yorkshire have erected an immense column in memory of the men of the West Riding Division who fell in the Ypres salient. This monument is a veritable landmark, which can be seen for many miles around.

Is the sentiment of nationality stronger in Yorkshire than in Wales? The Welsh lads lie forgotten as far as the Welsh nation is concerned; and yet the fame of the 38th Division, in actual fighting and sacrifice, is second to none. That it poured out its blood without stint the thousands of gravestones bear witness. As there appears now no danger of war fortunes being confiscated to pay our war debts, will not the Welsh patriots, who stayed at home to garner millions out of the war, spare a thousand or two for a worthy monument to our dead?²⁷⁶

Although a national war memorial was unveiled in Cardiff in 1928, it would take until 2014 for a memorial commemorating Welsh people and those of Welsh descent to be built in the former Ypres Salient.

The column as a whole is very interesting. There is nothing about it that throws its veracity into doubt, but it is important to remember that Silyn Roberts was in several ways responsible for adding to the aura surrounding Hedd Wyn. As Secretary of the Hedd Wyn National Memorial Committee, he was involved in the publication of *Cerddi'r Bugail* in 1918, and the establishing of a statue of Hedd Wyn in Trawsfynydd in 1923. He additionally corresponded with the IWGC on behalf of the Evanses and proposed the words Y PRIFARDD HEDD WYN be inscribed on

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

the headstone.²⁷⁷ It is arguable, too, that making such a trip as this to his grave also helped to secure his status as a symbolic figure for Wales: a pilgrimage is, after all, a journey to a sacred place.

Reading the column with this in mind helps to reveal certain elements of the account that both echo and perpetuate the narratives around Hedd Wyn, particularly the emphasis on Welsh identity and the sense of solidarity between Welsh people as Silyn discussed the idea of a national memorial. Hedd Wyn came to symbolise all Welsh people, and especially all Welsh-speaking people, who had died during the war, and occupied a significant position in the Welsh national psyche.

A strong sense of Welshness defined another pilgrimage made to Artillery Wood Cemetery in September 1934. The visit was led by Bob Evans, the younger brother of Hedd Wyn, and amongst the pilgrims were Cynan (Albert Evans-Jones), a bard, minister, and veteran of the Royal Army Medical Corps, the Reverend T. Elwy Williams of Trefriw, who had also served as a chaplain to the 38th (Welsh) Division, ex-servicemen, bereaved relatives, and men and women from all over Wales, and from Welsh communities in London, Manchester, Liverpool, Ramsgate, and Huddersfield. It was described by Cynan, writing in the *Western Mail*, as “the first Welsh pilgrimage to the battlefields and cemeteries of France and Belgium”.²⁷⁸ Indeed, the journey had been organised exclusively by Welsh people, the pilgrims were all Welsh people, some of them monoglot Welsh speakers, and the actions and behaviour of the pilgrims were characterised by Welshness.

²⁷⁷ See Chapter 5 for details.

²⁷⁸ *Western Mail*, 10 September 1934, p. 10.

Gathered around the Cross of Sacrifice in Artillery Wood Cemetery, the pilgrims sang a memorial service, prayed, and observed two minutes' silence.²⁷⁹ One of the organisers of the pilgrimage then quoted from Rupert Brooke, translated into Welsh, pointing at the grave of Hedd Wyn and saying, "There is one corner of a foreign field that is for ever Wales."²⁸⁰ There were further speeches given, including a memorial address to Hedd Wyn, and an appreciation of his contribution to Welsh literature. "All our hearts are full," Cynan wrote:

I have never in my life attended a funeral or a memorial service quite like this.
Words fail.

It is only music that can express our pent-up emotions, and softly, very softly,
Telynores Gwyngyll plays "Dafydd y Garreg Wen" until the tears stream down
every cheek.

One feels that the veil is very thin, and in this atmosphere Mr. Williams-Parry's
lovely memorial englynion are sung with deep sincerity by Llinos Llyfnwy, who
also recites Cenech's dramatic poem, "On the Black Chair of Birkenhead."²⁸¹

The group then moved in procession to lay wreaths and other tributes on the graves of Hedd Wyn and two other Welshmen buried near him: Private Henry Evans, of Llanybydder, Carmarthenshire, whose mother and sister were amongst the bereaved relatives, and Private Owen Evans, of Dinorwig, Caernarfonshire, whose brother had also joined the pilgrimage.²⁸² As "Flanders poppies mingle[d] with Trawsfynydd heather and flowers from the home gardens at Llanybyther and Dinorwic", the pilgrims sang another hymn, *Bydd myrdd o ryfeddodau*

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Ibid.

(There will be a myriad of wonders...), commonly sung at funerals.²⁸³ Another account of the pilgrimage, also published in the *Western Mail*, commented that “the voice of Wales” was heard “in the peace of a Flanders field”.²⁸⁴ Certainly, there could be no doubt as to the national and cultural identity of the group: the speaking of the Welsh language, the performing of songs, music, and poetry, and the claiming of the site of the grave for Wales—a tiny Welsh enclave in Belgium—asserted who they were and why they were there.

This display of Welshness did not end at the cemetery. As they travelled across the former battlefields, the ex-servicemen amongst the pilgrims sang Welsh hymns under the direction of the Reverend T. Elwy Williams, “just like old times”.²⁸⁵ In Ypres, the pilgrims were received by the burgomaster in a ceremony that reaffirmed the bond between Wales and Belgium: the burgomaster declared that he was glad to be able to return the “warm welcome” which Welsh people had given Belgian refugees during the war, and to renew the comradeship sealed between the two nations “when they fought side by side for a common cause”.²⁸⁶ Afterwards, the group held a service of remembrance, and, “surrounded by the names of the fallen, our harpist struck ‘Aberystwyth,’ and the vaulted arches of the Menin Gate echoed ‘Iesu Cyfaill F’enaidd Cu.’”²⁸⁷ The hymn may have been chosen specifically because it was sung by Welsh soldiers before they went over the top at Mametz Wood.

Cynan noted that although other national instruments had been played in Ypres on previous occasions, the burgomaster told him that it was the first time he had heard the Welsh harp at

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ *Western Mail*, 8 September 1934, p. 10.

²⁸⁵ *Western Mail*, 10 September 1934, p. 10.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

the Menin Gate.²⁸⁸ “Your harp,” he said, “is essentially an instrument of peace.”²⁸⁹ It is an interesting remark, drawing a connection between Welshness, in the form of a national emblem, and peace, a theme to which we will return in Chapter 4 when discussing the peace movement in Wales. But the peace of the former battlefields was tinged with sadness:

The villages are clean and orderly; everything that human industry can restore has been restored. But thousands of thousands of graves we have passed in the well-kept roadside cemeteries tell of something that can never be restored—the lost generation of youth of hope and courage.²⁹⁰

This final paragraph reinforces the tone of the whole account: Hedd Wyn, Welshness, the anguish at the irreplaceable loss of life, and a love of peace are all bound up together, illuminating his central and symbolic role in Welsh—and Welsh-language—commemoration.

*

While Welsh veterans sought out places that were personally meaningful to them, Welsh civilians sought out sites that were of interest to Welsh people more broadly. These were sites connected to events or figures that had shaped the Welsh memory of the First World War, and so it is little surprise that the visits were influenced by Welsh national and cultural identity. Singing, playing music, and speaking in their own language affirmed their Welshness and that of the Welsh war dead, signalling a determination to remember in a way influenced by their specific cultural background.

²⁸⁸ *Western Mail*, 10 September 1934, p. 10.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

3.4 Battlefields, cemeteries, and the tourism industry

In September 1919, the Welsh-language weekly *Llais Llafur* ran an item originally published in the *Daily Chronicle*, discussing the emerging phenomenon of battlefield visiting. Many thousands of people were going out to France and Belgium, the article noted, “on a mournful quest to the obscure grave of a relative killed in action” and to see the numerous “ruined cities” on and near the old front lines.²⁹¹ But how many, the article also wondered,

will take the opportunity of staying out in those old trenches well into the night, in order to realise slightly the loneliness and eerie quietude of the battle-line in the dark hours. It would be a great experience to occupy one of those trenches just north of the Somme marches near Bray, and in the moonlight look down on the waters which so many of our boys found treacherous. Or, again, around Arras, to look across the broad, sweeping ridges which were once German. If the visitor did this, he would realise—what he has never before appreciated—how deceptive and delusive darkness really is. It was the darkness which made our sentries ‘creep’.²⁹²

The article anticipates—or, in fact, encourages—the tourist experience, suggesting that visitors engage in a sort of play-acting, walking the trenches by night in the silence and the moonlight in order to fully imagine and understand the realities of frontline service.

Many thousands of people did indeed visit the old battlefields out of sheer curiosity: a desire to comprehend what the war was really like, as the article suggests, or simply to witness the aftermath of what had been a constant—but distant—presence in their lives for years. These

²⁹¹ *Llais Llafur*, 13 September 1919, p. 7.

²⁹² *Ibid.*

people booked battlefield tours through travel agencies like Thomas Cook, or incorporated an excursion to the battlefields within a holiday or business trip.

The commercial activity surrounding battlefield visiting has been thoroughly explored by David Lloyd and, more recently, Mark Connelly, and it is not my intention here to retread this ground, but rather to examine how holidays or business trips taken by Welsh people often took on a Welsh character. Indeed, this section demonstrates how Welsh people, even when visiting the battlefields in a more casual context, sought out sites of Welsh interest and asserted their Welshness through their actions and behaviour. It reinforces previous sections in this chapter which show that Welsh people brought Wales with them to the battlefields, thus adding to our understanding of the experience of visitors on the old Western Front in the interwar period.

*

Just as bereaved relatives ventured across to the old battlefields as soon as was possible following the cessation of hostilities, so did the more casual visitors, taking advantage of a fast-developing tourist industry. As explained in previous sections, the conflict between ‘pilgrim’ and ‘tourist’ was largely an invention of the interwar period, with definitions unclear, and the lines between each categorisation blurred. Still, it is true that people visited the battlefields for different reasons, and there were considerable contrasts in how these visits were planned, carried out, and talked about.

The bereaved, as ‘pilgrims’, tended to rely on charitable organisations to escort and accommodate them, whereas ‘tourists’ used travel agents or made their own arrangements. Once in the vicinity of the battlefields, pilgrims had a single objective: to visit the site where their loved one was commemorated. Tourists might have stopped at cemeteries and memorials, but also took in a number of other attractions, such as the preserved trenches at Beaumont Hamel or Vimy Ridge, the huge craters at La Boisselle or on the Messines Ridge, or Hill 60 south of Ypres. There were also semantic differences in how these visits were reported and described. The journeys made by the bereaved were always ‘pilgrimages’, but tourists took ‘trips’, ‘sightseeing tours’, ‘excursions’, or ‘holidays’.

Take, for example, the newspaper coverage of a visit made by two people from Kidwelly, Carmarthenshire, in the summer of 1919. Daniel Meredith, a colliery manager, and Muriel Meredith, his step-daughter, spent a “most thrilling holiday” in Belgium while at home Peace Day was being celebrated.²⁹³ They visited Ypres and the old Salient, “the scene of some of the most desperate conflicts in the most desperate of all wars”, as well as Zeebrugge, Leuven, Liège, and Brussels.²⁹⁴ Also on the itinerary was “an excursion” into Germany—perhaps somewhere like Cologne or Bonn—and Verviers, the home of several of the Belgian refugees who had spent the war in Kidwelly.²⁹⁵ It was, the newspaper said, a “unique holiday”, but there was also hope that Daniel Meredith would give a lecture about his experiences, “in aid of a deserving charity”.²⁹⁶ Although it was clearly defined as a leisure activity, there was still an educational element to the trip, showing how the line between pilgrimage and holiday could be blurred, contrary to contemporary perceptions.

²⁹³ *The Carmarthen Weekly Reporter*, 1 August 1919, p. 3.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

At other times, the old battlefields were included as one element of a trip, and were not the sole focus. A party of over one hundred young tourists from Neath, Glamorgan, travelled to Belgium in the summer of 1927. They visited Ypres, where they laid a wreath at the Menin Gate, and then by motor-car “visited almost every place of interest” on the old battlefields, including Yser and Zeebrugge.²⁹⁷ Later they journeyed to Brussels, and then on to Paris, where they witnessed the demonstrations on behalf of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, who had been controversially convicted of murder and sentenced to death in the United States of America.²⁹⁸ This was deemed the “most exciting event” of their visit, and, according to the tourists themselves, the experience alone was “well worth the trip”.²⁹⁹ True, the battlefields would probably pale in comparison for anyone caught up in riots in Paris, but even the intended itinerary of the trip blended the sombre and educational with the enjoyable and recreational, once again showing how pilgrimage and holiday could exist alongside each other, even in the same trip.

Eight years later, another group of Welsh tourists combined a trip to Paris with a visit to the old front lines. They sailed from Liverpool on a two-week cruise, and, a few days into the trip, disembarked at Boulogne in order to travel to Paris and the battlefields.³⁰⁰ The exact itinerary was not listed in the newspaper article, but Artillery Wood Cemetery in Belgium was visited, and a “cushion wreath in the form of a map of Wales was placed on the grave of Private E. H. Evans who, under the bardic name of Hedd Wyn, won the bardic chair at the National Eisteddfod at Birkenhead in 1917”.³⁰¹ As we have seen in previous sections, the grave of Hedd Wyn had become a site of particular interest for Welsh people, and especially Welsh-speaking

²⁹⁷ *Port Talbot Guardian*, 16 September 1927, p. 6.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁰ *Liverpool Journal of Commerce*, 13 August 1935, p. 5.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*

people: the purpose of the visits was shaped by Welshness, and often the nature of the visits was shaped by Welshness too. This group of tourists was no exception, as they laid a wreath in the outline of Wales, asserting their own national identity and that of Hedd Wyn himself. They also marked themselves out as Welsh by their organisation of and participation in a singing festival aboard the cruise liner.³⁰² It seems that expression of Welsh identity was a feature of the whole trip.

Singing was, and is, a significant part of Welsh culture: a mark of joy, an act of commemoration, a show of community, and an affirmation of identity and love of country. It is unsurprising that singing features in many accounts of battlefield visits made by Welsh people. Indeed, one trip seemed to have been characterised by singing. In the spring of 1921, a group of mining students from Glamorgan toured the coalfields of northern France and Belgium, visiting collieries and meeting with civic leaders, engineers, and university representatives.³⁰³ At one event, hosted by Monsieur Berni, managing director of the Mauvage Colliery, “some Welsh music” was performed by the students’ choir.³⁰⁴ The mining director then described to the students how, during the war, Monsieur Berni had given water to a soldier of the Seaforth Highlanders who had been taken prisoner, and the ex-servicemen present went up to shake the Frenchman’s hand.³⁰⁵ After more war stories were exchanged, the whole party picked up flags and marched around the tables singing the Welsh, English, French, and Belgian national anthems, *Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau*, *God Save The King*, *La Marseillaise*, and *La*

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ *Western Mail*, 7 April 1921, p. 10.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

Brabançonne.³⁰⁶ The mining students sang in both an organised performance and in a spontaneous show of patriotism and celebration.

They also sang to commemorate the war dead. Later that day, when the group was travelling from the collieries to Mons, they stopped at a cemetery by the side of the road. A “short but solemn service” was held in the cemetery and “those who could manage to keep back their tears and control their feelings [...] tremblingly sang the Doxology and ‘Bydd myrdd o ryfeddodau’”, a Welsh hymn commonly sung at funerals.³⁰⁷ Just like the Welsh tourists on the cruise, these Welsh mining students brought their cultural practices with them to the battlefields, both in the choice of hymn and the act of singing itself.

National and cultural identity could, however, be expressed in other ways. A group of women from the village of Llansaint in Carmarthenshire chose to call attention to their Welshness by wearing Welsh traditional dress while visiting Terlincthun British Cemetery in France in September 1923. The group had travelled to France for *la Grande semaine du poisson* (‘the Great Fish Week’), along with dignitaries and fisherwomen from Scotland, Brittany, and the Netherlands.³⁰⁸ At the end of the week, the women of Llansaint—along with a group of women from Newhaven in Scotland, a number of naval officers serving in HMS *Godetia*, the Fisheries Secretary at the Ministry for Agriculture and Fisheries, and the British Vice-Consul, all of whom were also attending the Fish Week—went to the cemetery and laid wreaths on the Stone of Remembrance.

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ *Market Harborough Advertiser and Midland Mail*, 25 September 1923, p. 5.



Figure 3.1: Visit of Welsh and Scotch “Fishwives”. © Commonwealth War Graves Commission Archive, CWGC/9/2/2/9/5.



Figure 3.2: Visit of Welsh and Scotch “Fishwives”. © Commonwealth War Graves Commission Archive, CWGC/9/2/2/9/5.

The wearing of national dress was clearly a part of the pageantry and excitement of the Fish Week, but it was also a choice, and one that had the effect of marking these women out as Welsh while visiting the old battlefields in Europe. From the limited primary sources available, it is unclear whether the choice was conscious or unconscious, and whether the effect was intentional or unintentional, but their actions are nonetheless representative of how Welsh people performed Welshness overseas, by speaking their language, singing, wearing particular items of clothing, and seeking out sites of Welsh interest. It shows how important national and cultural identity was to all battlefield visitors—whether dedicated pilgrims or casual tourists—and, indeed, how important identity was in Welsh commemoration more broadly.

*

Throughout the interwar period, the former battlefields retained a magnetic pull, drawing in tourists and other casual visitors year after year. There were key differences between these visitors and those who were labelled or labelled themselves as pilgrims, and there was also conflict, some of it legitimate and some of it manufactured. But tourists and pilgrims had a great deal in common as well: both groups were motivated by curiosity, both shared the need for food and drink, accommodation, and transport, and in many cases both performed similar acts and rituals. Indeed, the behaviour of Welsh people, tourist or pilgrim, was shaped by their national and cultural identity.

We have seen in previous sections that the journeys made by Welsh pilgrims took on a Welsh character, as they travelled to the graves of Welsh soldiers and to sites of national interest, and they spoke, sang, and prayed in Welsh. This is perhaps unsurprising, as these visits, particularly

the mass pilgrimages, were carefully planned and the participants took great care over how they presented themselves. The trips made by casual visitors, however, were also defined by Welshness, suggesting that national and cultural identity could be expressed through more spontaneous or instinctive behaviour. It certainly seems that identity was central to how Welsh people interpreted and navigated the old battlefields, just as identity moulded the tone and format of Welsh commemoration as a whole.

3.5 Reflections on battlefield visits

Thousands of people—pilgrim, tourist, and veteran—were drawn to the battlefields in the interwar period, sharing a longing to understand and experience the world of the trenches. Welsh people were no exception. As individuals, in small groups, or as part of mass pilgrimages, they travelled to the Western Front, to the Macedonian Front, or to the Middle East, and, significantly, they travelled as Welsh people. Indeed, their Welshness was central to their itinerary, behaviour, and interpretation, as they sought out sites of Welsh interest, and performed acts and rituals that affirmed their identity. This could be dismissed as a consequence of being abroad—amongst the unfamiliar, people often cling to the familiar—but when placed alongside other forms of commemoration, it is clear that there was a broad desire to remember the war and the war dead in a specifically Welsh way.

Interstice I

*A selection of photographs taken by Ernest Turner, the author's great-grandfather,
on his return to Ypres in 1920*



A view of Ypres from the outskirts of the city.



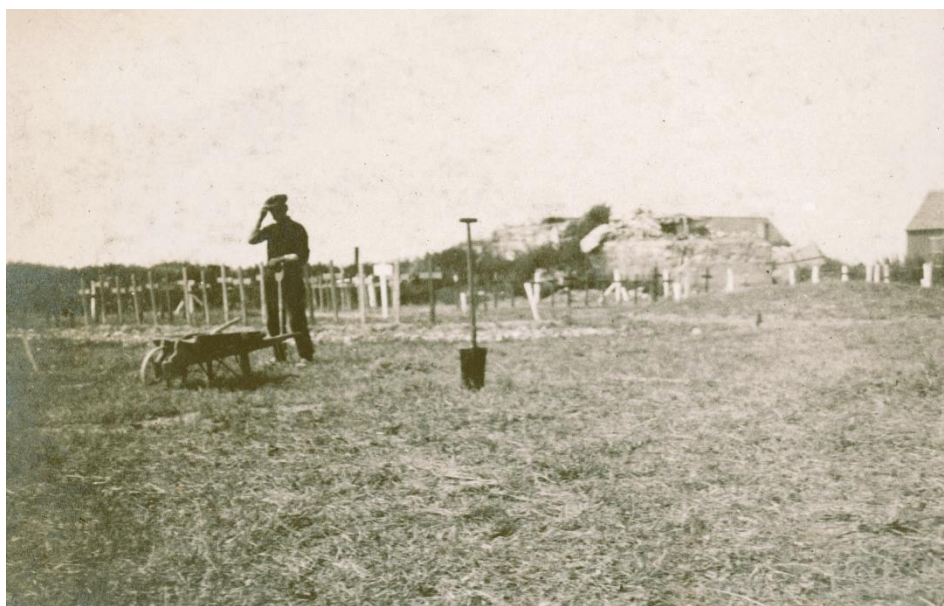
A Flemish man and woman, standing in the doorway of their temporary housing.



Two gun carriages, displayed next to what appears to be a shattered tree stump, with the ruins of Saint Martin's Cathedral in the background.



The ruins of the Cloth Hall.



A gardener of the Imperial War Graves Commission at work in St Julien Dressing Station Cemetery.



The grave of Bombardier Frederick Turner, Ernest's younger brother, in St Julien Dressing Station Cemetery.

4 “LET THAT STERN LESSON BE HANDED DOWN”: SERVICES OF REMEMBRANCE

During the interwar period, reminders of the conflict were inescapable. The aftermath of the conflict and its long-lasting ramifications occupied countless column inches, as did *in memoriam* notices. Writers, poets, artists, and filmmakers created works about the war, both critically and popularly received. In cities, towns, and villages across the country, the sight of disabled or unemployed ex-servicemen, or bereaved relatives wearing mourning dress, was common.³⁰⁹ As well as these visible or tangible reminders, everyday life, too, was organised around and shaped by remembrance.

Every year, the calendar was punctuated by important commemorative occasions, such as Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday in November, Peace Day in July, and the anniversaries of major battles, such as the Somme, Passchendaele, and Gallipoli. In Wales, the centuries-old custom of decorating graves with flowers on Sul y Blodau (‘Flowering Sunday’), observed on Palm Sunday, was extended to war graves. Indeed, the *Western Mail* reported throughout the interwar period that in Cardiff Cemetery alone—presumably Cathays Cemetery, which has a large plot of war graves—the graves of the war dead were transformed by spring flowers: in 1919, the graves of soldiers and sailors “were decorated with bunches of laurel, narcissi, and daffodils”, by 1929, “‘Soldiers’ Corner’ was a special place of homage” for relatives bearing wreaths or posies, and, in 1933, two young girls, laying flowers on the

³⁰⁹ For studies on disabled war veterans, see Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*; Ana Carden-Coyne, *Reconstructing the Body: Classicism, Modernism, and the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Julie Anderson, *War, Disability and Rehabilitation in Britain: ‘Soul of a Nation’* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), to give just a few examples.

grave of a relative, saw the next grave bare and “placed some of their flowers on a soldier’s tomb”.³¹⁰ The unveiling of a war memorial, whether in 1919 or in 1939, was also a significant commemorative event—furthermore, once finished, the memorials became prominent visual reminders of the conflict, and the sites around which rituals and services of remembrance were performed. Finally, there were myriad other, more personal, anniversaries, such as the birthday or date of death of a loved one or former comrade.

This chapter is concerned with the commemorative services performed at and around war memorials across Wales. It examines, firstly, the unveiling ceremonies that were, in most cases, the first service or ritual held at the memorial site, and what was said, done, and sung during these ceremonies. The chapter then turns to the services of remembrance that were observed on Armistice Day or Remembrance Sunday, and the speeches, readings, hymns, and rituals that formed the service. While the annual act of remembrance remained a constant, the tone of the services changed over the interwar period, reflecting a shift in how the war, and war in general, was perceived.

Drawing on the work of Adrian Gregory and Mark Connelly, who have identified distinct stages in the character of Armistice Day in their studies on national and local remembrance, respectively, this chapter also charts the changing tone and meaning of commemorative services, touching on the rise of pacifist activism alongside war remembrance.³¹¹

³¹⁰ *Western Mail*, 14 April 1919, p. 5; *Western Mail*, 25 March 1929, p. 11; *Western Mail*, 10 April 1933, p. 13.

³¹¹ Gregory, *The Silence of Memory*; Connelly, *The Great War, Memory, and Ritual*.

There are, in many ways, similarities here between Wales and the rest of Britain, but there are crucial differences, too. This chapter therefore offers a new perspective on the public ceremonies that were performed around war memorials in the interwar period, adding to our understanding of First World War commemoration.

4.1 Memorial unveiling ceremonies

Although some memorials, such as rolls of honour or street shrines, were established during the war itself, commemorative structures began to be unveiled in earnest following the cessation of hostilities in 1918. Contemporary records and newspaper coverage show that a memorial may have been unveiled on any day of the year, but certain dates were more popular than others, such as Armistice Day or Remembrance Sunday, for obvious reasons, Peace Day, and Easter Sunday, for the imagery of the sacrifice and resurrection of Christ, which, as Stefan Goebel observes, “provided the principal point of religious reference in war remembrance” as “fallen soldiers were presented as Christ-like characters”.³¹² In Wales, St David’s Day on 1 March was also chosen by several communities for an unveiling ceremony: examples include Senghenydd, Mold, Llandysilio, and Johnstown.

Memorial unveiling ceremonies followed a fairly standard pattern. There were hymns, and prayers and readings of scripture performed by religious representatives. A speech was usually given by a civic leader or a dignitary. The climax of the service—as with Armistice Day—was the silence, often ushered in by a bugler playing the Last Post and broken by Reveille. After

³¹² Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory*, pp. 232-233.

the memorial had been physically uncovered and dedicated, the national anthem(s) were played, signalling the end of the ceremony.

Civic pride and rivalry and regimental loyalty were just as influential in shaping the format of a memorial unveiling ceremony as they were in deciding the style of the memorial itself. Many services therefore featured a strong military involvement through the presence of ex-servicemen and serving soldiers from the local regiment. Dignitaries, whether royals, aristocrats, or high-ranking military officers, were invited to participate, with figures of national renown surely a victory for the community in the somewhat competitive business of war commemoration. In Wales, for example, the Lloyd George family were in high demand. Some war memorial committees, on the other hand, opted to give a different tone to the proceedings and chose people from the local community, particularly bereaved mothers as a symbol of sacrifice and mourning, to unveil the memorial.

None of the above arrangements are unique to Wales. The crucial distinction between Wales and the rest of Britain, however, is the role that the Welsh language played in commemoration. Although the Welsh language was in decline in the interwar period, and although Welsh and English held different statuses and occupied different spheres, Wales was still a bilingual society, and this was represented in the organisation of memorial unveiling ceremonies.

It seems that most communities in Wales included both Welsh and English hymns and readings in the services, even in areas where one language dominated. This was, perhaps, a natural and unconscious choice, but it is also possible that war memorial committees had already been pressured by the local community to feature inscriptions in both languages on the memorial

itself—as we will see in Chapter 6—and therefore took care to make the unveiling ceremonies bilingual in order to avoid further controversy.

The war memorial in Llanfairfechan, Caernarfonshire, was unveiled on 28 March 1920. One Welsh hymn, *Ar lan Iorddonen Ddofn* (On the bank of the deep Jordan), was sung at the beginning of the ceremony, and another, *Duw mawr y rhyfeddodau maith* (Great God of many wonders), concluded the service, while *Jesu, Lover of my Soul* was sung “in English” in the middle of the ceremony.³¹³ Portions of scripture were read in English and in Welsh by the Reverend Elfyn J. Humphreys, and prayers were offered by the Reverends Garel Jones, W. P. Watkin Davies, and W. E. Williams.³¹⁴ Although the newspaper does not specify in which language these prayers were read, it seems likely that there was a split between Welsh and English.

A similar approach was taken in Maesteg, Glamorgan, when unveiling the war memorial on 11 November 1926. The English hymn *O Valiant Hearts*—published in 1919, it became an “instant fixture” at remembrance services, Jeffrey Richards observes, for its evocation of service and sacrifice—was chosen to begin proceedings, and at the end of the ceremony, after the Last Post and the two minutes’ silence, the crowd joined in singing the Welsh hymn *Bydd myrdd o ryfeddodau* (There will be a myriad of wonders...).³¹⁵ Scripture was read in English by the Reverend T. C. Phillips, and in Welsh by the Reverend Iorwerth Jones.³¹⁶

³¹³ *North Wales Weekly News*, 1 April 1920, p. 4.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*

³¹⁵ *Glamorgan Advertiser*, 12 November 1926, p. 5; Jeffrey Richards, *Imperialism and Music: Britain 1876–1953* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), p. 157.

³¹⁶ *Glamorgan Advertiser*, 12 November 1926, p. 5.

In west Wales, too, both Welsh and English hymns and readings from scripture punctuated unveiling ceremonies, allowing the entire community to feel represented in the war memorial project. During the unveiling of the cenotaph in Cardigan, Cardiganshire, on 29 August 1923, lessons from scripture were read in English by the Reverend W. Whittington, and in Welsh by the Reverend T. Esger James.³¹⁷ Again, hymns in both languages were chosen: the Welsh hymns *Bydd myrdd o ryfeddodau* and *Marchog, Iesu! yn llwyddianus* (March on, Jesus, in victory) were sung at the beginning and end of the ceremony, respectively, while *Jesu, Lover of my Soul* was sung in English in the middle of the ceremony, prior to the act of unveiling.³¹⁸ Both *Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau* and *God Save The King* were sung at the conclusion of the ceremony, carefully balancing the dual, or perhaps competing, identities and allegiances held by Welsh people at this time.³¹⁹

The bilingual structure of the services in Llanfairfechan, Cardigan, and Maesteg was repeated across Wales throughout the interwar period: ceremonies incorporating both Welsh and English languages were held in Mold, Caerau, Flint, Caernarfon, Dolgarrog, Cefn Coed, Granston and St Nicholas, and Caio, to give just a handful of examples. Furthermore, at least a few unveiling ceremony programmes were printed bilingually, such as those printed for the services at Trefeurig, Cardiganshire, and Nefyn, Caernarfonshire.³²⁰ In all of these services, a mix of hymns, and the two national anthems, were sung, and readings from scripture were performed in both languages, allowing all members of the community to mourn and reflect in their own way. It is important to note, as well, that the religious texts chosen were read not only in

³¹⁷ Archifdy Ceredigion / Ceredigion Archives, CDM/SE/1/1: Cardigan Borough Council minute books. Souvenir of the Unveiling of the Cardigan Cenotaph.

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ Archifdy Ceredigion / Ceredigion Archives, ABY/WW1/8: Trefeurig War Memorial Unveiling Programme; Gwasanaeth Archifau Gwynedd, Archifdy Caernarfon / Gwynedd Archives Service, Caernarfon Record Office, XM 2942: Unveiling of Nefyn Parish War Memorial, 1923.

different languages, but by different ministers. The presence of Anglican and Nonconformist representatives was surely a comfort to the members and adherents of each denomination, but was also, as Angela Gaffney points out, a “demonstration of ecumenical unity”.³²¹ I would add that religious representation at the very public and formal unveiling ceremonies meant that each denomination could show their involvement in the war memorial project, and their continued relevance in the changing religious landscape of interwar Wales.

Perhaps the most carefully arranged display of bilingualism was seen at the unveiling of the Welsh National War Memorial on 12 June 1928. The memorial project had come under considerable criticism, primarily because the proposal to establish a national memorial in Cardiff was viewed by many in the north and west of the country as only “partly for the commemoration of Welsh heroes in the war and largely for the glorification of Cardiff”.³²² There may be a glimmer of truth in this: the memorial, a circular colonnade inspired by classical architecture, is similar in fabric and style to the other public buildings of the capital, and thus could appear to have been designed to augment the civic centre space of Cathays Park, and the city of Cardiff as a whole.³²³

Hostility towards the national memorial scheme was not based on architectural grounds, however: it was aimed at the city of Cardiff itself. Cardiff was described in the *North Wales Chronicle* as “a town which prides itself ten times more on its cosmopolitan than upon its national character”.³²⁴ Furthermore, at a meeting of the Penmaenmawr Urban District Council,

³²¹ Gaffney, *Aftermath*, p. 125.

³²² *North Wales Chronicle*, 4 July 1919, p. 5.

³²³ See John Hilling, *The History and Architecture of Cardiff Civic Centre: Black Gold, White City* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2016).

³²⁴ *North Wales Chronicle*, 4 July 1919, p. 5.

during which the memorial scheme was discussed, it was said that “Cardiff would not claim to be a Welsh town. One could not hear a word of Welsh spoken in the streets of Cardiff”.³²⁵ These remarks demonstrate that it was the cosmopolitan and Anglicised nature of Cardiff that commentators in the north and west of the country found so objectionable, providing an intriguing glimpse at the importance placed on the Welsh language in Welsh-speaking Wales at this time.

The Welsh language was inscribed on the memorial, and was used during the unveiling ceremony. Leading up to the service, the bands on parade played English and Welsh hymns, including *Fight the Good Fight, Onward, Christian Soldiers, O Fryniau Caersalem* (From the Hills of Jerusalem), and *Arglwydd, arwain trwy’r anialwch* (Lord, lead me through the wilderness, translated into English as *Guide me, O Thou great Redeemer*).³²⁶ During the ceremony itself, the English hymns *Jesu, Lover of my Soul* and *O Valiant Hearts* were sung, but there were no additional Welsh hymns—perhaps to avoid embarrassing the Anglophone Prince of Wales, who was in attendance to perform the unveiling.³²⁷ Welsh was spoken, however, for the dedication performed by the Archbishop of Wales, a prayer read by the Bishop of Llandaff, and the benediction pronounced by the Reverend Howell Elvet Lewis, representing the Welsh Free Churches.³²⁸ Furthermore, both national anthems were sung at the end of the ceremony.³²⁹ It is worth noting that the words of these religious readings and of *Hen Wlad Fy*

³²⁵ *North Wales Chronicle*, 6 June 1919, p. 2.

³²⁶ Glamorgan Archives / Archifau Morgannwg, D985/6/1: Order of Service at the Ceremony of Unveiling and Dedication of the Welsh National War Memorial.

³²⁷ Ibid. Newsreel footage of the unveiling can be found at ‘Wales Honours Her Dead’, British Pathé <<https://www.britishpathe.com/asset/63321/>> [accessed 1 August 2025].

³²⁸ Glamorgan Archives / Archifau Morgannwg, D985/6/1: Order of Service at the Ceremony of Unveiling and Dedication of the Welsh National War Memorial.

³²⁹ Ibid.

Nhadau were printed in the order of service booklet in Welsh, but were also accompanied by an English translation.

Although the unveiling ceremonies discussed above were held in different parts of the country, in different years, a number of hymns appear over and over again. The English-language hymn *Jesu, Lover of my Soul* was a popular choice, as was the Welsh translation *Iesu, cyfaill f'enaid cu*, as both hymns describe the refuge and strength found in the Christian faith, a consolation to the bereaved. Furthermore, the hymn was closely associated with the Welsh, having been sung by soldiers before they went over the top at Mametz Wood.³³⁰ A similar note of assurance and hope in God was struck by the hymn *O God, Our Help in Ages Past*, which was sung during the ceremonies which unveiled the memorials in Caerau, Llanasa, Penmaenmawr, Llangynog, Caernarfon, Criccieth, Llanfarian, Flint, Pontyclun, Lampeter, and Dolgarrog, amongst others. Other well-established hymns used for unveiling ceremonies include *Nearer, My God, To Thee*, *Fight the Good Fight*, and—an interesting choice—*The Crusaders*, performed by a male voice choir during the service at Penmaenmawr and chosen because at Gaza, the evening before going into action, “a choir of Welsh Fusiliers sang [the hymn] under the shade of the palm trees. On the morrow, nearly all fell”.³³¹

Newer hymns were also chosen for unveiling ceremonies. The hymn *O Valiant Hearts*, written in 1919 by Conservative politician Sir John Stanhope Arkwright, proved popular. It depicts British soldiers as crusader knights, heroes sacrificing themselves for their country, a sacrifice

³³⁰ The moment was immortalised in David Jones’ prose-poem *In Parenthesis*, and was described in soldiers’ letters, such as the one written by Evan Jones from Corwen and published in *Yr Adsain*, 25 July 1916, p. 2. *In Parenthesis* names the hymn as *Jesu, Lover of my Soul*, while Evan Jones’ letter names it as *Beth sydd i mi yn y byd*, but both hymns are sung to the tune *Aberystwyth*, hence the confusion.

³³¹ *North Wales Weekly News*, 4 June 1925, p. 6.

akin to that made by Christ. Incidentally, it is representative of a problem with First World War commemoration, which drew on so many languages and images that confusion and contradiction were inevitable: had the war dead fought in the name of Christ, or were they Christlike figures themselves?

Nevertheless, the hymn was an instant favourite, a celebration of those who had fought and died, appropriate for the dual purposes of honouring the dead and consoling the living with thoughts of the righteousness of the Allied cause. Despite its overtly Christian associations, it was also, as Gerald Parsons points out, typical of a “generalised religious sentiment” which characterised British remembrance.³³² Parsons argues that it was important to avoid reference to specific doctrine; instead, the language and rituals of remembrance served a “deliberately imprecise and unspecific civil religion”, albeit one steeped in Christian, and particularly Anglican, sentiment.³³³ Commemoration in Britain was inherently ambiguous, and was therefore successful. It must be presumed, however, that unveiling ceremonies held in specific churches or chapels involved prayers, sermons, and hymns that drew on more precise teachings and beliefs: a comparison of the services held in places of worship and of those held in civic spaces would certainly be a worthwhile study.

The English-language hymns chosen—whether well-established or written more recently—were familiar and popular, and their messages were general and inarguable, speaking of faith in God and the comfort found in His love and protection, the promise of resurrection and eternal life, and the necessity of remembering and honouring the dead. Welsh-language hymns used

³³² Gerald Parsons, *Perspectives on Civil Religion*, third volume (Abingdon & New York: Routledge, 2016), p. 51.

³³³ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

in unveiling ceremonies were no different, drawn from a body of typical funerary hymns whose tone was sombre but uplifting. The hymn *Bydd myrdd o ryfeddodau* was very popular, sung at Cardigan, Granston and St Nicholas, Caio, Nefyn, and Ffynnongroyw, to give just a few examples. It looks forward to the Resurrection, the joy and wonder of the day when the dead will rise from their graves and be welcomed into heaven, free from grief and earthly tribulations, and was therefore closely associated with mourning: it was commonly sung at funerals and Easter services, and in fact had been sung by the crowd at the 1917 National Eisteddfod, after they had learnt of the death of Hedd Wyn.³³⁴

Other hymns with established connections to commemoration of the dead in a peacetime context were *O Fryniau Caersalem*, and *Mae'n hyfryd meddwl ambell dro* (It is lovely to think from time to time...), both of which anticipate eternal life in heaven, free from suffering, grief, and pain. A hymn written by the bard Ieuan Glan Geirionydd (Evan Evans) titled *Gorffwys yn y Bedd* (Resting in the Grave), was also a popular choice, as it envisioned the dead now resting in peace, without pain and burdens, under the care of God. These were traditional hymns, but clearly resonated in the aftermath of the First World War for their familiar words and melodies, and their consoling and uplifting sentiments. Indeed, we can see that these specific hymns were used in other forms of commemoration as well: they were sung during battlefield burial services and during visits to the old front lines in the interwar period, and were used for inscriptions on war graves, war memorials, and as part of *in memoriam* texts, as other chapters in this thesis show.

³³⁴ *Y Brython*, 20 September 1917, p. 2.

Jay Winter argues that traditional languages and rituals—while less profound or intellectually challenging—were able to mediate bereavement and heal the pain of loss.³³⁵ Certainly, there was comfort in the Christian belief in the impermanence of death, grief, and loneliness, and in the familiarity of this belief, which helps to explain why the format of unveiling ceremonies and remembrance services remained largely unchanged throughout the interwar period. But while certain fixtures of remembrance services—hymns such as the ones listed above, the silence, and the Last Post, for example—were a constant, the tone of remembrance did change with the times, influenced by a growing disillusionment with the patriotic and militaristic narrative of the conflict, brought about by political, economic, and cultural shifts.

It was no comfort, however, for the bereaved to be told their loved ones had fought and died for nothing. *Some* meaning had to be retained, as Adrian Gregory points out, and there was “only one solution”: the purpose of the war ceased to be about winning victory, and became, instead, about winning peace.³³⁶ “Such an interpretation,” Gregory writes, “could take cynicism about war experience in its stride and at the same time console the bereaved with a powerful meaning attributed to the deaths of their loved ones”.³³⁷ The speeches given at unveiling ceremonies—an opportunity to discuss the meaning of the memorial and its role in the community space—reflect the change in focus.

Looking at Britain as a whole, Gregory identifies 1929 as the year of transformation. But in Wales, it seems that war disillusionment, and the resulting preoccupation with peace, emerged several years earlier, as early as 1922. The reasons for this are unique to Wales. Perhaps the

³³⁵ Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*.

³³⁶ Gregory, *The Silence of Memory*, p. 122.

³³⁷ Ibid, p. 123.

most significant factor in destroying the belief that the war had created a better world was the collapse of the coal industry in the early 1920s and the severe and prolonged depression that followed, leaving south Wales economically crippled. In his history of Wales John Davies writes that every one of the developed western nations experienced depression in the interwar period, but the depression in Wales was “exceptional in severity and length”.³³⁸ With economic decline came mass emigration, poor health, substandard living conditions, and widespread despondency and humiliation. The Wall Street Crash of 1929 exacerbated the depression, and caused serious hardships in the steel, tin, and slate industries, and in agriculture. By 1932, Wales was amongst the most depressed countries in the world, with over 40 percent of insured Welsh males out of work, and as late as 1939 over 15 percent of Welshmen remained unemployed, representing over one hundred thousand people.³³⁹ Running alongside economic decline was the rise in socialism, particularly in the south Wales coalfields, and it is easy to link the idea of working-class solidarity across nations and concerns over the growth of Fascism to the emergence of internationalism and the peace movement.

The dedication to securing peace also developed out of other sources, such as the doctrines of Liberalism and Nonconformism, which were particularly strong in north and west Wales. It is possible—in fact probable—that some Welsh people threw themselves behind the peace movement as a way to atone for so readily abandoning their pacifist ideals in 1914, and to return to the image the Welsh had of themselves as liberal, peace-loving, and faithfully religious. But we also have to assume that many others took up the cause out of genuine horror at what the war had entailed, and a determination that conflict should not occur again. With this in mind, it is perhaps no surprise that women led the way in grassroots campaigns for

³³⁸ John Davies, *A History of Wales* (London: Penguin, 1994), p. 549.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 549; 586.

peace. (The involvement of Welsh women in the peace movement will be explored in more detail later on in this chapter.)

Political, economic, and cultural changes, specific to Wales, created an environment in which war disillusionment and a dedication to the cause of peace thrived. The speeches given at memorial unveiling ceremonies reflected this, developing in tone and emphasis in three distinct stages throughout the interwar period: 1919 to 1921, the immediate postwar years, 1922 to 1929, the turning point, and 1930 to 1939, years in which the message of peace were firmly embedded in war remembrance.

Unveiling ceremonies in the immediate postwar years were defined by a blend of mourning and sombre remembrance with rejoicing and thanksgiving for the victory. The theme of sacrifice was central, skilfully wielded to console the bereaved and to instruct the living, particularly the younger generation. At the unveiling of the memorial in Llanarth, Cardiganshire, for example, which took place on 28 December 1920, the Reverend J. M. Prytherch offered “his deepest and most heartfelt sympathy” to the bereaved, but reminded them that they had the “satisfaction of knowing that their boys had refused to save themselves in order that they might save others”.³⁴⁰ The idea of Christlike sacrifice was thus intended to be a comfort amidst grief. Reverend Prytherch then turned his attention to the young people who would be using the hall, warning them that its character would be determined by them, and urging them, “in solemn tones, never to do anything in that hall that would be unworthy of

³⁴⁰ *Cambrian News*, 7 January 1921, p. 2.

the sacrifices commemorated by it”.³⁴¹ The sacrifice made by the war dead was also, then, something to inspire good behaviour.

At times the speeches given during the ceremonies seem to be deliberately vague. Living up to the example set by the war dead could, after all, mean any number of things. But at other times the speakers were more precise, and used their addresses to describe how the living should behave in their daily lives. At the unveiling of the memorial in Llangynog, Carmarthenshire, on 1 September 1922, County Councillor J. J. Bowen commented on the “great sacrifice” made by the dead, which he hoped “would remain an example to all to eradicate selfish motives” and to put community and country “before self”.³⁴² Here, following in the footsteps of the dead meant being dutiful to country above everything.

A similar appeal was made by Dame Margaret Lloyd George when unveiling the memorial in Granston and St Nicholas, Pembrokeshire, on 28 July 1921. Speaking in Welsh, she praised those who had served during the conflict, and said that their country should be grateful for their sacrifice.³⁴³ She then hoped that the coming generation would never be called upon to fight, but remarked that they could still demonstrate a similar sense of duty by committing themselves to be loyal citizens of their country.³⁴⁴ Of course, Margaret Lloyd George had her own motivations for stressing duty, loyalty, and patriotism—she was, often, a personal and political representative for her husband and helped to sustain his career, alongside their daughter Megan,

³⁴¹ Ibid.

³⁴² *Carmarthen Journal*, 8 September 1922, p. 3.

³⁴³ *Pembrokeshire Telegraph*, 3 August 1921, p. 7.

³⁴⁴ Ibid.

and his personal secretary and mistress Frances Stevenson—but it was a message echoed by many, not all of them social and political elites, in the immediate postwar years.

It is easy to see why some historians have viewed war commemoration as a form of social control. Bob Bushaway, for example, argues that the language and rituals of remembrance, emphasising sacrifice, glory, and the debt owed by the living to the dead, curbed “discontent and disorder” and prevented criticism of the war, and of postwar society and politics.³⁴⁵ Similarly, Michael Heffernan asserts that, once memorialised, “Britain’s war dead imposed a powerful block on the development of popular moral or political criticisms of the Great War, the political or military leaders who organised it, and the post-war world which these same leaders constructed”.³⁴⁶ Not only criticism: the speeches made at unveiling ceremonies warned against any kind of dissonant behaviour, such as immorality, criminality, the stirring of political divisions, industrial action, even minor grumbling, selfishness, or ungratefulness, anything that could possibly insult the memory of the dead and their sacrifice. This interpretation depicts the war dead as an active and dominant spectral entity, the guards in the watchtower, encouraging the living to regulate their behaviour.³⁴⁷ Commemoration was therefore an exercise of power.

There *was* an innate conservatism to war commemoration. To justify mass death, Adrian Gregory writes, it was necessary to extol the values that were being defended, and to stress the importance of preserving these values, which of course were defined as national traits or priorities.³⁴⁸ But it is also true that the interpretation advanced by Bushaway and Heffernan

³⁴⁵ Bushaway, ‘Name Upon Name’, p. 161.

³⁴⁶ Heffernan, ‘For Ever England’, p. 313.

³⁴⁷ See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, translated by Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon, 1977).

³⁴⁸ Gregory, *The Silence of Memory*, p. 5.

ignores that the memory of the war, far from being imposed upon the population by politicians and social elites, was actually a product of a relationship between the individual and the collective—a complex and at times unequal relationship, but a relationship nonetheless—and furthermore was constantly being reshaped by political, economic, and cultural events.

The shift in tone during the 1920s clearly illustrates this. It was no longer possible to speak of a better world won by heroic sacrifice, not with soaring levels of unemployment and poverty, rising fears over the growth of Bolshevism and Fascism, and continued conflict across the globe, but the cause of peace was unassailable, and was a matter over which the left and right were united. War remembrance during the interwar period was not, therefore, controlled solely by the political right, but neither was there a swing from right-wing war fervour to left-wing pacifism. Once again we are reminded of the complexities and fluidity of war commemoration.

As discussed above, the tonal shift is noticeable in Wales as early as 1922. At the opening of the memorial hall in Tregaron, Cardiganshire, on 4 January 1922, Captain Ernest Evans, who had served with the Royal Army Service Corps and was elected Liberal Member of Parliament for Cardiganshire in the by-election of 1921, remarked that “the world longed for a permanent peace”.³⁴⁹ His comment stands in contrast to speeches made in the immediate postwar years, which assert that victory and peace had already been won. Evans then reminded the crowd that their duty was “to make sure that they were moving, and moving in the right direction [...] to attain the great ideal which was so essential for the progress of humanity”.³⁵⁰ He was followed by Lieutenant Colonel David Watts Morgan, a socialist and trade unionist who had served with

³⁴⁹ *Western Mail*, 6 January 1922, p. 10.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

the Welsh Regiment and later the Labour Corps, and was elected Labour Member of Parliament for Rhondda East in the 1918 general election, who spoke at length about Welsh gallantry in the field as well as his hopes for the future. He hoped that the sacrifices of the war dead “had laid the foundation of a fuller and better liberty in the world” but also urged everyone present to do whatever they could to “abate unrest”:

Things were bad—he did not think they could be very much worse than they were with them in South Wales—but what they wanted to do was to close their ranks, with their faces set towards the sun of prosperity, and by pulling together they would again place Great Britain in the forefront of the nations so far as trade, prosperity, and business were concerned.³⁵¹

Here, again, is the acknowledgement that a better world was yet to be achieved. The speech was used as an appeal for unity, for Welsh people to work together towards peace, harmony, and prosperity, whether at home or abroad.

By the following year, speeches had taken on a more urgent and sombre tone, and were not only pro-peace, but anti-war as well. In what the *Welsh Gazette* called a “striking” address, the mayor of Cardigan, Alderman Dan Williams, dwelled on the devastation caused by war during the unveiling of the Cardigan cenotaph on 29 August 1923.³⁵² He began by saying that the memorial was “the first Cenotaph for the town of Cardigan, and he prayed God it would also be the last”, setting the tone for the rest of his speech, which is worth quoting at length here:

On the bronze tablet they had recorded the names of 93 dead. They had no record on the Cenotaph of those who lost their health or of those who broke their hearts, or of those who would bear the after effects of war upon their minds and bodies to the

³⁵¹ Ibid.

³⁵² *Welsh Gazette*, 6 September 1923, p. 6.

grave. They could not fit into this monument a plate large enough to take in that long list [...]. But it was all symbolised in the column—all the agony brought upon the people of Cardigan by the Great War.³⁵³

Alderman Williams then spoke of the “inestimable services rendered to the nation, and to humanity” by those from the town who had served in the Army, the Navy, or the Mercantile Marine.³⁵⁴ “It would help the people of the town,” he said, “to keep in remembrance their great suffering and privations, their mental and physical agony and their miraculous escapes from death during their long and arduous campaigns.”³⁵⁵ But he also chose to emphasise the “anguish borne patiently and heroically” by those at home:

The ex-Service men were not alone in their suffering during those tragic years. Their families and friends at home were their companions in adversity—those sleepless nights, the terrible suspense, the constant gnawing at the heart, the dread of the postman’s knock, the shock at the sight of a telegram, the ever-recurring fear that the worst was about to happen—all that agony, all that torture endured by loved ones at home was also symbolised in the stones of the Cenotaph. The Cenotaph would be a permanent record for all time that Cardigan suffered grievously in the Great War.³⁵⁶

And he was not finished yet. Alderman Williams closed his address with the following words:

War was terrible, a hateful, a diabolical business. War was a crime against the human race. God never ordained that nations should kill and torture one another. The sacrifices demanded by modern warfare were indeed too cruel for human souls

³⁵³ Ibid.

³⁵⁴ Ibid.

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

³⁵⁶ Ibid.

to bear. Let that stern lesson be handed down through all the ages by that sacred empty tomb, that pillar of sacrifice.³⁵⁷

The horrors of war were openly addressed here: Alderman Williams described not only the mental and physical strain of frontline combat, but the tension felt by those at home waiting for news, as well as the ongoing suffering of ex-servicemen and the bereaved, and concluded in no uncertain terms that war was a crime against humanity. It *was* a striking speech, a complete contrast to speeches made in the immediate aftermath of the war which dwelled on heroism, sacrifice, and pride.

Peace and freedom were contrasted with the cost of war at other unveiling ceremonies. At Aberbanc, Cardiganshire, the memorial was unveiled on 29 September 1923 by Colonel Edward Crawford Lloyd Fitzwilliams, who had commanded the 12th Divisional Train, Army Service Corps, during the war, and resided in Llandyfrïog, a nearby village. His speech seems to straddle the gap between the immediate postwar years and the years that followed. Indeed, he described initially “the inspiration and the example” set by the war dead to the younger generation, an example for them to have in their daily lives but also in the event that “civilisation and humanity” were threatened once more.³⁵⁸ This part of his address seems to belong in 1919. But then, in line with the mood of the times, Colonel Fitzwilliams spoke of peace. There was “no wish for real peace in the hearts of the nations of the world”, only amongst the people, and so the memorial, like all memorials, was “a call to the League of Nations for aid”.³⁵⁹ With the intervention of the League of Nations, and the establishment of

³⁵⁷ Ibid.

³⁵⁸ *Welsh Gazette*, 4 October 1923, p. 7.

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

peace across the world, the dead would not have “died in vain”.³⁶⁰ John Davies writes that enthusiasm for the League of Nations was “one of the most prominent features of Welsh life in the 1920s and 1930s”, and it seems that memorial unveiling ceremonies and remembrance services provided an ideal public occasion during which to discuss the importance of the League.³⁶¹ We will return to the League of Nations elsewhere in this chapter.

Colonel Fitzwilliams was followed by a number of other speakers, including the Reverend D. Jones, who began by saying “all their efforts should be turned in the direction of making war impossible”.³⁶² He pointed out that it had been said that “the men whose memories they were honouring that day laid down their lives for the sake of peace” but they were now in the year 1923 and “there was greater feeling of unrest in the country than before the war”.³⁶³ Disappointed that there was so much military feeling prevailing in the country, and fearful that the present policy of the country was marching them to another war, he urged those present to “set their faces sternly against the military spirit”, eradicate “hatred among nations”, and cultivate peace and better feelings at home.³⁶⁴ The language here is suggestive of the aims of peace, security through disarmament, and cooperation amongst nations, clearly showing the influence of the League of Nations.

Concerns over continued militarism and conflict were also raised at the unveiling of the memorial in Llanybydder, also in Cardiganshire, on 10 November 1923. The beginning of the ceremony unfolded along the usual lines: the Reverend D. Ayron Jenkins, chairman of the war

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ Davies, *A History of Wales*, p. 596.

³⁶² *Welsh Gazette*, 4 October 1923, p. 7.

³⁶³ Ibid.

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

memorial committee, paid his respects to the dead and expressed his sympathy for the bereaved, commenting that the ceremony involved a blend of respect and thankfulness with sadness and sorrow. After the act of unveiling, however, Major B. Davies-Evans said that “their hope was that in the ages to come every man’s sense of duty would be extended to every other man, and that injustices, oppressions, and warfare not only between individuals but also among nations would cease”, a hope voiced by the League of Nations.³⁶⁵ He was joined by the Reverend Lewis Williams, who hoped that “the time was not far distant when all wars would cease”, although he acknowledged that the world was “not within sight on that happy time yet, because of the great unrest on the Continent”.³⁶⁶ The peace that seemed so assuredly won in 1918 and 1919 was now not yet fully achieved, and it was more necessary than ever to work towards it and defend it.

Once again, the influence of the League of Nations is clear. There were hopes for a full and permanent peace, achieved through international cooperation and harmony. But there were also hopes for freedom and justice at home, hopes that human life would no longer be cheap, to be wasted on battlefields or down mines or in factories. Reverend D. James, who also spoke, asked how the people of Llanybydder might best honour the dead, and answered that they should not simply visit the memorial and look at it devotionally, but should live as worthy citizens and, articulating a particular sadness in the wake of mass death, should place “a proper value on life”.³⁶⁷ Remembrance was still envisioned as an active thing, a vehicle for improvement, just as in the immediate postwar years, but its lesson and purpose had now changed.

³⁶⁵ *Welsh Gazette*, 15 November 1923, p. 2.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

These unveiling ceremonies held in 1922 and 1923 are representative of the changing interpretations of the war, death in war, and how best to honour the dead. Although reverence towards the dead and efforts to console the bereaved remained constant, the rejoicing at an Allied victory and the winning of global peace, and the exhortations to follow the example of the dead who had sacrificed their lives for that victory and peace, began to disappear at the beginning of the 1920s and by the end of the decade were largely absent. Instead, peace was depicted as something fragile which had to be continually maintained, and efforts to achieve permanent world peace were considered the best way to commemorate the dead and ensure that they had not died in vain.

By the late 1920s and throughout the 1930s, commemoration of the war dead went hand in hand with discussion of national and international unity and how world peace might be preserved. Memorials, previously described as symbols of sacrifice and pride in that sacrifice, were now reimagined as markers of the horrors of war and the need for peace.³⁶⁸ After unveiling the memorial in Morriston, a community within Swansea, Glamorgan, on 15 November 1928, the Earl of Plymouth acknowledged that there were people who opposed the building of war memorials, but argued that these people were “labouring under a complete misconception” because it “was not the victory of the war that these memorials commemorated”.³⁶⁹ Similarly, at the unveiling of the memorial in Cefn Coed, Glamorgan, on 9 November 1930, Councillor Isaac Morris, presiding over the ceremony, declared that the memorial “was not a symbol of war but of peace, and it was their earnest prayer that war would be made a thing of the past”.³⁷⁰ These speakers addressed the criticism of monument building,

³⁶⁸ King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain*, p. 202.

³⁶⁹ *Western Mail*, 16 November 1928, p. 7.

³⁷⁰ *Merthyr Express*, 15 November 1930, p. 8.

a product of the mood of disillusionment and anti-militarism, as well as the ever-worsening economic circumstances. Unveiling ceremonies now had to justify the place of the memorial in the community landscape, and the reminder of the importance of peace was certainly reasonable, and befitting the political and cultural climate.

There was, however, a great deal of anxiety during the interwar period over the thought of another world war, which grew worse as Fascist aggression heightened and future conflict no longer seemed possible, but probable. Alex King points out that fears were particularly focused on the idea of aerial bombing of civilian populations and the use of poison gas, not because aerial bombing and poison gas had been particularly strategically effective during the First World War, but because the war had proved that the application of modern technology to warfare could be catastrophic.³⁷¹ The awareness of the horrors of war and the desperation to avoid future conflict meant that commemoration of the dead became an ideal occasion to discuss armaments policy, international relations, and the preservation of peace.³⁷² Speakers at memorial unveiling ceremonies often dwelled at length on these subjects.

In Llanasa, Flintshire, the war memorial was unveiled on 16 April 1927, and was described as “a monument of peace and goodwill” by Rhys T. Davies, one of the speakers, setting the tone for the rest of the ceremony.³⁷³ Davies spoke of the sacrifice of the war dead, describing it as “a covenant for the peace of the world”, language entirely representative of what King calls the “pervasive” depiction of the war dead as “martyrs for peace”.³⁷⁴ He urged those present to

³⁷¹ King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain*, pp. 201-202.

³⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 202.

³⁷³ *Prestatyn Weekly*, 23 April 1927, p. 7.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*; King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain*, p. 212.

remember in an active and not a passive manner, and to dedicate themselves to the task of founding a “new order of peace and concord between man and man and nation and nation”.³⁷⁵ Invoking a cultural identity in which a love of peace and strong religiosity were central, he said that although the Welsh felt the loss of their loved ones most keenly, this feeling did not lead them to build monuments of stone, but rather to lay the foundations of peace and goodwill amongst the nations of the earth.³⁷⁶ The remark is, perhaps, a touch hyperbolic, but it is true that the Welsh had taken a leading role with the League of Nations Union, and with the peace movement more broadly, to which we will return.

The Reverend T. G. Ellis, the final speaker, declared that the “principle of war was to kill and devastate”, and that “[b]etter principles and loftier ideals must take the place of the false philosophy that ‘might is right’”.³⁷⁷ To this end, he urged those present to make their own efforts to avoid another war, but also offered “thanks to God that out of the ruins of this world catastrophe there had sprung the beautiful blossom of the League of Nations”.³⁷⁸ The idea of renewal and redemption was almost certainly inspired by the timing of the unveiling ceremony, coming a day after Good Friday. It is an Old Testament vision of war, a purifying fire, cleansing the world of sin and turning people back to morality—and while his religious faith clearly provided him with the terms with which to think about the war, the idea that a lesson had been learnt from the death and devastation was not limited to clergymen, but was in fact widespread amongst the general population.

³⁷⁵ *Prestatyn Weekly*, 23 April 1927, p. 7.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

Indeed, the lesson learnt from the war was one of the central messages at the unveiling of the war memorial in Merthyr Tydfil on 11 November 1931. It was unveiled by Field Marshal Viscount Allenby, who gave a lengthy and interesting address. Understandably for a military man, Allenby first paid tribute to the bravery and sense of duty showed by the men of Wales, voicing his admiration for Welsh soldiers who were his comrades in both the western and eastern theatres of the conflict.³⁷⁹ Then, like the memorial itself, which features a bronze figure of a woman carrying a young child, Allenby drew attention to the contribution of the women of Wales. They shared the dangers of “shot, shell, disease and poison gas” while serving overseas, and showed “endurance and patient bravery” while working and waiting at home—courage, unimaginable to men, he said, that was “of even a finer type than the heroism so splendid in the clamour and clash of battle”.³⁸⁰ Allenby stressed that men, women, and children all suffered during the conflict, and it was this that should be brought to mind:

A young generation is rising to maturity—a generation who knew not the war. To them should be handed down the experience of their elders so dearly bought. Let them learn what we have been taught, lest some day they may have to pay again in misery and lamentation for the education which has cost us so nearly ruinous a price.

But if the lesson is turned to good account, no price will have been too high.³⁸¹

This emotional conclusion to his address reflects his personal politics, which had, according to Justin Fantauzzo, moved steadily towards opposition to war and belief in international cooperation during the last ten years of his life.³⁸² It was surely motivated by grief over the death of his only son Michael on the Western Front in 1917, but also the intersection of his grief with the broader feeling of disillusionment, when it became apparent that the First World

³⁷⁹ *Merthyr Express*, 14 November 1931, p. 12.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*

³⁸² Justin Fantauzzo, ‘Dead Sea Fruit: Edmund Allenby, the First World War, and the Politics of Personal Loss’, *First World War Studies* 7:3 (2016), pp. 287-302.

War had only brought about further unrest and conflict (some of which Allenby was at least partly responsible for). Fantauzzo also observes that from 1925 onwards Allenby had participated almost continuously in memorial unveiling ceremonies, remembrance services, and reunions and parades of ex-servicemen.³⁸³ It is an important reminder that while some people found remembrance services helpful, for others commemoration must have been a perpetual opening of old wounds.

The address is, of course, coloured by Allenby's own bereavement and grief and his personal political views, but the sentiment was shared by many. In fact, the address shows just how widely the feeling was shared: opposition to war and support for peace and international cooperation was not developed along political lines, but involved ordinary people as well as members of the establishment, people belonging to the left and to the right, and people with varying experiences of the war.

As the decade wore on, a new collection of 'Big Words' emerged: glory, sacrifice, honour, and victory were replaced by futility, tragedy, and horror, influenced by Fascist aggression and expansionism, the inevitability of rearmament in Britain, and the ongoing economic depression. The sense of growing desperation is clear. For the generation who had lived through the conflict, it was becoming more important than ever to prevent a reoccurrence of its tragedies and devastation. At the unveiling of the memorial in Ynyshir, Glamorgan, on 14 November 1936, Sir William James Thomas, an industrialist and philanthropist, said:

Those of you who served in the Great War and those of us who were old enough to realise what it meant to those who were actually serving and to those who had

³⁸³ Ibid, p. 293.

someone near and dear to them serving require no Memorial to remind us of the horror of it all, but since the end of the War an entirely new generation has grown up who know very little, if anything, of the futility, the tragedy and horror of War.³⁸⁴

The memorial would, he continued, be seen daily by the inhabitants of the town, and would therefore serve as a

daily reminder to the younger generation of what War has meant to those who lived and also those who died in those terrible years 1914 – 1918, and will I hope make them more determined than ever to strive their utmost to secure the continuance of peace—not a peace secured at any price—but a peace founded on honour, mutual understanding and justice.³⁸⁵

Here we see the war memorial in its final stage, transformed from a marker of community pride and thanksgiving, to a site of memory and mourning, and finally to a reminder of the horror of war and the necessity of peace. It held great significance in every stage, and was always intended to impart some kind of lesson, but the lesson changed throughout the interwar period.

The idea that a lesson of peace was to be found in war memorials was not always accepted, however. In March 1936 the *Glamorgan Advertiser* published a letter to the editor from ‘Optimist’, who asked whether a stone memorial would be the most fitting way to remember the dead of Caerau, a town near Maesteg in Glamorgan. ‘Optimist’ stated firmly that “War Memorials do not remind youth of the horrors of war. They serve rather to glorify war in the eyes of youth.”³⁸⁶ They then referred to the poverty and suffering in Caerau, and stated that a monument “would be a stupid waste of money” when there were far worthier causes, such as

³⁸⁴ *Caerphilly Journal*, 21 November 1936, p. 3.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁶ *Glamorgan Advertiser*, 13 March 1936, p. 8.

establishing a children's ward at Maesteg Hospital, or creating a fund to feed and clothe the children of the town or to help mothers make ends meet.³⁸⁷ Referring to the wishes of the bereaved, and thus employing a tactic used time and time again in the interwar period, 'Optimist' argued that those who had lost sons or husbands would prefer the memory of their loved ones to be enshrined in a cause that helped the living.³⁸⁸ In a postscript, 'Optimist' returned to their original point, and offered a final suggestion:

Donate the whole of your fund to the "No More War Movement." In so assisting such a movement you will be doing much in helping forward the cause of peace, surely the greatest tribute to the memory of those who died, so they believed, that war might be no more.³⁸⁹

Peace was of the utmost importance, but this commentator wanted a practical, not symbolic, gesture towards its preservation.

'Optimist' was clearly motivated by the dire economic situation in south Wales, which exacerbated or renewed ongoing tensions between those who supported the building of symbolic monuments and those who preferred functional memorials. The debate over the purpose of a war memorial—whether it should honour the dead or serve the living—has been explored by Angela Gaffney, in a Welsh context, and by Catherine Moriarty and Alex King, more broadly, and has since been neatly summarised by Gill Abousnnouga and David Machin.³⁹⁰ What is clear is that both monumental and functional memorials could fulfil both purposes, in a variety of ways, but the matter was keenly felt, as the letter shows.

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

³⁸⁸ Ibid.

³⁸⁹ Ibid.

³⁹⁰ Gaffney, *Aftermath*, pp. 69-95; Catherine Moriarty, 'Private Grief and Public Remembrance: British First World War Memorials', in Martin Evans and Kenneth Lunn (eds.), *War and Memory in the Twentieth Century*

But ‘Optimist’ also displayed a deep dissatisfaction with war commemoration as a whole. Their opinions in the letter above reflect a growing disappointment with the message and format of remembrance, particularly Armistice Day, another trend of the 1930s which ran alongside the peace movement. Just like the calls for peace, the opposition to Armistice Day did not come from a single group: there were those who, to use the model developed by Martin Ceadel, can be classed as absolute pacifists, who pointed out the hypocrisy of preaching peace while the country was preparing for war, and there were those who can be labelled pacifists or defencists, who were not opposed to a war of defence or a war that would ultimately restore international harmony, and who saw the emphasis on peace as an excuse to appease or facilitate Fascist aggression and expansionism.³⁹¹ The proponents of Armistice Day also cited the importance of peace, however, arguing that the services prompted people to remember the horrors of war and to pledge themselves to the cause of peace. People across the political spectrum thus agreed that peace was important, but there were disagreements over the way in which calls for peace were to be balanced with the commemoration of war. We will return to this theme in the following section.

Memorial unveiling ceremonies taking place during the 1930s demonstrate how fluidly war remembrance changed with the times. Analysis of the tone and content of the addresses made at the ceremonies shows that there was an awareness of the disillusionment with the war and the dissatisfaction with the militaristic elements of remembrance. Speakers were therefore keen to stress that war memorials were in fact symbols of peace. But while some speeches may have been intended simply to pre-empt criticism on political, moral, or economic grounds, other

(Oxford: Berg, 1997), pp. 125-142; King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain*, pp. 65-105; Gill Abousnnouga and David Machin, *The Language of War Monuments* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), pp. 87-90.

³⁹¹ Martin Ceadel, *Thinking About Peace and War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 4-5.

speeches display a genuine and urgent desire for peace and international cooperation, indicating just how far-reaching the peace movement was in Britain during this period.

*

The unveiling and dedication of a war memorial was a formal and public ceremony that made a declaration about the meaning and purpose of the memorial in a local and national community. As such, we can chart the changing tone of war remembrance throughout the interwar period as it was influenced by economic decline, the betrayal of promises made by politicians, and finally the likelihood of another global conflict breaking out. In Wales, it seems that the shift towards war disillusionment and the resulting calls for peace occurred several years before it did across the rest of Britain as a whole, evidence with intriguing implications for how political and economic specificities affect commemoration.

Once unveiled, memorials remained visible and relevant to the community, as the site at which commemorative activity took place. The most important, or at least the most consistent, act was the annual observance of Armistice Day, to which this chapter now turns.

4.2 Remembrance services

Today it is hard to imagine that the format and tone of Armistice Day was anything other than fixed and constant and permanent. The tradition seems so embedded in British life that it feels immemorial, not invented—but it *was* invented, bit by bit, in the first few years that followed the end of the war, and, moreover, was reinvented throughout the interwar period.

The term ‘invented tradition’ was coined by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger in 1983.³⁹² It describes ‘traditions’ which were “actually invented, constructed, and formally instituted” as well as those which emerged “in a less easily traceable manner within a brief and dateable period” and established themselves “with great rapidity”.³⁹³ The traditions themselves are “taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition”, which “attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past”.³⁹⁴ In short, Hobsbawm explains, they are “responses to novel situations which take the form of reference to older situations”.³⁹⁵

Hobsbawm and Ranger, together with Benedict Anderson and his concept of ‘imagined communities’, helped to illuminate the relationship between “the nation-state, the ‘invented traditions’ and ‘imaginings’ that give shape to national identity, and the forms and rituals of

³⁹² Hobsbawm and Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*.

³⁹³ Eric Hobsbawm, ‘Introduction: Inventing Traditions’, in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 1-14 (p. 1).

³⁹⁴ Ibid.

³⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 2.

war commemoration”, thereby posing questions about the power of commemoration to preserve and reinforce dominant elites and ideologies in an existing state.³⁹⁶

Armistice Day certainly seems to fulfil the definition of an invented tradition. It developed out of various spontaneous and improvised responses as well as more deliberate efforts to address certain needs: the need to celebrate and express relief alongside the need to mourn and reflect, the need for unity in the face of unrest (there was conflict in Russia, Germany, and Ireland, and elsewhere, and violent, racially motivated riots across Britain, including in south Wales), and the need to address changing political and diplomatic circumstances.

Certain aspects of Armistice Day services—the procession, hymn-singing, prayers, and wreath-laying—were rooted in typical funerary customs, and its tone—the blend of thanksgiving with solemn reflection—was certainly influenced by memorial unveiling ceremonies. As well as the familiar, there was the new, in the form of the two-minute silence, the Exhortation, taken from a poem by Laurence Binyon, and the associated Poppy Appeal of the British Legion, which ran in the week or so leading up to Armistice Day. These rituals, in particular the silence, which was at the core of the service, were, Adrian Gregory writes, rituals of integration, unity, and legitimation.³⁹⁷

The format of Armistice Day, once established, changed very little from 1919 to 1939. But the language surrounding the ritual and the language used in the service itself did adjust itself to the times. As with memorial unveiling ceremonies, we can observe a shift in tone over the

³⁹⁶ Ashplant, Dawson, and Roper, ‘The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration’, p. 8.

³⁹⁷ Gregory, *The Silence of Memory*, p. 10.

interwar period, and, as with memorial unveiling ceremonies, this shift occurred much earlier in Wales than in the rest of Britain.

As an invented tradition, it grew from its original conception and survived from year to year, even when doubts were expressed over its longevity and even when opposition towards it emerged. Three factors can be identified to explain its success: firstly, the blend of old and new elements gave the whole ritual a sense of timelessness; secondly, its ambiguities and imprecision meant that the ritual could mean anything to anyone; and thirdly, the message and meaning of the day was adapted to the changing times.



Figure 4.1: A portion of the crowd which assembled in front of the City Hall in Cathays Park, Cardiff, 11 November 1918. © *Western Mail*, 12 November 1918.

As the photograph above suggests, the actual day of armistice on 11 November 1918 was one of joy and triumph, with spontaneous celebrations breaking out across the country. But despite the overwhelming response to Allied victory and the emotional attachment to the day, the decision to mark its first anniversary in 1919 was, as Adrian Gregory explains, made “very close to the anniversary itself”.³⁹⁸ It was only on 7 November 1919 that newspapers carried the request, framed as a personal invitation from King George V, for the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month to be marked by “a complete suspension of all our normal activities” for the duration of two minutes, so that “the thoughts of everyone may be concentrated on reverent remembrance of the Glorious Dead.”³⁹⁹ There was no other direction, however, leaving each community free to do what it felt necessary for the remainder of the day.

In Cardiff, the capital, crowds filled the streets. The *Western Mail* reported that “at first there was a shyness on the part of many people to take off their hats” but “the old man who stood in St. Mary-street and whose demeanour indicated that he had lost a son in the war set the example”; “all the rest followed, and, bareheaded, engaged in the Great Silence.”⁴⁰⁰ Soldiers stood to attention, people remained still, and there was no other movement until the two minutes were over.

There were similar scenes in Colwyn Bay, in the historic county of Denbighshire in the north of Wales. Promptly at eleven, the *North Wales Weekly News* said, hooters were sounded and people, wherever they were, “instinctively” stood still and bowed their heads, and men doffed

³⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 8.

³⁹⁹ *Western Mail*, 7 November 1919, p. 5.

⁴⁰⁰ *Western Mail*, 12 November 1919, p. 5.

their hats.⁴⁰¹ Cars and other vehicles came to a standstill, and business was suspended. It was “a simple though thrilling act”, the newspaper commented, and reported that a large number of people were “moved to tears”, with some “sobbing piteously”.⁴⁰² Silence broken by sobbing or a singular cry of anguish was one of the enduring clichés of Armistice Day, serving to describe the emotional atmosphere of the ritual and, by drawing attention to a small sound—the ticking of clocks was another—to emphasise the depth and intensity of the silence itself.

It was not only crowds gathering in public spaces that observed the silence. The *South Wales Gazette* and the *Western Mail* also reported that work stopped in the coalfields of south Wales, both on the surface and underground. Colliery hooters were used to signal the beginning of the silence, and “pick and shovel were laid aside”.⁴⁰³ Elsewhere, shops were closed, business was suspended, and in the courts all those present stood in silence with their heads bowed. Observance of the silence was largely spontaneous, but there were incidents where participation had to be enforced. In Conwy, for example, a lorry driver proceeding up a road was stopped by a policeman and made to come to a halt.⁴⁰⁴

For other communities, observance of Armistice Day went beyond the silence at eleven o’clock, and involved other events and gatherings. In Aberystwyth, the boys of Alexandra Road School were addressed by their headmaster on the subject of the League of Nations.⁴⁰⁵ The message for them on that day, the headmaster said, “was to realise the destructiveness of war, and [...] to prepare for reconstructing the world in fellowship and co-operation, so that

⁴⁰¹ *North Wales Weekly News*, 13 November 1919, p. 5.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*

⁴⁰³ *South Wales Gazette*, 14 November 1919, p. 6; *Western Mail*, 12 November 1919, p. 5.

⁴⁰⁴ *North Wales Weekly News*, 13 November 1919, p. 5.

⁴⁰⁵ *Welsh Gazette*, 13 November 1919, p. 8.

confidence and happiness might take the place of anxiety and sorrow.”⁴⁰⁶ In Llandudno, too, the League of Nations was important to the message of the day. A public meeting was held at the town hall in the evening, during which “the leading residents and clergy of the town” spoke about the League of Nations and the League of Nations Union.⁴⁰⁷ The Reverend E. O. Davies explained the League of Nations Covenant, while Union literature on the subject was distributed amongst the audience, and a local branch of the Union was formed with the Reverend H. C. Lewis as secretary.⁴⁰⁸ Although both the League of Nations and the League of Nations Union were in their infancy in November 1919, there were signs that discussion of international harmony and cooperation would, firstly, become an important part of British society, and would, secondly, become inextricably linked with Armistice Day.

Elsewhere in Wales, the day took on an atmosphere of festivity. The children and elderly people of Llanfairfechan were hosted in the town hall, which was decorated with flags and bunting, and were “given a treat in the way of a good tea”.⁴⁰⁹ Other towns, such as Colwyn Bay in the north, and Pencoed in Glamorgan in the south, put on receptions for demobilised servicemen and women, which consisted of sports competitions, dinners, and concerts.⁴¹⁰ Across the country, then, the first Armistice Day involved a blend of solemn mourning and reflection with celebration and entertainment.

This fusion of responses and needs, which was in 1919 spontaneous and without official direction, soon solidified into tradition, and would endure throughout the interwar period.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁷ *North Wales Weekly News*, 13 November 1919, p. 5.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid; *Glamorgan Gazette*, 21 November 1919, p. 4.

Remembrance services, based around typical funerary customs such as the singing of hymns, the reading of prayers, and the laying of wreaths, as well as the new mark of respect and mourning, the silence, continued to be held because they consoled the bereaved, and consoling the bereaved was understood to be the primary purpose of the day.⁴¹¹ But the concerts, dances, and parties also remained a constant because they were chiefly attended by ex-servicemen and women who, subordinate to the civilian bereaved, were able to celebrate, express relief at having survived, and honour their former comrades in their own way and with other people who understood their experiences.⁴¹² The revelries were criticised by civilians, and by unemployed or poverty-stricken ex-servicemen, and underwent changes throughout the interwar period, but never disappeared entirely.

Although there was a great deal of consistency in how the occasion was observed, the message of Armistice Day changed subtly but significantly from 1919 to 1939, shaped by political, diplomatic, and economic circumstances. Writing of Britain as a whole, Adrian Gregory identifies 1929 as the year of transformation, but in Wales, I argue here, war disillusionment and the subsequent preoccupation with peace emerged as early as 1922. Wales was crippled by economic depression which took root in the early 1920s, leading to mass unemployment, widespread poverty, and a deep sense of hopelessness and anger. The land fit for heroes had certainly not materialised. The feeling of discontent and dismay was heightened by developments abroad that threatened international security and undermined the organisations that were responsible for maintaining peace. In the face of such misery and anxiety, there was a corresponding shift in the tone of commemoration. On Armistice Day in 1919, a person could claim that the heroism of Allied soldiers and the victory they had won had achieved peace, but

⁴¹¹ Gregory, *The Silence of Memory*, p. 24.

⁴¹² Ibid, pp. 51-92.

by 1922, the jubilation wearing off, the core message of Armistice Day was that the suffering of Allied soldiers and the sacrifice they had made necessitated the establishment and preservation of a proper peace.⁴¹³ The longing for a better world is evident in the coverage of Armistice Day services in the early 1920s.

Indeed, on the eve of Armistice Day in 1922, the *South Wales Gazette* recalled the “ever memorable suspension of war”, and commented that it was “disappointing to realise that four years have elapsed without a peace being achieved which would be commensurate with such a victory”.⁴¹⁴ The following year, the *Glamorgan Gazette*, covering the remembrance service at Bridgend, remarked that the “ebullient joy of the first Armistice Day there was not, nor could it be expected, for the disillusionment of the five years of peace, and the none too bright outlook for the future, are almost as great a trial as was the stress of the terrible days of war”.⁴¹⁵ In this atmosphere of pessimism and suffering, Armistice Day required a new meaning and purpose. Morgan Watcyn-Williams, who had served with the Royal Welsh Fusiliers and who became a Calvinist Methodist minister after the war, offered a solution which was echoed by many: that Armistice Day should recall people to the task of “redeeming the promises made” to ex-servicemen, widows, and orphans, that it should “make better men and women of us”, and above all that it should be a solemn and personal “dedication to the cause of peace”.⁴¹⁶

The shift in the tone of commemoration was affected by the emergence of campaigns for peace and the development of a broader interest in the maintenance of peace. These trends were

⁴¹³ Ibid, p. 36.

⁴¹⁴ *South Wales Gazette*, 10 November 1922, p. 8.

⁴¹⁵ *Glamorgan Gazette*, 16 November 1923, p. 5.

⁴¹⁶ *Merthyr Express*, 24 November 1923, p. 3.

observable across Britain, but in Wales the cause of peace and international cooperation was keenly felt. It was, of course, due to the experience of the First World War, but was also reflective of more entrenched aspects of Welsh society and culture.

Pacifist, anti-militarist, and internationalist sentiment in Wales can be traced, firstly, to the influence of Nonconformism. At the beginning of the twentieth century, D. Densil Morgan notes, Wales was “an intensely religious nation”: various religious revivals during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had encouraged involvement in organised religion, and Christianity, whether practised in a Nonconformist chapel or in a parish church, was undoubtedly the religion of the people and an important part of daily life.⁴¹⁷ It was Nonconformism in particular, though, that held a tight grip on Wales through the first half of the century, generally but especially after the Church of England was disestablished within Wales in 1920. Taking into account the extent to which Nonconformism shaped Welsh society, culture, and politics, John Harvey writes that the various Nonconformist denominations were “amongst the most powerful forces acting upon nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Wales”.⁴¹⁸ There was a perception that the Nonconformists of Wales were the people of Wales, and consequently Nonconformism was integral to Welsh identity and the belief that Wales was a separate, distinctive nation.⁴¹⁹ Indeed, R. Merfyn Jones argues that Nonconformity gave to the Welsh a sense of specialness and confidence “which also often engendered self-righteousness and a generally smug belief that Wales was the most faithfully religious corner

⁴¹⁷ D. Densil Morgan, ‘A Century of Christianity in Wales’, in Norman Doe (ed.), *A New History of the Church in Wales: Governance and Ministry, Theology and Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp. 45-62 (p. 45). See also D. Densil Morgan, *The Span of the Cross: Christian Religion and Society in Wales, 1914—2000*, second edition (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011), pp. 5-14.

⁴¹⁸ John Harvey, *The Art of Piety: The Visual Culture of Welsh Nonconformity* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1995), p. 3.

⁴¹⁹ M. Wynn Thomas, *In the Shadow of the Pulpit: Literature and Nonconformist Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2010), p. 8.

in the whole world”.⁴²⁰ Piety, tolerance, and a love of peace were central to Welshness in both perception and reality, and many Welsh people, for many reasons, renewed their commitment to peace in the aftermath of war. This constituted participation in the peace movement on religious and moral grounds.

There are also legitimate connections to be made between support for the peace movement and the growth of socialist belief and allegiance. In a study on pacifism in modern Welsh writing, Linden Peach has argued that Welsh pacifism evolved from anti-war and anti-militaristic sentiment, prevalent during the war years, into a much broader social ideology concerned with the quality of human life, during the interwar period.⁴²¹ Welsh pacifism, he writes, “is not simply an opposition to war but addresses the structural roots of conflict in society and the social causes of inequalities including gender, class, ethnicity, and race” and aims to supplant them with values such as “the importance of the individual, the need for an educational system that stresses personal and spiritual growth, the promotion of small communities, and the importance of neighbourliness”.⁴²² For some people in Wales, then, pacifism represented not only opposition to war, but opposition to all injustice, oppression, and suffering, whether on the battlefield, or down a mine, or in a steelworks, or amongst the poverty-stricken towns and cities of the country. Peace was therefore defined as not simply the absence of war, but as the presence of harmony, fairness, and physical and mental wellbeing. This interpretation helps to explain why the plight of ex-servicemen and the civilian bereaved was often discussed alongside the cause of peace. In short, pacifism in Wales was often a social rather than just an

⁴²⁰ R. Merfyn Jones, *The North Wales Quarrymen, 1874—1922* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1982), p. 63.

⁴²¹ Linden Peach, *Pacifism, Peace, and Modern Welsh Writing* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2019), p. xiii.

⁴²² *Ibid.*, p. 4; 13.

anti-war movement, demonstrating how pacifist and internationalist feeling could be motivated by and shaped by political beliefs.

Finally, it should be noted that the principle of internationalism, which advocated greater cooperation and equality between nations, had existed in Wales decades before the outbreak of the war. It was connected to the belief in the distinctiveness of Wales and the desire for self-governance through home rule, which had both grown from the late nineteenth century onwards. The aftermath of the First World War saw the possibility of Welsh Home Rule die a sad death: Lloyd George, once an enthusiastic supporter, now failed to use his influence on its behalf, and its remaining proponents, Edward T. John in particular, struggled to campaign for Welsh autonomy equal to that of the new Irish Free State and also downplay the fact that Irish independence had been won by force.⁴²³ But the interwar period did provide Wales with another chance to join other nations on the world stage, united in the cause of peace and international cooperation. John Davies writes that it was claimed in the 1920s “that it was by leading the world on the matter of the League of Nations that Wales would become a nation in the full sense”, and there were certainly several efforts to make an independent impact in this way.⁴²⁴ So although the emergence of a peace movement in the 1920s and 1930s was a notable development in British society as a whole, it can be said that pacifism and internationalism in Wales had a distinctly Welsh character.

It is no surprise, then, that there was widespread and continual participation by Welsh people in the League of Nations Union, or that some Welsh people took on a leading role in its

⁴²³ See Caoimhín De Barra, *The Coming of the Celts, AD 1860: Celtic Nationalism in Ireland and Wales* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2018).

⁴²⁴ Davies, *A History of Wales*, p. 596.

activities and campaigns. The League of Nations Union (LNU), formed in late 1918 through the merging of the League of Nations Society and the League of Free Nations Association, aimed to promote the ideals of the League of Nations: international government, a permanent peace achieved through collective security, and the improvement of human rights, particularly in terms of health and labour conditions. It was not only highly influential in the peace movement in Britain, but also a major presence in the wider political culture of Britain. The development, structure, activities, and impact of the LNU are vast subjects, far too vast to deal with here, and indeed have been explored by Donald Birn in a 1981 monograph, *The League of Nations Union*, and by Helen McCarthy in a more recent book, *The British People and the League of Nations*.⁴²⁵ Birn provides a straightforward institutional history, while McCarthy examines the role of the LNU in British society and politics, arguing that “whatever its ultimate failings as a mechanism of collective security, the League inspired a rich and participatory culture of political protest, popular education, and civic ritual”.⁴²⁶ The two approaches offer a good understanding of the work of the LNU in Britain in the interwar period.

What is necessary, however, is to outline the Welsh involvement in the LNU and the way the LNU came to be perceived almost as a Welsh project. This was, to a significant extent, due to the efforts of David Davies, a philanthropist, businessman, and Liberal Member of Parliament for Montgomeryshire from 1906 to 1929, who during the war had commanded a battalion of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers and after the war became a tireless campaigner for peace.⁴²⁷ Davies had been instrumental in the creation of the LNU in 1918, but he also envisioned an

⁴²⁵ Donald Birn, *The League of Nations Union, 1918—1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981); Helen McCarthy, *The British People and the League of Nations: Democracy, Citizenship, and Internationalism, c. 1918—1945* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011).

⁴²⁶ McCarthy, *The British People and the League of Nations*, p. 1.

⁴²⁷ See Brian Porter, ‘David Davies: A Hunter after Peace’, *Review of International Studies* 15:1 (1989), pp. 27-36; J. Graham Jones, ‘The Peacemonger’, *Journal of Liberal Democrat History* 29 (2000/2001), pp. 16-23 (p. 18).

independent, yet complementary, Welsh movement—and, together with the Reverend Gwilym Davies, a Baptist minister and devoted supporter of international peace, he founded the Welsh League of Nations Union in 1922.

The Welsh League of Nations Union (WLNU) soon became one of the most influential bodies in Welsh society. According to its annual reports, digitised and available to read on the People’s Collection Wales website, throughout the interwar period there were around one thousand adult and junior branches in existence across the country, representing over sixty thousand members actively involved in its activities.⁴²⁸ The WLNU was affiliated with and cooperated with the wider movement, but deliberately retained its own national character and identity: it undertook its own campaigns and, in doing so, saw itself as leading the Union, not just in Britain but in other countries as well. These initiatives, listed in the annual reports, are deserving of their own full-length study, and are notable for how they combined aspects of Welsh life and identity with the campaign for peace.

Perhaps the most powerfully symbolic campaign was the organisation of Daffodil Days, the sale of daffodils—artificial and real—to raise funds and awareness of the work of the WLNU, which were held across Wales throughout the year. The use of a national emblem to promote international cooperation was a deliberate and effective statement. As the *Western Mail* reported in 1925, the “national flower of Wales had become the international flower of peace”.⁴²⁹ Patriotism and nationalism could exist quite comfortably alongside internationalism, and Welshness was inextricably linked to the cause of peace and international cooperation.

⁴²⁸ Annual Reports of the Welsh League of Nations Union, 1922–1943, People’s Collection Wales <<https://www.peoplescollection.wales/collections/1186311>> [accessed 25 August 2025].

⁴²⁹ *Western Mail*, 3 August 1925, p. 9.

Daffodil Days were an important fundraising and publicity campaign for the WLNU, but were scattered throughout the annual calendar. Other efforts to raise money, recruit members, and spread awareness of the cause were connected explicitly with Armistice Day. Alex King notes that at its first meeting in 1922 the WLNU urged its branches to focus on enrolment and renewal during the week leading up to Armistice Day and make it “the week of its year”.⁴³⁰ The annual reports show that throughout the 1920s and 1930s many local branches of the Union duly organised Armistice Week Campaigns, which involved public meetings, the distribution of literature, and house-to-house canvassing.⁴³¹ This illuminates the overt connection between the peace movement and war commemoration.

Two of the most interesting and ambitious campaigns of the WLNU were led by women. The first of these was the Welsh Women’s Peace Petition of 1923, an appeal from the women of Wales to the women of the United States of America, urging the USA to join and lead the League of Nations. The appeal emphasised the historic connections between the USA and Wales, and the comradeship shown between the two nations in the shared goal of peace, thus placing Wales and the USA on equal terms as world leaders. It was signed by 390,296 Welsh women and girls, representing around a third of the entire female population of Wales (including adults, children, and infants).⁴³² The petition was then delivered to the USA in 1924 by Annie Hughes-Griffiths, Mary Ellis, and Elined Prys, who were all active and experienced campaigners in various political and social causes and humanitarian issues: Annie Hughes-Griffiths was Chair of the WLNU and President of the Women’s Committee of the WLNU, and therefore deeply involved in the efforts to build international cooperation; Mary Ellis was

⁴³⁰ King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain*, p. 202.

⁴³¹ Annual Reports of the Welsh League of Nations Union, 1922–1943, People’s Collection Wales <<https://www.peoplescollection.wales/collections/1186311>> [accessed 25 August 2025].

⁴³² See Jenny Mathers and Mererid Hopwood (eds.), *Yr Apêl / The Appeal* (Talybont: Y Lolfa, 2023).

the second woman to be appointed Inspector of Schools in Wales and, after her marriage to the Reverend Gwilym Davies, became a champion of his Youth Peace and Goodwill Message; and Elined Prys, leading the relief work of the World Student Christian Foundation, had worked to aid war refugees.⁴³³

Other prominent Welsh female activists were instrumental in organising the second of these campaigns, the Peacemakers' Pilgrimage of 1926. The Pilgrimage was a collaboration between twenty-eight women's organisations—political, social, industrial, and religious—and peace societies, including the LNU, the No More War Movement, the National Council for Women, and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. Despite difficulties brought about by the General Strike, it was decided to march from all over England, Scotland, and Wales to Hyde Park, to urge the government to agree to settle all international disputes by conciliation or arbitration, and to impress upon the British people the need to attain world peace.⁴³⁴ Communities from north Wales were particularly involved in the Pilgrimage, owing to the efforts of Mary Silyn Roberts, Gladys Thoday, and Charlotte Price White, who were all suffragists and leading political and social campaigners, and who, after the Pilgrimage, formed the North Wales Women's Peace Council, the importance of which is discussed in an article published in the *Welsh History Review* by Sydna Ann Williams.⁴³⁵ Although the Pilgrimage was not a specifically Welsh movement, the Welsh contingent expressed their national identity in several ways. Participants marched under banners declaring HEDD NID CLEDD ('law not war'), sang Welsh hymns, and in Hyde Park Mary Roberts addressed the crowd in Welsh,

⁴³³ Ibid.

⁴³⁴ Report of the Women's Peacemakers' Pilgrimage, May–June 1926, People's Collection Wales <<https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/1952936>> [accessed 25 August 2025].

⁴³⁵ Sydna Ann Williams, "'Law Not War—Hedd Nid Cledd': Women and the Peace Movement in North Wales, 1926–1945", *Welsh History Review / Cylchgrawn Hanes Cymru* 18:1 (1996), pp. 63–91. As an aside, Mary Roberts was married to Robert Silyn Roberts, who features in this thesis in his capacity as Secretary of the Hedd Wyn National Memorial Committee.

asserting that “Wales had always stood for peace and worked for peace”.⁴³⁶ Once again Welsh people were depicted as leaders in the world peace movement.

These campaigns demonstrate the extent to which Welsh women were involved in the peace movement, and the LNU more specifically, both as members and as supporters of the Union initiatives. Furthermore, the campaigns are indicative of how interwar pacifist activism was imagined as a feminine pursuit, inviting comparisons with early feminist social reformers, who achieved success and acceptance in causes relating to health, education, and temperance, for example, precisely because their work reinforced the perception that women were morally superior. The female-led campaigns of the LNU drew upon the belief that women were peaceful, maternal, and nurturing, as well as the depiction of women as the bereaved, *victims* of war, rather than veterans or war-workers, *participants* in war. Nonetheless, this was balanced with a very real female contribution to politics and international relations. As Helen McCarthy shows, in a chapter exploring the extent to which internationalism was gendered at this time, the LNU combined tradition with modernity, reinforcing some conventional gender roles while also allowing and indeed encouraging women to engage with and influence politics.⁴³⁷ Welsh women embraced not only gender stereotypes but cultural stereotypes as well, suggesting that their femininity *and* their Welshness made them especially qualified to campaign for peace, but it was this feeling that resulted in some of the most significant and successful fundraising and publicity schemes of the WLNU.

⁴³⁶ *Western Mail*, 21 June 1926, p. 6.

⁴³⁷ McCarthy, *The British People and the League of Nations*, pp. 182-211.

One of the last major campaigns associated with the WLNU was the building of the Welsh National Temple of Peace and Health in the civic centre space of Cathays Park in Cardiff, near the City Hall, Cardiff Crown Court, the university buildings, and the Welsh National War Memorial. Although it was a personal project of David Davies, and was almost entirely financed by him, it was intended to become the headquarters of the WLNU as well as the King Edward VII Welsh National Memorial Association (WNMA), a voluntary organisation set up to eradicate tuberculosis. The Temple was thus raised to the ideals of peace and health, fulfilling Linden Peach's concept of Welsh pacifism as a 'social gospel', a broad understanding of peace.⁴³⁸ Despite its clear designation as a landmark of peace, its unveiling ceremony was remarkably similar to that of a war memorial. Bereaved mothers were foregrounded during the proceedings: Minnie James of Dowlais, Glamorgan, whose three sons were killed during the war, performed the unlocking of the doors, and twenty-three other women from various countries whose sons were amongst the war dead were also present.⁴³⁹ Prayers were offered, and the hymn *O God, Our Help in Ages Past*—a popular choice for services of remembrance—was sung.⁴⁴⁰ These echoes of the language and ritual of commemoration show not only the extent to which war commemoration and the peace movement were intertwined at this time, but also how war commemoration, having been influenced by older forms of mourning, remembrance, and public ceremony, influenced them in turn.

The history of the interwar peace movement in Wales could and deserves to fill another thesis. In this thesis, unfortunately, it has only been possible to give an overview of the movement in terms of its relation to war commemoration and the development of the meaning of Armistice

⁴³⁸ Peach, *Pacifism, Peace, and Modern Welsh Writing*, pp. 27-28.

⁴³⁹ *Western Mail*, 24 November 1938, p. 7.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

Day. This is, however, the central point of this chapter: that the emergence and growth of the peace movement did not occur independently, but was directly and explicitly linked to commemoration, just as commemoration came to be connected to the cause of peace.

By the end of the 1920s, Armistice Day was imagined as an occasion when people could dedicate themselves to the cause of peace. The *Western Mail* summarised the mood in Cardiff in 1928, ten years on from the end of the war, noting that in places of worship “the aims and hopes of the League of Nations were enlarged upon from almost every pulpit”.⁴⁴¹ In Wood Street Congregational Church, for example, both morning and evening services were attended by three thousand people, who listened to the minister read the articles of the Kellogg Pact, and then stood and “pledged allegiance to their country in its pursuit of peace”.⁴⁴² Meanwhile, at the Cathedral Road Synagogue, the minister, Reverend H. Jerevitch, spoke about the Jewish ideal of peace, which was not armistice, or the “temporary cessation of war”, but rather the “realisation of the prophetic promise that ‘nation shall not lift up sword against nation, nor learn war any more.’”⁴⁴³ It was not only religious ministers who discussed the cause of peace, however: ahead of Armistice Day, the *Welshman* featured a column describing what peace was and how to foster it.⁴⁴⁴ “Pacts may be signed by governments,” it said:

and it is good that they sign pacts and treaties, but peace cannot be imposed from without, or made by law. It is something that has to come from the hearts of the people. The people have to understand all that war has done for them, or it would be truer to say, has done them out of, and in that sense undone for them. War has taken away by death or disablement millions of breadwinners, and has condemned

⁴⁴¹ *Western Mail*, 12 November 1928, p. 11.

⁴⁴² Ibid.

⁴⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁴ *The Welshman*, 2 November 1928, p. 5.

those who survive to the miseries of unemployment. [...] As it is the people who have suffered, it is the people who must demand peace.⁴⁴⁵

The column then urged its readers to spend Armistice Day committing themselves to peace in thought and behaviour, saying “[t]o think peace is to bring peace”.⁴⁴⁶ It is reflective of how remembrance was envisioned as an active and ongoing behaviour.

But while some commentators used Armistice Day to preach peace, others protested its existence, and its language and ritual, on the grounds that it was not focused enough on peace, but instead continued to glorify war and provide space for militarism. In 1930, the Welsh Congregational Church in Rhosllannerchrugog, near Wrexham in the historic county of Denbighshire, refused to allow the British Legion to hold their Armistice parade and service within the church, because the church leaders and members were opposed to militarism in any form.⁴⁴⁷ The decision was criticised in the press, but it is telling that the presence of ex-servicemen was deemed to be unacceptable.

The Congregationalists in Rhos were not alone in their stance. Three years later, “on the eve of another anniversary of the signing of the Armistice which terminated the most appalling war in history”, the *Welsh Gazette* lambasted the governments of Britain, France, Germany, and every other nation in the world for “piling up armaments” instead of “bending all their energies to secure a lasting peace”.⁴⁴⁸ The newspaper called for a commitment to peace and disarmament, and argued that:

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁷ *Western Mail*, 28 October 1930, p. 13.

⁴⁴⁸ *Welsh Gazette*, 9 November 1933, p. 4.

Much could be done if an end were made once and for all of all glorification of war at all Armistice celebrations, and the occasion used to proclaim the greater glories of peace. Let all who attend discard everything military—uniforms, medals, and the like, and let the more prominent positions be given to the war widows, war orphans, maimed and wounded soldiers and sailors. Let the reading from the Revelation of John be supplemented by readings from the revelations by Beverly Nicholls, Norman Angell and others showing how war itself and the munitions of war are manufactured by the self-same people for their own sordid and selfish ends. Why not a collection at every Armistice service to further the cause of peace?⁴⁴⁹

The annual commemoration of the First World War, which in the immediate postwar years was conceived of as a day of solemn reflection, mourning, and remembrance, was now criticised as a glorification of war, indicating just how far public opinion had shifted. Indeed, protests against war and militarism began to be held on Armistice Day. The *Welsh Gazette* noted that:

Gan gredu mai'r ffordd orau i anrhydeddu coffadwriaeth y meirw ydyw drwy wneud heddych yn sicr i'r genhedlaeth hon a chenhedlaethau a ddel, ffurfiwyd gorymdeithiau i wrthdystio yn erbyn rhyfel.

(Believing that the best way to honour the memory of the dead is to make peace certain for this generation and generations to come, marches were formed to demonstrate against war.)⁴⁵⁰

In 1933, students in Aberystwyth belonging to an anti-war society placed their own wreath of flowers at the foot of the war memorial, and then

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁰ *Welsh Gazette*, 16 November 1933, p. 3.

gorymdeithiodd y myfyrwyr, yn fechgyn ac yn ferched, drwy'r heolydd gan gario
baneri heddwch.

(the students, both boys and girls, marched through the streets carrying peace
banners.)⁴⁵¹

Their demonstration was repeated the following year, when they marched behind the Armistice Day procession carrying a banner reading 'Remember and resolve—Never Again!'⁴⁵² On Armistice Day 1935 in Lampeter, Cardiganshire, the Reverend T. Roberts spoke out against the "false glorification of war" by poets, preachers, journalists, ex-servicemen, and "those who dressed up for war but never went to it".⁴⁵³ But there was still hope. Somewhat presciently, he pointed out that if Armistice Day was "for the purpose of remembering only, it is meaningless to millions, and will die out, or worse, become a piece of meaningless ritual".⁴⁵⁴ He urged the crowd to do more than remember: to vow to end war, and to wage peace instead.⁴⁵⁵

Whether a person opposed the language and ritual of Armistice Day, or saw the occasion as it was as a necessity, the issue of peace was undeniably important. There was a widespread desire to foster the spirit of peace at home, to urge the government to commit to peace, and to prevent another world war by maintaining a system of international cooperation and collective security. In short, there was a desire to ensure the First World War had not been fought and suffered in vain, so that the question 'What was it for?' could be answered with 'Peace'.⁴⁵⁶ Ultimately, however, Fascist violence made another conflict unavoidable. Millions of British people

⁴⁵¹ Ibid.

⁴⁵² *Western Mail*, 12 November 1934, p. 7.

⁴⁵³ *Welsh Gazette*, 14 November 1935, p. 2.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁶ Gregory, *The Silence of Memory*, p. 177.

throughout the interwar period had wanted to hand down to the rising generation a lesson of peace. What they got instead was another world war.

*

The message and meaning of Armistice Day changed significantly over the interwar period. In the immediate aftermath of the war, the day involved a blend of celebration and mourning, and was considered as a mark of gratitude and pride in the heroic sacrifice of the dead. Over time, however, the rituals of the day were reimagined as a commitment to the cause of peace. Indeed, Armistice Day was closely intertwined with the peace movement, involved in a symbiotic relationship in which remembering the war gave rise to the desire for peace, and the importance of peace reshaped the memory of the war.

Interestingly, and significantly, the peace movement in Wales had a distinctly Welsh character: Welsh national and cultural identity was bound up with both the quality of peacefulness and the cause of peace, and Welsh people viewed themselves as leading the world in the peace movement. The observance of Armistice Day in Wales was heavily influenced by this prevailing mood, and the shift in tone is apparent in the early 1920s, several years before similar developments occurred across the rest of Britain. Once again, this demonstrates how studying remembrance in Wales can offer new perspectives on First World War commemoration.

4.3 Reflections on services of remembrance

This chapter has charted the changing tone and meaning of memorial unveiling ceremonies and Armistice Day observance in Wales. It shows that a sense of disillusionment set in across the country in the early 1920s, several years before similar feelings are observable, broadly speaking, across the rest of Britain. This reflects the social, political, and economic circumstances specific to Wales, particularly the economic hardships and worsening poverty that made it hard to speak of the war having ushered in a better world, but also the emergence of a broader peace movement which Welsh people envisioned themselves as leading and which took on a Welsh character in Wales. The chapter has therefore added to our understanding of war commemoration in Britain, showing how local, regional, or national specificities could affect the development of war memory.

PART II

MEMORIAL TEXTS AND THE LANGUAGE OF REMEMBRANCE

5 “CYMRO MEWN GWLAD ESTRON”: INSCRIPTIONS ON WAR GRAVES

Over one hundred thousand individual epitaphs are inscribed on the headstones of the British and Commonwealth casualties of the First World War. These personal inscriptions speak about, to, and on behalf of the war dead, and even just a cursory study of some of the texts reveals their sheer diversity. Short commemorative phrases such as REST IN PEACE, THY WILL BE DONE, GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN, and PEACE PERFECT PEACE are the most popular inscriptions, chosen for thousands of headstones each, and appearing in altered forms or in conjunction with other sayings or messages on thousands more. Verses from the Bible, patriotic expressions, lines from well-known poetry, hymns, or songs, home addresses, and promises of eternal remembrance are also found frequently. In contrast, other texts are highly individualised: they quote letters home or the last words of the deceased, outline details of the casualty's military service or the circumstances of their death, or consist of special memorial poems written by a relative or friend.

These epitaphs are written in an array of regional dialects and languages, including but not limited to English, Latin, Gaelic, Irish, Manx, Welsh, Afrikaans, Māori, French, Spanish, German, Danish, Finnish, and the universal language Esperanto. One inscription even takes the form of a bar of musical notes.⁴⁵⁷ Taken as a whole, the epitaphs of the First World War give us a unique insight into the multitude of attitudes towards war, death, and the experience of bereavement. But when examined more closely, as this chapter will do, the inscriptions can

⁴⁵⁷ It is found on the headstone of Second Lieutenant Hugh Gordon Langton in Poelcapelle British Cemetery, Belgium. Though several theories have been put forward over the years, the source of this music is still a mystery.

reveal patterns across a particular demographic, showing how opinions may be shared within certain communities and highlighting the localised aspects of war commemoration.

Personal inscriptions are a feature unique to British and Commonwealth war cemeteries, a concession to the bereaved made by the Imperial War Graves Commission (IWGC). Relatives would be permitted to add a short text or verse, a total of sixty-six characters over a maximum of four lines, and each character would cost them three-and-a-half pence.

Choosing a personal inscription was therefore not an easy process. Restrictions were placed on the length and tone of inscriptions both by the IWGC and by the financial circumstances of the family, and selecting or writing the right text was a matter of care and deliberation, involving the consultation of several sources and perhaps discussion and negotiation with family members and figures such as religious ministers or local poets. The whole process was presumably more difficult for Welsh speakers, particularly monoglot Welsh speakers, as they were required to interact with an organisation which conducted its work in English. Several questions arise: how exactly did the bereaved communicate with the Commission? Were any Welsh-language inscriptions rejected due to their tone or content? How were the inscriptions translated and checked by the Commission staff?

The answers to these questions are unfortunately not readily available. Many thousands of enquiry files in the Commission archive, containing the correspondence between staff and the next-of-kin about a particular casualty, were given to the paper salvage campaign during the Second World War, and many more were later destroyed as part of archival weeding processes. Of the fraction of files that remain, only a few concern Welsh-speaking casualties, and these

do not deal at length with the choice of inscription. It is nonetheless important to bear in mind that the language barrier may have added an extra complication to an already challenging process, or may have deterred Welsh speakers from submitting an inscription altogether.

5.1 The Welsh-speaking war dead

There are 847 casualties of the First World War whose headstones are engraved with a Welsh-language personal inscription. This group is, of course, a mere fraction of the estimated number of Welsh-speaking war dead: one study by Janet Davies has put this figure at twenty-thousand men and women, though it is unclear how this conclusion was reached, and it is likely to be a generous estimate.⁴⁵⁸ Nonetheless, from the details of their lives, deaths, and burials, we can learn a great deal about the service of Welsh speakers and those of Welsh heritage in the British armed forces during the conflict, just as the inscriptions themselves give us an understanding of the attitudes of their families towards war, death in war, and the experience of bereavement.

Using census records, contemporary newspapers, and military documents from before, during, and after the First World War, I was able to locate 503 casualties and their families and gather information on their place of residence, occupations, language ability, and religious denomination. These details can help to explain why a person or a group of people—whether connected by a shared local or regional identity, class, or cultural background—chose a particular inscription or type of inscription.

⁴⁵⁸ Janet Davies, *The Welsh Language* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1993), p. 58.

It comes as no surprise that these casualties and their relatives were predominantly Welsh-speaking. According to census records, 46 percent of the next-of-kin were able to speak only Welsh, and 54 percent were able to speak both Welsh and English—though, of course, the ability to speak both languages does not mean that the languages were spoken in equal proportions. In fact, it is likely that, for many of these families, Welsh was the language in which they lived their everyday lives, as the majority of them resided in the west and north of the country, the Welsh-speaking heartland. Two thirds of these 503 families were living in the counties of Anglesey, Caernarfonshire, Merionethshire, Cardiganshire, and Carmarthenshire, counties in which between 75 and 85 percent of the population could speak Welsh, according to the 1921 census. When including the counties of Denbighshire, Flintshire, Montgomeryshire, and Pembrokeshire, counties in which between 30 and 50 percent of the population could speak Welsh, that figure rises to over three quarters of the total.

Generally speaking, then, these families were Welsh-speaking people, from strongly Welsh-speaking areas, and it can be assumed that for most of them Welsh was their first language and the language they used most frequently, and that their upbringing, outlook, and cultural identity were distinctly Welsh. Writing a headstone inscription in Welsh would have been a natural choice.

There were, however, families living in other parts of Wales, in cities in England, and locations further afield, reflecting the distribution of the Welsh language within and outside Wales, and indicating the existence of a Welsh-speaking diaspora. This latter point raises the complex issue of national and cultural identity amongst diasporic families. While the overwhelming majority of the casualties were either monoglot Welsh speakers, like their parents or spouses, or the

bilingual children of monoglot parents, reflecting the generational shift in language ability, there are a number of casualties who spoke only English, and it was their relatives (usually a parent or parents, but occasionally a spouse) who spoke Welsh, and chose to submit a headstone inscription in Welsh. There is a sense here of the identity of the next-of-kin replacing that of the casualty, as Wendy Ugolini points out: “some English-born soldiers were posthumously positioned within a Welsh linguistic community which signalled the importance of their families’ Welsh diasporic, and Welsh language, identity above their day-to-day existence lived out in England”.⁴⁵⁹ Whether this, too, was an unconscious act—individuals communicating in a language familiar to them—or whether it was a deliberate choice—perhaps to distinguish the grave in some way—the use of Welsh by diasporic families serves as another reminder that commemoration always tells us more about the bereaved than the dead.

Census records also provide information on the occupations held by the casualties and their relatives, giving an insight into the social class composition of this group. For this study, the occupation of the closest male relative to the deceased, or, if no male relatives were living, the closest female relative, was recorded and categorised, as was the occupation of the casualty. Just under half of the next-of-kin worked in the primary sector, in agriculture, mining, quarrying, fishing, and forestry, industries which employed large proportions of the population in the regions in which these families lived. A smaller number, around 20 percent, worked in the secondary sector, in manufacturing and construction jobs. Many of these people were employed in the metalworks of Glamorgan and Carmarthenshire, but others worked as builders, carpenters, stonemasons, and general labourers, to give a few examples. Tertiary sector occupations account for just over a third of the total: these people were employed as, for

⁴⁵⁹ Wendy Ugolini, *Wales in England, 1914–1945: A Social, Cultural, and Military History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2024), p. 191.

example, shop assistants, clerks, transport workers, postal officials, and, very occasionally, as teachers, solicitors, or doctors. The families studied for this chapter were employed in all sectors of the economy, but were predominantly working class or lower middle class. There is, perhaps, something to be said for the intersection of class and language ability at this time.

It was not as straightforward to determine the religious denominations to which these families belonged. Unlike place of residence, language ability, and occupation, religion was not recorded on census forms, meaning that it was necessary to draw upon other sources for this information. Military attestation forms recorded religious denomination, and so could provide answers, but only for a small number of casualties, as millions of documents were destroyed by bombing during the Second World War. Notices published in newspapers occasionally described the connection of a family to a particular church or chapel, but not always. It was also possible to cross-reference the names of the casualties studied for this chapter against the names listed on church or chapel memorials to determine the religious denomination of the casualty and their family. Many chapels have closed or have been demolished in recent decades, however, resulting in the loss of many memorials, and, with them, the evidence of the denomination of a particular person.

There were several challenges associated with determining religious denomination, and it has only been possible to collect this information for a small number of these families. The majority were Nonconformist, belonging to one of the four main Nonconformist denominations: the Calvinist Methodists (or Presbyterians), the Wesleyan Methodists, the Baptists, and the Congregationalists (or Welsh Independents). A number of other families belonged to smaller Nonconformist denominations, such as the Unitarians. Anglicanism is also well-represented,

however, showing that while Nonconformism may have dominated Wales at the beginning of the twentieth century, a significant proportion of the population still belonged to the Church in Wales. On the other hand, it is important to note that more Anglican churches—and therefore the memorials commemorating their congregations—have survived the religious decline of the late twentieth century, while many Nonconformist chapels have become derelict, been converted into homes, or have been demolished. This may have impacted the data on religious denomination gathered for this chapter.

As a result, no conclusions can be made overall about the influence of religious belief on the choice of headstone inscription. On an individual level, religious denomination may illuminate the choice of headstone inscription, but the gaps in the data and the likelihood of skewed results make any broader analysis impossible.

*

We can also learn a great deal about the deceased and their families from certain aspects of their military service and from the circumstances of their deaths, information provided by the records of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. The experiences of Welsh people, and Welsh speakers in particular, in the British armed forces during the First World War may have influenced the attitudes of their relatives towards the war, death in war, and bereavement, and therefore may have informed their choice of headstone inscription.

Over half of these 847 casualties, numbering 462 men in total, served with Welsh regiments. Of this group, over 60 percent served with the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, which is consistent with the high proportion of casualties who were born and who resided in north Wales, the historic recruiting ground of the regiment. A significant number, totalling around 20 percent, served with the Welsh Regiment, which recruited in Glamorgan, Carmarthenshire, and Pembrokeshire. As we will see in section 5.2.3, regional loyalty to the regiment could inspire the choice of headstone inscription. The remainder served with the South Wales Borderers, or the Welsh Guards, and, in smaller numbers, with the Monmouthshire Regiment, the Glamorgan Yeomanry, or the Denbighshire Yeomanry.

Around a third of the total number of casualties served with one of the various artillery regiments, the Royal Engineers, or other regiments requiring specialist skills such as the Machine Gun Corps, the Army Service Corps, or the Army Ordnance Corps. There may be a connection here with the fact that so many men were employed in agricultural jobs, mining, and heavy industry, and therefore would have been accustomed to and proficient in handling machinery and horses.

The remainder of the Welsh-speaking war dead served with various other infantry regiments or auxiliary units of the British Army, or with the Royal Navy, or the Royal Air Force. Some served with the Canadian Expeditionary Force or the Australian Imperial Force. These were men who had emigrated before the war and had joined up in their respective country of residence; their families, meanwhile, remained in Wales. Although their headstones were engraved with the maple leaf emblem of the CEF or the rising sun badge of the AIF, these men

were commemorated by their families as Welshmen, with the Welsh language acting as a marker of their 'true' national identity.

As well as regiment, military rank can provide information about these casualties and their experience during the First World War. The Welsh-speaking war dead belonged overwhelmingly to the 'other ranks', the non-officer ranks. In fact, over three-quarters of this group held the rank of Private, or the equivalent rank in other branches of the armed forces, such as Gunner, Driver, Sapper, Guardsman, or Rifleman. A further 13 percent of the group served as non-commissioned officers, holding the rank of Lance Corporal, Corporal, or Sergeant, or the equivalent rank in other branches. Just 8 percent held a commission and served as officers, and these men were predominantly junior officers in the rank of Second Lieutenant, Lieutenant, or Captain. Only one man held the rank of Major, the highest rank found amongst this group.

Situated somewhat outside this rank structure were chaplains and nurses, in explicitly non-combatant roles. The casualties studied for this chapter include two chaplains, the Reverend Thomas Howell, and the Reverend William Evans Jones, both of whom had joined the Army Chaplains' Department and were attached to infantry regiments. The group also includes Nurse Jennie Williams of the Voluntary Aid Detachment, the only female casualty with a Welsh-language headstone inscription.

The Welsh-speaking war dead held a wide range of military ranks and roles, and thus would have experienced military service in a number of different ways, possibly influencing the attitudes of their families towards the war. In general, however, most of these men were

ordinary soldiers, serving at the lowest rank. This certainly corresponds to what we already know about the social class composition of this group.

Analysis of the dates on which these individuals died reveals another important point to consider when reading the inscriptions studied in this chapter. The majority of the Welsh-speaking war dead, numbering around 75 percent of the total, died in 1917 and 1918, the final two years of the war. These years were, of course, incredibly bloody, with major offensives such as the Battle of Arras, the Third Battle of Ypres, and the Hundred Days Offensive each costing tens of thousands of lives. According to the records of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, the death toll for the British Empire in 1917 and 1918 significantly outnumbered the death toll in the years 1914, 1915, and 1916 combined. It may be that more Welsh people died in those two years simply because more people in general died in those two years. It is also possible that this statistic has been distorted by survivorship bias: graves from the earlier years of the war are more likely to have been destroyed by later fighting or lost by the time the Commission began its work, meaning that the individuals who were buried in those graves were ultimately commemorated on memorials to the missing, and were not included in the group studied for this chapter.

The high proportion of deaths in the latter half of the war could, on the other hand, suggest that these individuals had not entered military service until this time. In other words, it implies that they were conscripted, following the introduction of the Military Service Act in early 1916, rather than voluntarily enlisting. Putting together what we already know about the social and cultural background of these individuals with the indication that many of them were conscripts,

an important question arises: were Welsh speakers less likely to have volunteered for military service during the First World War?

Other research into recruitment and enlistment in Wales corroborates this suggestion. In his 1988 study of Gwynedd during the First World War, Cyril Parry explains that the outbreak of war was met with bewilderment, apathy, and even outright opposition, particularly in Welsh-speaking communities and by Welsh-speaking individuals.⁴⁶⁰ Despite recruiting initiatives directed at Welsh speakers, and the efforts of well-known and influential Welsh speakers such as David Lloyd George and the Reverends John Williams and Thomas Charles Williams, rates of enlistment were “consistently low” in the Welsh-speaking areas of Gwynedd, and remained so throughout the whole period from August 1914 to December 1915.⁴⁶¹ Parry stresses the impact of economic factors, especially for the slate quarrymen of north-west Wales, but also points to Nonconformist beliefs and cultural perceptions about the military in explaining this indifference.⁴⁶²

More recent research has also demonstrated that predominantly Welsh-speaking areas raised fewer volunteers. Using area recruitment statistics and contemporary newspapers, Clive Hughes shows that while men were volunteering in their hundreds elsewhere in Wales and across England, the men of north-west Wales came forward in mere handfuls.⁴⁶³ Reluctance to volunteer can be attributed to practical considerations such as low Army pay and an inadequate

⁴⁶⁰ Cyril Parry, ‘Gwynedd and the Great War, 1914—1918’, *Welsh History Review / Cylchgrawn Hanes Cymru* 14:1 (1988), pp. 78-117.

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 86.

⁴⁶³ Clive Hughes, “*I’r Fyddin Fechgyn Gwalia!*”: *Recriwtio i’r Fyddin yng Ngogledd-Orllewin Cymru, 1914—1916* (Llanrwst: Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, 2014), pp. 34-41.

separation allowance, Hughes writes, but also indifference, the pacifist doctrines of Nonconformity, and historic distrust of English militarism.⁴⁶⁴

There is, then, evidence to show that Welsh speakers were less willing to volunteer for military service, and that this was due—at least in part—to cultural values and beliefs. This, in turn, strongly suggests that their relatives were similarly reluctant to engage with popular narratives about the war, with intriguing implications for the tone and meaning of the headstone inscriptions explored in this chapter.

*

Contemporary records provide important information about the social and cultural background of the individuals and families studied in this chapter, helping us to understand their values and beliefs, their pre-war lives, and their experiences of war, death, and bereavement. For the most part, these families were Welsh-speaking, from predominantly Welsh-speaking communities, and it can be assumed by extension that the doctrines of Nonconformism and Liberalism, long associated with Welsh-speaking Wales, played a central role in shaping their thinking and behaviour in peacetime and during war. This illuminates many of the themes present in the inscriptions: strong religious faith, emphasis on Welsh national and cultural identity, geographical distance, and a muted response to popular narratives about the war.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 35; 38.

It is important to stress, however, that this group was not a homogenous whole. Families from south Wales, for example, while Welsh-speaking, may have been influenced by the prevailing mood in what was at this time a more Anglicised region, and the specificities of their lives in an urban and industrialised environment. Concepts of national and cultural identity are also more complicated amongst diasporic families, who may have clung to familiar beliefs and practices, or embraced those of their adoptive countries. Some inscriptions therefore reveal highly individualised responses to war and experiences of grief and bereavement.

This section has touched on the social and cultural context in which these families lived and its potential impact on their beliefs and behaviours. Examining this background reveals patterns, both at a local level and across the country, and also reminds us of the diversity of opinion that war commemoration was able to accommodate.

5.2 The inscriptions

In total there are 715 separate Welsh-language inscriptions, engraved over 847 headstones. It is possible to group these inscriptions into six broad categories: religious (encompassing verses from the Bible, lines from hymns, prayers, and other religious sayings), poetic, patriotic and martial, anti-war, generic (namely, phrases such as ‘rest in peace’ or ‘ever remembered’), and individualised.

	Number of inscriptions	Number of headstones
Religious	390	484
Poetic	55	61
Patriotic/ martial	49	61
Anti-war	9	9
Generic	59	79
Individualised	153	153

Table 5.1: Welsh-language inscriptions on war graves.

The table above shows that texts drawn from religious sources were by far the most popular choice, accounting for over half of the total number of Welsh-language personal inscriptions. Poetry was also frequently utilised to describe, honour, and remember the dead. Many families submitted original formulations, which constitute around a fifth of the total; other families, meanwhile, chose conventional commemorative phrases. Patriotic phrases and military mottos provided other options for bereaved families, but a small number of inscriptions paint a different picture, articulating sorrow and despair.

This chapter studies a selection of personal inscriptions from each of the categories listed above. It provides context for each text and identifies common themes across the body of Welsh-language inscriptions, and places these alongside other trends in Welsh-language commemoration, and British commemoration as a whole.

Above all, this chapter highlights the importance of analysing the inscriptions found on war graves. These texts reveal such a wide variety of perspectives, expressed directly by the bereaved, and yet personal inscriptions have received almost no attention from historians in what is a truly vast body of literature on war commemoration. There is, of course, Sonia Batten's 2011 doctoral thesis on memorial texts.⁴⁶⁵ In it, she identifies three main narratives present in First World War personal inscriptions: the 'wartime narrative' (in which the dead were commemorated in their military roles and praised for their deeds), the 'bereavement narrative' (in which the focus was on the grieving relatives and the loss they had suffered), and a combination of the two (which is concerned with remembrance).

Her approach is a useful starting point for the study of personal inscriptions, demonstrating that traditional languages of mourning existed alongside wartime and postwar innovations. This chapter will further her interpretation, revealing a diversity of opinion—and, with it, the complexities and contradictions inherent to grief, bereavement, and mourning. There are tensions here between the individual and the collective, and between the variety of identities held by the deceased, tensions that were exacerbated by the policies of the IWGC discussed above. Perhaps, too, there are tensions between Wales and England, and Welshness and Englishness. Indeed, in many of the inscriptions explored in this chapter there is a sense of

⁴⁶⁵ Batten, 'Memorial Text Narratives'.

reclamation, indicating a reluctance, even a refusal, to give the dead over to their military identity and to engage with popular rhetoric about the war. This is surely a reflection of the growing disillusionment that the aftermath of the war brought about, but also a reflection of long-established ideas about the distinctiveness of Wales and its place and status within Britain.

5.2.1 Religious inscriptions

Verses from the Bible and lines from traditional hymns and prayers were the most popular choices for personal inscriptions. The prevalence of these texts reflects the deep and widespread religious belief of the period, and the centrality of Christian religion—particularly Nonconformism—to Welsh identity and culture. Religious faith was a fundamental aspect of daily life for Welsh people, and gave people the terms through which to experience and talk about birth, love and marriage, illness and death, and bereavement. Scripture and lines from hymns therefore appear frequently on civilian headstones from this period, and it follows that religious texts would also be drawn upon, again and again, to commemorate the dead of the First World War.

Over half of the total number of Welsh-language personal inscriptions were chosen from religious texts, such as Bible verses, lines from hymns, prayers, and well-known religious sayings. Of these 390 inscriptions, 281 were taken from the Bible, with a fairly even split between verses of the Old Testament and of the New Testament, while 88 were selected from hymns, and 21 from prayers and sayings. The selection here displays a deep knowledge and understanding of religious texts amongst the next-of-kin of the war dead, and also speaks to the sheer variety of sentiments that could be expressed through this form of commemoration, reminding us that grief and bereavement in the aftermath of the war were not straightforward or universal experiences. Some recurring themes can, however, be observed amongst this body of texts, and are explored below.

The most popular religious verse, by far—and indeed the most popular Welsh-language inscription—is the following line, adapted from Mark 14:8 in the New Testament:

HYN A ALLODD HWN EFE A'I GWNAETH

(He hath done what he could.)

It appears, with some variation in spelling and syntax, on 44 headstones. The verse is also inscribed in its original form

HYN A ALLODD HON HI A'I GWNAETH

(She hath done what she could.)⁴⁶⁶

on the headstone of Nurse Jennie Williams in Sainte Marie Cemetery in France.

The verse describes an act of deep love and devotion, one not quite equal to Jesus' subsequent sacrifice, but one that is nonetheless given a huge significance in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and John through Jesus' lengthy commendation of the action. In the context of the First World War, the use of this line as a grave inscription implies that the dead had marked themselves as faithful disciples through their military service, and augmented the meaning of Jesus' death through their own. This sense of accomplishment and dedication seems to match what Sonia Batten calls the 'wartime narrative': an image of the war constructed by the bereaved in which the dead were commemorated in their military roles, and the ideals of sacrifice, honour, gallantry, and duty were foregrounded.⁴⁶⁷ Although distinctions were sometimes made between the wartime experiences and the deaths of men and women, this kind of text could be appropriate for both genders. As Alison Fell points out, "women's deaths, like those of militarised men, were frequently placed within a patriotic, Christian-inflected

⁴⁶⁶ Nurse Jennie Williams, Voluntary Aid Detachment. Buried in Sainte Marie Cemetery, France.

⁴⁶⁷ Batten, 'Memorial Text Narratives', pp. 162-163.

understanding of sacrifice”.⁴⁶⁸ Death was an act of service, not only for the nation, but for civilisation itself.

It is, however, also remarkably self-effacing, contrasting other inscriptions which emphasise the particular bravery of the deceased. With this in mind, it is unsurprising that the verse also appears frequently on the gravestones of Welsh people in burial grounds across Wales. In this civilian setting, the line evokes not a specifically martial kind of duty and sacrifice, but a general faithfulness and service. It is clear that these families chose a text familiar to them, a verse already long established as an appropriate epitaph, but one that could additionally fit the new context of war commemoration.

Another popular inscription, taken from 2 Timothy 4:7, also calls to mind the ideals of duty and sacrifice.

MI A YMDRECH AIS YMDRECH DEG, MI A ORFFENNAIS FY NGYRFA,
MI A GEDWAIS Y FFYDD.

(I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.)

It was submitted to the IWGC by 20 families, although some headstones are only inscribed with the first clause, or the first and second, and some combine the first clause with the third. This may indicate that, in these cases, a shortened version of the verse—at a lower cost—was all that the family could afford. On the other hand, it demonstrates how even well-known and established texts could be adapted to be more appropriate or meaningful to a family.

⁴⁶⁸ Fell, *Women as Veterans*, p. 50.

Indeed, two families changed the pronoun in the verse. The brother of Captain Richard Lloyd Williams submitted

YMDRECHODD YMDRECH DEG

(He fought a good fight.)⁴⁶⁹

while the wife of Gunner Benjamin Jones chose

TI A YMDRECHAIST YMDRECH DEG

GORPHWYS MEWN HEDD

HYD DORIAD Y WAWR

(You fought a good fight / Sleep in peace / Until the break of dawn.)⁴⁷⁰

While the different pronouns do not necessarily change the meaning of the line, the existence of these three versions of the same verse suggests that there were various ways in which the bereaved regarded the purpose of a personal inscription. The 19 inscriptions using ‘I’ and ‘he’ are focused outwards, speaking to whoever visited the grave, acknowledging that the cemeteries were or would become places of interest and pilgrimage. Charlotte Jones, however, addresses her husband directly, giving the inscription an intimacy that shows how personal inscriptions could serve as a final communication between the deceased and the bereaved.

This inscription makes more explicit reference to the war than the previous verse. We are told that the casualty “fought a good fight”; moreover, while I have translated ‘gyrfa’ as ‘course’, in line with the text of the King James Bible, it can also mean ‘race’, thereby continuing the sporting metaphors of the First World War. The verse appears, then, to fulfil the war narrative,

⁴⁶⁹ Captain Richard Lloyd Williams, Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Mendinghem Military Cemetery, Belgium.

⁴⁷⁰ Gunner Benjamin Jones (171927), Royal Field Artillery. Buried in Barlin Communal Cemetery Extension, France.

but it was also in use as an epitaph on civilian graves. Again, its use as an epitaph precedes and succeeds the First World War.

The religious verse most representative of the wartime narrative is taken from the Gospel of John. It was one of the most widely-used inscriptions in postwar commemoration, appearing in English on thousands of headstones and on war memorials across Britain.

CARIAD MWY NA HWN NID OES GAN NEB;
SEF, BOD I UN ROI EI EINIOES DROS EI GYFEILLION

(Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.)

As Batten writes, the text did not make sense in a pre-war civilian context, but found resonance in the aftermath of the First World War.⁴⁷¹ Interpreted literally, it speaks of sacrifice and comradeship, themes central to wartime rhetoric and postwar commemoration. If, however, we take ‘friends’ as a metaphor for ‘people’ or ‘country’, the inscription elevates the war dead to a Christlike position: just as Jesus died to save mankind, the fallen soldier gave their life to save their home and nation from invasion and tyranny.

A small number of relatives across Britain and the Empire made this connection themselves, and substituted ‘friends’ for ‘country’, ‘King’, or ‘Empire’, or loftier notions like ‘humanity’ and ‘freedom’, thereby making an overt declaration of patriotic martyrdom. Yet in Welsh, all inscriptions taken from John 15:13 use ‘cyfeillion’ (‘friends’), and none are accompanied by additional words. As we have seen, Welsh people did not have reservations about altering Biblical verses, so this is perhaps indicative of how the bereaved in Wales perceived the reasons

⁴⁷¹ Batten, ‘Memorial Text Narratives’, p. 105.

for which their loved ones went to war—namely, for their homes, families, and friends, rather than abstract ideals or concepts. This is also reflected in the wording of Welsh war memorial inscriptions, explored fully in Chapter 6: the core text often names a cause for which those commemorated fought and died, and references to ‘country’ and ‘home’ are far more common than words such as ‘freedom’, ‘justice’, or ‘honour’, suggesting that, for many Welsh people, both civilian and serviceman, war service was predominantly about the defence of home and country, and therefore a practical, rather than ideological, matter.

*

Other inscriptions focus on the reward of peace after strife than the circumstances and meaning of the casualty’s death. Any reference to holy war is absent from the following line from *Gorffwys yn y Bedd* (Resting in the Grave), a hymn written by the bard Ieuan Glan Geirionydd (Evan Evans):

EU HENWAU’N PERAROGLI SYDD

A’U HUN MOR DAWEL YW

(Their names are preserved forever, and their sleep is so peaceful.)⁴⁷²

It is also inscribed in the singular form:

EI ENW’N PERAROGLI SYDD

A’I HUN MOR DAWEL YW

(His name is preserved forever, and his sleep is so peaceful.)

⁴⁷² Translation note: ‘perarogli’ literally means ‘sweet-scented’ or ‘fragrant’, but can mean ‘embalmed’ and thus figuratively carries the meaning of ‘preserved evermore’.

The hymn describes how the dead have left behind their tribulations, pain, and anguish, and are resting in peace with God in heaven. Their virtue is implied, for their names to be “preserved forever”, but there is no explicit reference to their exceptional righteousness, bravery, or chivalry. With this in mind, it makes sense that the hymn precedes the First World War by several decades, and that it was a popular choice for civilian headstones, for the consoling metaphor of death as sleep and the idea of eternal remembrance. It could, of course, fit the war context—matching the tone of the famous verse THEIR NAME LIVETH FOR EVERMORE, chosen by Rudyard Kipling for the Stone of Remembrance in the war cemeteries—but its role as an established epitaph means that it is likely that the 27 families that submitted it to the IWGC did so because it was a familiar text. The war dead are sacred, but so are the civilian dead: the themes of virtue and eternal remembrance are applicable to both.

Several other Welsh hymns dwell on the idea of rest and refuge after labour and suffering. A line from *O Fryniau Caersalem* (From the Hills of Jerusalem), written by Calvinistic Methodist minister David Charles, is engraved on the headstone of Sergeant Harry Sturdy of Lampeter, Cardiganshire:

DIANGFA DRAGWYDDOL GEIR YNO

AR BECHOD, AR GYSTUDD, A PHOEN

(There we shall find eternal refuge, from sin, from affliction, and pain.)⁴⁷³

⁴⁷³ The original text of the hymn reads “Ar bechod, cystuddiau, a phoen” meaning ‘From sin, afflictions, and pain’. Sergeant Sturdy contracted dysentery towards the end of the war, was invalided home, and ultimately died of ill-health in 1921. The singular ‘cystudd’ in the personal inscription may then be a reference to his particular illness. Sergeant Harry Sturdy (200214), South Wales Borderers. Buried in Lampeter (St Peter) Churchyard, Wales.

The hymn has a long association with death and burial, which was reinforced during and after the First World War: it was frequently sung at burial and memorial services for deceased soldiers, and at memorial unveiling services.

Margaret Evans, living in Glan Conwy, Denbighshire, chose a line from *Os yw'n gofidiau yn y byd* (If our griefs in the world...), a hymn written by eighteenth-century Calvinistic Methodist cleric and hymn-writer William Williams, for the headstone of her son, Sapper Hugh Evans:

‘NOL TEITHIO ‘NGWRES YR HAUL A’R DYDD
MOR FELUS FYDD PARADWYS

(After travelling in the heat of the sun and the day, how sweet will Paradise be.)⁴⁷⁴

The mention of the heat of the sun is very apt, as he served in the Salonika campaign and is buried in Mikra British Cemetery in Greece. It contrasts other hymns which envision earthly struggles as a long, dark night, such as the following line from *Pan fwy'n cerdded drwy'r cysgodion* (When I walk through shadows...), by Elfed (Howell Elvet Lewis):

MELYS FYDD TRALLODION HIRNOS
PAN CEIR ARNYNT OLEU’R DYDD

(Sweet will the long night of tribulations be, when the light of day is upon them.)⁴⁷⁵

A similar image is given in this evocative inscription, adapted slightly from *Yr Iesu adgyfododd* (Jesus rose again...) by William Williams, which appears on the headstone of Private Edward Jones in Artillery Wood Cemetery in Belgium:

⁴⁷⁴ Sapper Hugh Evans (71056), Royal Engineers, attached Royal Garrison Artillery. Buried in Mikra British Cemetery, Greece.

⁴⁷⁵ In hymn books, the line reads “Melys fydd trallodion hirnol pan geir arnynt olau'r dydd”. The lack of soft mutation on ‘ceir’ and the different spelling of ‘golau’ may be due to the literacy of the family, or because of the lack of standardisation in the Welsh language at this time. Private John William Thomas (290390), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Gaza War Cemetery, Israel & Palestine.

“DAW I TI FOREU, TÊG, A HYFRYD
N’OL STORMUS, DDÛ, BRYDNAWN”

(Morning will come to you, fair and lovely, after a stormy, black evening.)⁴⁷⁶

These hymns contrast the war, alluded to through words like ‘sin’, ‘pain’, and ‘a stormy, black evening’, with the sanctuary and peace of heaven. Consolation for the bereaved comes from envisioning their loved ones in the peace of heaven.

*

A number of families chose personal inscriptions that not only envisioned their loved ones in heaven, but expressed their conviction that they would meet again. These inscriptions articulate the Christian idea of resurrection and reunion, in which death, absence, and separation are impermanent, and a happier existence is promised to the deceased and their families and friends—after their own deaths—in heaven. The belief in resurrection and reunion after death was the ultimate consolation for those of the Christian faith, and therefore an important part in the processing and mediating of grief.

As Patricia Jalland points out, however, Victorian and Edwardian families—whether Anglican or Nonconformist—had no clear idea of what heaven would look like, nor how reunion with loved ones would be achieved.⁴⁷⁷ In the absence of detailed and coherent teaching on the

⁴⁷⁶ The original line is “Daeth boreu teg a hyfryd, ‘nol stormus, ddu brydnawn”. His parents, Thomas and Mary Jones, therefore changed the first part to address their son directly. The comma separations and circumflexes on ‘teg’ and ‘du’ are also not found in the original hymn. Again, this may reflect the Joneses’ literacy, or that they were quoting from memory and not a printed source. Private Edward Jones (54797), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Artillery Wood Cemetery, Belgium.

⁴⁷⁷ Patricia Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 268-269.

afterlife, resurrection, and reunion in the New Testament, with the exception of the Book of Revelation, a wide range of doctrinal positions were developed amongst each denomination. But while clergymen and theologians seemed to hold specific views, disseminated in sermons and writing throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, for the laity there was less certainty. Jalland identifies a few central themes in the writing of Victorian and Edwardian families, such as the hope for peace and rest, the belief in reunion with loved ones, and the consolation of eternal union with God: conventional, generalised beliefs, often expressed through metaphors and symbolic language.⁴⁷⁸

The ambiguity surrounding the afterlife and resurrection is reflected in the personal inscriptions that take these themes as their focus. Several inscriptions simply look forward to ‘meeting again’, with the place of reunion unspecified—these are discussed below in section 5.2.6. A few, though, are drawn from scripture and hymns, but are no more definite as to the circumstances of resurrection and reunion.

A line from the Song of Songs, also known as the Song of Solomon, states

HYD ONI WAWRIO’R DYDD

(Until the day break.)

It is inscribed, with some variation, on the headstones of 7 soldiers; another grave gives the full line:

HYD ONI WAWRIO’R DYDD, A CHILIO O’R CYSGODAU

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid.

(Until the day break, and the shadows flee away.)

In context, the verse makes very little sense as an epitaph: the Song of Songs is a sensual, and at times erotic, poem, a conversation between two lovers, and the line used here belongs to a passage in which the woman recalls a visit from her lover in springtime. It is usually interpreted in both Judaism and Christianity as an allegory for the relationship between God and Israel, in the former case, and between Christ and the Church, in the latter. Over time, however, the verse has become detached from its original meaning. In obituaries, eulogies, and as a headstone inscription for those of the Christian faith, UNTIL THE DAY BREAK constitutes an oblique reference to the Day of Judgement—in other words, the time when Jesus will return, the living will be reunited with the resurrected dead, and the righteous will receive their eternal reward in heaven.

The verse was a popular choice in the English language, too: thousands of families submitted the phrase to the IWGC, either on its own or as part of a longer inscription. Similar formulations such as UNTIL THE RESURRECTION MORN and SOON SHALL COME THE GREAT AWAKENING can be found on a number of headstones, as well. Resurrection was clearly a powerful concept for the bereaved, as it framed death as a temporary condition.

Other inscriptions sidestep the idea of resurrection entirely and instead look forward to a heavenly reunion. A repeated line from the hymn *Gorphwys yn y Nef* (Rest in Paradise), written by the bard Ieuan Glan Geirionydd, was chosen by 2 families:

MAE’N FELUS MEDDWL

ETO ‘NGHYD CAWN GWRDDYD YN Y NEF

(It is sweet to think we will meet in heaven, together again.)

A similar idea is present in the hymn *Mynydd Seion* (Mount Zion), written by the nineteenth-century poet and preacher Watcyn Wyn, a line from which was submitted by the father of Private Thomas Gwynfor Thomas:

CWRDD AR FYNYDD SEION

O MOR FELYS FYDD

(To meet on Mount Zion—O, how sweet it will be.)⁴⁷⁹

The promise of reunion present in both inscriptions was clearly a consolation for the bereaved, in that their own deaths would be made easier by the thought of loved ones waiting for them. Note that these families envisioned the reunion in a specific place—heaven, and Mount Zion, the heavenly city of God, respectively. In contrast, other relatives were as vague as possible:

CWSG NES GWELD EIN GILYDD ETO

CWSG A GWYN DY FYD

(Sleep until we see each other again / Sleep and be blessed.)

This line, taken from the religious song *Sul y Blodau* (Flowering Sunday) by the poet Eifion Wyn (Eliseus Williams), simply looks forward to ‘meeting again’.

Despite no consensus on the exact circumstances of resurrection, and varying visions of the location of reunion, it is still taken as a given that these families would achieve eternal life and meet each other again. The inscriptions above are representative of Protestant beliefs and

⁴⁷⁹ Private Thomas Gwynfor Thomas (54597), Welsh Regiment. Buried in Caterpillar Valley Cemetery, France.

doctrine, in contrast to texts chosen by Catholic families—BLESSED MARY PRAY FOR HIM, for example—which are less sure that the souls of the dead have reached heaven. Instead, prayers are needed, an intercession on behalf of the dead, to help their souls be purified and pass through to heaven.

Overall, these inscriptions are imbued with hope, and were clearly intended to heal. They were chosen by bereaved families to remind them of the sacrifice of their loved one and the promise of resurrection and reunion as promised to them by their faith.

*

While the inscriptions above find consolation in the sacrifice made by the deceased, and the promise of resurrection and reunion, there are a significant number of inscriptions that describe a life cut short. Here, the focus is on death, not the afterlife. In some inscriptions, the frailty and finite nature of human life is accepted and is seen as something natural through comparisons to grass or flowers; other inscriptions, however, depict the death of the casualty as untimely and abnormal. The texts in this section therefore discuss death in similar ways but carry different connotations, demonstrating the variety and complexity of ideas about death in war.

Human life is, in the Bible, often likened to the existence of grass or flowers, something fragile and fleeting. The following verse from Psalm 90, for example, uses this euphemistic language to describe life and death as a natural cycle:

Y BORE Y BLODEUA, AC Y TYF;

PRYNHAWN Y TORRIR EF YMAITH, AC Y GWYWA

(In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.)

This verse would undoubtedly have been very familiar to the families that chose it, but it is worth pointing out that the psalm as a whole provided inspiration for the hymn *O God, Our Help in Ages Past*—also translated into Welsh a number of times during the nineteenth century—which was commonly sung at memorial unveilings and remembrance services in the interwar period. Like many other inscriptions explored in this chapter, this verse highlights the connections between various texts and phrases all used in war commemoration, showing that personal inscriptions were not chosen in isolation.

Here, finite human life is contrasted to the infinite nature of God, but its fragility is presented as natural and expected through the comparison to the life of grass or flowers. Other families chose verses which also speak of a life cut short, but, in contrast, depict this as shocking and unnatural. Jeremiah 15:9, for example, uses another metaphor with a different tone:

CANYS EI HAUL A FACHLUDODD PAN YR OEDD I ETO’N DDYDD

(For his sun is gone down while it was yet day.)

This inscription, which was selected by 13 families, does not speak of life and death as a natural cycle, but rather depicts the death of the casualty as something abnormal: the sun setting during the day. It implies that the casualty died an untimely death, and should have had many more years to live.

A line from Psalm 102, chosen by 17 families, similarly describes a life ending unnaturally:

GOSTYNGODD EFE FY NERTH AR Y FFORDD;

BYRHAODD FY NYDDIAU

(He weakened my strength in the way; he shortened my days.)

The words “weakened” and “shortened” evoke a life cut short, and contain a sense of unfairness and anger. Interestingly, one inscription, submitted by the family of Corporal George Bowen of Cardigan, Cardiganshire, changes the pronoun to give:

GOSTYNGAIST FY NERTH AR Y FFORDD

BYRHEAIST FY NYDDIAU

(You weakened my strength in the way; you shortened my days.)⁴⁸⁰

These lines are certainly accusatory, though whether this is directed at God, the military authorities, or the general public it is impossible to know.

Another inscription, taken from Psalm 41 and engraved on the headstone of Private John Davies of Llandysul, Cardiganshire, also points to external forces when describing his death:

PSALM XL.1

“AFLWYDD, MEDDANT, A LYN WRTHO

A CHAN EI FOD YN GORWEDD NI CHYFYD MWY”

(An evil disease, say they, cleaveth fast unto him: and now that he lieth he shall rise up no more.)⁴⁸¹

John died of wounds, not of illness or disease, but the disease here is clearly metaphorical, referring to the war itself, something invasive and destructive. It is worth pointing out that,

⁴⁸⁰ Corporal George Bowen (18324), Welsh Regiment. Buried in Saint Vaast Post Military Cemetery, France.

⁴⁸¹ Private John Davies (29566), South Wales Borderers. Buried in Sezanne Communal Cemetery, France.

with the exception of the line from Psalm 41, these latter inscriptions are very frequently seen on the gravestones of babies and children. There is an established association with early and untimely death, inviting sorrow and pity for the deceased, and for the bereaved whose loved ones died before their time.

The texts explored in this section, though similar thematically, have very different tones and connotations. Human life is fragile and short-lived, but there are different ways of looking at this: it might be accepted as something natural, or it might be a source of anguish, particularly in the context of wartime, in which death could be sudden and violent.

*

There are also inscriptions which dwell on the experiences of loss and grief in a much more forthright manner than some of the others explored above. Feelings of desolation, distress, and confusion are foregrounded, suggesting that the relatives that chose these texts were still navigating their sorrow and had not found consolation. The texts in this section remind us that grief is not a linear process and that postwar commemoration incorporated a multitude of sometimes contradictory emotions.

A number of inscriptions were taken from the Book of Job. For example, 4 families chose a line from Job 3:25:

CANYS YR HYN A FAWR OFNAIS A DDAETH ARNAF

(For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me.)

Death here is a thing “greatly feared”, contrasting popular rhetoric which conceived of death in war as a heroic and noble sacrifice in which the bereaved could take pride. It is perhaps a more honest reflection of the experience of bereavement and grief, emphasising feelings of anxiety and sorrow.

The distress of the bereaved is also evident in Job 1:21, chosen by 3 families:

YR ARGLWYDD A RODDODD AR ARGLWYDD A DDYGODD YMAITH

(The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away.)

A similar evocation of emptiness is found in Job 7:10:

NI DDYCHWEL MWY I'W DŶ A'I LE NID EDWYN EF MWY

(He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him anymore.)

Death, in these two inscriptions, is described by absence, an absence which began when the deceased entered military service and was compounded by their burial overseas. It is a device used in the following inscription, too, which can be found on the headstone of Sergeant William Thomas of Alltwen, Glamorgan:

CÂR A CHYFAILL A YRRAIST YM MHELL ODDIWRTHYF

(Lover and friend hast thou put far from me.)⁴⁸²

This line originates in Psalm 88, which is, as a whole, a lament stemming from a sense of abandonment and desperation. It has an accusatory tone, though it is unclear at whom this is directed: God, perhaps, or the military authorities, or the general public.

⁴⁸² Sergeant William Thomas (29525), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Saint Vaast Post Military Cemetery, France.

Feelings of distress and anguish are also present in the text chosen for the headstone of Driver David Williams, taken from Psalm 25:

TRO ATTAF A THRUGARHA WRTHYF

CANYS UNIG A THLAWD YDWYF

25 PSALM 16 VERSE

(Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted.)⁴⁸³

These two lines, like the psalm itself, form a prayer for help, calling attention to ongoing suffering and asking God for protection and mercy. While it is probable that the words are meant to be in David's 'voice', they could easily be spoken by his relatives as well.

A final inscription sums up the depth of emotion felt by many bereaved families in the wake of the First World War:

“ANCHWILIADWY YDYNT DY FFYRDD DI O DDUW!”

(Your ways are incomprehensible, O God!)⁴⁸⁴

This text was adapted from Romans 11:33 by the parents of Sapper Sam Marshall Williams, changing its meaning somewhat: the original verse expresses wonder at the wisdom and knowledge of God, while this inscription seems to articulate confusion, anger, and despair. Sonia Batten reminds us that the parents of the war dead were the first generation of parents who could have reasonably expected to predecease their children.⁴⁸⁵ Although the census forms filled out by the families studied for this chapter show that some parents *did* in fact suffer the

⁴⁸³ Driver David Williams (T4/058348), Army Service Corps. Buried in Alexandria (Hadra) War Memorial Cemetery, Egypt.

⁴⁸⁴ Sapper Sam Marshall Williams (181935), Royal Engineers. Buried in Tehran War Cemetery, Iran.

⁴⁸⁵ Batten, 'Memorial Text Narratives', p. 194.

loss of children in infancy, the death of an adult child, in an often sudden and violent manner, was a different experience. It is small wonder that William and Catherine Williams, like other families, found it difficult to understand.

*

For other bereaved families, sorrow existed alongside hope. Physical death opened the way to a new and eternal life in the presence of God; meanwhile, the living left behind could be comforted in the belief that God recognised their suffering and would provide strength and protection. Distress and grief could be endured, with this ultimate trust in God. The inscriptions below acknowledge earthly strife and suffering, but are not overwhelmed by it, unlike the inscriptions explored in the previous section. Instead, these texts are characterised by a sense of confidence and unwavering faith.

The parents of Able Seaman William Henry Jones of Troedyrhiw, Glamorgan, selected a line from Psalm 120:

AR YR ARGLWYDD Y GWAEDD-AIS YN FY NGHYFYNGDER

AC EFE A'M GWRANDAWODD I

(In my distress I cried unto the Lord, and He heard me.)⁴⁸⁶

A similar sentiment can be found in the inscription chosen by Jemima Evans for the headstone of her son, Lance Corporal Joseph Albert Evans, taken from Psalm 138:

⁴⁸⁶ Able Seaman William Henry Jones (PALACE Z/3699), Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve. Buried in Buenos Aires (Chacarita) British Cemetery, Argentina.

Y DYDD Y LLEFAIS Y'M GWRANDEWAIST
AC A'M CADARNHEAIST A NERTH YN FY ENAID

(In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.)⁴⁸⁷

These two texts refer to adversity and feelings of distress, but these are overcome by strength given by God. God, here, is a benevolent caretaker and protector, not one whose acts are sometimes cruel and incomprehensible, as the inscriptions in the previous section imply.

A verse from Psalm 23, chosen by 9 families, is perhaps the most emblematic of the belief in God as guide and guardian:

YR ARGLWYDD YW FY MUGAIL NI BYDD EISIAU ARNAF

(The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.)

This inscription, the first line of the psalm, would have been instantly recognisable to anyone reading it, and would have called to mind the rest of the text: a declaration of faith in God, despite the presence of evil, and the comfort found in the thought of divine protection. For this reason, Psalm 23 was, and is, commonly read at funeral services in peacetime, but was equally appropriate for commemorating a death in war. Once again, we can observe the utilisation of traditional texts within the new context of war commemoration—significant, in this case, as it allowed families to incorporate elements of the burial service which they had not been able to hold for their loved ones.

⁴⁸⁷ Lance Corporal Joseph Albert Evans (19136), Welsh Regiment. Buried in Nantyffyllon (Salem) Welsh Baptist Burial Ground, Wales.

The texts above are characterised by strong faith and a belief in the goodness and mercy of God. Comfort is drawn from the thought that the deceased are protected and at peace, and that the anguish of the bereaved will be heard and assuaged. A final inscription, however, does not dwell on any kind of distress, but instead makes an ultimate declaration of trust in God:

DY EWYLLYS DI A WNELER

(Thy will be done.)

These words are taken from the Lord's Prayer, and were chosen by 16 families in total. In this inscription there is no sense of resignation or bitterness, just an acceptance—an acceptance of death, if God wills it. It is, perhaps, the clearest measure and strongest assertion of religious faith of all the personal inscriptions explored in this section.

*

The inscriptions studied in this section—and, indeed, all of the Welsh-language inscriptions taken from religious sources—articulate a vast range of sentiments and comment on a vast range of themes. These were, however, all filtered through the lens of religious belief and Christian, specifically Protestant, teachings. We can see just how deeply religious beliefs and rituals were embedded in the fabric of everyday life at the beginning of the twentieth century: religion provided a framework for people to experience and understand all that happened to them, and all that they felt and thought. It is natural that the bereaved would turn to religious texts to help them express their emotions in the task of commemorating the war dead.

These emotions were varied and complicated. Some families dwelled on their sadness; others focused on more uplifting themes, such as the hope of resurrection and eternal life under the protection of God. Religious texts also offered families plenty of verses or lines with which to praise the virtue of the dead and the justness of their cause. Many of the themes explored above were carried through from peacetime, with several of the inscriptions equally appropriate for describing the death of a civilian or for commemorating a death in war. Other inscriptions would not have made sense in civilian life, but found resonance in the aftermath of the conflict. The religious texts explored above show that war commemoration was able to accommodate a variety of narratives and approaches, and these complexities are also evident in other Welsh-language personal inscriptions.

5.2.2 Poetic inscriptions

Although religious texts were clearly the preferred choice for a headstone inscription, owing to the religiosity of the period and the ways it shaped civilian practices surrounding burial and commemoration, other literary sources were also drawn upon by the bereaved families of the First World War. Poetry dwelled on many of the same themes as religious texts—death, grief, love, and remembrance, for example—but provided a secular alternative for those who, for whatever reason, wanted to express their feelings outside the framework of Christian belief. It is possible that some families chose inscriptions derived from literature in order to stress their intellectual credentials; others may have simply wanted a lesser-known or lesser-used epitaph, something that would make an impression on visitors to the cemeteries. The use of literature alongside religious texts suggests a mining of written sources for use after the First World War, in the search for an appropriate, and perhaps distinctive, quotation, within the limits laid down by the IWGC, and within the financial means of the family.

A wide range of literature was considered suitable for commemorating the dead. Quotations from William Shakespeare, John Donne, William Wordsworth, Alfred, Lord Tennyson, and William Ernest Henley, as well as contemporary poets such as Rupert Brooke, John McRae, Rudyard Kipling, and Laurence Binyon, are all found amongst English-language epitaphs. Such variety is perhaps surprising when considering that, amongst the British working- and middle-classes at least, reading was far less popular as a leisure activity than gardening, playing sports, keeping pets, group singing, or card games.⁴⁸⁸ For many Edwardians, regular reading was limited to daily or, more often than not, weekly newspapers, the Bible and other religious books, and adventure novels or school stories, especially for younger readers.⁴⁸⁹ Knowledge of

⁴⁸⁸ Batten, 'Memorial Text Narratives', p. 151.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid.

more highbrow texts was clearly widespread, however, suggesting that the bereaved were remembering literature studied in school, or using quotes in common usage. Indeed, Sonia Batten observes that many inscriptions are slightly misquoted, though not, she thinks, deliberately, which implies that they were copied down from memory rather than from a printed source.⁴⁹⁰ The deliberation with which headstone inscriptions were chosen is apparent here: several sources were no doubt considered for the task at hand before one inscription was eventually chosen, possibly after consultation with the wider family, and sometimes following negotiations with the IWGC.

The popularity of poetry can be observed amongst the body of Welsh-language inscriptions. As table 5.1 shows us, 61 headstones are inscribed with lines of poetry, sourced from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century bards such as Dyfed (Evan Rees), Islwyn (William Thomas), John Ceiriog Hughes, and John Henry Roberts, as well as twentieth-century poets like Hedd Wyn (Ellis Humphrey Evans), Robert Williams Parry, and Gwilym Williams. (Some poems were composed especially for the deceased, by both well-known poets and family members, but these have been included in the individualised inscriptions section or, if clearly patriotic or anti-war in tone, into those sections instead. The inscriptions in this section have been taken from *published* works.) It is clear that amongst these 61 families there was a broad knowledge of Welsh literature, reflecting the importance of poetry within Welsh culture—particularly Welsh language culture—at this time. Poetry was often composed to mark life events such as births, marriages, and deaths, and, indeed, was strongly connected with the commemoration of the dead through the tradition of the *englyn bedd*, or grave elegy.⁴⁹¹

⁴⁹⁰ Batten, ‘Memorial Text Narratives’, p. 155.

⁴⁹¹ From the seventeenth century onwards, there was in Wales a tradition of carving elegiac *englynion* on headstones. An *englyn* is a short poem form, governed by strict rules on metre and rhyme, and *cynghanedd* (‘harmony’), the arrangement of sounds within one line. *Englynion bedd* appear in their thousands on gravestones across Wales.

Moreover, writing and reading poetry was not just a leisure pursuit of the middle- and upper-classes, but was a popular cultural activity across all of Welsh society. Census data for this particular group of Welsh people shows that just as many families were working-class as middle-class, with a third working in the primary sector, in agriculture, mining, and quarrying, and just under a third working in the tertiary sector, in retail, education, or banking.

We can see, then, that people across Welsh society turned to poetry to help them articulate their emotions and experiences. Their choices provide us with an insight into the complex emotions of bereavement, and with an understanding of the trends or patterns in the use of commemorative poetry at this time.

*

A large proportion of the inscriptions in this category are concerned with the idea of remembrance. Unlike other epitaphs such as some of those explored in sections 5.2.5 and 5.2.6, however, these poetic inscriptions articulate the promise of a wider and perpetual remembrance: a collective memory, rather than a personal and private memory. It may be that the bereaved found that poetry, like religious verses, had the ability to address these complicated ideas in a succinct and eloquent manner, and was therefore ideal for the somewhat restrictive personal inscription format.

Just under half of all poetic inscriptions are taken from a single poem, an *englyn* titled *Nid â'n Ango* (Not Forgotten), by the bard Hedd Wyn. It was written in memory of his friend Private

Tommy Morris, who was killed near Neuve Chapelle on 12 May 1916, but became widely used for headstone epitaphs and war memorial inscriptions in the aftermath of the First World War, transforming the commemoration of an individual into something universal.

EI ABERTH NID Â HEIBIO—EI WYNEB

ANNWYL NID Â'N ANGO

ER I'R ALMAEN YSTAENIO

EI DWRN DUR YN EI WAED O.

(His sacrifice will not be passed by—his face

So dear will not be forgotten,

Although Germany has stained

Its steel fist in his blood.)

Nid â'n Ango is one of the most famous poems written by Hedd Wyn. It was used on Tommy Morris' memorial card, and later appeared in many articles in the Welsh press to commemorate Hedd Wyn himself, following his death on 31 July 1917. The publication of *Cerddi'r Bugail* in 1918 meant that his poems reached an even wider audience, and this coincided with the selection of inscriptions for war graves and war memorials.

It is not surprising that *Nid â'n Ango* proved a popular choice for a memorial text. The four-line *englyn* format is short and succinct, ideal for headstone inscriptions, and unlike some of Hedd Wyn's other poems, such as *Rhyfel* (War) and *Y Blotyn Du* (The Black Spot), it is less despairing: instead, it honours the sacrifice of the deceased and pledges remembrance. The wording and tone of the poem therefore, understandably, resonated with numerous individuals and communities as they were commemorating their dead.

The majority of these 27 personal inscriptions use the first two lines of the poem. One, however, engraved on the headstone of Private William Williams from Llanfor, Merionethshire, uses the last two lines.⁴⁹² There are also a handful of inscriptions which alter the wording slightly, demonstrating how the bereaved could add their own voices to a published and well-known text. For instance, the families of Gunner William Hugh Pownall and Private Elias Jones changed ‘wyneb’ (‘face’) to ‘enw’ (‘name’).⁴⁹³ This may be, of course, an accidental misquotation of the original poem; it may also be, however, an acknowledgement that personal memories would, in time, give way to a more general remembrance. The faces of the war dead would inevitably be forgotten, as those that knew them passed away, but their names would remain carved in stone in perpetuity.

Annie Jones of Waen, Flintshire, substituted ‘enw’ for ‘wyneb’ as well when submitting the inscription for the headstone of her husband, Guardsman Thomas Hugh Jones. She also changed the pronoun ‘ei’ (‘his’) to the plural ‘eu’ (‘their’).

EU HABERTH

NID EL HEIBIO

AU HENWAU ANWYL

NID ANT ANGHO

(Their sacrifice will not be passed by, and their dear names will not be forgotten.)⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁹² Private William Williams (43934), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Étaples Military Cemetery, France.

⁴⁹³ Gunner William Hugh Pownall (131900), Royal Garrison Artillery. Buried in The Huts Cemetery, Belgium. Private Elias Jones (10959), Royal Welsh Fusiliers & Labour Corps. Buried in Beaumetz Cross Roads Cemetery, France.

⁴⁹⁴ Guardsman Thomas Hugh Jones (2841), Welsh Guards. Buried in Grove Town Cemetery, France.

This inscription encompasses all of the war dead, and so makes an even stronger statement about everlasting remembrance. In this way, it is externally focused, an implicit instruction to other visitors to the grave, recognising that the cemeteries were or would become places of interest and pilgrimage. Other families seem to have had this in mind, as well: two inscriptions include translations of the poem. The grave of Gunner Edward Jones from New Quay, Cardiganshire, reads

EI ABERTH NID A YN ANGOF

HIS SACRIFICE SHALL NOT BE FORGOTTEN.⁴⁹⁵

His mother, Mary Jones, ensured that both Welsh-speaking and English-speaking visitors would be able to read her choice of epitaph. Annie Wilcoxon, the mother of Guardsman Joseph Oswald Wilcoxon, addressed Welsh speakers, English speakers, and local French people with the following inscription:

EI ABERTH NID Â HEIBIO

HIS SACRIFICE WILL NOT FADE

SA GLOIRE VIVRA.⁴⁹⁶

The message of remembrance is therefore accessible to the vast majority of people passing by the grave.

One inscription contains an interesting addition, which blends the promise of remembrance with a declaration of national identity. It is found on the headstone of Second Lieutenant

⁴⁹⁵ Mary Jones misquoted the first line but the inscription is clearly inspired by the poem. Gunner Edward Jones (168240), Royal Field Artillery. Buried in Duisans British Cemetery, France.

⁴⁹⁶ Guardsman Joseph Oswald Wilcoxon (1778), Welsh Guards. Buried in Guards' Cemetery, France.

Iorwerth Glyndwr John, who served with the South Wales Borderers and is buried in St Mary's Advanced Dressing Station Cemetery in France.

UN O FEIBION HOFFUSAF CYMRU

EI ABERTH NID EL HEIBIO—A'I ENW

ANNWYL NID A'N ANGO

(One of the beloved sons of Wales / His sacrifice will not be passed by, and his dear name will not be forgotten.)⁴⁹⁷

His father, Edward John, who submitted the inscription to the IWGC, was a staunch Welsh nationalist and an advocate for Welsh Home Rule.⁴⁹⁸ It makes sense, then, that he would choose to frame the death and commemoration of his son in terms of his Welshness, ultimately implying that the sacrifice made was for the sake of Wales. However, he was also a pacifist and opposed Britain's entry into the First World War. Reading the inscription with this in mind, we become aware of how any sense of glory or war fervour is avoided. Edward John honours his son, but does not condone the war; he emphasises his national identity, without descending into jingoism. This careful balance is another reminder of the diligence with which personal inscriptions were composed.

The theme of eternal remembrance is also found in older poetry, written long before the First World War and referring to warriors and heroes of a past age, but found to be appropriate and

⁴⁹⁷ Second Lieutenant Iorwerth Glyndwr John, South Wales Borderers. Buried in St Mary's ADS Cemetery, France.

⁴⁹⁸ For details on Edward John's involvement in the Welsh Home Rule movement, see J. Graham Jones, 'E. T. John and Welsh Home Rule, 1910—14', *Welsh History Review / Cylchgrawn Hanes Cymru* 13:4 (1987), pp. 453-467.

resonant nonetheless in this new context. One inscription, submitted to the IWGC by 5 families, declares:

MEWN ANGOF NI CHÂNT FOD

(They shall not remain in oblivion.)

It is sourced from a stanza in the poem *Dyffryn Clwyd* (Vale of Clwyd) by John Ceiriog Hughes.

MEWN ANGOF NI CHÂNT FOD,

WŶR Y CLEDD, HIR EU CLOD,

TRA'R AWEL TROS EU PENNAU CHWŶTH:

Y MAE YNG NGHYMRU FYRDD,

O FEDDAU AR Y FFYRDD,

YN BALMANT HYD BA UN Y RHODIA RHYDDID BYTH!

(They shall not remain in oblivion, men of the sword, much praised, even while the wind blows over their heads / For there are in Wales a multitude of graves along the ways, a pavement on which freedom forever walks!)

The poem honours the Welsh heroes of old, asserting that they will not be forgotten as their graves stand as testament to the freedom they won. Its use as a headstone inscription—and as a quotation on numerous war memorials, as we will see in Chapter 6—implies that the dead of the First World War were considered heroes of equal standing and thus deserving of remembrance as well.

Although these poems were written in different contexts and originally referred to different people, the concept of remembrance within them is very similar. It is taken as a given that the

war dead will not be forgotten, both in the present and the future, and this seems to be because these poems conceive of remembrance as a collective responsibility, safe from the limitations of personal, private memory. The inscriptions explored throughout this chapter show that there were many ideas about remembrance amongst the Welsh-speaking bereaved, but what is beyond doubt or debate is that it was necessary to remember.

*

Other inscriptions take a different approach. Rather than merely stating that the dead will not be forgotten, like the poems above, the texts in this section praise the specific qualities and efforts of the deceased individual, giving us an insight into how their families and friends thought of them and wanted others to remember them. That they are worthy of remembrance is undisputed, but remembrance is an unspoken presence, articulated between the lines.

Second Lieutenant Robert Pritchard Evans of Garndolbenmaen, Caernarfonshire, is commemorated by the words

OR ADDFWYN YR ADDFWYNAF

AC OR GWYR Y GOREU GAF

YN DAWEL CWSG

(The gentlest of the gentle and the best of all men / Sleep in peace.)⁴⁹⁹

⁴⁹⁹ Second Lieutenant Robert Pritchard Evans, Welsh Regiment. Buried in Mendinghem Military Cemetery, Belgium.

This inscription was submitted by his mother, Elizabeth, but the first two lines come from an *englyn*, one of several, written in his memory by his close friend, the poet Robert Williams Parry.⁵⁰⁰ It is interesting that the *englyn* describes him as gentle, rather than pointing to more martial qualities such as bravery, honour, or a sense of duty. There are comparisons to be made with some of the inscriptions in section 5.2.6 which also emphasise the gentleness and peace-loving nature of the deceased.

The context of the war is similarly absent in this inscription, taken from *Er cof am D. G. Williams* (In memory of D. G. Williams) by Hedd Wyn:

GEDY AR OL, OES WEN

FER, DLOS, ANFARWOL

(He leaves behind a blessed, short, beautiful, immortal life.)⁵⁰¹

As the title suggests, the *englyn* was written to commemorate Private David Griffith Williams, a friend of Hedd Wyn from Trawsfynydd, who served with the Royal Welsh Fusiliers and was killed on 3 September 1916. It was chosen as a headstone inscription, however, by the parents of Second Lieutenant William Ifor Williams from Amlwch, Anglesey, again showing how the commemoration of one individual could speak to other families. Again, martial qualities are absent; rather, it is his blessed and beautiful life that will be remembered forever.

⁵⁰⁰ The *englynion* appear to have been first published in *Y Goleuad*, 27 April 1917, p. 5.

⁵⁰¹ “Ar ol” should read “ar ôl”, but it is not known whether this was a mistake on the part of the Williamses or the IWGC. Second Lieutenant William Ifor Williams, Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Erquinghem-Lys Churchyard Extension, France.

In contrast, other inscriptions honour the bravery and patriotism of the deceased. Another poem by Robert Williams Parry states:

RHOES EI NERTH A'I BRYDFERTHWCH

TROS EI WLAD TROS AELWYDYDD HEDDWCH

(He gave his strength and his loveliness for his country, for peaceful hearths.)⁵⁰²

This poem was originally written in memory of Lieutenant Richard Jones of Tanygrisiau, who was killed in October 1916, but was chosen by the family of Second Lieutenant David Thomas Parry, a banker's clerk from Liverpool.⁵⁰³ It portrays his death as a sacrifice of youth for the sake of his country, articulating some of the same themes present in the inscriptions explored in section 5.2.3.

The variation in tone in the inscriptions above demonstrates how amongst Welsh people there were different views of the war dead. For two families, there was an attempt to minimise their martial qualities by praising their gentleness and by referring to their pre-war lives. Another family chose a poem that complemented their military service and the circumstances of their death, and were therefore more fitting for the commemoration of a soldier.

*

Other families chose not to focus on the earthly life of the deceased, but to envision their afterlife. Themes of peace, reward, and reunion are discussed in these inscriptions, drawing on

⁵⁰² Second Lieutenant David Thomas Parry, East Lancashire Regiment. Buried in Saint Sever Cemetery, France.

⁵⁰³ The *englyn* was published in *Y Goleuad*, 9 March 1917, p. 5.

Christian beliefs about death and the afterlife. As with other inscriptions explored in this chapter, these texts demonstrate the influence of religion at this time, even though these families were choosing poetry, not scripture, to commemorate their dead.

The popular metaphor of death as sleep, used frequently in religious texts and in literature, is found in an extract from the song *Cwsg, Filwr, Cwsg* (Sleep, Soldier, Sleep) by John Henry Roberts, which was submitted by 6 families:

CWSG, FILWR, CWSG

(Sleep, soldier, sleep.)

Another inscription, using a line from the ode *Cariad* (Love) by Dyfed, also imagines the deceased at rest and at peace. It is found on the headstone of Sergeant Benjamin Roberts in Faubourg d'Amiens Cemetery in France:

HUNA NAWR

HEB BOEN

AR OBENYDD HEDDWCH

(Sleep, now, without pain, on the pillow of peace.)⁵⁰⁴

In contrast, Benjamin Davies, the brother of Private Llewellyn Oswald Davies, did not dwell on the past or any earthly struggles, but simply looked forward to an eternity in heaven:

YN Y NEF OEDD DY HAF DI I DDECHREU

(In heaven your summer is about to begin.)⁵⁰⁵

⁵⁰⁴ Sergeant Benjamin Roberts (11451), Dorsetshire Regiment. Buried in Faubourg d'Amiens Cemetery, France.

⁵⁰⁵ Private Llewellyn Oswald Davies (13916), Devonshire Regiment. Buried in Sarigol Military Cemetery, Greece.

This line is taken from a poem called *Glan Ebbwy* (The Bank of the Ebbw) by Islwyn (William Thomas).

All of these inscriptions deal with similar themes but take different approaches. Some families chose lines that spoke of death as sleep, while others submitted extracts that focused on eternal life—a reminder of the differing, and sometimes contradictory, euphemisms that surrounded death in Christian belief. Despite this, all were imbued with hope and relief that their loved one was suffering no longer.

*

For other families, however, grief was all-encompassing, and could not be assuaged by promises of remembrance or the thought of resurrection. Feelings of sorrow and anxieties over the far-off location of the grave are reflected in their choice of inscription.

The parents of Private Thomas John Jones of Llansawel, Carmarthenshire, submitted the following lines to the IWGC:

HEB RODRES WEDI BRWYDRO

ERYS A CHROES UWCH EI RO

(After the battle he remains, without glory, a cross above his grave.)⁵⁰⁶

⁵⁰⁶ Private Thomas John Jones (320238), Welsh Regiment. Buried in Beersheba War Cemetery, Israel & Palestine.

This inscription was taken from an *englyn* titled *Beddargraff Milwr* (A Soldier's Epitaph), written by Gwilym Williams and published posthumously in 1917.⁵⁰⁷ It contrasts other texts which depict the grave as a special site, the ground sanctified through the burial of a British soldier. (Inscriptions taken from *The Soldier* by Rupert Brooke come to mind.) Instead, it conjures up a lonely image, matching some of the inscriptions in section 5.2.6 which dwell on the theme of distance.

Grief and anguish are even more palpable in the following inscription. It was taken not from a printed source, but from an *englyn bedd* written by Owain Gwyrfaï (Owen Williams) for the headstone of Gwyndaf Eryri (Richard Jones) in the cemetery in Llanbeblig, Caernarfonshire:

YN WIR, MI GARWN ORWEDD

ER EI FWYN YNG NGHWR EI FEDD

(Indeed, for his sake I would lie down in his grave.)⁵⁰⁸

Gwyndaf Eryri died in 1848, but these lines resonated with the parents of Sapper Evan Richard Roberts and the mother of Sapper Evan Parry several decades later in the wake of a devastating conflict. The inscription is infused with love and loss, with Hugh and Jane Roberts and Ann Parry declaring that they would give up their own lives in place of their sons.

The adoptive parents of Private Thomas Davies, Joseph and Eleanor Jones, voiced a very real concern shared by many in the interwar period:

⁵⁰⁷ Gwilym Williams, *Dan Yr Hebyg* (Llanelli: James Davies a'i Gwmni, 1917).

⁵⁰⁸ Sapper Evan Richard Roberts (71105), Royal Engineers. Buried in Warlincourt Halte British Cemetery, France. Sapper Evan Parry (WR/261751), Royal Engineers. Buried in Les Baraques Military Cemetery, France.

AI DROS FÔR PWY DRWSIA'I FEDD

(Who will attend to his grave over the sea?)⁵⁰⁹

This line was taken from an *englyn* written by Gwilym Eryri (William Roberts) to commemorate the poet Rhisiart Ddu o Wynedd (Richard Foulkes Edwards), who died in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, in 1870. Thomas Davies was buried in France, but the distance between Wales and the grave was still keenly felt by his parents. The loss and longing in this inscription echoes some of the texts explored in section 5.2.6 of this chapter which are also focused on the theme of distance.

*

Inscriptions taken from poetry expressed a range of emotions and dwelled on a number of themes. Once again, we can see that mourning and remembrance were complex processes, and that some families turned to existing written sources to help them articulate their thoughts and feelings. Like scripture, poetry had long been used in Wales to commemorate the dead and, like scripture, it was drawn upon in the aftermath of the First World War. It should be noted, however, that all of the poetry chosen by Welsh speakers was Welsh-language in origin, and had not, unlike the Bible, been translated into Welsh from English. The broad knowledge of Welsh literature, from the bards of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to the poets writing during the war and the interwar period, highlights the importance of poetry in Welsh-language culture, particularly for the task of commemorating the dead.

⁵⁰⁹ Private Thomas Davies (88592), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Englefontaine British Cemetery, France.

5.2.3 Patriotic and martial inscriptions

While personal inscriptions taken from religious and poetic sources explored a broad range of concepts, other epitaphs can be grouped around a single theme. There are 49 inscriptions, submitted by 61 families in total, that are patriotic or martial in tone, and thus clearly fit the context of war commemoration. Some are original formulations, composed by the next-of-kin, others consist of well-known phrases and mottos, popular in other memorial texts during this period, and some quote lines from songs.

The inscriptions in this section can be split into two broad groups: those which stress the national identity of the deceased, and reference the war only obliquely, and those which engage directly with the war and the notion of death in war. As a whole, the texts discuss the ideals of sacrifice, honour, bravery, and duty, reflecting the dominant rhetoric of the interwar period, but there is nonetheless some deviation which points to a particular memory of the war shared by Welsh people, and Welsh speakers in particular. The recurring emphasis on Wales and Welshness strongly suggests that these families believed that their relatives were fighting for Wales, to protect Welsh culture and the Welsh language, and that they should be mourned and remembered as Welshmen. In this way, although these inscriptions are specific to the martial context, there is a connection to other epitaphs explored in the rest of this chapter which foreground Welsh nationality and identity.

*

The most popular inscription in this category by far, chosen by 25 families, is the motto of the Welsh Regiment:

GWELL ANGAU NA CHYWILYDD

(Better death than dishonour.)

It is perhaps the most explicitly martial of all the texts in this section, both in its tone and wording and in its association with the Welsh Regiment. What is interesting is that of the 25 men whose headstones are inscribed with these words, only 8 of them actually belonged to the Welsh Regiment. The other 17 men served with a wide range of units, including the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, Royal Engineers, Machine Gun Corps, Canadian Expeditionary Force, and the Australian Imperial Force, to name a few. Looking more closely, however, we can see that 19 of them, with their families, were born and lived in the counties of Glamorgan, Carmarthenshire, and Pembrokeshire, the historic recruiting ground of the regiment. This implies that, for the next-of-kin submitting the inscription, at least, there was a regional loyalty to the regiment that superseded the actuality of a man's war service. David French observes that territorialisation and localisation in the late nineteenth century helped to "forge a shared sense of identity between civilian communities and particular regiments".⁵¹⁰ Popular militarism and local patriotism were likely at play here.

Another factor worth mentioning is that several of these men, and their fathers and brothers, were colliery workers, metal workers, or otherwise employed in heavy industry, like a high proportion of men of working age across south Wales at this time. Connecting their occupations to the choice of headstone inscription also points to the importance of a collective or corporate identity within the specific culture of south Wales, with the regiment replacing or succeeding the union. Familiarity with the collective, and a sense of solidarity and consolation in the

⁵¹⁰ David French, *Military Identities: The Regimental System, the British Army, and the British People c. 1870—2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 237. Benedict Anderson's concept of 'imagined communities' is also useful here. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

collective, may help to explain why families whose loved ones served in other units nonetheless felt an allegiance to the Welsh Regiment, their local regiment.

It is also possible that these families chose the motto because it had been inscribed on their local war memorial, or had featured in a remembrance or unveiling service, and they were therefore aware of it while they were selecting a personal inscription. Chapter 6 shows that it was a popular memorial text, especially in Carmarthenshire and Glamorgan, at this time. This demonstrates how certain phrases or quotations could become trends, illuminating the connections and crossovers between different facets of commemoration.

A similar sentiment was conveyed by the final lines of the song *I Blas Gogerddan* (To Plas Gogerddan) by John Ceiriog Hughes, which was submitted as an inscription to the IWGC by 4 families.

MIL GWELL YW MARW'N FACHGEN DEWR

NA BYW YN FACHGEN LLWFR

(A thousand times better to die as a brave boy, than to live as a cowardly one.)

The song narrates the story of a mother urging her son to go to battle and fight with his father, saying that a mother prefers a son to shed his blood like water than be a coward; the son accepts gladly, and returns to the battlefield. When his body is brought back to his home, his mother grieves and calls on God to forgive her, but the son's voice, heard through the walls, reassures her that it is better to die as a hero, than to live as a coward.

Death in war is presented as preferable to dishonour and cowardice in the two inscriptions above. The parents of Lance Corporal Goronwy Jones framed the matter slightly differently in the following *cyplid* ('couplet'):

ABERTHODD EI FYWYD FEL DEWR DROS EI WLAD

SYDD GYSUR MEWN GOFID I'W FAM AC I'W DAD

(He sacrificed his life as a hero for his country, which is a consolation amidst sorrow for his mother and father.)⁵¹¹

The Joneses acknowledge their distress, making this inscription a little less fervent, but, even so, they state that their son's heroic and patriotic sacrifice is a consolation, something to assuage their grief. It echoes other memorial text narratives which portray death in war as gallant and honourable, to be praised and admired. There is no sense of sarcasm or cynicism in this inscription, nor in others like it, showing that, for many people in the interwar period, the fact that their loved one had died a 'good death' was genuinely a source of comfort. Death in war—or, rather, the narratives constructed around death in war—could, in some cases, mediate the grief of the bereaved.

*

Other inscriptions describe the cause or causes for which the casualty fought and died. Death, here, is not an abstract ideal; rather, it achieves something. These texts shift the emphasis from death in itself, and instead place the importance and meaning on the specific purpose of death.

⁵¹¹ Lance Corporal Goronwy Jones (164708), Machine Gun Corps. Buried in Sainte Marie Cemetery, France.

Although a variety of causes are invoked, providing an insight into the many views and interests of the civilian bereaved, it is the word ‘gwlad’ (‘country’) that is mentioned most frequently, appearing in nearly all of the inscriptions in this section. The frequent occurrence of ‘country’ emphasises the patriotism of the deceased, and the language in which these texts were written leaves no doubt as to which country they loved, sought to protect, and ultimately died defending.

The word ‘country’ is occasionally paired with the word ‘brenin’ (‘King’), emphasising both love of country and loyalty to the Crown, and demonstrating the centrality of the monarch—as both a political and cultural icon—to the British war effort. Indeed, Heather Jones has demonstrated that military service was constructed as a “personal, sacralised, individual bond between monarch and subject”, the fulfilment of a relationship in which both would serve and protect each other.⁵¹² Death in war could be both a symbolic and real act of service.

John Jones submitted the following inscription for the headstone of his son, Gunner Robert Jones:

BU UFUDD HYD ANGAU DROS EI FRENIN A’I WLAD

(Obedient unto death for his King and country.)⁵¹³

Barbara Buckley Roderick wrote a simple but powerful epitaph to commemorate her husband, Captain Hume Buckley Roderick:

FY NUW, FY NGWLAD, FY MRENIN

⁵¹² Heather Jones, *For King and Country: The British Monarchy and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), p. 59.

⁵¹³ Gunner Robert Jones (29252), Royal Field Artillery. Buried in Messines Ridge British Cemetery, Belgium.

(My God, my country, my King.)⁵¹⁴

These are the only two headstone inscriptions written in the Welsh language that refer to the King. In contrast, there are thousands of inscriptions in the English language which portray the death of the casualty as a sacrifice for the King, mentioned alongside ‘country’, ‘God’, and sometimes ‘Empire’. The absence of the King amongst Welsh-language personal inscriptions is mirrored by the same infrequent occurrence in Welsh war memorial inscriptions—particularly those in the Welsh language. It implies that loyalty to the monarch was not as important to Welsh speakers as a reason to fight and die than the defence of home and country, which certainly is a recurring theme, not only amongst the patriotic inscriptions in this category, but amongst other epitaphs explored elsewhere in this chapter, and amongst war memorial inscriptions as well.

Were the class and cultural backgrounds of these two families a factor in the choice of inscription? It is hard to say. The Buckley Roderick family certainly fulfil the criteria to explain such allegiance to King and country: namely, Anglo-Welsh, English-speaking, strongly Anglican, and firmly upper middle class.⁵¹⁵ Military service seems to have been a tradition in the family as well, thus reinforcing the ideals of duty and loyalty.⁵¹⁶ Barbara Buckley Roderick had the same Anglo-Welsh, upper middle class upbringing as her husband, and the military was also an important presence in her life. Indeed, her father was Lieutenant Colonel Richard Davies Garnons-Williams, who was killed in action in 1915, and she herself served in

⁵¹⁴ Captain Hume Buckley Roderick, Welsh Guards. Buried in Gouzeaucourt New British Cemetery, France.

⁵¹⁵ Ella Buckley Roderick, Hume’s mother, signed Lady Florence Cecil’s petition: clearly her faith was important enough for her to petition for cruciform headstones.

⁵¹⁶ William Buckley Roderick, Hume’s father, served with the Welsh Regiment, reaching the rank of lieutenant-colonel before his death in 1908. Hume himself was active in the Territorials as a young man, and was serving as an officer in his father’s old regiment at the outbreak of war. The other three brothers all served as junior officers during the First World War; two of them were also killed.

France.⁵¹⁷ While Barbara was the official next-of-kin, and it is her name listed on the Commission documents, it is possible that the inscription was composed after some discussion with her in-laws, reflecting their similar backgrounds, and their shared values and priorities.

The Jones family, in stark contrast, were from Llanfaglan in Caernarfonshire, a rural, Welsh-speaking community whose inhabitants were largely employed in agriculture and quarrying. They were representative of the local demographic, being a working-class family—John Jones was an agricultural labourer—and monoglot Welsh speakers. I was unable to determine to which religious denomination the Joneses belonged. Robert Jones is named on the war memorial in St Mary Magdalene’s Church in Llanfaglan, but it is unclear whether the memorial commemorates members of the church congregation, or whether it includes men from the wider community and the church was simply chosen as the most suitable location.⁵¹⁸ There is, then, a possibility that the family were Anglican, but it is equally likely that they were of another Christian denomination.

With very little in common between these two families, it does not appear that their class, cultural background, or service in or experience of the military determined the wording of the personal inscription. Then again, it is extremely difficult and also problematic to draw any kind of conclusion from just two inscriptions and two families. What is significant, however, is that references to the King are almost entirely absent from the body of Welsh-language epitaphs, and from this we can only conclude that the priorities of Welsh speakers lay elsewhere.

⁵¹⁷ *Llanelly Star*, 15 December 1917, p. 4.

⁵¹⁸ War Memorials Register 37067: St Mary Magdalene’s Church, Llanfaglan, Caernarfonshire.

To be sure, the word ‘country’ is in a few cases paired with ‘Duw’ (‘God’), emphasising the righteousness of Wales’ and Britain’s part in the conflict, and expressing devotion to an authority greater than the King. For example, the headstone of Sergeant Robert Howells Jones reads:

TROS EI DDUW A’I WLAD

(For his God and his country.)⁵¹⁹

A more expressive phrase was used by the father of Private William Owen:

EDMYGU EI FYWYD GWYN

A’I ABERTH MAE DUW A’I WLAD

(Admire his blessed life, and his sacrifice for God and his country.)⁵²⁰

We are told that these two men were faithful to God and to their country, even into death. Their deaths were, then, a sacrifice for a greater cause, the ultimate act of loyalty.

More frequently, however, ‘country’ appears alongside abstract concepts such as ‘rhyddid’ (‘freedom’), ‘cyfiawnder’ (‘justice’), and ‘hedd’ (‘peace’). The line chosen by Edward Edwards for his son, Private Arthur Edwards, tells us that

BU FARW DROS GARTREF RHYDDID, A HEDDWCH EI WLAD

(He died for the freedom of his home, and the peace of his country.)⁵²¹

⁵¹⁹ Sergeant Robert J. Howells Jones (54560), Welsh Regiment. Buried in Varennes Military Cemetery, France.

⁵²⁰ Private William Owen (267281), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Beersheba War Cemetery, Israel & Palestine.

⁵²¹ Private Arthur Edwards (55334), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Bard Cottage Cemetery, Belgium.

This inscription does not portray his death as a sacrifice for home and country in themselves; rather, it is home and country being in a state of freedom and peace that is important. The military threat posed by Germany and her allies during the war is very present here, contrasting other inscriptions which depict the conflict as a war of ideals, such as the following text, which was inscribed on the headstone of Private David John Roberts:

DROS “RHYDDYD” A “CHYFIAWNDER”

(For ‘freedom’ and ‘justice’.)⁵²²

Maggie Williams, the sister of Gunner William Owen Williams, seems to have been inspired by the words of *Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau* (The Land of my Fathers), the Welsh national anthem:

COLLODD EI WAED DROS RHYDDID

(He shed his blood for freedom.)⁵²³

The line from the anthem reads:

TROS RHYDDID GOLLASANT EU GWAED

(For freedom they shed their blood.)

These words were inscribed on the war memorial in Ruthin, where the Williams family lived. It may be that Maggie submitted the inscription before the memorial was unveiled in 1925, but it is also possible that the quotation on the memorial influenced her choice of personal inscription.

⁵²² Private David John Roberts (3519), Welsh Regiment. Buried in Saint Sever Cemetery, France.

⁵²³ Gunner William Owen Williams (113107), Royal Field Artillery. Buried in Sailly-au-Bois Military Cemetery, France.

For these three families, it was not merely soldiers and armies that Welshmen fought, but militarism, tyranny, brutality, and barbarism. These inscriptions are almost certainly the product of wartime propaganda which depicted Germany as a threat to liberalism and democracy, and the enemy of Christian civilisation—and may also reflect the more entrenched image the Welsh had of themselves as liberal, peace-loving, and faithfully religious. The war was fought not only for the defence of home and country, but also to uphold the ideals of freedom, justice, and peace, and death in war could be vindicated by the victory of the Allies and the successful survival of these ideals.

It does not appear that these concepts were universally meaningful, however, as there are also several instances where ‘country’ is used by itself, blending the notion of patriotism with the necessity of military defence. The following words, for example, are inscribed on the headstone of Private John Ivor Jones:

BU FARW DROS EI WLAD

(He died for his country.)⁵²⁴

A similar formulation was chosen by the parents of Private George Turk:

EIN ANWYL FAB

A RODD EI FYWYD DROS EI WLAD

(Our beloved son, who gave his life for his country.)⁵²⁵

⁵²⁴ Private John Ivor Jones (10089), Gloucester Regiment. Buried in Guards’ Cemetery, France.

⁵²⁵ Private George Turk (46909), South Wales Borderers. Buried in Busigny Communal Cemetery Extension, France.

William and Sarah Rees, the parents of Private Richard Wells Rees of the Welsh Regiment, also depict the death of their son as an act of service for his country, but frame it as their own sacrifice, highlighting their sense of patriotism and their role in the wider war effort.

GWLADGARWCH PUR YN MYNWES MAM A THAD

RHOI BACHGEN DEWR I FARW DROS EI WLAD

(Pure patriotism in the heart of Mother and Father, giving their brave boy to die for his country.)⁵²⁶

Another inscription takes a different approach. It appears on the headstone of Lance Corporal Owen Jenkins in Delville Wood Cemetery in France.

CASÉAIS RHYFEL

CERAIS FY NGWLAD

(I hated war, but I loved my country.)⁵²⁷

Although Owen enlisted voluntarily in 1915, this text makes the point that his military service was not the result of war fervour, but was a necessity to protect the country he loved. His enlistment may indeed have been reluctant—certainly, the use of the first person here gives the impression that this was something Owen had said or implied. It is equally possible that these words reflect the mood of the interwar period, rather than that of the early war years, and this inscription was an attempt to justify his decision to a community now disillusioned with the war.

⁵²⁶ Private Richard Wells Rees (200879), Welsh Regiment. Buried in Cairo War Memorial Cemetery, Egypt.

⁵²⁷ Lance Corporal Owen Jenkins (35538), Machine Gun Corps. Buried in Delville Wood Cemetery, France.

The inscriptions above all engage with the theme of patriotic sacrifice, but in different ways. Sacrifice could be made by both the deceased and the bereaved, and it could be willing, even enthusiastic, or reluctant. As we will see in Chapter 6, various interpretations of sacrifice are also apparent in war memorial inscriptions: it was by no means a monolithic concept.

*

The word ‘iaith’ (‘language’) appears in connection with ‘country’ in several inscriptions. Intriguingly, this appears to be unique to Welsh-language epitaphs: I cannot find any inscriptions in any other language—English, Gaelic, French, Manx, Afrikaans—which mention the word in this context. The texts below imply that these Welsh soldiers considered their language to be of equal importance to their country, and it was out of love for both, and a desire to defend both, that they were motivated to enlist and fight. This would certainly contradict scholarship which has argued that the experiences of the Welsh during the conflict were no different to those of the English or the Scottish.⁵²⁸ Instead, it would seem that their Welshness was greatly significant to their enlistment, service, and the manner in which they were commemorated.

Private Idwal Samuel Jones was commemorated with the following words:

FY NGWLAD

FY IAITH

⁵²⁸ For example, Williams, ‘Taffs in the Trenches’.

FY NGHENEDL

(My land, my language, my nation.)⁵²⁹

This was a well-known phrase, used on postcards, in books, and was even inscribed on the Washington Monument. Significantly, it was used in publications associated with Cymru Fydd, a movement founded in 1886 which campaigned for Welsh self-rule. It voices a distinctly nationalist sentiment, giving us an insight into the political views and priorities of the Jones family.

Other families formulated their own inscriptions. Elizabeth Williams, the mother of Private Willie Williams, declared:

CWYMPODD YN GYMRO DEWR

CARODD EI DDUW EI WLAD

A'I IAITH HEDDWCH MWY

(He fell as a brave Welshman / He loved his God, his country, and his language of such peace.)⁵³⁰

The relatives of Private Leyshon James Leyshon, meanwhile, wrote:

BRODOR O CWMGWRACH

GLYN NEDD

CARODD EI IAITH, AI WLAD

(Native of Cwmgwrach, Neath / He loved his language, and his country.)⁵³¹

⁵²⁹ Private Idwal Samuel Jones (25942), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Merville Communal Cemetery Extension, France.

⁵³⁰ Private Willie Williams (54583), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Wimereux Communal Cemetery, France.

⁵³¹ Private Leyshon James Leyshon (1955), Australian Infantry. Buried in HAC Cemetery, France.

Elizabeth Jones submitted the following *englyn milwr* (soldier's *englyn*) for the headstone of her husband, Corporal William Jones:

IAITH GWLAD A CHALON, —

I FŴYN WR MAE'R GOLOFN HON,

A HYF ARWR O FEIRION

(Language, country, and heart—this column is raised to a gentle man and a bold hero of Meirion.)⁵³²

The inscriptions above state that the Welsh language and Wales as a nation were the causes to which these men were dedicated in life, and for which they fought and died, marking them out as true Welsh patriots. Crucially, Wales, Welsh, and Welshness are inextricably connected. This relationship between language and national identity may reflect beliefs held by some Welsh people at this time regarding the distinctness of Wales, a concept in which language played a significant part. In the absence of historic enquiry files, we cannot know exactly why these families chose their wording, but these inscriptions are certainly an intriguing glimpse into the Welsh political landscape at the beginning of the twentieth century, and how this influenced, or perhaps created, a Welsh memory of the war.

All of the inscriptions in this small section claim that these soldiers died for something, whether it was King and country, abstract ideals, or for the sake of Wales and Welsh language and culture. The prevalence of each cause amongst this body of inscriptions shows us how Welsh people envisioned the purpose and meaning of the war. As stated above, the word 'country' is present in nearly all of these texts, while abstract ideals such as freedom and justice, and the Welsh language, also feature prominently. On the other hand, the word 'King' is rare, and

⁵³² Corporal William Jones (334), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Alexandria (Chatby) Military & War Memorial Cemetery, Egypt.

‘Empire’ is entirely missing. Another striking absence is Belgium, considering how important Belgium had been to recruitment efforts at the beginning of the war. In fact, the only explicit mention of Belgium as a cause for which a casualty fought is found in an English-language inscription, engraved on the headstone of Private George Albert Lewis from Carmarthenshire: BELGIUM’S AGONY CONSTRAINED HIM TO THIS.⁵³³ Does this suggest that the plight of Belgium had largely been forgotten by the end of the war, when Welsh people were overwhelmed by their own losses, let alone the unimaginable devastation across Europe? Or perhaps it demonstrates that propaganda focusing on Belgium was not all that effective to begin with?

It is important to point out that we cannot know from headstone inscriptions how these men envisioned the purpose of their own war service. The texts above reveal a civilian perspective, perhaps shaped by how their loved ones spoke about the war, but also influenced by politicians, religious ministers, newspapers, popular rhetoric, and the changing circumstances of the interwar period. As ever, commemoration says more about the living than the dead, and we can learn here how these bereaved families interpreted the war and how they justified military service and death.

*

Love of country did not have to be expressed with reference to the war. There are a handful of inscriptions which stress the national identity of the deceased and describe their devotion to

⁵³³ Private George Albert Lewis (1895), Welsh Guards. Buried in Brandhoek Military Cemetery, Belgium.

their country, but it is only implied that it was their sense of patriotism that led them to fight and die. The headstone of Lieutenant William Henry Kenrick Owen, for example, is inscribed with words from the national anthem:

“MAE HEN WLAD FY NHADAU

YN ANWYL I MI”

(The old land of my fathers is dear to me.)⁵³⁴

Two other well-known phrases were inscribed on the headstone of Private Nathaniel Bebb Jones, chosen by his sister Leah:

CAS GWR NA CHARO’I WLAD A’I MACO

CYMRU FO AM BYTH

(Hateful is the man who does not love the country that raised him / Wales forever.)⁵³⁵

Another inscription, engraved on the headstone of Private Ivor Davies Gould, continues this theme:

ANAN GOF

GWLAD LWFRYN ADYN YDYW

NA CHWYD GLEDD ER HEDD EI RYW

(DEWI AUR)

(Not forgotten / It is a country of cowardly wretches that would not raise a sword for the peace of its people.)⁵³⁶

⁵³⁴ Lieutenant William Henry Kenrick Owen, Welsh Regiment. Buried in Saint Sever Cemetery, France.

⁵³⁵ Private Nathaniel Bebb Jones (29509), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Ovillers Military Cemetery, France.

⁵³⁶ The headstone schedule shows ‘Anan gof’, which is meaningless, but I wonder if this was intended as ‘An angof’, which would translate as ‘unforgotten’ or ‘not forgotten’. Private Ivor Davies Gould (1725), Welsh Regiment. Buried in Chocques Military Cemetery, France.

This poem was composed especially by his father, David Gould, writing under his bardic name Dewi Aur.⁵³⁷ These three inscriptions suggest that the deceased was a patriot, but frame it through different wording. The first states explicitly that William Owen loved his country, the effect heightened by the use of the first person, while the other two texts describe the shameful nature of those who did not or would not fight and thus cast Nathaniel Jones and Ivor Gould in a heroic light by implication.

Other families chose simply to call attention to the national identity of their loved one. Private W. C. Jones of the Manchester Regiment was commemorated as:

CYMRO O ABERERCH

HUNED MEWN HEDD

(A Welshman of Abererch / Rest in peace.)⁵³⁸

His identity is foregrounded in two ways, firstly by declaring him to be a Welshman, and secondly by giving his place of birth. The naming of addresses is common amongst other inscriptions, whether categorised here or elsewhere, and acts to reunite the dead with their home, if only textually, perhaps a response to the distance between Wales and the site of burial.

The distance between home and the grave is also discussed in the following inscription:

CYMRO MEWN GWLAD ESTRON

(A Welshman in a foreign land.)⁵³⁹

⁵³⁷ His bardic name is a play on his real name: Dewi is a Welsh diminutive of David, and 'aur' is the Welsh for 'gold'.

⁵³⁸ Private W. C. Jones (7339), Manchester Regiment. Buried in Saint Sever Cemetery Extension, France.

⁵³⁹ Private Ellis Lewis (201357), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Jerusalem War Cemetery, Israel & Palestine.

It appears on the headstone of Private Ellis Lewis, who died in March 1918 and was buried in Jerusalem War Cemetery, Israel & Palestine. The words “foreign land” are interesting, and surprising: no comfort is drawn from Ellis’ burial in the Holy Land, despite its religious and historical significance. Instead, the emphasis is placed on his Welshness, reasserting his national identity within the military burial setting and in a far-off country.

David French, writing about the concept of ‘military identity’, observes that through training, and absorption into the regimental system, military authorities “impose[d] the identity of a soldier onto men who had hitherto been civilians”.⁵⁴⁰ Much has also been said about the British army of the First World War being made up of citizen soldiers, or ‘civilians in khaki’.⁵⁴¹ In death, too, men were framed in their military roles, with their headstones bearing their rank, service number, and regiment. The personal inscriptions above, however, stress the Welsh national identity of the casualties and thus act to supplement—or perhaps even supplant—their military identity. Here there are parallels with many other inscriptions explored in the final section of this chapter.

*

The inscriptions explored in this section provide an insight into how bereaved Welsh speakers envisioned the purpose of the war. Most of the inscriptions claim that the deceased served and died for a particular cause or reason, sentiments perhaps drawn from conversations with the

⁵⁴⁰ French, *Military Identities*, p. 6.

⁵⁴¹ See, for example, Ian Beckett and Keith Simpson (eds.), *A Nation in Arms: A Social Study of the British Army in the First World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985); Ian Beckett, Tim Bowman, and Mark Connelly, *The British Army and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

casualty when they were alive but also reflecting a civilian perspective. Abstract concepts such as freedom, justice, and honour feature prominently, but are outnumbered by the many references to ‘gwlad’ (‘country’). While the idea of ‘country’ is clearly important, the words ‘King’ and ‘Empire’, often used in conjunction with ‘country’ in English, are conspicuous by their absence—here and in war memorial inscriptions, as is shown in the following chapter. Other families took the opportunity to make a declaration of national identity, stressing the Welshness of their loved one. Comparisons can be made with other inscriptions explored elsewhere in this chapter which include addresses or the names of relatives, and thus blend civilian identity and military identity.

5.2.4 Anti-war inscriptions

In contrast to the epitaphs explored in the section above, a small number of personal inscriptions are explicitly critical of the war and those who waged it, and of the way in which those who died in the war were being commemorated. These 9 texts account for a tiny fraction of all Welsh-language inscriptions, but are nonetheless important in showing the diversity of First World War headstone inscriptions, and the flexibility of commemoration more broadly, wherein both patriotic and pacifist sentiments could be accommodated.

Four families chose inscriptions which condemn the war and criticise warmongers. Here, war is not depicted as something glorious or holy, but as something terrible, an aberration. The strongest judgement comes from Morgan and Mary Morgan, the parents of Private John Morgan from Crynant, near Neath in Glamorgan. They submitted the first two lines of the poem *Rhyfel* by Hedd Wyn.

GWAE FI FY MYW MEWN OES MOR DDRENG

A DUW AR DRAI AR ORWEL PELL

(Woe that I live in such a bitter age, with God at ebb on the distant horizon.)⁵⁴²

The poem is despairing and mournful: it describes how mankind has abandoned God, and, in His absence, brother takes up arms against brother, and the shadow of war falls upon the cottages of the poor. Its final two lines are amongst the most haunting of all war poetry:

A GWAEDD Y BECHGYN LOND Y GWYNT,

A’U GWAED YN GYMYSG EFO’R GLAW.

⁵⁴² Private John Morgan (23562), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Dantzig Alley British Cemetery, France.

(The cries of boys fill the wind, and their blood falls like rain.)⁵⁴³

While Welsh-language war commemoration was, as this thesis shows, much more muted in tone than the prevailing rhetoric, it is still rare to find such extreme condemnation and bitterness expressed in a public setting during the interwar period. The use of the poem above as a headstone inscription therefore highlights the depth of the Morgans' sorrow and anger.

The family of Guardsman John Williams also used negative language to describe the war:

CWYMPODD MEWN CÂD OFNADWY

NI WEINA MAM ARNO MWY

CROESFRYN

(He fell in a terrible battle / No more will Mother tend to him.)⁵⁴⁴

A number of deep feelings are articulated in this inscription: a loathing of the war, in its refusal to echo rhetoric about the glory and righteousness of the conflict, and the sorrow of his mother in no longer being able to look after John, either in life or in death. Although this *cwpled* is written from the perspective of John's mother, it was actually composed by the poet Richard Williams, under his bardic name Croesfryn. He was a successful poet and well-known in the Nantlle Valley, where both he and the Williams family lived. It is very possible that the Williams family asked Croesfryn to write this memorial text, demonstrating how several people, within and outside a bereaved family, could be involved in the formulation of a personal inscription, once again pointing to the careful and deliberate manner in which war grave inscriptions were chosen.

⁵⁴³ See John James Williams (gol.), *Cerddi'r Bugail: Cyfrol Goffa Hedd Wyn* (Caerdydd: William Lewis, 1918) for the full poem. Various English translations can be found across the Internet.

⁵⁴⁴ Guardsman John W. Williams (26917), Grenadier Guards. Buried in Étaples Military Cemetery, France.

Scripture was also utilised to help the bereaved express their views and emotions. Anne Phillips, the mother of Lance Corporal James Howell Phillips, adapted a line from the Song of Solomon, normally used in memorial texts as a reference to the Resurrection, as we have seen in section 5.2.1, but used here to look forward to a permanent end to war:

HYD ONI WAWRIO'R DYDD

A PHEIDO O'R RHYFELOEDD

(Until the day break, and wars come to an end.)⁵⁴⁵

The father of Private Arthur James of Wolfscastle, Pembrokeshire, took a more unforgiving approach:

GWASGAR Y BOBL HYN

SYDD DDA GANDDYNT RHYFEL

(Scatter Thou those people who delight in war.)⁵⁴⁶

Here is the wrathful, avenging God of the Old Testament, who pours out His fury on the wicked and sinful, including those who make war. This inscription, taken from Psalm 68, is a direct criticism of those who were responsible for waging the war, such as politicians and military leaders, and those across Wales and Britain as a whole who supported it. It stands in stark contrast to verses or hymns which portray the conflict as a just and holy war: this verse declares that war is a sin, and those who wage it and delight in it must be punished by God—the ultimate condemnation.

⁵⁴⁵ Lance Corporal James Howell Phillips (320314), Welsh Regiment. Buried in Beersheba War Cemetery, Israel & Palestine.

⁵⁴⁶ Private Arthur James (29195), South Wales Borderers. Buried in Berlin South-Western Cemetery, Germany.

*

Other Welsh people directed their sorrow and anger at the IWGC and specifically the ban on repatriation which meant that the war dead were buried in the locality in which they fell and were not brought home to their local churchyards or chapelyards.

Elizabeth Rees, the wife of Second Lieutenant John Cyril Rees, submitted the following poem:

FE FYDDAI Y BEDDROD I MI YN FWYNHAD

FE BYDDAI FY MEDDROD YN NGHYNMRU FY NGWLAD

(Death would not be unpleasant to me, if my grave were in Wales, my country.)⁵⁴⁷

John Rees was interred in Egypt, but the dead did not have to be buried thousands of miles away for their relatives to feel the distance. The grave of Private Thomas Glynn Hughes is in France, but his mother Elizabeth chose also to convey her longing.

NID YMA MAE'M CARTREF I

(My home is not here.)⁵⁴⁸

These two women speak through the voice of the deceased, a device common in many other inscriptions. Sonia Batten reminds us that, for the most part, the sentiments expressed through these texts “mirrored the views and interests of the civilian bereaved rather than the soldiers themselves”, but the impression was given that these were excerpts from a letter home or a

⁵⁴⁷ Second Lieutenant John Cyril Rees, Welsh Regiment. Buried in Alexandria (Chatby) Military & War Memorial Cemetery, Egypt.

⁵⁴⁸ Private Thomas Glynn Hughes (29447), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in La Chapelette British & Indian Cemetery, France.

recalled conversation.⁵⁴⁹ The device gives the opinions of the bereaved more authority, which perhaps explains why Elizabeth Rees and Elizabeth Jones (formerly Hughes) formulated their inscriptions in this way, in order to legitimise their criticisms of the IWGC burial policy.

Existing literature was also drawn upon. The headstones of Privates William Roberts, William Ewart Williams, and Griffith Davies are inscribed with lines from the poem *Englynion Coffa Hedd Wyn* (Elegy for Hedd Wyn) by the celebrated bard Robert Williams Parry.

GARW RHOI'I BRIDD I'R BRIDDELL

MWYAF GARW MARW YMHELL

(It is cruel that he was given to the earth, but crueller still that he died so far away.)⁵⁵⁰

The epitaph laments the fact that these men died and were buried so far away from their homes and loved ones, thus describing the refusal of the IWGC to repatriate the bodies of the war dead as an act of cruelty, denying the bereaved the one consolation they may have found: to be able to visit and tend the grave of their loved one in their own community, and to be buried in the same plot following their own deaths. Visitors to the grave who knew the poem would have also been reminded of its final, abiding image of the lonely and empty bardic chair silently reaching out its arms for someone who would never come. Perhaps the relatives of these men felt like that themselves.

⁵⁴⁹ Batten, 'Memorial Text Narratives', p. 125.

⁵⁵⁰ Private William Roberts (18393), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Essex Farm Cemetery, Belgium. Private William Ewart Williams (203757), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Doiran Military Cemetery, Greece. Private Griffith Davies (64841), Welsh Regiment. Buried in Niederzwehren Cemetery, Germany.

Parry's words alone are haunting enough, but there is an added significance in these relatives using a poem mourning a man who very quickly came to symbolise the loss of thousands of Welsh-speaking men, conscripted by the British authorities to fight in a war not their own. Indeed, the poem states that Hedd Wyn, "un addfwyn" ('one so gentle'), was driven from the shelter of his home to fight and die.⁵⁵¹ The politics surrounding the relationship between Wales and England are therefore embodied in the symbolic figure of Hedd Wyn—not necessarily the man himself, it should be noted. By choosing the above lines from the poem, these three families place their own loved ones and themselves into its narrative, communicating the opinion that the lives of the men were taken and wasted, and that they, the relatives, were denied their bodies and graves. It is an inscription with many layers of meaning, conveying grief and longing and, underneath, a deep anger at past and current injustices.

*

The inscriptions explored above may only represent a tiny minority of Welsh-language personal inscriptions, but are nonetheless fascinating, telling us how some families thought about war and death in war, and also demonstrating the fluidity of commemoration. The sorrow and anger expressed here is powerful and extreme, explicitly challenging official narratives about the conflict, but certain sentiments, and in particular the theme of distance, appear elsewhere in Welsh-language headstone inscriptions and Welsh-language commemoration more broadly. It is therefore important not to dismiss these inscriptions as exceptions to the

⁵⁵¹ "Garw a gwael fu gyrru o'i gell un addfwyn / Ac a noddfa'i lyfrgell". These lines precede the lines quoted above.

rule; rather, we should consider them at one end of a spectrum of opinions shared by a wide group of Welsh people.

5.2.5 Generic inscriptions

Amongst the body of Welsh-language headstone inscriptions, there are a number of generic formulations, derived from popular and conventional memorial texts. These inscriptions are perhaps not as individually interesting as others featured in this chapter, but the prevalence of certain commemorative phrases reveals shared ideas and ways of talking about death, and demonstrates the survival of prewar mourning practices and languages into war commemoration.

The 62 inscriptions in this category, chosen by 82 families in total, can be grouped around two main themes: first, the euphemistic metaphor of death as rest or sleep, and second, the promise of remembrance, which could be discussed both as remembering and as not forgetting. Loss is keenly felt, but a sense of hope nonetheless imbues all of these inscriptions.

*

Sleep has long been used as a metaphor for death. Numerous books in the Bible, across both Old and New Testaments, describe death as sleep, rest, or even ‘lying down’; the image also appears in countless hymns and in literature ranging from Shakespeare to Keats, from Donne to Barrett Browning to Rossetti. It acknowledges that the dead have, to deploy another euphemism, ‘moved on’, or passed into another state or realm, but conceals the reality of death—particularly death in war—behind figurative and consoling language.

The phrase most illustrative of the metaphor,

GORPHWYS MEWN HEDD

(Rest in peace.)

and its equivalent,

HUNA MEWN HEDD

(Sleep in peace.)

appear on 20 headstones in total. These expressions had been used on civilian headstones for centuries, and continued to be appropriate in the context of war commemoration. To be sure, the verbs ‘rest’ and ‘sleep’ stand in contrast to the acts of fighting or labouring, and ‘peace’ is, of course, the opposite of war.

It was possible for relatives to alter or add to these conventional phrases. Catherine Jones of Llanbedrog, Caernarfonshire, drew on scripture in the following inscription, engraved on the headstone of her son, Able Seaman Hugh Jones:

GORPHWYS HYD DORIAD Y DYDD

(Rest until the break of day.)⁵⁵²

The mention of daybreak is most likely inspired by the Song of Solomon, which, as has been discussed elsewhere in this chapter, is usually used in memorial texts as a reference to the Resurrection. Christian beliefs about the afterlife are also present in the inscription on the headstone of Private David Watkin Davies:

GORPHWYS MEWN HEDD

⁵⁵² Able Seaman Hugh H. Jones (R/4677), Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve. Buried in Rocquigny-Equancourt Road British Cemetery, France.

NES CAWN GWRDD YN Y NEF

(Rest in peace until we meet in heaven.)⁵⁵³

For his mother Tabitha, the sorrow of David's death was assuaged by the belief that he was resting, and that mother and son would be reunited in heaven. The metaphor of death as sleep acted, then, not only as a denial of death, by its depiction of a permanent and irreversible condition as merely a temporary one, but in this way also allowed the bereaved to imagine an eventual resurrection and reunion. It was a consolation in more ways than one.

Several families chose a uniquely Welsh formulation:

HEDDWCH I'W LWCH

(Peace to his dust.)

This inscription is conceptually similar to those above, but is, however, a more honest acknowledgement of death: 'llwch' translates literally as 'dust' or 'ashes', but also describes the remains of a human body. While the epitaphs above speak of a person at rest or asleep, this phrase recognises that the person is dead and that their body will decay.

One inscription, chosen by Moses Morris for the headstone of his brother, Private Robert Morris, consists of a single word:

“TANGNEFEDD”

(Peace.)⁵⁵⁴

⁵⁵³ Private David Watkin Davies (355317), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Sainte Marie Cemetery, France.

⁵⁵⁴ Private Robert Morris (21957), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Essex Farm Cemetery, Belgium.

As the translation shows, the word ‘tangnefedd’ means ‘peace’ or ‘serenity’, but specifically the peace spoken about in the Bible. It refers to the reconciliation achieved by the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, the kind of harmony and forgiveness that belongs to the kingdom of heaven. This inscription contains an even more overtly Christian interpretation of death as rest, declaring that Robert Morris, through death, had reached the peace of God and had found a home in heaven.

The metaphor of death as sleep was long established, and continued to find resonance with bereaved families in the aftermath of the First World War. It concealed the horrible reality of death during the conflict behind a reassuring euphemism; moreover, the temporary nature of ‘sleep’ allowed the bereaved to look forward to resurrection and reunion. Inscriptions such as the ones listed above turned thoughts away from death and destruction, and instead focused on eternal life and regeneration. These texts are therefore filled with hope.

*

The second broad theme in this category is that of remembrance. It is a recurring theme throughout the body of Welsh-language personal inscriptions, present in religious texts, poetry, and the individualised epitaphs of section 5.2.6. Although the inscriptions below are perhaps less sophisticated than the hymns or *englynion* explored elsewhere, having utilised or adapted short, well-known phrases, they demonstrate that the bereaved understood themselves to have a duty to remember, individually and collectively. The idea of remembrance was so important, in fact, that these relatives chose to have it—literally—engraved in stone, whether as a final

communication between the bereaved and the deceased, or as a conversation between the next-of-kin and visitors to the grave.

A standard formulation was

BYTH MEWN COF

(Forever in memory.)⁵⁵⁵

It was possible for relatives to adapt and add to this phrase, in order to make it clear who was remembering the deceased:

MEWN COF ANWYL GAN DY FAM

(In loving memory, from your mother.)⁵⁵⁶

Many more relatives, however, interpreted commemoration not as ‘remembering’ but as ‘not forgetting’. The comparative frequency of inscriptions phrased in this way may be due to the way in which the headstone was structured: the name and military information of the deceased are inscribed at the top, while personal inscriptions were engraved at its foot. Inscriptions on gravestones in Welsh churchyards and chapelyards, however, tend to begin with a dedicatory expression such as ‘er cof am’ (‘in memory of’), which is followed by the name of the deceased, and any additional quotations are the final element to appear. Because the personal inscription is somewhat dislocated from the name on the headstone of a war casualty, the usual phrasing ‘er cof am’ was not as natural, unless the family then repeated the name. Some inscriptions *are* formulated this way—particularly as it allowed the family to include a diminutive or

⁵⁵⁵ Private Robert Humphrey Jones (2509), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Lala Baba Cemetery, Turkey.

⁵⁵⁶ Private W. Lewis (14019), Somerset Light Infantry. Buried in Saint Souplet British Cemetery, France.

nickname—but for those of more limited means, additional expenditure on the extra characters was simply not possible.

On the other hand, inscriptions which speak of ‘not forgetting’ followed on much more easily. Expressions like the ones studied below referred back to the name of the deceased but also stood apart from it, and could include the details of those doing the ‘not forgetting’ without any awkward wording.

The phrase

MEWN ANGOF NI CHAIFF FOD

(He shall not remain in oblivion.)

and an equivalent form

YN ANGOF NI CHAIFF FOD

(He will not be forgotten.)

were inscribed on 26 headstones in total, with some variation in spelling.⁵⁵⁷ These inscriptions contain a certainty that the dead will not be forgotten, and seem to allude to a perpetual, collective memory.

Likewise, the expression

⁵⁵⁷ These inscriptions may be adapting a line from the poem *Dyffryn Clwyd* by John Ceiriog Hughes for the singular form, but without any evidence to support this, it is hard to say. As they were also phrases in general usage, I have included them in this ‘generic’ category.

WEDI MYND OND NID YN ANGOF

(Gone but not forgotten.)

acknowledges the loss of the deceased, but asserts that they are, and will be, not forgotten.

Other inscriptions use a similar wording, but add the names or family relationships of those who submitted the text. For example, the headstone of Private John Jones reads:

BYTH YN ANGHOF

GAN EI WRAIG A'I BLANT

(Never forgotten by his wife and his children.)⁵⁵⁸

The inscription chosen for the headstone of Private Owen Evans, who was before the war a farm labourer and a poet writing under the bardic name Rhiwlas, is as follows:

BYTH YN ANGOF

GAN

EI FAM A'R TEULU

(Never forgotten by his mother and the family.)⁵⁵⁹

Note that his mother is given precedence in this text, named first and apart from the rest of the family. The inscription may suggest, then, that mothers were considered primary mourners, fulfilling a gendered role. Certainly, the bond between mother and child was privileged above other relationships, and grieving mothers occupied a prominent and highly visible role in

⁵⁵⁸ Private John Jones (20249), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Alexandria (Hadra) War Memorial Cemetery, Egypt.

⁵⁵⁹ Private Owen Evans (44132), South Wales Borderers. Buried in Saint Sever Cemetery, France.

postwar commemoration.⁵⁶⁰ One may assume that it was his mother, Elizabeth, who wrote this inscription and chose to call attention to her particular grief.

Owen Evans was, however, married to a woman named Sarah. Given that it was the wife of a married soldier, and not his parents (as was the case with unmarried soldiers), that the IWGC recognised as the next-of-kin, it is perhaps strange that the inscription prioritises ‘ei fam’ (‘his mother’) instead of ‘ei wraig’ (‘his wife’). A closer look at the Commission headstone schedules throws up another curiosity: it was Owen’s sister, Grace, that submitted the text.

Had Sarah remarried sometime between 1918 and the early 1920s, yielding her position as primary mourner to her parents-in-law? In this case, did Grace take on the duties of corresponding with the IWGC, most likely because she was able to speak English where her parents could not? Perhaps the IWGC had initially contacted Sarah, but the task of submitting a personal inscription was too difficult for her in her grief, and it was for this reason that Owen’s immediate family wrote and submitted the inscription. These questions are unlikely to be answered in the absence of a historic enquiry file, but the inscription nonetheless illuminates the complexities of family hierarchies and gender roles within mourning.

Rather than speaking of a general and perpetual ‘not forgetting’, these two inscriptions promise instead that it was the families of the deceased who would never forget. This suggests that the Joneses and Evanses recognised their own role in the commemoration of their loved ones, but were less sure that others would also ‘never forget’. Alternatively, the naming of specific

⁵⁶⁰ Grayzel, *Women’s Identities at War*, pp. 241-242.

relatives may have been way to restore the deceased as an individual, lifting them out of the anonymity of a military cemetery.

These conventional phrases about remembrance may be simple, but demonstrate the importance of the theme in postwar commemoration. We can see that the bereaved defined remembrance in different ways, disagreeing on whose responsibility it was, its longevity, and its precise nature: was it remembering, or not forgetting? Other inscriptions exploring the theme of remembrance, featured in section 5.2.6, also prompt these questions. The texts above also show how family hierarchies could be reinforced or challenged in bereavement, adding to our understanding of mourning conventions at this time.

*

There is nothing about the conventional commemorative texts featured in this section that hints at the military identity of the deceased or the military character of the war cemeteries. In fact, these inscriptions could be—and were—commonly used in a civilian context, confirming that prewar mourning practices and languages survived into the interwar period as the bereaved found consolation in the familiar and traditional. The tone of hope and positivity in these inscriptions highlights that the purpose of commemoration was not only to respect and remember the dead, but also to provide relief for the emotions and anxieties of the bereaved.

5.2.6 Individualised inscriptions

A large number of families chose inscriptions that had no source in scripture, poetry, or common sayings, and were not already in use as epitaphs: these texts were written solely for the war dead, revealing to us the opinions and emotions of the bereaved in their own words. The 153 inscriptions explored in this section range from short, simple statements to expressive and sophisticated poems, and, overwhelmingly, dwell on the theme of distance, thereby articulating feelings of grief, emptiness, and longing.

One popular format for a personal inscription was the naming of home addresses and the relatives of the deceased. In this way, the war dead were commemorated as members of a family and community, acknowledging their civilian identity, which could both supplement and challenge the military identity already represented on the headstone by the man's rank, service number, and regiment. This is unsurprising when considering the composition of the British Army in the First World War: by 1918, volunteers and conscripts had outnumbered the professional soldiers with which the country had entered the conflict, and the army was largely a citizen force made up of 'civilians in khaki'. But the inclusion of the names of relatives and localities in Wales did more than simply recognise the pre-war existence of the dead. It also created a semantic link between the site of their grave, a distant, unknown space, and their home, a known, meaningful place. The bereaved knew that the bodies of their loved ones would not be returned to them for burial at home, and so they referenced home on the headstone; similarly, they knew that they themselves would not be buried in the same grave, and so they chose to join the deceased in name. By placing a casualty within a family unit and a community—where he came from, and, it is implied, where he belonged—rather than a military context, these families were, in essence, reclaiming their loved one from his military identity and burial setting.

The headstone of Private Thomas John Hughes is inscribed with words chosen by his half-brother William:

BACHGEN O LLANDUDNO

(A lad from Llandudno.)⁵⁶¹

A slightly more formal phrase was used by the father of Guardsman George Gordon Rees:

UN O FEIBION CIPPIN

(One of the sons of Cippyn.)⁵⁶²

Here, the two soldiers are connected very firmly to a geographic place, and everything that that place signifies: a family, a home, a community, an identity. The place names call attention to the origins of these two men, and the use of the Welsh language reinforces their national and cultural identities. But the nouns also indicate to us how William Hughes and Thomas Rees viewed their relatives. The words ‘bachgen’ (‘boy’ or ‘lad’) and ‘un o feibion’ (‘one of the sons’) are a far cry from the nouns used in the patriotic and martial inscriptions explored above, such as ‘gwron’ (‘hero’), ‘dewr’ (‘brave man’), and ‘arwr’ (also ‘hero’). It is clear that Thomas Hughes’ and George Rees’ civilian role, within a home, family, and community, and not their military identity, was more important to their next-of-kin.

These two inscriptions are additionally illustrative of another significant trend amongst the Welsh-language epitaphs, and Welsh-language commemoration more broadly. The use of ‘boy’ and ‘son’, rather than the Welsh words ‘dyn’ or ‘gŵr’ (both meaning ‘man’), would imply that these two soldiers were young. Yet Thomas Hughes was thirty-three when he was

⁵⁶¹ Private Thomas John Hughes (14881), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Karasouli Military Cemetery, Greece.

⁵⁶² Guardsman George Gordon Rees (2720), Welsh Guards. Buried in Wimereux Communal Cemetery, France.

killed in 1916, and George Rees was twenty-nine when he died of tuberculosis in 1917—both hardly in their first flush of youth. Nonetheless, the choice was made to place an emphasis on their youth, perhaps pointing to their unsuitability for war and the tragedy of their untimely deaths. This emphasis was made in other headstone inscriptions, and on war memorials in Wales the dead are consistently described as ‘bechgyn’ (‘boys’), ‘meibion’ (‘sons’), or ‘gwŷr ieuanc’ (‘young men’), something which will be examined in Chapter 6. In colloquial Welsh, people are often referred to in such terms, but here the attention placed on youth seems to be more than just a feature of dialect: its prevalence in war commemoration, a public and formal phenomenon, speaks to a different vision of the war dead amongst Welsh speakers, making it a significant facet of Welsh-language commemoration.

Other inscriptions are even clearer in describing the casualty’s origins. John Roberts submitted the following line for the headstone of his son, Private William Roberts:

GANWYD YN CAEHEN
ABERDARON, PWLLHELI
GOGLEDD CYMRU

(Born in Caehen, Aberdaron, Pwllheli, North Wales.)⁵⁶³

Caehen is the name of a small farm, situated just over a mile away from Aberdaron on the Llŷn Peninsula. The Roberts family never lived there, however: the 1901 census shows that their home was a cottage called Bryn-caned, at the tip of Llŷn, while the 1911 census and the Commission headstone inscription schedules record them as living in a cottage called Talcen-y-Foel, close to Caehen. Further study of the census records shows that Caehen was in fact the family home of William’s mother, Anne. Presumably, she had returned there to stay with her

⁵⁶³ Private William Roberts (201885), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Belgium.

mother through part of or all of her pregnancy. With this in mind, while it is John Roberts' name that is listed on the Commission documents, it is likely that Anne herself actually wrote the inscription and chose to recognise her family home, which would have held more meaning to her than the worker's cottages she lived in following her marriage. It may also be that Caehen held more status locally, as a farm, than Talcen-y-Foel, as a quarryman's cottage, for in Wales at this time the holding of land was seen and valued as an indicator of social position. The inclusion of the farm name in the headstone inscription was perhaps then a way of marking out the Roberts family through the grave of their son.

The headstone of Lance Corporal Hughie Roberts bears a similar formulation:

GANWYD A MAGWYD

YNG NGLANGORS

DYFFRYN NANTLLE

GOGLEDD CYMRU

(Born and raised in Glangors, Nantlle Valley, North Wales.)⁵⁶⁴

Again, it is the home—Glangors, located about a mile outside the village of Llanllyfni—that is given the highest priority in this inscription. The wider communities of the Nantlle Valley and north Wales are important, too, acting here to place Hughie into a social and cultural context: a Welsh-speaking, chapel-going, slate-quarrying background. Anyone reading the inscription is thus able to envision his pre-war life, despite an address being the only information given. The foregrounding of his birthplace and upbringing is particularly significant given that Hughie served with the Canadian Expeditionary Force. While he is buried

⁵⁶⁴ Lance Corporal Hughie Roberts (79702), Canadian Infantry. Buried in Boulogne Eastern Cemetery, France.

Private William Davies Williams was buried in Janval Cemetery in France, but was associated unequivocally with his family home through this inscription:

(His home was Tyddyn-y-Coed, Boduan, Pwllheli, North Wales.)⁵⁶⁵

These three inscriptions appear simple, but manage to convey a great deal of information in just a few lines. The names of houses, communities, and regions stress the origins of the deceased, and, by extension, allude to their specific upbringing and background. It is possible, too, that house names signal social status, giving us an insight into how local dynamics influenced the ways in which a casualty was remembered. In these ways, the inscriptions are

273

outwardly focused, addressing visitors to the grave. But they must have also served a purpose for the bereaved. Repatriation of the bodies of the war dead was prohibited, causing a great deal of anguish to countless families across Britain and the British Empire: these men could not be buried at home, so their families took home—albeit in name only—to their graves, linking the two places and perhaps providing some consolation through that connection. There is a poignancy in these men being situated so precisely in the world, when they must have seemed so very distant to their families.

Numerous other inscriptions include the names of the deceased soldier's parents as well as their home address. The father of Corporal John William Roberts, who fought with the Canadian infantry, submitted a standard formulation:

MAB GOMER A MARGARET ROBERTS
CEFNYGRIOLEN LLANELIDAN SIR DDINBYCH

(Son of Gomer and Margaret Roberts, Cefnygriolen, Llanelidan, Denbighshire.)⁵⁶⁶

Here, parents and child are reunited textually, gathered together as a family unit in one place. The father of brothers Privates David and Richard Griffiths, killed almost exactly one month apart in the autumn of 1918, chose a slightly different wording, but one which communicated the same information:

COFFA AM DAVID MAB THOS. A MARY GRIFFITHS
HAULFAN, GER MACHYNLLETH

(In memory of David, son of Thomas and Mary Griffiths, Haulfan, near Machynlleth.)⁵⁶⁷

⁵⁶⁶ Corporal John William Roberts (552364), Canadian Infantry. Buried in Aubigny Communal Cemetery Extension, France.

⁵⁶⁷ Private David Griffiths (73954), Sherwood Foresters. Buried in Vadencourt British Cemetery, France.

COFFA AM RICHARD MAB THOS. A MARY GRIFFITHS
HAULFAN, GER MACHYNLLETH

(In memory of Richard, son of Thomas and Mary Griffiths, Haulfan, near Machynlleth.)⁵⁶⁸

Not only do these identical inscriptions connect the sons to their parents and their home, the text also provides a link between the two brothers. The wording figuratively brings together the Griffiths family, whether in Wales, France, or Belgium, and may have provided some measure of consolation in this way.

It was possible for the bereaved to add further detail to this typical memorial text. The headstone of Private Thomas Jones, for example, is inscribed:

ANNWYL FAB DAVID AC ELIZABETH JONES
PEN-Y-BRYN, DOLANOG

(Beloved son of David and Elizabeth Jones, Pen-y-Bryn, Dolanog.)⁵⁶⁹

Several other inscriptions use this wording, such as those on the headstones of Private Ellis Griffith, Driver Ivor Towy Rhys, and Private Joseph Henry Evans.⁵⁷⁰ Additional adjectives could define family relationships, giving us a better idea of how the family wanted to remember the deceased.

⁵⁶⁸ Private Richard Griffiths (69416), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Harlebeke New British Cemetery, Belgium.

⁵⁶⁹ Private Thomas Jones (90236), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Dolanog (St John) Churchyard, Wales.

⁵⁷⁰ Private Ellis Griffith (39912), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Queens Cemetery, France. Driver Ivor Towy Rhys (730936), Royal Field Artillery. Buried in Railway Dugouts Burial Ground (Transport Farm), Belgium. Private Joseph Henry Evans (26421), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Vlamertinghe Military Cemetery, Belgium.

Other families make it plainer that the death of their son was a devastating loss for the family. Jane Evans submitted the following inscription for the headstone of her son, Stoker Robert Evans:

ER COF ANWYL AM BOB
UNIG FAB EVAN A JANE EVANS, TALYBONT

(In loving memory of Bob, only son of Evan and Jane Evans, Talybont.)⁵⁷¹

A similar sense of loss and tragedy imbues the inscription on the headstone of Private Thomas Wynne Jones. War graves were often already inscribed with the casualty's age, but here his youth is doubly emphasised:

OED 19
MAB THOS. A JANE JONES
GARREGFAWR, UPPER LLANDWROG
CARNARVON

(Aged 19. Son of Thomas and Jane Jones, Garregfawr, Upper Llandwrog, Caernarfon.)⁵⁷²

Implicit in these two inscriptions is the desire of the Evanses and the Joneses to stress their specific grief and loss. Attention is drawn to the status of Robert Evans as an only son, and to the youth of nineteen-year-old Thomas Wynne Jones, yet the texts frame their deaths not as their own sacrifice, a reflection of their selflessness and gallantry, but rather as a sacrifice made by their parents. This is noticeable in other memorial texts such as death notices and obituaries in newspapers, the cemetery registers for which the next-of-kin supplied information, or something like Lady Florence Cecil's petition: amongst a vast number of dead sons and

⁵⁷¹ Stoker Second Class Robert O. Evans (K/39559), Royal Navy. Buried in Chwilog Free Cemetery, Wales.

⁵⁷² Private Thomas Wynne Jones (27894), King's Shropshire Light Infantry. Buried in Ligny-St-Flochel British Cemetery, France.

mourning families, those who stand out are parents who had lost their only son or only child, multiple sons, young sons in their teenage years or early twenties, or clearly preferred sons, described as, for example, “the merriest + best of my four sons”.⁵⁷³ Bereavement was a universal experience in the interwar period, but there were clearly hierarchies within it, with some losses felt more keenly, or considered more devastating, than others.

It is, however, important not to overstretch this point and read any sense of competitiveness into these two inscriptions. After all, the wording is typical of monumental inscriptions found on family gravestones. But, given how deliberately personal inscriptions were chosen, the inclusion of these details cannot be overlooked. The particularly tragic nature of the death is foregrounded, and, by extension, so is the immense sorrow of the Evanses and Joneses, articulating a need for others to recognise that loss and vindicate their grief.

Overall, about a quarter of the total inscriptions in this category include an address or name the relatives of the deceased. This of course reflects typical civilian commemorative practices, where family members would all be named on the same headstone, spanning two or sometimes three generations. In this context, however, these inscriptions have a greater significance.

Casualty entries in cemetery registers almost invariably contained home addresses and the names of immediate family members, usually parents and spouses; other details, such as the age of the deceased, the date of enlistment, the manner of death, or the exact place of death,

⁵⁷³ The quotation is taken from Lady Florence Cecil’s petition. It was written by Clara Hackett, whose son, Gunner Douglas Hackett, was killed in Flanders on 31 July 1917. Commonwealth War Graves Commission Archive, CWGC ADD 4/2/7: Petition to the Prince of Wales from Lady Florence Cecil, wife of the Bishop of Exeter, presented in 1919.

could also be added to the entry. This information was printed regardless of the wording of the inscription—or, indeed, whether or not the family had actually submitted an inscription. Certainly, the cemetery registers could be and were used as an alternative to headstone inscriptions, as the next-of-kin were not charged by the IWGC for these entries. Those personal inscriptions that do include an address or the names of relatives therefore prompt the question: why would the family duplicate this information on the headstone, especially when each character cost them money?

We can only conclude that it was a matter of great importance for bereaved relatives to name where their loved one was born and brought up and to show that they came from a devoted family. It also provided an opportunity for a textual reunion: the names of a family all engraved on one headstone. Significantly, these inscriptions shift the emphasis to the bereaved, giving them and the casualty equal prominence on the headstone, thus fulfilling Sonia Batten's 'bereavement narrative'.⁵⁷⁴ In contrast to the wartime narrative, in which the dead were commemorated as soldiers and heroes, and discussion dwelled upon the ideals of military sacrifice, honour, and duty, within the bereavement narrative the focus was squarely on the next-of-kin and the contradictory experience of loss and grief. It allowed the bereaved to express their emotions and to call attention to their own sacrifices—indeed, bereavement *was* sacrifice.

Mass bereavement could be just as isolating an experience as being the sole person to suffer a loss. In the personal inscriptions above, in which the bereaved name themselves, and reunite themselves with the deceased, we can read a desire for recognition, vindication, comfort, and

⁵⁷⁴ Batten, 'Memorial Text Narratives', pp. 180-181.

connection. Home addresses and the names of family members, rather than being a mistaken duplication of the information printed in the cemetery registers, were therefore incredibly important, serving several purposes—and reminding us that all personal inscriptions were chosen with immense deliberation.

*

Another recurring theme amongst the inscriptions in this category is the deceased's character, status, and pre-war life. Here, the words chosen by the next-of-kin act to complement or, in several cases, to displace the military identity of the casualty represented on the headstone by the man's rank, service number, and regimental badge and title. In this way, these inscriptions serve the same purpose as the addresses above: to emphasise, both implicitly and explicitly, the civilian status of the Welsh war dead.

There are a number of inscriptions that dwell on the kind, loving, and peaceful nature of the war dead. For example, the line chosen by Daniel Mainwaring for his sons, twin brothers Dan and William, tells us that

NID HAWDDFYD OND HEDDWCH I'R BYD OEDD EI NOD

(His desire was not ease, but peace for the world.)⁵⁷⁵

Anyone visiting their graves may not have known that the brothers enlisted voluntarily in September 1914, but possibly could have guessed after reading this inscription. Daniel

⁵⁷⁵ Pioneer Dan Mainwaring (48405), Royal Engineers. Buried in Bedford House Cemetery, Belgium. Sapper William Mainwaring (48505), Royal Engineers. Buried in Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Belgium.

Mainwaring draws a distinction between those who lived in ease, and his sons, who fought and died for world peace. Still, the emphasis on peace as the motivation for military service contrasts certain inscriptions in section 5.2.3 which foreground love of country and the exceptional heroism of the dead.

Second Lieutenant Victor George Roberts was also presented as peace-loving in the epitaph submitted by his father, Joseph:

HUNODD FEL Y BU BYW YN DAWEL

HYD ONI WAWRIO Y DYDD

(He sleeps as he lived: in peace / Until the day break.)⁵⁷⁶

Similarly, Gunner Graham Howells was remembered as

BACHGEN CAREDIG TAWEL A DA

(A loving, peaceful, and good lad.)⁵⁷⁷

in an inscription chosen by his father. The family of Sergeant Griffith John Jones were even more emphatic, describing him as

BRAWD A MAB O YSBRYD MWYN; ENAID ANNWYL DI-WENWYN

(A gentle-spirited brother and son; a dear, harmless soul.)⁵⁷⁸

At first glance, it seems odd for a soldier's grave to assert that he was peaceful, gentle, and harmless, especially when contrasted against the many other inscriptions in the English language which stress the casualty's particular gallantry and manliness. Take, for example, the

⁵⁷⁶ Second Lieutenant Victor George Roberts, Welsh Regiment. Buried in Bard Cottage Cemetery, Belgium.

⁵⁷⁷ Gunner Graham Howells (371373), Royal Garrison Artillery. Buried in Barenthal Military Cemetery, Italy.

⁵⁷⁸ Sergeant Griffith John Jones (48311), Royal Army Medical Corps. Buried in Rocquigny-Equancourt Road British Cemetery, France.

text submitted by the father of Private Herbert Henry Jenkins: A SOLDIER AND A MAN.⁵⁷⁹

The headstone of Second Lieutenant John Jones gives a similar but more descriptive formulation: A BRAVE SOLDIER AND A SPLENDID SON.⁵⁸⁰ Attention is drawn to their masculinity by the words ‘son’ and ‘man’, and this is then put into context through the use of the word ‘soldier’. It is not only masculinity that is celebrated here, but martial masculinity.

Other English-language inscriptions, found across the whole body of First World War epitaphs, are even clearer in emphasising the casualty’s warlike credentials. There are hundreds of inscriptions which consist of or include the phrase KILLED IN ACTION, with its connotations of heroism and movement and perhaps reflecting a hierarchy of death in wartime. A number of other texts provide variation on the theme, such as HE DIED A SOLDIER’S DEATH or HE DIED AT HIS POST. Inscriptions which describe the specific manner of death could also underline the casualty’s exceptional bravery, gallant leadership, and devotion to duty even into death.

KILLED BY AN ENEMY GRENADE
WHEN IN COMMAND
OF A RAIDING PARTY.⁵⁸¹

SHOT AT BEAUMONT WHEN
ATTACKING FIVE AEROPLANES

⁵⁷⁹ Private Herbert Henry Jenkins (68529), Machine Gun Corps. Buried in Wimereux Communal Cemetery, France.

⁵⁸⁰ Second Lieutenant John Y. P. Jones, Welsh Regiment. Buried in Morval British Cemetery, France.

⁵⁸¹ Second Lieutenant Cormac Patrick James Wray, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. Buried in Philosophe British Cemetery, France.

SINGLE HANDED.⁵⁸²

KILLED WHILE HELPING
A WOUNDED COMRADE
UNDER HEAVY SHELL FIRE.⁵⁸³

KILLED IN ACTION
WHILE MAKING AN ATTACK
ON THE ENEMY TRENCHES
EAST OF HENDECOURT DURY ROAD.⁵⁸⁴

SHOT WHILE SUCCESSFULLY
RALLYING INFANTRY
IN LAST LINE BEFORE AMIENS.⁵⁸⁵

Note that place names are used to great effect, here and in many other inscriptions: evocative locations like Ypres, the Somme, Loos, Gallipoli, and even specific trenches, roads, and woods augmented the sense of danger and daring, providing context for the deceased's heroic actions. We can observe a detailed civilian awareness of the chronology and geography of the war, with the exact manner and place of death reflecting the knowledge of the bereaved about the war service of their loved one, and the overall effectiveness of the inscription relying upon the same familiarity with various battles and skirmishes amongst visitors to the grave.

⁵⁸² Captain Frederick Leycester Barwell, Royal Flying Corps. Buried in Beaumont Communal Cemetery, France.

⁵⁸³ Lance Corporal Christopher George Shier (25781), Royal Irish Regiment. Buried in Croisilles British Cemetery, France.

⁵⁸⁴ Private James Michael McGrath (2356054), Canadian Infantry. Buried in Upton Wood Cemetery, France.

⁵⁸⁵ Captain Frederick Alexander Single, Second Dragoon Guards (Queen's Bays). Buried in Namps-au-Val British Cemetery, France.

The Welsh-language inscriptions listed above are at total odds to these energetic visions of hegemonic martial masculinity. Heroism and manliness are absent from the texts; instead, the qualities of gentleness, decency, and a peace-loving nature are praised. Indeed, one epitaph, engraved on the headstone of Private David James Davies, from Penygraig in Glamorgan, tells us of his gentleness and uses it as a warning to visitors:

AR DIR EI FEDD NA SANGED TROED

NI SANGODD EF AR NEB ERIOED

(Let not a foot tread on the earth of his grave / He never stamped his foot on anyone.)⁵⁸⁶

These inscriptions are most certainly the product of a culture that prized itself on its deep religiosity, pacifism, and distrust of militarism, but, on a smaller scale, are perhaps an attempt on the part of the bereaved to demonstrate the unsuitability of their loved one for war. Here is the implication that the Welsh-speaking bereaved did not see the dead as soldiers, but as civilians who should not have been a part of the conflict.

On a similar theme, a handful of inscriptions make reference to the strong religious faith of the deceased, thereby providing a visitor to the grave with a glimpse of their pre-war life, and conveying their goodness and righteousness.

The headstone of Pioneer William Jenkins is inscribed with words chosen by his father, giving the family address and then the name of the Welsh Independent chapel of which William was a member:

⁵⁸⁶ Private David James Davies (65351), Welsh Regiment. Buried in Sainte Marie Cemetery, France.

2 PENTREGALAR

AELOD FFYDDLON O EGLWYS ANTIOCH

(2 Pentregalar / Faithful member of Antioch Church.)⁵⁸⁷

A comparable phrase was used by the father of Lance Corporal David Williams:

AELOD FFYDDLON O EGLWYS Y PLWYF YN LLANRHYSTYD

(Faithful member of the parish church in Llanrhystyd.)⁵⁸⁸

Private Owen Williams of Ebenezer (now Deiniolen) in Caernarfonshire was remembered in even stronger terms by his father, Evan:

PLENTYN Y SIEAT AR YSGOL SUL

UNWAITH NI CHOLLODD Y LLWYBR CUL

(A child of the Seiat at Sunday school / He never once strayed from the narrow path.)⁵⁸⁹

Anyone reading the inscription is able to envision his upbringing, one revolving around attendance at Sunday school and the *seiat*, which is a religious meeting amongst Nonconformists, characterised by prayer, hymn-singing, and the sharing of religious experience. Not only was Owen brought up in a very devout environment, he followed religious teachings closely, as the second part of the inscription declares: the phrase ‘y llwybr cul’ translates literally as ‘the narrow path’, but in this context means a virtuous way of life. Implicit

⁵⁸⁷ Pioneer William Jenkins (226584), Royal Engineers. Buried in Antioch Congregational Chapelyard, Wales.

⁵⁸⁸ Lance Corporal David Williams (12021), South Wales Borderers. Buried in Pernes British Cemetery, France.

⁵⁸⁹ The misspelling of ‘seiat’ in the inscription is original, though it is unclear whether this was an error on the part of Evan Williams or the IWGC. Private Owen Williams (25379), South Wales Borderers. Buried in Guizancourt Farm Cemetery, France.

in this inscription is the parental pride of Evan and Elizabeth Williams, that they wanted to impress upon visitors to the grave the deep faith and goodness of their son.

All three of these men died in the last two years of the war, implying that they were conscripts and had not voluntarily enlisted in the army. Could it be that their families, by stressing their devout and virtuous characters, wanted not only to supplement their military identity, but supplant it? On the other hand, the wording of the inscriptions may have been a way of connecting their religion with their military service, thus suggesting that they were soldiers of God fighting in a just and holy cause. Whether complimenting or challenging their military identity, however, these glimpses of their pre-war lives demonstrate the importance of religion to these three men and in everyday Welsh life.

Some relatives chose not to describe the deceased as individuals, dwelling on their character and pre-war life, but instead defined their place within the immediate and wider family. Emma Roberts of Dinas Mawddly, Merionethshire, compared the death of her son, Private William Roberts, to a physical loss of part of her body.

O, GANAAN IESU MWYN!

MAE YNNOT HENO

DDARN MAWR O' NGHALON I

YN MELYS HUNO

(Dear Jesus from Canaan! A large part of my heart sleeps sweetly in your care.)⁵⁹⁰

⁵⁹⁰ Private William Roberts (290888), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Beersheba War Cemetery, Israel & Palestine.

Although this is not a particularly despairing inscription—Emma uses the consoling metaphor of death as sleep, and, moreover, asserts that her son was with Jesus, another comfort—his death is still depicted as something painful through the absence of “a large part” of her heart. We can infer that William was a cherished son, and therefore must have possessed a number of respected qualities, but the text prioritises Emma, the love she felt for him, and the impact of his death on her.

The inscription on the headstone of Private Robert Lloyd, a poignant *cwpled*, also makes explicit reference to family relationships and familial love.

DA FUOST DRWY DY FYWYD

EULUN HOFF EIN CALON WYD

(You were good through your life, the beloved idol of our longing hearts.)⁵⁹¹

Again, the text states that Robert was “good” and “beloved”, but then brings the focus back around to his family by calling attention to their “longing hearts”, a phrase which similarly portrays death as a physical loss or pain felt by the bereaved. Whoever the pronoun ‘our’ includes—certainly his parents, Isaac and Maggie, possibly his brother and sisters, and perhaps even relatives beyond the immediate family unit as well—the inscription makes it clear that Robert was loved, revered, almost, and sorely missed. The effect is heightened by the first-person point of view: this is the actual voice of the next-of-kin, rather than that of a detached narrator.

⁵⁹¹ Private Robert Lloyd (87229), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Montay-Neuvilly Road Cemetery, France.

Both epitaphs remark upon, or are suggestive of, the good qualities of the deceased, and are in this way similar to others featured in this section which describe a loving, gentle, and virtuous character. The crucial difference here is that this information is conveyed not by a single, simple statement, but instead through the emphasis placed on the sense of loss felt by their families. Despite the restrictions of the personal inscription format, deceased and bereaved are in equal focus, illustrating the care and deliberation with which these texts were written.

Finally we come to perhaps the most well-known Welsh-language inscription of the First World War, engraved on the headstone of Private Ellis Humphrey Evans.

Y PRIFARDD HEDD WYN

(The Chief Bard, Hedd Wyn.)⁵⁹²

The inscription is very simple but has an interesting and complex story behind it. Ellis was the eldest son of a farming family from Trawsfynydd in Merionethshire, and had achieved wide renown in Wales as a poet, writing under his bardic name Hedd Wyn. He had won many local poetry competitions and *eisteddfodau* in the years before the Great War, but the highest honour for a Welsh poet, the chair at the National Eisteddfod, eluded him until September 1917—just a few weeks after Ellis was killed in the early morning of 31 July 1917, during the attack on Pilckem Ridge on the first day of the Third Battle of Ypres.

His death, announced at the National Eisteddfod and then publicised in the Welsh press, was received with shock and sorrow. As the news became known across Wales, people wrote poetry in his memory, sent letters of condolence to his parents, and travelled to the Evanses' farm, Yr

⁵⁹² Private Ellis Humphrey Evans (61117), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Artillery Wood Cemetery, Belgium.

Ysgwrn, to express their sympathy. Countless Welsh people also undertook pilgrimages to his grave in the aftermath of the war, amongst them Robert Silyn Roberts, a Calvinistic Methodist minister, poet, and the Secretary of the Hedd Wyn National Memorial Committee.

Silyn Roberts was aware that the grave of Hedd Wyn had become a focal point for Welsh visitors to the battlefields. In September 1923 he called at the offices of the IWGC to correct the details given on the temporary wooden cross marking the grave, pointing out that “this soldier was a poet of high repute in Wales, and that Welch [sic] people visiting the area often go to this grave”.⁵⁹³ It was during this visit that Silyn also submitted the inscription Y PRIFARDD HEDD WYN for engraving on the headstone.

The Commission wrote to Evan Evans, Ellis’ father, for permission to inscribe this text, as “it is usual to engrave only the inscriptions which are submitted by the next of kin”.⁵⁹⁴ In a short but moving letter, Evan Evans gave his consent and explained that

Mr Silyn Roberts, the Hon. Sec. of my son’s National Memorial Committee is acting with my knowledge and approval. My son was a peasant farmer like myself and only thirty years of age when he fell, but he had won a national reputation as a poet of great merit. The inscription suggested by the National Committee, namely,

Y PRIFARDD HEDD WYN

is simple and most appropriate.⁵⁹⁵

⁵⁹³ Commonwealth War Graves Commission Archive, E File SL 10876: Private Ellis Humphrey Evans. Letter from Secretary of Enquiries Branch to the Director of Records, 20 September 1923.

⁵⁹⁴ Commonwealth War Graves Commission Archive, E File SL 10876: Private Ellis Humphrey Evans. Letter from Principal Assistant Secretary to Evan Evans, 20 September 1923.

⁵⁹⁵ Commonwealth War Graves Commission Archive, E File SL 10876: Private Ellis Humphrey Evans. Letter from Evan Evans to the Secretary, 26 September 1923.

At first glance, then, this inscription was a practical necessity, allowing Welsh pilgrims to easily locate his grave by the inclusion of the name most people would have known. Its deeper significance is that it acknowledges his civilian life and status—just like the use of addresses, family names, and descriptions of the character and qualities of the deceased in the inscriptions explored above. We are reminded, in all of these cases, that the soldier was also a man.

But the words Y PRIFARDD HEDD WYN do more than merely acknowledge his civilian identity. Welsh language culture and the concepts and traditions of bardic names, *eisteddfodau*, and the title of *Prifardd* are represented as well.

These four words are therefore incredibly powerful, and carry a sense of possessiveness and reclamation. Indeed, Silyn wrote to the Commission in April 1924 to enquire after the wooden cross from the grave of “the Welsh poet, Hedd Wyn, *known in the army* as Private E.H. Evans of the 15th R.W.F.”.⁵⁹⁶ Here is the implication that his true identity, his more meaningful identity, was that of Hedd Wyn, the Chief Bard, not Ellis Evans, shepherd, and certainly not Private Evans, soldier. The inscription not only challenges his military identity: it was clearly intended to displace it.

⁵⁹⁶ Commonwealth War Graves Commission Archive, E File SL 10876: Private Ellis Humphrey Evans. Letter from Robert Silyn Roberts to the Secretary, 12 April 1924. Emphasis mine.



Figure 5.1: The headstone marking the grave of Hedd Wyn in Artillery Wood Cemetery, taken 31 July 2017. © Author.

A sense of reclamation is present in all the other inscriptions studied so far in this section. Although the men were known to the military authorities and to the Commission as a long list of Joneses, Evanses, and Williamses, that is not who they were, and not how their relatives and their communities remembered them. Beneath the bare details of military service and death, the bereaved added home addresses, their own names, descriptions of personality and pre-war life, reinstating the civilian identity of their loved one, explaining his place within the family and community, and defining how they would mourn and remember him. The recurrence of this device strongly suggests that Welsh speakers as a group shared a particular vision of the war dead, one that was distinct from or even alternative to the ways in which the dead were described by English speakers in Wales, and indeed across Britain, broadly speaking.

In this category there are also inscriptions which dwell on loftier themes such as the sanctity of the war dead, resurrection, reunion, and remembrance. These epitaphs are often formulated as *cwpleddi* or *englynion*, reflecting the Welsh tradition of inscribing poetry on gravestones, as well as showing how carefully personal inscriptions were composed. To be sure, although some of the texts below may have been written by the next-of-kin or someone in the wider family, it is equally likely that some bereaved families turned to local poets for help. Even a private form of commemoration could be a community effort.

The promise of heaven and eternal life is a persistent theme amongst these inscriptions. Mary Williams, the mother of Sergeant Daniel Williams, killed on the first day of the Battle of the Somme, expressed a certainty that her son would be raised to eternal life.

HUNA, HUNA, DANIEL BACH

TI GEI ETO GODINIACH

(Sleep, sleep, little Daniel, you shall rise again.)⁵⁹⁷

Other families framed the matter in a different way, confident that their loved ones had already reached heaven. The following inscription appears on the headstone of Second Lieutenant Evan Lewis Jones, who was from a farming family living in Llanarth, Cardiganshire:

HOGODD EI GRYMAN A GALWYD EF

I FEDI YM MEUSYDD GWYNION NEF

⁵⁹⁷ Sergeant Daniel Williams (12801), Devonshire Regiment. Buried in Devonshire Cemetery, France.

(He sharpened his sickle and was called to reap in the white fields of heaven.)⁵⁹⁸

Note how definite the past tense is here: his ascension to heaven is beyond doubt. It is also interesting how the family occupation was incorporated through the references to a sickle and to reaping.

Emily Corbetta Wigley, the wife of First Engineer Lewis Wigley, also envisioned him at peace in the afterlife.

UCHLAW GOFID PECHOD, CUR A PHOEN

MEWN HYFRYD HEDD YN NGHWMNI'R OEN

(Above the distress of sin, anguish, and pain, he is in lovely peace with the Lamb.)⁵⁹⁹

Sin, pain, and sorrow, words which may simply be echoing conventional language about earthly strife, but may also be a commentary on the war, are contrasted against the peace of heaven. Emily acknowledged the struggles her husband faced, but conveyed her relief that he was past hardship and had reached peace.

For the parents of Private Idris Phillips, the belief that their son was in heaven was a consolation for themselves.

NA WYLWN MWY

NA FYDDWN DRIST

MAE EIN BACHGEN

⁵⁹⁸ Second Lieutenant Evan Lewis Jones, Machine Gun Corps. Buried in Bertrancourt Military Cemetery, France.

⁵⁹⁹ First Engineer Lewis Wigley, Mercantile Marine. Buried in Cardigan Cemetery, Wales. 'Oen' ('Lamb') is a figurative title for Jesus Christ.

GYDA CHRIST

(Let us not weep any more, let us not be sad, our boy is with Christ.)⁶⁰⁰

Another inscription, found on the headstone of Private John Jones in Beersheba War Cemetery in Israel, also acts to provide solace for the bereaved.

ER MARW 'MHELL O WALIA WEN

R'UN FAINT YW'R FFORDD I LOEWACH NEN

(Although he died far from blessed Gwalia, it is the same way to the shimmering sky.)⁶⁰¹

This text recognises that John died and was buried far from Wales, which, as we know, was a source of anguish for many families; still, the reference to distance is followed up by the assertion that heaven is reached in the same way no matter the place of death. As an aside, it is interesting that this text deploys the archaic and poetic name for Wales, 'Gwalia'. Two other inscriptions, both poems as well, also use the name Gwalia, but there does not appear to be a strong connection between its significance in each text. It seems to have been utilised as a way of achieving *cynganedd* ('harmony') within the poem. For example, in the inscription above, the first line contains two 'm' sounds and two 'w' sounds, giving it a balance and cohesion that would not be possible if the word 'Cymru' was used instead.

The inscriptions studied above assert that the deceased had reached eternal peace, commenting on the righteous nature of the war dead, and providing consolation for the bereaved who could envision their loved ones in heaven. While these texts are original compositions, not taken from scripture or hymns, they have a clear religious influence.

⁶⁰⁰ Private Idris Phillips (260177), Royal Warwickshire Regiment. Buried in Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Belgium.

⁶⁰¹ Private John Jones (320234), Welsh Regiment. Buried in Beersheba War Cemetery, Israel & Palestine.

Other families were also inspired by their religious faith to look forward to a reunion in the afterlife following their own deaths. Henry Beddoe, living in Pontlotyn, Glamorgan, chose the following inscription for the headstone of his son, Gunner Owen Arthur Beddoe:

ER MARW YMA GWLAD BELL

CAWN GWRDDYD ETO MEWN GWLAD WELL

(Although he died here in a far-off country, we will meet again in a better land.)⁶⁰²

Similarly, the parents of Private William John Harris wrote

NI GAWN NI GWRDD

ODDETUR BWRDD

A CHWRDD HEB

YMADAEL MWY

(We shall meet around the table, meet without ever parting again.)⁶⁰³

Again, these two inscriptions engage with religious doctrine, finding hope and consolation in the thought of resurrection, eternal life, and reunion with loved ones that is promised to the faithful in Christian scripture. In contrast, there are several inscriptions which focus not on future reunion and eternal life, but on the current absence of the deceased and the need to remember.

The family of Second Lieutenant Richard Williams avowed that

FE FYDD BYTH MEWN COF

⁶⁰² Gunner Owen Arthur Beddoe (74769), Royal Field Artillery. Buried in Salonika (Lembet Road) Military Cemetery, Greece.

⁶⁰³ Private William John Harris (79543), Royal Army Medical Corps. Buried in Hooge Crater Cemetery, Belgium.

GAN EI ANWYL FAM

FRODYR AI CHWIORYDD.

(He will be forever remembered by his loving mother, brothers, and sisters.)⁶⁰⁴

A similar sentiment was inscribed on the headstone of Driver Ivor Davies:

IVOR DY GOFIO WNAWN HYD ANGAU

FROM YOUR LOVING MOTHER

69 HIGH ST., CEFN COED

MERTHYR TYDVIL

(Ivor, I will remember you until I die.)⁶⁰⁵

It is important to observe that the address is written in English and is therefore focused outwards, speaking to whoever visited the grave, but the first line is in Welsh, and is directed to Ivor himself. Margaret Davies was able to bid a final farewell to her son through the privacy and intimacy created by the Welsh language.

These two inscriptions recognise the finite nature of private memory. Richard Williams would be “forever remembered” but by his mother and siblings, indicating that ‘forever’ meant the duration of their lifetimes, while Margaret Davies promised to remember Ivor until she died, placing a natural limit on the length of memory.

⁶⁰⁴ Second Lieutenant Richard Williams, Machine Gun Corps. Buried in Gezaincourt Communal Cemetery Extension, France.

⁶⁰⁵ Driver Ivor Davies (DM2/117601), Army Service Corps. Buried in Premont British Cemetery, France.

On the other hand, some epitaphs allude to a collective and perpetual memory.

ER FOD EI GORPH YN SALEM DREF

YN SERCH PENBOYR YR ERYN EF

(Though he rests in the town of Jerusalem, he will remain in the love of Penboy.)⁶⁰⁶

reads the headstone of Corporal John Rhys Thomas. This inscription highlights the distance between his home—Penboy, a small hamlet in Carmarthenshire—and his grave, but nonetheless affirms that the inhabitants, both current and future, would remember him fondly.

As we have seen in section 5.2.5, which examines conventional memorial texts, some families interpreted commemoration as ‘not forgetting’. Certainly, David Lougher, the father of Private David William Lougher, stated:

NIS ANGHOFIR ER YMHELL

(Not forgotten though far away.)⁶⁰⁷

A comparable inscription was engraved on the headstone of Company Sergeant Major David Benjamin Davies, chosen by his mother, Sarah:

ER DY FOD YN BELL NI AI BYTH YN ANGOF

(Although you are far away, we will never forget.)⁶⁰⁸

The idea that memory, or ‘not forgetting’, is stronger than distance and absence is the same in both texts, though the pronoun ‘we’ used by Sarah is perhaps suggestive of private, finite

⁶⁰⁶ Corporal John Rhys Thomas (355874), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Jerusalem War Cemetery, Israel & Palestine.

⁶⁰⁷ Private David William Lougher (1609), Army Service Corps. Buried in Ismailia War Cemetery, Egypt.

⁶⁰⁸ Company Sergeant Major David Benjamin Davies (240286), Welsh Regiment. Buried in Beersheba War Cemetery, Israel & Palestine.

memory, while the words “not forgotten” written by David Lougher hint at collective, perpetual memory.

Similarly, the following epitaph indicates that the ‘not forgetting’ will be performed by someone in particular:

ER YN NHIR ESTRON

NID A’N ANGHOF

FAN FECHAN EI FEDD

GAN EI RIENI

(The little site of his grave, though in a foreign land, will never be forgotten by his parents.)⁶⁰⁹

Unlike Sarah Davies, the parents of Private David Michael directed their promise of remembrance to the unknown visitor, once again showing that there were multiple ways in which the bereaved defined the purpose of a personal inscription.

The six inscriptions above are all concerned with remembrance, but there are considerable differences in how the people who wrote them thought about this concept. Who was obligated to remember? Some relatives defined memory as their own responsibility, while others alluded to a wider, collective memory. Following on from this question, how long would remembrance last? By avoiding personal pronouns, a number of families depicted remembrance as an ongoing process, but others acknowledged, whether consciously or unconsciously, that their

⁶⁰⁹ Private David Michael (267315), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Beersheba War Cemetery, Israel & Palestine.

loved ones would only be remembered as long as they themselves were alive. Finally, how was it to be done: a constant, active ‘remembering’, or a more passive ‘not forgetting’?

These questions, prompted by the inscriptions explored in this small section, have several answers, or perhaps none at all. We are reminded that remembrance was a phenomenon and process not universally agreed upon: it was inherently ambiguous and, in this way, it endured and was participated in year on year.

Returning to the inscriptions to conclude this particular section, it is striking that around half of the texts listed above, although primarily focused on other themes—sanctity of the war dead, reunion, and remembrance—also mention the distance between family, home, and country, and the grave. Separation heightens the pain of death, but also makes the eventual reunion all the sweeter, and strengthens the resolve of the bereaved to remember. As we will see in the following section, however, distance could be a source of sorrow that nothing could soothe.

*

The theme of distance runs through all of the personal inscriptions in this section. From the repeated naming of home addresses and family members, to the texts dwelling on heavenly reunion or eternal remembrance, separation, loss, and absence were keenly felt and clearly shaped the wording of an inscription in both deliberate and unconscious ways. The unmitigated pain of distance is even more overt in several inscriptions in this category, some of which are explored below.

Gwen Roberts submitted the following inscription to commemorate her youngest son, Private John Alun Roberts:

CWSG YN DAWEL

YMHELL O PENMACHNO

(Sleep in peace, far from Penmachno.)⁶¹⁰

Another inscription, engraved on the headstone of Private William Lloyd Jones in Gaza War Cemetery, Palestine, uses more emotive language to emphasise the separation between members of the family.

ER ALAETH I OER WELU

Y TORWYD BRAWD TIRION ANWYL OEDD,

MEWN ESTRON WLAD YN GORFFWYS

(In sorrow, and to a cold bed, this gentle and dear brother was laid to rest in a foreign land.)⁶¹¹

His burial in “a foreign land” represents two losses: firstly, his death—the loss of William as a person—and secondly, the fact that his body and his grave are so remote. Indeed, his grave is described as a “cold bed”, something bleak and hostile, precisely because his family cannot reach it. There is nothing different or special about the Holy Land here, as one might expect, given its religious and historical significance, nor is the cemetery considered an extension of Britain, ground made sacred through the bloodshed and burial of British soldiers. Instead, the site is represented as unwelcoming, far away, and foreign.

⁶¹⁰ Private John Alun Roberts (039828), Royal Army Ordnance Corps. Buried in Abbeville Communal Cemetery Extension, France.

⁶¹¹ Private William Lloyd Jones (266317), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Gaza War Cemetery, Israel & Palestine.

Distance was explicitly connected to feelings of anguish and emptiness by Griffith Evans, the father of Corporal Evan Evans of Harlech, Merionethshire:

CWSG DI FY MAB;

YN MHELL O DRE,

NID OS TRWYR BYD,

A LEINWTH LE, CWSG; CWSG.

(Sleep, my son, far from the town / In all this world there is nobody who can replace you / Sleep,
sleep.)⁶¹²

This inscription makes it clear that his absence cannot be filled, as does the following *cwpled* engraved on the headstone of Private Harry Morgan:

BU FARW FERTHYR DROS EI WLAD

MAE BWLCH AR AELWYD MAM A THAD

(He died as a martyr for his country, but there is an emptiness in the home of Mam and Dad.)⁶¹³

His parents, John and Cassie Morgan, remembered him as a martyr and a patriot, but also explained that his death had fractured their lives. While I have translated ‘bwlch’ as ‘emptiness’, it can be used to describe a breach or jagged gap, as well as, more figuratively, loss and distress. For the Morgans, their son’s death was something which had torn into their home, an almost physical destruction.

⁶¹² Corporal Evan Evans (39185), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Erquinghem-Lys Churchyard Extension, France.

⁶¹³ Private Harry Morgan (5287), Honourable Artillery Company. Buried in Mesnil Communal Cemetery Extension, France.

Similar feelings of sorrow and emptiness are apparent in other inscriptions. The parents of Private Griffith Henry Rees submitted the words below, less an epitaph than a cry of anguish:

O EIN DUW! Y BACHGEN DEL RIFWYD 'MYSG EBYRTH RHYFEL

(O, our God! Our fine boy is numbered amongst the sacrifices of war.)⁶¹⁴

Sacrifice was a widespread, and potent, concept in the aftermath of the First World War, but could be construed in different ways. As we will see in Chapter 6 as well, sacrifice could be willing ('he sacrificed his life') or it could be something that was done to a person ('he was sacrificed'), portraying the dead in a far more passive role. This inscription seems to fit the latter interpretation, as Griffith is "numbered amongst the sacrifices of war"—the sacrifice is not his own.

Evan and Margaret Davies framed the death of their son, Private Evan David Davies, purely through the terms of absence.

GOLEU O'N TEULU DDIFLANODD

Y LLAIS A GAREM SYDD FUD

(The light of our family has disappeared; the voice we loved is silent.)⁶¹⁵

This inscription contains parallels with many other epitaphs of the First World War, including original formulations, as well as those sourced from popular memorial verses and poetry. Take, for instance, the text submitted by the mother of Private A. Neil: VANISHED FOR EVER FROM MY VIEW / THOU SON OF MY SOUL, ADIEU.⁶¹⁶ The image of a silenced voice was also common: A VOICE FOR EVER STILLED / A MEMORY reads the headstone of Lieutenant

⁶¹⁴ Private Griffith Henry Rees (3094), Welsh Regiment. Buried in Béthune Town Cemetery, France.

⁶¹⁵ Private Evan David Davies (35434), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Abbeville Communal Cemetery, France.

⁶¹⁶ Private A. Neil (315181), Black Watch (Royal Highlanders). Buried in Quietiste Military Cemetery, France.

Arthur Buck, to give one example.⁶¹⁷ It may be that Evan and Margaret Davies were inspired by a line from the poem *Break, Break, Break* by Tennyson, a line which resonated with hundreds of bereaved families after the war.

BUT O FOR THE TOUCH OF A VANISH'D HAND,
AND THE SOUND OF A VOICE THAT IS STILL!

Perhaps they were influenced by Welsh poetry. The first stanza of the poem *Englynion Coffa Hedd Wyn*, studied elsewhere in this chapter, also speaks of stillness brought about by death:

Y BARD DTRWM DAN BRIDD TRAMOR, — Y DWYLO
NA DDIDOLIR RHAGOR:
Y LLYGAID DWYS DAN DDWYS DDÔR,
Y LLYGAID NA ALL AGOR.

(The poet lies heavy under foreign soil / His hands will never part again / His intense eyes, beneath an intense weight, cannot open.)

Whether the Davies family were guided by existing poetry or commemorative verses or not, they nonetheless voiced a despair common in other memorial texts, written in both Welsh and English. Their words communicated that their son Evan was loved, and that their family would be forever changed by his death.

The word ‘hiraeth’ (‘longing’ or ‘yearning’, especially for something that cannot be replaced or regained) appears in ten inscriptions in this category, articulating an all-encompassing

⁶¹⁷ Lieutenant Arthur Buck, Royal Engineers & Royal Garrison Artillery. Buried in Fosse No. 10 Communal Cemetery Extension, France.

sorrow and desolation. For two families, their longing was so strong that it was personified. The headstone of Private Cledwyn Shelby reads:

HIRAETH ANWYLA 'I WERYD

(Longing embraces his grave.)⁶¹⁸

Griffith Jones submitted an emotive poem to commemorate his son, Private John Thomas Jones:

HUNA, JOHN THOMAS

DY HUN O HEDD

HIRAETH FEL ENGYL

WARCHODA'TH FEDD

(Sleep, John Thomas, your sleep of peace / Longing like an angel guards your grave.)⁶¹⁹

In other inscriptions, longing was not something that could shelter the body and the grave, akin in this sense to love and remembrance, but was something suffered by the bereaved family. Thomas and Mary Jones of Henllan, Denbighshire, chose the following words to commemorate their youngest son, Private John Oswald Jones:

ER COF AM EIN HANWYL FAB

MEWN HIRAETH DWYS

(In memory of our beloved son, in profound longing.)⁶²⁰

⁶¹⁸ Private Cledwyn Shelby (35478), King's Shropshire Light Infantry. Buried in Wancourt British Cemetery, France.

⁶¹⁹ Private John Thomas Jones (5352), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Merville Communal Cemetery, France.

⁶²⁰ Private John Oswald Jones (204315), Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Buried in Chocques Military Cemetery, France.

In contrast to texts such as IT IS SWEET TO REMEMBER HIM and the Welsh equivalent BYDD MELYS GOFIO AMDANO, this inscription suggests that remembering was necessary but painful, as it renewed feelings of grief and longing.

Certainly, sorrow and yearning were ongoing processes for the family of Private Walter Gwyn Thomas.

MAE HIRAETH YN PARA I DARO EI DANT

(Longing continues to pull the heartstrings.)⁶²¹

The sense of continual grief and longing is also present in this inscription, chosen by the parents of Private Arthur Jones, who served with the Canadian Expeditionary Force but was from Penygroes, Caernarfonshire:

AM ARTHUR, WIR, MAE HIRAETH

YN FAWR 'ER YR AWR YR AETH

EI DAD A'I FAM

(For Arthur, the longing is great indeed since the hour he went / His father and mother.)⁶²²

It is unclear whether the phrase “he went” refers to his emigration to Canada, sometime between 1911 and 1915, or to his death, and therefore we cannot be sure when the longing felt by Robert and Jane Jones started. Perhaps it encompasses both absences: the ache and worry of geographical distance intensified by his death.

⁶²¹ Private Walter Gwyn Thomas (29204), Welsh Regiment. Buried in Bard Cottage Cemetery, Belgium.

⁶²² Private Arthur Jones (446269), Canadian Machine Gun Corps. Buried in La Chaudiere Military Cemetery, France.

Numerous themes and narratives were aired by the inscriptions studied in this section, and indeed in this chapter as a whole, but it is perhaps this final inscription which summarises the experience of all families whose loved ones died during the First World War:

ANWYL FAB

HIRAETH A LANWODD EIN CALON

TYNGWNDWN, BETTWS LIKY

(Beloved son, our hearts are filled with grief and longing / Tyngwndwn, Betws-Lleucu.)⁶²³

It appears on the headstone of Gunner John Jones, a farmer's son from Betws-Lleucu in Cardiganshire, who was killed in April 1918.

The inscriptions explored above articulate feelings of grief, sorrow, longing, and emptiness, all caused by the absence of their loved one through death, and the distance between home and the grave. Significantly, the idea of distance is not limited to the inscriptions commemorating men buried in Egypt, Israel, or Palestine, but was also dwelled upon by the families of men buried in France or Belgium along the Western Front. There are certainly comparisons to be made with the texts in section 5.2.4, which express anger and desolation at the burial policy of the IWGC and at the circumstances which took men so far from home.

*

⁶²³ Gunner John Jones (243704), Royal Field Artillery. Buried in Crouy British Cemetery, France.

Distance is a recurring theme throughout all of the personal inscriptions explored in this section. For some families, this distance was overwhelming, a source of anguish and feelings of longing and emptiness. Other relatives attempted to bridge the distance by including addresses and their own names in the inscription, reuniting the deceased with his home and family, if only textually. This was a device also used by bereaved families in Canada and Australia, who were separated from the graves of their loved ones by thousands, not only hundreds, of miles.⁶²⁴ Grief was clearly worsened by geographical distance, and it is unsurprising that so many bereaved families used the personal inscription format to articulate a response to this separation.

The inscriptions above obviously refer to physical distance: the fact that the war dead are buried far away from their local churchyards or chapel burial grounds in Wales. But it is not too much of a stretch to read a sense of cultural distance into these texts as well. The repeated naming of home addresses, the focus on the gentle and peaceful nature of the deceased, and of course the preoccupation with distance and separation all indicate that these men were not seen as soldiers by their families, but as sons, husbands, and brothers—which is also noticeable in Welsh-language war memorial inscriptions. It signals a reluctance, even a refusal, to give the dead over to their military identity and to engage with popular rhetoric about the war. This is surely a reflection of the growing disillusionment that the aftermath of the war brought about, but also a reflection of long-established ideas about the distinctiveness of Wales and its place and status within Britain.

⁶²⁴ See Ziino, *A Distant Grief*.

5.3 Reflections on headstone inscriptions

Personal inscriptions could be drawn from scripture, hymns, poetry, or well-known memorial phrases. A variety of themes emerge from these sources, such as the importance of remembrance, the hope in eventual reunion, and praise for the deceased. Relatives could also formulate their own inscriptions, and these texts are dominated by feelings of grief and longing, caused by the death of their loved one and the distance between home and the grave. At times, there is a futile despair; at other times, relatives attempt to reclaim their loved one from their military identity and burial setting.

In exploring all of these overlapping, sometimes contradictory, sometimes concordant voices, we also need to recognise that these inscriptions provide only a fragment of the fuller picture. Many thousands of men were posted missing: they were not buried and their next-of-kin were not given the opportunity to write a headstone inscription. There were countless families who could not afford a personal inscription, and undoubtedly some other families, monoglot Welsh speakers, who were unable to communicate with the IWGC. Other families may have *chosen* not to submit an inscription, preferring instead to include the name of their loved one on the family headstone, which could be easily visited, or to utilise the *in memoriam* tradition, which was a more flexible commemorative ritual.

The subject would benefit from further study. Speaking solely of inscriptions on war graves, a more thematic approach would aid comparisons and the identification of particular narratives across the whole body of texts. But it would also be worth comparing the inscriptions on war graves with the inscriptions on family headstones and the text of *in memoriam* notices. It may

be that interesting nuances arise in how the dead were named and identified, how their deaths were described, and which quotations were chosen to accompany the text.

Interstice II

A collection of Welsh-language headstone inscriptions

“DAW I TI FOREU, TÊG, A HYFRYD N’OL STORMUS, DDŪ, BRYDNAWN”

(Morning will come to you, fair and lovely, after a stormy, black evening.)

Edward Jones was born in Liverpool, and lived with his family in Bychton Cottages, Mostyn, Flintshire, before the war. He was killed on 27 July 1917, aged twenty, and was buried in Artillery Wood Cemetery. In November 1923, his mother Mary signed the Welsh Women’s Peace Petition, one of nearly four hundred thousand women across Wales to do so.

BYTH YN ANGOF GAN EI FAM A’R TEULU

(Never forgotten by his mother and the family.)

Before the war, Owen Evans was a poet, writing under the bardic name Rhiwlas, which was the name of the family farm in Llaneilian, Anglesey. During the war he served with the South Wales Borderers as a stretcher-bearer, and was awarded the Military Medal for his actions on Pilckem Ridge in 1917. He was badly wounded in the spring of 1918, and died on 30 April 1918 in the hospital in Rouen, leaving a widow, Sarah, and four young children, as well as his bereaved parents, Owen and Elizabeth, and several siblings.

UN NAWS Â DAIL EINIOES DYN

(A man’s life is of the same calibre as the leaves.)

Haydn Gwion Morris was from the village of Hebron in Carmarthenshire. He was killed in France on 6 May 1917, aged twenty-three, and was buried in Beaulencourt British Cemetery. It was his own

brother, David, who recovered his body, and who retrieved a letter from their sister Elsie, addressed to “my dear brother”, and stained with mud and pierced by the bullets or shrapnel that killed him.

OS HUNO WYT TEDDY YN WELW DY WEDD

EIN HIRAETH A ERYYS O AMGYLCH DY FEDD

(Teddy, you are sleeping, pale-faced / Our longing will remain around your grave.)

Edward Parry, known as Teddy to his family, lived in Tynffynon, a house in Llanerchymedd, Anglesey. He worked as a shop assistant before the war.

GOLEU O’N TEULU DDIFLANODD

Y LLAIS A GAREM SYDD FUD

(The light of our family has disappeared; the voice we loved is silent.)

Evan David Davies, from the village of Ystrad Rhondda in Glamorgan, was a warehouse man for the Taff Vale Railway Company. During the war he joined the Royal Welsh Fusiliers and died on 25 August 1916 in France.

HYN A ALLODD HON HI A’I GWNAETH ST. MARK 14.8

(She hath done what she could.)

Jennie Williams was the youngest of ten children born to John and Ellen Williams. The family lived at Plas Coch in Llanberis, Caernarfonshire, in the heart of the slate quarrying landscape of north Wales. Jennie was a faithful member of Capel Coch, the Calvinistic Methodist chapel in Llanberis, and of the Llanberis branch of the Red Cross, participating in nursing classes led by Doctor Robert Mills-Roberts, Chief Surgeon at the Dinorwig Quarry Hospital. In 1915, she joined the Voluntary Aid Detachment,

and was posted to a hospital near Le Havre in France. Jennie worked in France throughout 1917 and 1918, but caught influenza at the beginning of 1919, which developed into the pneumonia that killed her on 31 January 1919.

CWSG YN DAWEL

BERL DY FAM

(Sleep in peace, pearl of your mother.)

The son of the Reverend Maelfryn Morgan and Sara Ann Morgan, Walter Ewart Morgan enlisted at Ammanford, Carmarthenshire, in September 1915, and was sent to France in December 1915. He served with the Royal Horse Artillery for the next year and a half, but was taken ill in the spring of 1917, and died in hospital on 13 May 1917, aged eighteen.

OR ADDFWYN YR ADDFWYNAF

AC OR GWYR Y GOREU GAF

YN DAWEL CWSG

(The gentlest of the gentle and the best of all men / Sleep in peace.)

Robert Pritchard Evans lived in Melin Llecheiddior, in Garndolbenmaen, Caernarfonshire, with his parents William and Elizabeth and several siblings. From 1904 to 1907 he was a student at the University College of North Wales, graduating with a degree in English, and for a period he taught at the school in Trefor. He was a close friend of Robert Williams Parry, a poet who wrote several *englynion* in his memory after he was killed in France on 11 April 1917.

OF NEW QUAY, CARDIGANSHIRE

MYFI A AF ATO EF OND NI DDYCHWEL EFE ATAF FI

(I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.)

Before the war, Tom Arthur James lived in Kensington, but was originally from the seaside town of New Quay in Ceredigion. He was killed in action at Ypres on 5 December 1917, aged twenty, and was buried in Bedford House Cemetery.

AI DROS FÔR PWY DRWSIA'I FEDD

(Who will attend to his grave over the sea?)

Thomas Davies, known as Tom to his adoptive parents and friends, was killed in action on 4 November 1918, a week before the armistice. He was described as a quiet young man, beautiful in appearance and manners, and it was agreed that it was sad and wrong to have lost him at such a young age.

6 “O GOFADAIL GOFIDIAU”: INSCRIPTIONS ON WAR MEMORIALS

This chapter is based on the study of 509 memorials located across all thirteen historic counties in Wales, commemorating both those who died during the First World War and those who served and returned home at the end of the conflict. All were constructed and unveiled between 1914 and 1939.

Numerous and various types of memorial were included in the study, ranging from large decorative monuments such as cenotaphs, obelisks, crosses, and sculptures of soldiers and allegorical figures, to smaller forms such as plaques, tablets, and rolls of honour, as well as functional structures like halls, hospitals, church or chapel furniture, horse troughs, and clock towers. The memorial types are fairly equally distributed across the country: in other words, no one area is dominated by a particular kind of memorial, although there are some local trends and preferences. Cenotaphs, for example, seem to be more prevalent in south Wales, with 16 of the 23 recorded found in the counties of Glamorgan, Monmouthshire, Pembrokeshire, and Radnorshire. Celtic crosses are popular in the counties of Montgomeryshire, Merionethshire, Denbighshire, and Flintshire, while there is a comparatively high proportion of sculptures of soldiers in towns and villages along the Carmarthenshire-Cardiganshire border.



Figure 6.1: The memorial at Aberbanc, a sculpture of a soldier in mourning pose, a common sight in west Wales. © Author.

These trends do not seem to be connected to any one thing in particular. Local culture and commemorative traditions, as well as the local architectural vernacular, undoubtedly had a significant influence on the selection of a certain type of monument. The somewhat competitive nature of commemoration in the aftermath of the First World War must also be emphasised here: civic pride and pretensions were bound up with concerns over being seen to sufficiently honour the dead, and it is likely that, in some cases, the choice of memorial in one community prompted neighbouring communities to select similar or identical memorials to stress their own contribution and will to remember.⁶²⁵ On the other hand, the preference for specific types of memorial in certain areas may simply reflect a more practical matter, namely, the skills and specialities of local stonemasons and builder's firms.

⁶²⁵ King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain*, pp. 100-103.

Despite the diversity of form and design within the study, some types of memorial were more popular than others. Plaques, boards, and tablets constitute nearly 40 percent of the total, with Celtic crosses, making up 13 percent, and obelisks, pillars, and columns, accounting for 10 percent, the next two largest categories. In general, ornamental memorials were clearly preferred: nearly 90 percent of the memorials included in the sample are of the monumental type, reflecting the desire, common in the interwar period, for a war memorial to be devoted entirely to the dead.⁶²⁶ More mundane considerations were also at play, however, as ornamental memorials were easier to plan for financially, and required less money and effort to maintain than, for example, a hall or a park.

The memorials studied here are predominantly civic ones, commemorating those from a particular town, city district, or village; some, however, commemorate even smaller communities, like the employees of a company, or the members of a certain church, chapel, or synagogue congregation. A few, on the other hand, commemorate all those from a particular county or region, and one, the Welsh National Memorial in Cardiff, was raised to the memory of all those from Wales who served and died during the war. It is not unusual to find more than one memorial in a single place, nor is it an uncommon occurrence for one person to be named at a number of locations. Certainly, many bereaved families were anxious to see their loved one commemorated on several memorials, but the various memorial projects in one community and the repetition of names across multiple sites also illuminates complex local politics and competing claims of ownership over the dead. The actions of the Anglican Church are particularly noticeable in this respect: many civic memorials are actually located within a parish church, and include those who were Anglican as well as those who belonged to one of the

⁶²⁶ Several memorial committees in towns across Wales were obliged to construct monuments in addition to utilitarian structures following public pressure. See Gaffney, *Aftermath*, pp. 69-95.

Nonconformist denominations and who would be named in their respective places of worship. It appears that the Church in Wales was keen to maintain influence following Disestablishment in 1920, and thus assumed the role of caretaker in the commemoration of the war dead.

Overall, this study has gathered a representative sample of First World War memorials in Wales, not only in terms of range and diversity, but also in the ways in which the memorials studied are illustrative of the process of memorialisation in the interwar period. It is not my intention, however, to focus on the memorials themselves. This chapter is neither an analysis of war memorial design nor a narrative of the building of memorials in Wales—indeed, the decisions and conflicts that marked this process have been thoroughly explored by Angela Gaffney in *Aftermath*, though there is clearly room in the historiography for further research and a re-examination of some of the conclusions reached in her study. Nor is this chapter concerned with the lives of the people named on the memorials. Several online projects, such as the West Wales War Memorial Project run by Steven John, and digital and print publications by family history societies, have already amply researched the backgrounds of the Welsh war dead using census records and military documents.

This chapter is instead concentrated upon the precise wording and meaning of the inscriptions on war memorials in Wales. The texts inscribed on war memorials have, in comparison to iconography, received relatively little attention from historians, perhaps because the study of material culture has been particularly fashionable over the last twenty to thirty years.⁶²⁷ But inscriptions are an incredibly important element of a monument: they (quite literally) spell out

⁶²⁷ See Sarah Turner, 'The Poetics of Permanence? Inscriptions, Memory, and Memorials of the First World War in Britain', *Sculpture Journal* 24:1 (2015), pp. 73-96.

the attitudes of a given community towards war, death in war, and the experiences of bereavement and remembrance, and also shape thoughts and emotions as part of the wider affective atmosphere of the memorial site. Just like symbols, inscriptions both reflect and project certain viewpoints, and are therefore worthy of serious analysis in order to further our understanding of commemoration in the aftermath of the First World War.

6.1 Memorialisation in Wales

A culture of commemoration took hold in Britain in the aftermath of the First World War. Memorials were raised by almost every community across the country, as well as by workplaces, schools, clubs, and places of worship, and took a wide range of forms, from the ornamental, including crosses, statues, and obelisks, plaques, rolls of honour, or stained-glass windows, to the functional, such as halls, hospitals or hospital equipment, sports facilities, gates, clock towers, or church furnishings. Innumerable other private memorials existed in family homes: photographs, displayed on a mantelpiece or kept in a locket, letters, medals and insignia, and personal belongings also acquired a commemorative function.⁶²⁸ Both public and private spaces were thus transformed into landscapes of remembrance.

While some memorials were designed and constructed very quickly—indeed, the first street shrines and rolls of honour began to appear during the war itself, and many smaller memorials, such as those found in churches or chapels, were unveiled in the immediate postwar years—

⁶²⁸ For an article on private tokens and the transmission of memory from individuals to institutions, see Ann-Marie Foster, “‘We Decided the Museum Would Be the Best Place for Them’: Veterans, Families, and Mementos of the First World War”, *History & Memory* 31:1 (2019), pp. 87-117. For an older piece on the memorial function of photographs, see Catherine Moriarty, “‘Though in a Picture Only’: Portrait Photography and the Commemoration of the First World War”, in Gail Braybon (ed.), *Evidence, History, and the Great War: Historians and the Impact of 1914–18* (New York & Oxford: Berghahn, 2003), pp. 30-47.

other memorial schemes took several years from inception to completion. It was not a straightforward process. A completed memorial, no matter its location, form, or function, represented years of fundraising, prolonged deliberation and heated debate between all those invested and involved in the project, and the complex emotions, memories, and priorities of a community or group.

Memorialisation in Wales was no exception. Wales in the early twentieth century was a nation divided, with complex changes occurring across Welsh society, politics, and culture. It was against this turbulent backdrop that Welsh people commemorated the First World War, and these divisions, tensions, and changes affected commemoration at both a local and a national level.

*

Aftermath, published in 1998, was the first—and is, to this date, the only—comprehensive study of memorialisation in Wales. In it, Angela Gaffney identifies a number of conflicts that characterised the building of war memorials across the country. The movement to establish a national memorial in Cardiff, for example, exposed tensions between north and south, urban and rural, and the feeling of civic pride versus the concept of national unity. Another chapter touches on the competing roles of the Church in Wales and the various Nonconformist denominations, even when church and chapel generally cooperated during the commemoration process. Gaffney also explores the question of whether memorialisation and commemoration in Wales articulated a distinctive Welsh identity and sense of nationhood, or whether Welsh

war memorials simply emphasise the Welsh contribution to the war effort, and, by extension, the position of Wales within the British state and British Empire.

The overall impression is that the universal issues associated with the building of war memorials—such as fundraising, siting, choosing a design, and the arrangements for the unveiling—were further complicated by the social, political, and cultural landscape of twentieth-century Wales, although, somewhat confusingly, Gaffney ultimately concludes that comparison of commemorative processes in Wales and the rest of Britain reveals more similarities than differences.⁶²⁹ Perhaps the most significant distinction—the bilingual nature of Welsh society, albeit to varying degrees across the country—is dismissed, with Gaffney arguing that the use of Welsh on war memorials and in unveiling and remembrance services was “the least contentious feature of the commemoration process” because “the language itself was not a controversial issue in Wales in the post-war years”.⁶³⁰

What emerges from the primary sources is, in fact, the opposite. There was a great deal of anxiety over the inclusion of Welsh in memorial inscriptions, and there was a great deal of confusion and anger when the language was omitted.

In some areas, there were pleas from members of the public for some kind of Welsh text to be inscribed on the local war memorial. During the initial stages of the memorial project in Nelson,

⁶²⁹ Gaffney, *Aftermath*, p. 173.

⁶³⁰ Ibid, p. 133; 149. Clearly the countless articles, letters, and editorials discussing the future of the Welsh language, and the political activity aimed at protecting the Welsh language and Welsh-language culture went unnoticed.

near Caerphilly in Glamorgan, a letter signed ‘Respect for the Fallen’ was published in the *Merthyr Express*, stating that, as the site for the memorial had been decided,

it is to be hoped that when the design and the inscription to be placed thereon have been arranged, that a place will be given to a Welsh inscription—the native and home language of a large number of the fallen. It is a source of regret and implies a certain amount of disrespect that in the towns and villages of Wales many of the memorials have no Welsh inscription. The English people resident in Wales would certainly have cause for complaint if the war inscriptions were all in Welsh and the Welsh people have equal, if not more cause for complaint when the inscriptions are all in English. Let justice be done.⁶³¹

Successive meetings of the war memorial committee discussed many different inscriptions over the next year or so, and in February 1926 suggested the words

ERECTED BY THE PEOPLE OF NELSON

IN PROUD AND LOVING MEMORY OF THE MEN OF THIS VILLAGE

WHO DIED AS A RESULT OF THE GREAT WAR

1914—1918.⁶³²

The press report of the committee meeting did not, however, specify whether this inscription was to be written in English, Welsh, or in both languages, and another letter, signed ‘One of the Subscribers’, was sent in to the *Merthyr Express* the following week:

[It] is a very suitable inscription, but the report did not state whether the inscription is to be in the Welsh or English language, or in both. If in Welsh only, it would be

⁶³¹ *Merthyr Express*, 6 December 1924, p. 3.

⁶³² *Merthyr Express*, 20 February 1926, p. 8.

an injustice to the memory of the men of English nationality whose names are recorded. On the other hand, if the inscription is to be in the English language only, it will be an insult to the families and friends and to the memory of the men of Welsh nationality who fell in the war that a monument erected on their native heath should ignore the native language. In Nelson, Lancashire, one would not expect to find an inscription other than in English, but in Nelson, Glamorgan, an inscription in English only would be very inappropriate and against the wishes of many of the subscribers.⁶³³

It is possible that ‘Respect for the Fallen’ and ‘One of the Subscribers’ were the same person, as the letter reiterates a point from the initial appeal:

It is regrettable that in many villages and small towns in Wales the inscriptions on the memorials to the fallen are in English only, and it is a great injustice where men of Welsh nationality are represented not to have a Welsh inscription also. I can imagine the dissatisfaction of the English people if the inscriptions were all in Welsh.⁶³⁴

The war memorial committee acceded to the request: a meeting held in April 1926 unanimously agreed on the words

TO COMMEMORATE THE END OF THE GREAT WAR 1914—1918,

AND TO THE MEMORY OF THE FALLEN SONS OF NELSON

[list of names]

GWELL ANGAU, NA CHYWILYDD.

⁶³³ *Merthyr Express*, 27 February 1926, p. 3.

⁶³⁴ *Ibid.*

(Better death than dishonour.)

With both English and Welsh engraved on the bronze plaque, the cenotaph in Nelson was unveiled in August 1926.

It was not only in south Wales that anxieties concerning the inclusion of Welsh on war memorials were raised by observers. In August 1921, two years into the memorial project in Caernarfon—located in a county in which three-quarters of the population could speak Welsh, and where it should have been beyond doubt that a public monument would be inscribed in Welsh—a letter was sent to the Caernarfon War Memorial Committee by the Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary of the Cwmni Drama'r Ddraig Goch (Red Dragon Drama Company). The three men said:

Da gennym gael y fraint o gyflwyno deg gini at Gronfa Coffa Milwyr ein tref, ar yr un pryd dymunem fynegi ein hyder y bydd i'r Pwyllgor roddi ei lle teilwng i'r Iaith Gymraeg ar y Gofeb fwriedir ei chodi.

(We are pleased to have the privilege of presenting ten guineas to our town's Soldiers' Memorial Fund. At the same time, we wish to express our hope that the Committee will give the Welsh Language its rightful place on the Memorial that is intended to be erected.)⁶³⁵

Their concern was shared by Robert Pierce FRIBA, one of three local architects who were invited to submit designs for the memorial. His recommendations, which were sent in a letter to the war memorial committee also in August 1921, said specifically that the inscription “in

⁶³⁵ Gwasanaeth Archifau Gwynedd, Archifdy Caernarfon / Gwynedd Archives Service, Caernarfon Record Office, XD 1/895: Caernarfon War Heroes Memorial, Borough Council papers. Letter from Cwmni Drama'r Ddraig Goch, 23 August 1921.

this instance should be in Welsh”.⁶³⁶ There is no indication amongst the committee and council papers that an inscription written only in English was ever proposed, and so it appears that the anxieties of the architect and the drama group were unfounded—but it is still telling that it was deemed necessary to remind the war memorial committee that the Welsh language should be included on the monument.

In Llanrhystud, Cardiganshire—a county in which over 80 percent of the population could speak Welsh—those responsible for the memorial project were urged in no uncertain terms to utilise the Welsh language. An eisteddfod was held locally in 1925 to raise funds for the memorial hall. Two speakers, Mr D. Lewis and Mr Evan Evans, delivered speeches discussing the future of the Welsh language: the eisteddfod tradition and Sunday schools, they said, had done much to maintain the language, but they encouraged Welsh people to speak Welsh at public meetings and “to do all they could” to foster the language.⁶³⁷ Their words were endorsed by the Reverend John Dyfnallt Owen, a poet and Congregational minister who had served as a chaplain in France, who had filled the dual role of conductor and adjudicator that day. “When you have your Memorial Hall,” Dyfnallt said, “see that you have the words ‘Neuadd Goffa’ placed on the front, and not ‘Memorial Hall’. Learn as many languages as you like, but keep up the Welsh language.”⁶³⁸ Here, the use of Welsh in commemoration was explicitly linked to the survival of the language, contrasting commentary in other areas which, as we will see, framed the desire for a Welsh inscription in terms of respect for the fallen and for the bereaved, although, of course, this may not have been the only motivation.

⁶³⁶ Gwasanaeth Archifau Gwynedd, Archifdy Caernarfon / Gwynedd Archives Service, Caernarfon Record Office, XD 1/895: Caernarfon War Heroes Memorial, Borough Council papers. Letter from Robert Pierce FRIBA, 31 August 1921.

⁶³⁷ *Welsh Gazette*, 9 July 1925, p. 6.

⁶³⁸ *Ibid.*

At other times, public pressure to include the Welsh language in the inscription came after the memorial was actually completed. The memorial in Newport, Monmouthshire, was unveiled by Lord Tredegar in June 1923: it took the form of a cenotaph, inscribed with the words

TO OUR HEROIC DEAD
THEIR MEMORY ENDURETH FOR EVER

One month after the unveiling, the Newport Town Council received an influential deputation led by Sir Abraham Garrod Thomas, who founded the *South Wales Argus* and who had been elected Liberal Member of Parliament for South Monmouthshire in 1917. Accompanied by Mr W. E. Heard, Justice of the Peace, Mr J. Leslie Miller, the ex-president of the Newport Chamber of Trade, and considerable ecumenical support in the form of the Venerable David Henry Griffiths, Archdeacon of Monmouth, Reverend D. E. Llewellyn Jones, the rural dean of Newport, Father D. Hickey, a Catholic priest, and with the written support of Lords Tredegar and Treowen and the backing of “many Welshmen and women in the town”, Sir Garrod Thomas requested that a Welsh inscription be added to the memorial.⁶³⁹ The proposed text was

I’N DEWRION
EU HENWAU’N PERAROGLI SYDD

(Our heroes / Their names are preserved forever.)

It was stressed that the Welsh inscription expressed the same sentiment as the English text, and numbered only thirty-one letters. For some members of the council, it was not the tone or the length of the inscription that was concerning, however, but the possibility that the council would then “be faced with similar requests from other bodies”, such as the Irish.⁶⁴⁰ Alderman

⁶³⁹ *Western Mail*, 11 July 1923, p. 5.

⁶⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

Fred Phillips, who had been chairman of the war memorial committee, not only suggested that as the cenotaph had been completed and handed over to the town it would be wrong to alter it, but also dismissed the necessity of having an inscription in Welsh, saying that there were “a good many Welsh people who could not read Welsh, but there were no Welsh people who could not read English.”⁶⁴¹

Although the proposal made by the deputation was ultimately accepted, Alderman Phillips notified the council and the press of his intention at the next full meeting to ask the council to revoke its decision. A slew of letters protesting his stance were published in the *South Wales Argus*, lending weight to an impassioned editorial which argued:

The call for volunteers was made to the Welsh as well as to the English, Scottish, or Irish. [...] During the war, Newport was included in the Welsh military area. Many of those who served were attached to Welsh units, whose regimental mottoes are expressed in Welsh. Some of the fallen were Welshmen by birth. Surely there can be no real objection to their sacrifices being recorded in the Welsh language? We would suggest that if the placing of a Welsh inscription on the Cenotaph gives pleasure to only one bereaved mother, widow, sweetheart, or any other relative, the adoption of that course should be regarded as a town’s duty.⁶⁴²

Other influential bodies in the town also entered the debate. The Newport Trades Council, for example, passed a resolution urging the council not to reverse its decision to add a Welsh inscription.⁶⁴³ With considerable public and official support, the *South Wales Argus*

⁶⁴¹ Ibid.

⁶⁴² *South Wales Argus*, quoted in Gaffney, *Aftermath*, p. 143.

⁶⁴³ *Western Mail*, 11 August 1923, p. 8.

commented, the day before the decisive council meeting, that “the case for a Welsh inscription seems unanswerable”.⁶⁴⁴

At the council meeting on 14 August 1923, Alderman Phillips delivered on his promise and proposed a motion that the resolution to adopt a Welsh inscription be rescinded. He carried written support from the architects, and from the local branch of the British Legion, which stated that “as the cenotaph had already been dedicated and consecrated no additional inscriptions should be permitted”.⁶⁴⁵ This argument was reasonable enough, but the debate then turned to the perceived pointlessness of using Welsh in a predominantly English-speaking town. Major I. C. Vincent declared that considering that there was such a small percentage of people in Newport who spoke Welsh, “they might as well have an inscription in Yiddish”.⁶⁴⁶ In response, statistics on the number of Welsh speakers in Newport, and the number of Welsh speakers amongst the war dead and the bereaved, were flung around the council chamber.

Alderman Phillips changed tack, claiming that “no request for a Welsh inscription was made before the consecration”, perhaps in an attempt to depict the proposal as the untenable demand of a minority of Welsh nationalists.⁶⁴⁷ (His claim was not strictly true: the war memorial committee had in fact received one request for a Welsh inscription from a Mrs N. Llewellyn in May 1923, which was brushed aside.⁶⁴⁸) The fact that the request had come so late did not seem

⁶⁴⁴ *South Wales Argus*, quoted in Gaffney, *Aftermath*, p. 143.

⁶⁴⁵ *Western Mail*, 15 August 1923, p. 8.

⁶⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴⁸ Gaffney, *Aftermath*, p. 141. Gaffney suggests that Mrs Llewellyn then wrote to the *South Wales Argus* in July 1923, and it was after seeing her letter that Sir Garrod Thomas and the other members of the deputation decided to act.

to matter, however, as in the end his motion was heavily defeated and the Welsh inscription proposed by Sir Garrod Thomas and the deputation was indeed added to the memorial.

A similar sequence of events occurred in Maesteg, Glamorgan. The local war memorial—a bronze sculpture of a soldier, rifle raised and bayonet fixed, standing protectively over his wounded comrade, all mounted on a plinth—was unveiled on Armistice Day in 1926. Two weeks later, the *Glamorgan Advertiser* published a letter from ‘Cymro’, who observed, while reading the list of the fallen in the memorial unveiling programme,

the names of Welsh-speaking sons of Welsh-speaking parents, so many of whom took an active part as members of the numerous Welsh churches of Maesteg. The question that naturally arises is: Why is the Welsh inscription omitted from our beautiful memorial?⁶⁴⁹

The Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, an institution founded in 1751 to promote the Welsh language and culture, took up the matter and wrote a letter to the local war memorial committee, arguing that the men of Maesteg fought and died to defend Wales, and its language and culture, and their sacrifices should therefore be recorded in their native language:

In appreciating to a superlative degree the noble efforts and efficient way in which your committee initiated the war memorial to our fallen heroes, [we] feel that no compliment has been paid to the fallen heroes’ language and their country. Were it not the fact that Maesteg had a moral responsibility to share during that great war in defending Wales, its language and traditions, we feel convinced that the district would not have had such an honourable and worthy representation among our fallen

⁶⁴⁹ *Glamorgan Advertiser*, 26 November 1926, p. 6.

heroes. Yet in the heart of Welsh traditions, we find that the fallen heroes must accept their testimony in a language that should not be acknowledged, that should not be considered for our highest testimonies. Wales planted the desire in our heroes, Wales they defended, and Wales they spoke of as the land of their birth. Surely our testimonies should be expressed in their language—a language that remains loyal to every expression of our hearts. We appeal for a fair consideration that a Welsh phrase or phrases be yet added to the monument.⁶⁵⁰

A meeting of the war memorial committee was held in December 1926, and a long discussion was held on whether a Welsh inscription should be added to the memorial. The Cymmrodorion sent a deputation consisting of Mr John Windsor Jenkins, general secretary of the Maesteg Cymmrodorion, and the Reverend E. M. Rowlands, pastor of Tabernacle Welsh Baptist Church, who reiterated the points made in the letter and urged the committee to meet their request, “in deference to the sentiments of a great proportion of the population of this district”.⁶⁵¹

The committee was unconvinced. Councillor A. E. Lockyer, the chairman of the committee, remarked that, in his view, “the men went out to defend, not only Wales, but Britain”, and then pointed out that the appeal was “very belated”.⁶⁵² The war memorial committee had been in existence for over three years, he said, and

at its inception every known organisation in the Maesteg area was asked to send representatives, while unknown organisations were appealed to week after week in

⁶⁵⁰ *Glamorgan Advertiser*, 17 December 1926, p. 2.

⁶⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵² *Ibid.*

the Press. Unfortunately, the Cymrodorion [sic] is one of the few societies that did not send representatives to act on this committee. When the time was ripe suggested inscriptions for the memorial were published in the Press, and one would have thought that any organisation not actively engaged in the work would have come along with alternative suggestions. But no complaint or suggestion was made. Further, when the inscription had been decided upon it was published in the Press. That was done before a stone was laid or a letter was cut in the marble. Still there was no sign from any organisation that they desired an alternative or addition to that inscription. [...] I can understand and sympathise with the point of view of those who desire a Welsh inscription, but I cannot understand for the life of me why they have been quiescent through three long years and, after allowing us to have all the hard graft, should now come forward at not even the eleventh hour, for it has gone one o'clock.⁶⁵³

It was a strong and valid defence, but Reverend Rowlands was not cowed. He admitted that it was a shame the Cymmrodorion had not sent representatives in the first place, but also placed some of the blame on the “Welsh section” of the committee for failing to consider a Welsh inscription themselves. “Perhaps the fact that you conduct your meetings in English caused you to overlook the question of a Welsh inscription,” he said, and ended on a somewhat self-righteous note by mentioning, in implied contrast, the “large number of people” in Maesteg “who wish to retain and honour their native language”.⁶⁵⁴

⁶⁵³ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid.

After the deputation had retired, the committee members discussed the matter further. Councillor Lockyer reminded those present that the monument had been handed over to the council, but the committee felt that the council would not object to their suggestions. All members agreed that a Welsh inscription should be added to the memorial, and the phrase ‘Gwell angau na chywilydd’ (‘Better death than dishonour’) was recommended, although Captain D. J. Griffiths pointed out that they should first consider whether it was possible to engrave another inscription “without affecting the beauty of the memorial”.⁶⁵⁵ The committee agreed to meet at the memorial and examine it in person.

A few days later, the committee members met at the site of the monument and found that there was space on the side panels of the plinth for an additional inscription. They adjourned to the council chamber to make their final decision. Both viewpoints were aired: some members thought it was important to “satisfy the strong Welsh sentiment”, while others, supported by the secretary of the local branch of the British Legion, felt that additional inscriptions would spoil the simplicity and beauty of the memorial.⁶⁵⁶ It was eventually decided, by ten votes to eight, not to accede to the request of the Cymmrodorion.

An editorial in the *Glamorgan Advertiser* commented on both sides of the debate. The war memorial committee were, first and foremost, wary of “any action which might mar in the slightest measure the noble simplicity and symmetrical beauty of a monument that is justly regarded as one of the most artistic in Wales”, it said—but there was clearly some resentment towards the Cymmrodorion. Criticism was aimed not only at their lack of urgency, as their

⁶⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁶ Ibid.

proposal, in the view of the editor, “should have been brought forward months ago when the subject of the inscription was under consideration”, but also at their lack of diplomacy, for “in advocating the claims of the native tongue [they] have not been very tactful in their references to the English language”.⁶⁵⁷ Having said that, the editor then acknowledged that “a memorial to Welshmen in a Welsh town ought to bear some recognition of the Welsh language”, and that it was “a strange and almost inexplicable thing that this fact should have been overlooked”.⁶⁵⁸ “For the moment the question has been settled,” the editor continued, “though, knowing as we do the strength of Welsh sentiment in the town, it is safe to say that the last has not been heard of the matter.”⁶⁵⁹

The editor was right. Resolutions of protest regarding the decision of the war memorial committee were passed in a number of Welsh churches on 19 December 1926, and were forwarded to the Maesteg Urban District Council.⁶⁶⁰ By January 1927, feeling was running high: the Cymmrodorion circulated a petition amongst all the churches and chapels in the Llynfi Valley asking the Maesteg UDC to take steps to add a Welsh inscription on the memorial, which was signed by six thousand people.⁶⁶¹ The Maesteg and District Free Church Council also passed a resolution in favour of a Welsh inscription.⁶⁶² Disputing the concerns over potential damage to the memorial, the sculptor, Louis Frederick Roslyn, wrote that there should be no objection to a Welsh inscription as it would not detract from the beauty of the monument in any way.⁶⁶³

⁶⁵⁷ *Glamorgan Advertiser*, 17 December 1926, p. 6.

⁶⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶⁰ *Glamorgan Advertiser*, 24 December 1926, p. 4.

⁶⁶¹ *Glamorgan Advertiser*, 28 January 1927, p. 2.

⁶⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶⁶³ *Ibid.*

Faced with such strong support in the area for a Welsh inscription, and having received another deputation led by Reverend Rowlands and John Windsor Jenkins, the Maesteg UDC decided to overrule the war memorial committee and thus granted the request of the Cymmrodorion.⁶⁶⁴ A sub-committee was formed and presented its recommendations for the wording and location of a Welsh inscription to the main war memorial committee in March, which, despite one member stating again that nothing should be added to the memorial, were accepted.⁶⁶⁵ The committee could not resist a few further digs at the Cymmrodorion, however: one member declared that he was in favour of a Welsh inscription, “not to please the Cymrodorion [sic], but to honour the Welsh boys who had sacrificed their lives”.⁶⁶⁶ Another member observed that the Cymmrodorion had “boasted” the support of six thousand people in its campaign, and yet not a single daffodil was placed on the memorial on St David’s Day.⁶⁶⁷ (The following year, the ladies of the Maesteg Cymmrodorion, perhaps pointedly, laid a wreath made of green leaves and daffodils in the form of a Welsh harp.⁶⁶⁸) It was also suggested, in a final attempt to regain control over the memorial project, that the work of engraving the new inscription should be done entirely by the committee, and that the Cymmrodorion, or any other body, should have nothing to do with it.⁶⁶⁹

“There is good reason to believe that the controversy over placing a Welsh inscription on the Maesteg War Memorial has now come to an end,” an editorial in the *Glamorgan Advertiser* read. “It has been an unfortunate business and far too much has been made of it.”⁶⁷⁰

⁶⁶⁴ *Glamorgan Advertiser*, 18 February 1927, p. 5.

⁶⁶⁵ *Glamorgan Advertiser*, 11 March 1927, p. 6.

⁶⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶⁸ *Glamorgan Advertiser*, 9 March 1928, p. 5.

⁶⁶⁹ *Glamorgan Advertiser*, 11 March 1927, p. 6.

⁶⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

The words

ATGOF UWCH ANGOF

(Remembrance transcends forgetting.)

were inscribed on the plinth of the memorial, but, as the editorial suggested, the whole matter clearly left a bitter aftertaste in the community. It is also possible that the Cymmrodorion itself was not wholly satisfied with the text, as in December 1938 it reinstated the Mari Lwyd tradition in order to raise funds for a vase with a Welsh inscription to be placed at the foot of the memorial.⁶⁷¹

The campaigns to add inscriptions in Welsh to the memorials in Nelson, Newport, and Maesteg reveal interesting attitudes towards the Welsh language and the role of Welsh in commemoration, as well as providing an insight into the wider politics of remembrance. In all three towns, respect for the dead and for the bereaved was invoked on both sides of the debate, reminding us of the influence held by the fallen and the bereaved—and the *idea* of the fallen and the bereaved—in the interwar period: they could be, and were, used by different groups to legitimise their own viewpoints or agendas. Certainly, those against adding any further elements to the memorial inscription maintained that altering the monument, particularly after it had been dedicated and consecrated, would insult the dead and upset the bereaved, whereas those who argued for the inclusion of the Welsh language felt that a text in Welsh would honour

⁶⁷¹ *Western Mail*, 28 December 1938, p. 7. The Mari Lwyd is one of the most well-known Welsh folk customs. Associated with south Wales, and specifically Glamorgan, and performed around Christmastime, the tradition features a horse's skull, decorated with ribbons, rosettes, and a long veil, accompanied by a wassailing party. The Mari Lwyd party would visit each house in a village, singing and dancing, and engaging in a ritual called 'pwnco', an exchange of mischievous rhymes with the inhabitant. If the group won the pwnco they would be allowed to enter the house to share food and drink.

the fallen and comfort those relatives whose own acts of mourning and remembrance were conducted in Welsh.

It does seem that the people in these communities who lobbied for an additional Welsh inscription were acting from a genuine and altruistic desire to fully and appropriately commemorate the war dead. But there was also an expectation that a memorial in Wales should have an inscription in Welsh simply because it was located in Wales. It is reasonable to suggest, then, that the movements in Maesteg, Nelson, and Newport, and the commentators in Caernarfon and Llanrhystud, were motivated by the thought of language equality as much as by a feeling of respect for the dead and the bereaved.

This is perhaps obvious when considering the groups who led and supported these movements. The Cymmrodorion was active in protecting and promoting the Welsh language and culture, and it is natural that the society would want a war memorial located in Wales to bear the Welsh language. In Nelson and Newport, local politicians and newspaper editors initiated the campaigns, and were representing their Welsh-speaking constituents or readers (though there is, of course, a hint of self-serving behaviour about this as well). The Anglican and Nonconformist churches were active, too, lending their support to Sir Garrod Thomas in Newport and to the Cymmrodorion in Maesteg. In other words, these were intellectual, articulate, and influential groups, each with their own motives for advocating for the Welsh language. Although their requests were couched in rhetoric about honouring the war dead, it is clear that the politics surrounding the Welsh language at this time were also at play.

Another controversy over the exclusion of Welsh from a war memorial inscription illuminates this point even more clearly. In 1922, *Y Genedl Gymreig* and the *Western Mail* reported on the situation in Maentwrog, a village in Merionethshire. The war memorial, a Celtic cross carved from granite, includes a quotation from the Bible written in Welsh, but the core inscription is entirely in English. It was a strange decision for a village located in a predominantly Welsh-speaking area: indeed, most other memorials in the county are inscribed with Welsh only, or have full core inscriptions in both English and Welsh.

The correspondents writing for these two newspapers thought so, too, but instead of commenting on the need to honour the primary language of the deceased, or that of the bereaved families in the community, spoke of a “slur on the Welsh language”.⁶⁷² The *Western Mail* columnist, ‘Gwylledydd’, said:

Whether Wales wants Home Rule or not, there are indications in every part of the country that the Welsh language is coming to its own, and that in future it cannot with impunity be disregarded by men placed in positions of authority in Wales. The movement is helped by the idiotic action of thoughtless people, such, for instance, as that of a committee at Maentwrog, in the very heart of Welsh Wales, which placed an English inscription on a war memorial column to local heroes.⁶⁷³

Here is the accusation that the Welsh language had been disregarded and disrespected by those in positions of authority. Its exclusion would not only anger Welsh speakers in the area and further afield, the columnists argued, but would additionally bolster the Welsh Home Rule movement. Commemorating the dead of Maentwrog is almost irrelevant: this criticism is

⁶⁷² *Y Genedl Gymreig*, quoted in the *Western Mail*, 16 May 1922, p. 7.

⁶⁷³ *Western Mail*, 16 May 1922, p. 7.

purely focused on the use of the Welsh language, its status in twentieth-century Wales, and the political significance of its exclusion.

It could be suggested that all of this controversy was whipped up by a minority of Welsh nationalists, who were exploiting war remembrance for their own purposes and their own gain. Some political manoeuvring cannot be ruled out, but it does seem that the desire to have the Welsh language represented in commemoration was sincere, albeit for a number of different reasons. Moreover, a final example—the village of Llanbadarn Fawr in Cardiganshire—shows that it was not only a Welsh-speaking elite who were angered by the exclusion of Welsh on war memorials. The objections in Llanbadarn Fawr were led by a different group, but one no less influential: ex-servicemen.

The memorial in Llanbadarn Fawr was completed in December 1920. It took the form of a Celtic cross, and the inscriptions were written in English and Latin only. A meeting was held in the village and the discussion was relayed to the secretary of the war memorial committee:

I was instructed to inform your Committee that it is the unanimous wish of the public that an inscription in Welsh should be inserted by some means or other on the Memorial Cross before it is unveiled, and until this has been complied with the Exservicemen of Llanbadarn Fawr do not feel inclined to discuss any arrangements with regard to their attendance at the Unveiling Ceremony.⁶⁷⁴

Although the letter was acknowledged, no action was taken by the committee, and a further meeting was held in January 1921, just a few days before the memorial was due to be unveiled.

⁶⁷⁴ Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru / National Library of Wales, Minor Deposit 321: Llanbadarn Fawr War Memorial Committee papers. Letter from A. Griffiths to R. J. Greer, 9 December 1920.

Another letter sent to the committee made it very clear how strongly the community disapproved of the behaviour of the committee, and the fact that the question of language had not received “proper consideration”.⁶⁷⁵

The unveiling ceremony was held in “execrable weather” on 8 January 1921.⁶⁷⁶ Although the downpour of rain did not deter a sizeable crowd from attending the ceremony, the ex-servicemen were conspicuous by their absence, having decided to boycott the proceedings:

In connection with the memorial a meeting of ex-servicemen, held the previous week, expressed strong views because the inscription upon the memorial was in Latin and English with not a word of Welsh, and because a protest to this effect had not been dealt with in the way they wished, they decided to take no part in the ceremony, and although a large number was present they held aloof.⁶⁷⁷

During the ceremony itself, no “untoward incident” occurred, but afterwards “opinions were very freely expressed and some heated remarks were passed between some of the parties”.⁶⁷⁸

The “unpleasantness” continued for much of 1921, but a Welsh quotation was indeed later added, reading:

Y MAE EU HENW YN BYW BYTH

(Their name liveth for evermore.)⁶⁷⁹

⁶⁷⁵ Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru / National Library of Wales, Minor Deposit 321: Llanbadarn Fawr War Memorial Committee papers. Letter from Evan Jones to R. J. Greer, 7 January 1921.

⁶⁷⁶ *Welsh Gazette*, 13 January 1921, p. 8.

⁶⁷⁷ *Cambrian News*, 14 January 1921, p. 6.

⁶⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷⁹ Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru / National Library of Wales, Minor Deposit 321: Llanbadarn Fawr War Memorial Committee papers. Letter from G. T. Bassett to R. J. Greer, 8 December 1921.

The ex-servicemen of Llanbadarn Fawr went to great lengths to make their displeasure known. Clearly, the matter of language was very deeply felt. Their actions give us yet another example of how important the Welsh language was to some communities in Wales, but also provide another perspective on the issue. In some other areas, arguments for the inclusion of Welsh on war memorials had come primarily from civilians or civilian groups, and emphasis was placed on respect for the dead and consolation for the bereaved. The stance of the ex-servicemen in Llanbadarn Fawr, on the other hand, tells us how some Welshmen understood and remembered their war service, and how they wished to commemorate their comrades. There is the suggestion that the Welsh language and a Welsh identity were central to those who served, both during the war, and in the postwar world to which they had returned.

*

Controversies over the language(s) used in war memorial inscriptions were rare. It does seem, as Angela Gaffney points out, that it was a “natural reaction” to utilise both Welsh and English.⁶⁸⁰ This does not, however, prove that the Welsh language was an insignificant feature of the memorialisation process, as she also claims.⁶⁸¹ In fact, I would argue that it demonstrates the opposite: that it was not merely a formality to use the Welsh language, but a necessity. There was an acknowledgement of widespread bilingualism, albeit to differing degrees across the country. More broadly, there was a feeling that Welsh and English were of equal status, and ought to be used side by side in the commemoration of the dead. When the Welsh language was omitted from memorial inscriptions, it caused such lengthy and impassioned disputes

⁶⁸⁰ Gaffney, *Aftermath*, p. 151.

⁶⁸¹ *Ibid*, p. 133; 149.

because its use was not only about respecting the dead, but the language as well, and helping it to survive and flourish.

Crucially, the use of Welsh on war memorials allowed Welsh-speaking communities to commemorate their dead in their own way. The rest of this chapter will show that Welsh-language inscriptions were markedly different in tone to English-language inscriptions, pointing to the existence of two separate narratives about the war: one shared by Welsh speakers, those who spoke predominantly or purely Welsh, and whose upbringing, outlook, religion, and politics were distinctly Welsh, and one shared by English speakers, those whose primary language was English, and who had more in common with their counterparts in England. It may have been natural for Welsh to be used alongside English, but that does not mean it was used in the same way.

6.2 War memorial inscriptions

War memorials in Wales are distinguished by the widespread use of the Welsh language. It is perhaps surprising, considering that, by this time, English was regarded as and used as the language of public life and administration, as the language of government, business, law, and, to a large extent, education.⁶⁸² Welsh, on the other hand, had no official role, and was generally limited to everyday interaction and activities and the home.⁶⁸³ As Gwenllian Awbery observes, however, there was one crucial exception to this split between the role of English and Welsh within a community: “Welsh was overwhelmingly the language of religion, used for public worship and preaching in both Anglican churches and Nonconformist chapels”, and, as such, had been used for centuries in the commemoration of the dead.⁶⁸⁴ It was quite natural, then, for Welsh to be used alongside English in this new context of First World War commemoration. Furthermore, the previous section has shown that many Welsh people expected both languages to be used: firstly, to reflect the bilingualism of most communities in Wales, even if Welsh speakers were a minority within that community, and secondly, to honour the native language of the country, with the usage of Welsh in war commemoration, a public setting, connected to its survival.

Where English and Welsh appear together on the same memorials, questions arise over *how* the two languages are used. Is one language ‘dominant’, either in terms of volume or placement on the memorial? Do the languages perform separate roles? And are the sentiments expressed in Welsh different to those expressed in English?

⁶⁸² See Martin Johnes, *Welsh Not: Elementary Education and the Anglicisation of Nineteenth-Century Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2024), p. 7.

⁶⁸³ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁴ Awbery, ‘The Language of Remembrance’, p. 113.

A total of 509 memorials were included in this study and their inscriptions recorded, by using the War Memorials Register and other online resources, contemporary newspapers, and by performing fieldwork. 183 memorials have a core text in Welsh only, while 269 memorials have a core text in English only. The core texts of a further 35 memorials were inscribed in both Welsh and English. (Although many ‘Welsh-only’ and ‘English-only’ memorials do also have additional quotations in the other language, for the purposes of this study it is only the 35 memorials with a core text in both languages that have been categorised as bilingual.) There are, furthermore, 2 memorials that have inscriptions in Latin. The sample also includes 20 memorials whose original inscriptions are unknown, either where the inscription was non-existent originally, or where the text was changed to accommodate the Second World War and more recent conflicts and it has not been possible to determine the wording of that initial inscription.

During the process of analysis, the memorials with non-English or non-Welsh inscriptions and unknown inscriptions were removed from the sample. The memorials with bilingual inscriptions were counted twice: the Welsh portion of the text was analysed as a Welsh inscription, and the English text was included with other English-only inscriptions, therefore giving us a final sample of 218 Welsh inscriptions and 304 English inscriptions. These inscriptions were then broken down into individual components, and each component was categorised by wording or tone.

The following sections examine each element of a memorial inscription in turn—the dedicatory phrase, the people commemorated, the nature of their deaths, the cause for which they fought and died, and accompanying quotations. As a whole, this chapter reveals patterns and trends in

the use of commemorative texts and, most importantly, draws out subtle but significant variations in tone between the Welsh and English languages, indicating the existence of divergent narratives regarding war, and death in war, as well as differing experiences of bereavement.

6.2.1 Dedicatory phrase

The vast majority of the memorials studied for this section begin the core inscription with an introductory phrase, setting the tone for the remainder of the text. In English, the standard expressions are:

in memory of

to the memory of

Identical expressions exist in the Welsh language, namely:

er cof am

(in memory of)

er coffadwriaeth am

(in memory of)

These forms are typical of the established and conventional wording of monumental inscriptions, and are commonly seen on gravestones in churchyards and chapel burial grounds, as well as on other commemorative structures, such as memorials to peacetime tragedies or pre-1914 conflicts.

While it is not unusual for the phrases above to appear as they are on First World War memorials, many more memorial inscriptions use adjectives to modify and extend these simple dedications. Existing formulations were drawn upon, such as the following English expressions:

in loving memory of

in affectionate remembrance of

sacred to the memory of

and the similar Welsh expressions below:

er cof annwyl am

(in loving memory of)

er serchus gof am

(in loving memory of)

er cof cu am

(in dear memory of)

er parchus goffadwriaeth am

(in respectful remembrance of)

These again are well-established commemorative dedications, recognisable from family gravestones and other memorials, reflecting the widespread usage of traditional and familiar languages in the aftermath of the First World War. Certainly, ‘respectful remembrance’ is a very Victorian creation, but clearly found resonance in this new context.

In contrast, other memorial inscriptions supplement the plain dedicatory phrase with words fitting the context of war commemoration. English-language examples include:

in honoured memory of

in proud memory of

in grateful memory of

to the immortal memory of

to the glorious memory of

There are equivalent expressions in Welsh, such as:

i goffa anrhydeddus

(in honourable memory of)

er diolchus gof am

(in grateful memory of)

er bythol gof am

(in eternal memory of)

er cof parhaus am

(in everlasting memory of)

These forms articulate feelings of admiration and gratitude and make promises of eternal remembrance, and are therefore clearly innovations, devised specifically for use on war memorials.

A small number of memorial inscriptions combine the two contexts. In this case, the dedications may read:

in proud and loving memory of

in loving and grateful remembrance of

or:

o barch ac anrhydedd

(in respect and honour)

arwyddlun o serch ac edmygedd

(a symbol of love and admiration)

The fusion of traditional memorial texts and the phrases invented for war commemoration seems to address the dual identities of the war dead: individuals, the loved ones of families in the local community, but also servicemen and women, belonging to a wider, and somewhat anonymous, national community. These ‘combination’ phrases acknowledge private recollections and emotions, as well as a broader, collective memory.

One memorial, commemorating the members of Capel Ebeneser, Holyhead, begins its inscription quite differently.⁶⁸⁵ The dedicatory phrase used is:

er cof hiraethus

(in longing memory)

⁶⁸⁵ War Memorials Register 60613: Capel Ebeneser, Holyhead, Anglesey.

This expression is not ordinarily found on family gravestones, and so appears to be another creation of the interwar period, but the feelings of longing and sorrow conveyed by the word ‘hiraethus’ are at odds to the pride and honour expressed through the other newer dedications. Catherine Moriarty has suggested that “the loss of a loved one was to be viewed as a glorious and meaningful sacrifice rather than a painful, pointless loss”, explaining the absence of phrases such as ‘regretful memory’ and ‘broken-hearted memory’.⁶⁸⁶ This inscription, however, shows that there *was* space in war commemoration for less upbeat sentiments: feelings of anguish were not marginalised or silenced, but could resonate with a community to the point that they were engraved in stone. Although it is the only instance of such a phrase within the sample of memorials studied, it is important in highlighting the flexibility of commemoration in its ability to accommodate such a range of emotions.

In short, then, we can see that the same introductory phrases exist in both the English and Welsh languages, whether these are traditional formulations, the wording familiar from family gravestones, or new creations, composed to fit the context of war commemoration. The crucial point is, however, that the proportion of each type used differs between the two languages.

⁶⁸⁶ Moriarty, ‘Private Grief and Public Remembrance’, p. 137.

Type of phrase	Use on memorials with inscriptions in Welsh (%)	Use on memorials with inscriptions in English (%)
Plain	32.1	24.7
Traditional	36.2	11.5
War context	7.8	43.4
Both	0.9	3.3
Other	0.5	0.0
None	22.5	17.1

Table 6.1: The introductory phrase.

The table above shows that memorials with inscriptions in Welsh favour the plain and traditional dedicatory phrases. 32.1 percent use the simple ‘er cof am’ form, and 36.2 percent are inscribed with expressions such as ‘er cof annwyl am’ and ‘er serchus gof am’ which are typically found on gravestones. Over two thirds of all memorials with Welsh inscriptions studied therefore employ these conventional dedications. In contrast, just 17 memorials use a phrase fitting the context of war commemoration, such as ‘er diolchus gof am’ and ‘er bythol gof am’, amounting to less than 8 percent of all memorials with Welsh inscriptions.

For memorials with inscriptions in English, the reverse is true. Phrases conveying pride, gratitude, and everlasting honour, such as ‘in proud memory of’ and ‘to the glorious memory of’, appear on 132 memorials, constituting 43.4 percent of all memorials with English inscriptions included in the sample. The plain and traditional dedicatory phrases, including ‘in memory of’ and ‘in affectionate remembrance of’, account for 24.7 percent and 11.5 percent respectively, much smaller proportions than their Welsh-language equivalents.

*

It is important to note that these differences remain even when Welsh and English are used on the same memorial. Several memorials across the country are inscribed with core texts in both languages which are not, in fact, direct translations of each other. The memorial in the city of Bangor, Caernarfonshire, is inscribed:

TO GOD’S GLORY
AND IN GRATEFUL MEMORY
OF OUR FELLOW CITIZENS WHO
FELL IN THE GREAT WAR
1914—1918

*

ER GOGONIAN T DUW
AC ER COF ANWYLAF AM EIN
CYD-DDINASYDDION A GWYMPODD
YN Y RHYFEL MAWR
1914—1918

(To the glory of God and in loving memory of our fellow citizens who fell in the Great War, 1914—
1918.)⁶⁸⁷

The word ‘grateful’ in the English portion of the text is replaced by the word ‘anwylaf’ (‘loving’) in the Welsh section of the inscription. A similar substitution occurs in the inscription on the cenotaph in Barry, Glamorgan:

IN PROUD MEMORY
OF THE MEN OF BARRY
WHO FELL IN THE GREAT WAR
1914—1918

⁶⁸⁷ War Memorials Register 6999: Bangor, Caernarfonshire.

*
 ER COF ANNWYL
 AM FEIBION Y BARRI
 A SYRTHIODD YN Y RHYFEL
 1914—1918
 *
 FOR FREEDOM
 DROS RYDDID

(In loving memory of the sons of Barry who fell in the 1914—1918 War / For freedom.)⁶⁸⁸

Here, the word ‘proud’ is changed to ‘annwyl’ (‘loving’). Note also that the word ‘men’ is replaced by the word ‘meibion’ (‘sons’), another intriguing feature of Welsh-language inscriptions which will be explored in section 6.2.2.

At other times, the Welsh portion of the inscription simply omits any additional adjectives. This is the case on the memorial in Llanfyllin, Montgomeryshire, a Celtic cross unveiled in 1920:

CODWYD Y MAEN
 HWN ER CÔF AM
 Y BECHGYN A SYRTHIODD
 YN Y
 RHYFEL MAWR,
 1914—1919.
 “EU CYRFF A GLADDWYD MEWN HEDDWCH, AC
 Y MAE EU HENW YN BYW BYTH.”

*
 THIS CROSS
 WAS ERECTED BY THE INHABITANTS
 OF THE BOROUGH OF LLANFYLLIN

⁶⁸⁸ War Memorials Register 17700: Barry Cenotaph, Glamorgan.

IN GRATEFUL AND AFFECTIONATE MEMORY
OF THOSE BRAVE MEN FROM THIS BOROUGH
WHO DIED FOR THEIR COUNTRY IN THE
GREAT WAR, 1914—1919.

(This monument was raised in memory of the boys who fell in the Great War, 1914—1919 / “Their bodies are buried in peace, but their name liveth for evermore.”)⁶⁸⁹

The Welsh text is, in the absence of the words ‘grateful and affectionate’, much more restrained, an effect heightened by other changes in the wording, such as the replacement of ‘brave men’ for ‘bechgyn’ (‘boys’), and the absence of the patriotic note struck in the English text through the words ‘died for their country’.

Substituted words or phrases omitting certain adjectives can also be observed on the memorial in Bwlchgwyn, Denbighshire, on the plaque in Capel Gad in Cilcain, Flintshire, and on the wooden board commemorating those of the parish of St Thomas’ Church in Neath, Glamorgan.⁶⁹⁰ Why are the Welsh and English inscriptions on these memorials not exact translations of each other? As we have seen elsewhere in this section, the Welsh language *does* have the same words and phrases as the English language, and these *are* indeed used on some memorials. These bilingual memorials are therefore not simply employing approximate translations, but are deliberately replacing one sentiment with another, and thus reflecting and provoking different emotions and perceptions depending on language ability and, by extension, cultural background.

⁶⁸⁹ War Memorials Register 17405: Llanfyllin, Montgomeryshire.

⁶⁹⁰ War Memorials Register 9044: Bwlchgwyn, Denbighshire; 83126: Capel Gad, Cilcain, Flintshire; 65449: St Thomas’ Parish, Neath, Glamorgan.

Dedicatory phrases describe the emotions that motivated a community to embark upon a war memorial project and commemorate their dead—whether this was out of love, pride, or gratitude—but these words also shape the ways in which those named on the memorial were to be remembered.

Inscriptions in English use introductory phrases that emphasise feelings of pride and gratitude and the concepts of honour and glory, suggesting that the English-speaking population viewed the war dead in their military role, and their service and sacrifice on the battlefield were to be admired and celebrated. In stark contrast, the Welsh inscriptions tend to follow the wording of family gravestones, which use forms that speak of love, affection, and respect. This suggests that the Welsh-speaking demographic remembered the war dead primarily, perhaps entirely, as family members and friends, belonging to a local community. Feelings of grief and the painful experience of bereavement are a little closer to the surface here.

The variation in wording of the dedicatory phrase is reflective of contradictory perspectives amongst English speakers and Welsh speakers. These subtle but important differences continue into the subsequent elements of war memorial inscriptions.

6.2.2 The people commemorated

The second element of the core inscription names those who are being commemorated. Again, there are several choices available in either language, which range from muted, neutral forms to evocative descriptions, and provide a precise insight into how a community viewed the war dead and those who served.

A small number of memorials simply list the men and women being remembered by name, resulting in inscriptions that are similar to the following example, taken from the memorial in Tremeirchion, Flintshire, a Celtic cross unveiled in 1921:

1914—1918
TO THE GLORY OF GOD
AND IN PROUD MEMORY OF
[List of names]
THEIR NAME LIVETH FOR EVERMORE
ANGAU A LYNGCWYD MEWN BUDDUGOLIAETH
(Death is swallowed up in victory.)⁶⁹¹

Most other memorial inscriptions, however, use some kind of descriptor to refer to those who are being commemorated. This may be a rather general form, such as:

those

the following

or:

⁶⁹¹ War Memorials Register 49772: Tremeirchion, Flintshire.

<i>y rhai</i>	<i>(those)</i>
<i>y rhai a enwir isod</i>	<i>(those named below)</i>
<i>y canlynol</i>	<i>(the following)</i>
<i>yr uchod</i>	<i>(the above)</i>

These forms are vague but inclusive, allowing the text to commemorate any number of groups from the community (both men and women, for example) without taking up valuable space on the memorial by describing them fully. It may be that the war memorial committees and members of the public that chose these phrases were limited by the dimensions of the memorial or the funds at their disposal for inscribing the letters.

At other times, the phrasing may be very specific. Memorials erected by a school, a workplace, a club, or a church or chapel almost invariably depict those commemorated as members of that small community. It is not as usual to find a city or town memorial using expressions such as ‘citizen’ or ‘inhabitant’, but amongst the sample studied for this chapter there are a few scattered examples. The following expressions can be seen on memorials with inscriptions in English:

employees of the Oakeley Slate Quarries Co. Ltd.

all our employees

the members of this church

the beloved members of this church and congregation

the undermentioned members of the Penarth Yacht Club

our fellow citizens

those habitants and indwellers of the parish of Chirk

There are similar expressions in Welsh, such as:

gyn-ysgolion yr ysgol hon (former pupils of this school)

aelodau o'r eglwys hon (members of this church)

y personau ganlynol perthynol i'r eglwys hon (the following persons belonging to this church)

ein hannwyl frodyr (our dear brothers)

ein cyd-ddinasyddion (our fellow citizens)

These nouns highlight the contribution and sacrifice of the particular group that established the memorial, but, more significantly, make a claim to the identity of the war dead by foregrounding their role as employees, or members of a church, or former pupils, or citizens of the local community. It is important to remember that individuals could be—and usually were—named at a number of locations, and were, of course, commemorated through different means in more personal terms by their families, as previous chapters have shown. In this way, an individual was “fragmented” into the multitude of roles they had held in life, each of which was regarded as most important by the person or group that labelled them as such.⁶⁹² The nouns listed above, with their sense of possessiveness, therefore reveal competing claims for ownership of the war dead, and remind us that commemoration was shaped by complex local politics and tensions between the private and the public.

⁶⁹² King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain*, p. 219.

There is no great difference between the English and Welsh languages in the usage of the phrases explored above. Memorials listing the dead by name only, with no other description, account for 15.8 percent of the memorials with English inscriptions included in this study, and 16.5 percent of the memorials with Welsh inscriptions. Neutral forms of naming can be found on 10.5 percent of memorials with inscriptions in English, and 10.6 percent of memorials with inscriptions in Welsh. Likewise, memorial inscriptions using nouns signifying membership of a particular group constitute 11.5 percent of memorials with English inscriptions, and 11.5 percent of memorials with Welsh inscriptions.

We can see, then, that similar proportions of English-language inscriptions and Welsh-language inscriptions employed the previous forms of naming. In these cases, there is no discrepancy between the languages. There is, however, considerable divergence between English and Welsh where phrases referring to the age of the fallen are used.

In English, nouns depicting the war dead as grown men and women appear frequently.

the men of this parish

the men of Tregaron and district

the men of our county

the men and women of Merthyr Tydfil

Other phrases pointing explicitly to the military identity of the dead are also seen on many memorials. These include:

soldiers connected with this parish

our brave and noble soldiers and sailors

officers and men

nurses and officers and men

At the far end of the scale are more evocative descriptions, such as:

the brave men of this parish

our gallant dead

the brave connected with this church

our glorious dead

the heroic dead

the fallen heroes

These phrases call to mind a vision of martial masculinity and emphasise the qualities of heroism, gallantry, and nobility, thereby reinforcing the dominant interpretation of the war and the popular depiction of those fighting it.

The language used here is reminiscent of military memorials, whether in Wales (or Britain as a whole) or on the former battlefields. A cenotaph commemorating the men of the Welsh Regiment, located at Maindy Barracks in the Cathays area of Cardiff, Glamorgan, is inscribed with the words ‘our gallant comrades’ and the Welsh translation ‘ein cydfilwyr dewr’, while the battle exploit memorial to the South Wales Borderers in Geluveld (formerly Gheluvelt), Belgium, uses the phrase ‘officers and men’, to give just two examples. These descriptions are a natural choice for regimental or battle exploit memorials, commemorating men in their military identity and for their military service, but for civic memorials, with a greater array of

phrases to choose from, this wording seems to be the result of a more conscious decision to portray the dead in their military identity and to extol the qualities of gallantry and heroism.

The Welsh language does have equivalent words for the expressions outlined above, and these may be found as part of a number of inscriptions on memorials across the country. Some forms are fairly restrained in tone, such as:

<i>y gwŷr o'r lle hwn</i>	<i>(the men of this place)</i>
<i>wyr yr ardal hon</i>	<i>(men of this district)</i>
<i>ddynion Gwauncaegurwen</i>	<i>(the men of Gwauncaegurwen)</i>

Alternatively, the dead may be depicted in their military roles.

<i>y milwyr ganlynol</i>	<i>(the following soldiers)</i>
<i>ein milwyr a'n morwyr</i>	<i>(our soldiers and sailors)</i>

More descriptive forms are also used, mirroring the English phrases previously listed.

<i>arwyr ein hardal</i>	<i>(heroes of our district)</i>
<i>y dewrion</i>	<i>(the heroes)</i>
<i>ei glewion</i>	<i>(our valiant ones)</i>
<i>gwrniaid plwyf Cellan</i>	<i>(heroes of Cellan parish)</i>
<i>ein meirw gogoneddus</i>	<i>(our glorious dead)</i>

While these words do, clearly, exist in the Welsh language, and do appear as part of First World War memorial inscriptions, they are far less common than forms emphasising the youth of

those who served and died. Memorials with Welsh language inscriptions are more likely to use one of the following expressions:

<i>y bechgyn</i>	<i>(the lads)</i>
<i>y bechgyn annwyl</i>	<i>(the beloved lads)</i>
<i>fechgyn o'r eglwys hon</i>	<i>(lads of this church)</i>
<i>ei meibion</i>	<i>(our sons)</i>
<i>y meibion o'r ardal hon</i>	<i>(the sons of this district)</i>
<i>feibion Cymru</i>	<i>(sons of Wales)</i>
<i>ei hannwylle blant</i>	<i>(our beloved children)</i>
<i>plant yr eglwys hon</i>	<i>(children of this church)</i>
<i>y gwyŷr ieuaing</i>	<i>(the young men)</i>

All of these phrases portray the dead as youths, no matter their actual ages, perhaps pointing to their unsuitability for war and the tragedy of their untimely deaths. Furthermore, by using terms relating to specific family relationships—‘meibion’ (‘sons’) and ‘plant’ (‘children’)—the inscriptions reflect the dynamics of a closely-connected community and convey the grief of that community at the deaths of their loved ones. These are devices used consistently elsewhere in Welsh-language commemoration, as we have seen in Chapter 5, and are indeed a feature of colloquial Welsh. It demonstrates, at the very least, the distinct Welsh nature of commemoration in Wales, but also suggests a reluctance to give the dead over to the military identity and to engage with popular rhetoric about the war and those who served and died during it.

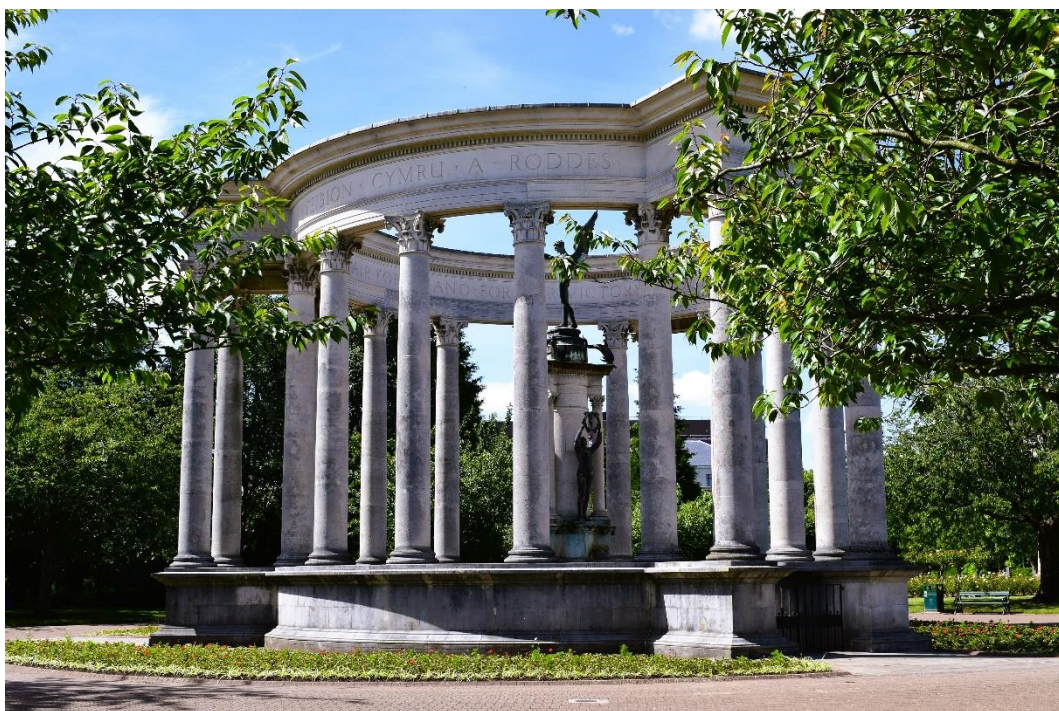


Figure 6.2: A portion of the inscription on the Welsh National War Memorial, Cathays Park, Cardiff, showing the words ‘feibion Cymru’. © Author.

There are a small number of memorials with inscriptions in English that use phrases emphasising the youth of those commemorated, such as:

the boys from this parish

the undermentioned young men

The word ‘sons’ is included in the English inscription on the North Wales Heroes Memorial Arch, Bangor, to give:

IN MEMORY OF THE HEROIC
SONS OF GWYNEDD & POWYS.⁶⁹³

⁶⁹³ War Memorials Register 17390: North Wales Heroes Memorial Arch, Bangor, Caernarfonshire.

Other uses of the words ‘son’ or ‘sons’, however, appear on memorials erected by the parents of those commemorated, and thus literally refers to their son or sons. Altogether, memorials with inscriptions in English make little use of these formulations: just 7 of the 304 memorials with English inscriptions recorded in this study are inscribed with ‘boys’, ‘sons’, or ‘young men’, compared to 73 of 218 memorials with inscriptions in Welsh that use the equivalent Welsh-language words.

Again, we can see that the same formulations for naming those commemorated are available in each language, but, again, these phrases are used very differently.

Type of phrase	Use on memorials with inscriptions in Welsh (%)	Use on memorials with inscriptions in English (%)
Young people	33.5	2.3
Adults	5.0	41.5
Heroes/ military	20.1	15.8
Neutral	10.6	10.5
Other	11.5	11.5
By name only	16.5	15.8
None	2.8	2.6

Table 6.2: Descriptions of those commemorated.

The table above shows that a greater proportion of memorials with Welsh inscriptions depict the war dead as young people. Forms such as ‘bechgyn’, ‘meibion’, or ‘gwŷr ieuainc’ are inscribed on 73 memorials across the country, making up 33.5 percent of the 218 memorials

that have core texts in Welsh. In contrast, the equivalent English expressions ‘boys’, ‘sons’, and ‘young men’ appear just 7 times, a mere 2.3 percent of the total number of memorials with English inscriptions.

These figures are reversed when looking at the usage of descriptive phrases portraying the war dead as adults. The words ‘gwŷr’ or ‘dynion’ can be found in only 11 locations, constituting 5.0 percent of the total number of memorials with inscriptions in Welsh. Amongst the body of memorials with English inscriptions, however, forms such as ‘men’ or ‘men and women’ are well-represented: 126 memorials, accounting for 41.5 percent of the total, are inscribed with these expressions.

Interestingly, a slightly higher percentage of Welsh inscriptions contain phrases which highlight the heroism of the dead, such as ‘arwyr’, ‘dewrion’, and ‘gwroniaid’. These account for 20.1 percent of the total number of memorials with Welsh inscriptions. On closer examination, however, it is clear that this figure is skewed by a disproportionate number of memorials located in Anglesey which use these phrases.

Type of phrase	Use on memorials with inscriptions in Welsh (%)	Use on memorials with inscriptions in English (%)
Young people	14.7	0.0
Adults	2.9	12.5
Heroes/ military	41.2	12.5
Neutral	11.8	25.0
Other	17.6	12.5
By name only	11.8	37.5
None	0.0	0.0

Table 6.3: Descriptions of those commemorated (Anglesey only).

Over a quarter of the total number of memorials with inscriptions in Welsh using forms such as ‘dewrion’ or ‘arwyr’ are found in Anglesey. The figures for other individual counties, however, are more representative of the country as a whole, as shown by the examples below.

Type of phrase	Use on memorials with inscriptions in Welsh (%)	Use on memorials with inscriptions in English (%)
Young people	38.9	2.5
Adults	16.6	33.8
Heroes/ military	11.1	15.0
Neutral	5.6	10.0
Other	16.6	25.0
By name only	5.6	10.0
None	5.6	3.7

Table 6.4: Descriptions of those commemorated (Glamorgan only).

Type of phrase	Use on memorials with inscriptions in Welsh (%)	Use on memorials with inscriptions in English (%)
Young people	41.7	0.0
Adults	0.0	41.2
Heroes/ military	16.7	23.5
Neutral	16.7	11.8
Other	5.6	5.9
By name only	19.4	11.8
None	0.0	5.9

Table 6.5: Descriptions of those commemorated (Cardiganshire only).

Why does the county of Anglesey have such a high proportion of memorials with Welsh inscriptions describing the dead as heroes? It may reflect a strong martial tradition in this area of Wales stretching back through the centuries, and thus the feeling that the dead of the First

World War were following in the footsteps of the warriors of old. It may also be a consequence of the more recent influence of figures such as John Williams, Brynsiencyn, and Thomas Charles Williams of Menai Bridge, who were persuaded by their close friend David Lloyd George of the righteousness of the cause, and who used their considerable popularity, status, and preaching ability to recruit Welshmen from north-west Wales into the armed forces.⁶⁹⁴ The appointment of Brigadier-General Sir Owen Thomas, another Anglesey man, a Congregationalist and a Welsh speaker, to the 38th Welsh Division also dispelled pacifist qualms and reinforced the appeal of voluntary enlistment.⁶⁹⁵ Even though the war fervour of 1914 and 1915 had long cooled by the interwar period, it seems that the rhetoric used by these men and others had a lasting impact: doubts and disillusionment over the war itself may have set in, but the perception of fighting men as heroes, by the people of Anglesey, at least, was still unquestioned.

*

As a whole, however, the statistics show that English-language inscriptions are more likely to depict the war dead as adults, while Welsh-language inscriptions, on the other hand, stress their youth. The words ‘plant’, ‘meibion’, and, in particular, ‘bechgyn’ are incredibly powerful, suggesting that the dead were innocents and that they died too soon.

⁶⁹⁴ For more information on their involvement in the recruitment process, see Densil Morgan, *The Span of the Cross*, pp. 43-46.

⁶⁹⁵ See Kenneth Morgan, *Rebirth of a Nation: Wales, 1880—1980* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 160-161; Hughes, “*T’r Fyddin Fechgyn Gwalia!*”.

Paul Fussell makes some interesting observations about the word ‘lad’ in his seminal work *The Great War and Modern Memory*. Like many subjects he explores throughout the book, he argues that in the writing of the Edwardian period and the First World War the word ‘lad’ carries a specifically homoerotic connotation. “As *men* grow more attractive, they are seen as *boys*,” he writes, “until finally, when conceived as potential lovers, they turn into *lads*.”⁶⁹⁶ Is this the case here? It seems unlikely. The wording of Welsh-language memorial inscriptions is almost certainly reflective of parental and familial love, and affection and familiarity between the members of a community, rather than sexual attraction.

More broadly, however, the word ‘lad’ could also be shorthand for a “beautiful brave doomed boy”.⁶⁹⁷ The lads that populate the poems and memoirs of the First World War, and, before that, the writings of Housman or Forster, for example, are fated to suffer wounds or to die, and their death or mutilation is made more tragic by the emphasis placed on their youth and their youthful health and strength. It is this interpretation that is useful to bear in mind here. The description of the war dead as youths in memorial texts is incredibly poignant, pointing to their unsuitability for war and the tragedy of their untimely deaths, and prompting passers-by to remember them not as soldiers, but as the children of a community family, as the young people they looked after and watched grow up.

In the absence of any war memorial committee documents which explicitly describe the process of choosing a memorial inscription, it is hard to tell whether the use of this colloquial and familiar language, with its connotation of tragedy, was done for dramatic effect, or whether it

⁶⁹⁶ Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 307. Italics original.

⁶⁹⁷ Ibid, p. 306.

was a natural choice for a close-knit community and a language which uses these terms regardless of age. Either way, a conscious decision was made to use these forms, and it is endlessly fascinating that they appear inscribed almost entirely in the Welsh language.

*

Differing descriptions of those commemorated are used even on memorials with inscriptions in both English and Welsh. The memorial in Clocaenog, Denbighshire, for instance, is inscribed:

IN ABIDING MEMORY OF
THE MEN FROM THIS PARISH AND DISTRICT
WHO FELL IN THE GREAT WAR
1914—1919
“LEST WE FORGET.”

*

ER COF PARHAUS AM
Y BECHGYN O’R PLWYF A’R ARDAL
A SYRTHIASANT YN Y RHYFEL MAWR
1914—1919
“DROS RYDDID GOLLASANT EU GWAED.”

(In everlasting memory of the lads of this parish and district who fell in the Great War, 1914—1919 /

“For freedom they shed their blood.”)⁶⁹⁸

The word ‘men’ in the English section of the inscription is replaced by the word ‘bechgyn’ (‘lads’) in the Welsh portion of the text. A similar substitution occurs in the inscription on the

⁶⁹⁸ War Memorials Register 38133: Clocaenog, Denbighshire.

Celtic cross commemorating the dead of the parishes of Granston and St Nicholas in Pembrokeshire:

IN MEMORY OF THE
MEN FROM THE PARISHES OF
GRANDSTON AND ST NICHOLAS
WHO IN THE GREAT WAR
1914—1919,
FELL IN THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM
*
ER COF AM Y BECHGYN O BLWYFI
TREMARCHOG A THREOPERT
A SYRTHIODD YN Y RHYFEL MAWR
1914—1919,
DROS RYDDID A GWLAD
GWELL ANGAU NA CHYWILYDD

(In memory of the lads of the parishes of St Nicholas and Granston who fell in the Great War, 1914—
1919, for freedom and country / Better death than dishonour.)⁶⁹⁹

Again, the two parts of the inscription are identical, except that the word ‘men’ is replaced by ‘bechgyn’. The substitution of ‘men’ for ‘bechgyn’ can also be observed on the Celtic cross in Llanfyllin, Montgomeryshire, and on the memorial hall in Tregaron, Cardiganshire.⁷⁰⁰

It was not only villages that made these substitutions. Memorials in larger towns, where we might have expected more scrutiny, similarly feature bilingual inscriptions which are not direct translations of each other. The cenotaph commemorating the dead of Flint and Oakenholt, Flintshire, was unveiled in 1926 and reads:

⁶⁹⁹ War Memorials Register 60300: Granston & St Nicholas, Pembrokeshire.

⁷⁰⁰ War Memorials Register 17405: Llanfyllin, Montgomeryshire; 6917: Tregaron Memorial Hall, Ceredigion.

THE GLORIOUS DEAD

1914 1918

*

IN MEMORY OF THE MEN OF FLINT AND
OAKENHOLT WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES FOR
THEIR COUNTRY IN THE GREAT WAR

*

ER COF AM Y MEIBION A RODDODD EU BYWYD
DROS EU GWLAD YN Y RHYFEL MAWR

*

THEIR NAME LIVETH FOR EVERMORE
MEWN ANGOF NI CHANT FOD

(In memory of the sons who gave their lives for their country in the Great War / They shall not remain
in oblivion.)⁷⁰¹

As shown in the previous section, the cenotaph in Barry—another large town—also replaces the word ‘men’ with ‘meibion’ (‘sons’), so that the English inscription depicts the war dead as adults and the Welsh text emphasises their youth. Other examples of the substitution of ‘men’ for ‘meibion’ can be found on the memorial in Bwlchgwyn, Denbighshire, and the memorial in Llanelidan, also in Denbighshire.⁷⁰²

At other times, the Welsh portion of the inscription simply uses a neutral form of naming. This is the case on the memorial in Llanboidy, Carmarthenshire:

OUR GLORIOUS DEAD

1914—1918.

*

LEST WE FORGET

⁷⁰¹ War Memorials Register 17765: Flint & Oakenholt, Flintshire.

⁷⁰² War Memorials Register 9044: Bwlchgwyn, Denbighshire; 102064: Llanelidan, Denbighshire.

THESE BRAVE MEN DIED THAT
WE MAY LIVE IN FREEDOM.
BUONT FEIRW ER DIOGELU
EIN RHYDDID.

(They died to protect our freedom.)⁷⁰³

Here, the phrase ‘these brave men died’ is replaced by the general form ‘buont feirw’ (‘they died’), giving the Welsh text a muted, restrained tone.

Most of the time, however, the bilingual memorial inscriptions which do alter the translations will use an English word relating to adulthood and a Welsh word relating to youth. Perhaps the most striking example is found on the memorial commemorating the dead of Peniel Independent Chapel, located in Peniel, Carmarthenshire, where the word ‘heroes’ in English is replaced by the word ‘plant’ (‘children’) in Welsh.⁷⁰⁴

This section has shown elsewhere that the same words and phrases are available in both the English and Welsh languages, and that the Welsh words for ‘men’ or ‘heroes’ do appear on some memorials. Why, then, in the examples given above, are these words *not* used? Why would the texts be altered in this very specific way, instead of being identical translations of each other? The wording conforms to the patterns observed across the whole of Wales, in which English language inscriptions portray the dead as adults and belonging to the military, and the Welsh language depicts the dead as youths and members of a community family. It demonstrates not only that English speakers and Welsh speakers held differing views of the

⁷⁰³ War Memorials Register 56913: Llanboidy, Carmarthenshire.

⁷⁰⁴ War Memorials Register 56957: Peniel Independent Chapel, Peniel, Carmarthenshire.

war dead, but also that these perceptions were widespread and so deeply ingrained that they could be inscribed even on the same memorial.

*

There is also a noticeable difference in the type of biographical information accompanying the names inscribed on monolingual war memorials. Memorials inscribed with the English language only—more commonly found in what we might call the Anglicised areas of Wales, namely, the counties of the south and east of the country—tend to supplement the names with rank, regiment, and military decorations. In fact, 84 percent of memorials with English-only inscriptions that include additional information add these military details to the names listed on the memorial. This trend implies that the military identity of the Welsh war dead was more important to the English-speaking and Anglicised population of Wales.

In contrast, the names on memorials with Welsh-only inscriptions are more likely to be followed by an address. Addresses appear on just under half—47 percent—of the memorials with inscriptions in Welsh only that include additional details. The use of house or farm names firmly grounded the people commemorated within the community and, by doing so, impressed upon those passing by the memorial the loss of people they had known, grown up with, and loved. It was not only the dead that were brought into focus by the use of addresses, but the bereaved as well: the name of the house indicated who in the community was grieving a death and required support. (One memorial, a stone tablet located in Hen Gapel, Maenclochog, Pembrokeshire, actually gives the names of the parents of the deceased as well as the name of

the family home.⁷⁰⁵) We can also make a connection between this trend and the frequent naming of home addresses in Welsh-language headstone inscriptions, explored in the previous chapter. There is a sense of possessiveness: the bereaved reclaiming the dead from their military identity and the context of their death.

It should be noted that these patterns are not an exact rule. There are a small number of memorials with English inscriptions that use home addresses, comprising 5 percent of the total, just as there are memorials with Welsh inscriptions that include military information, numbering 29 percent of the total. Furthermore, 11 percent of memorials with inscriptions in English and 24 percent of memorials with Welsh inscriptions include both types of information: the name is accompanied by rank, regiment, and address. Nonetheless, the patterns are noticeable enough to suggest, once again, contradictions between the memory of the war and the war dead shared by English speakers, and that shared by Welsh speakers.

*

War memorials in Wales articulate two different perceptions of the war dead depending on the language of the inscription. In the English language, deceased individuals were commemorated as men and women, soldiers, or heroes, while in the Welsh language, comprehensible only to the Welsh-speaking population, the war dead were remembered as young people, and as members of a family and community. Further differences are noticeable in subsequent components of war memorial inscriptions.

⁷⁰⁵ War Memorials Register 6938: Hen Gapel, Maenclochog, Pembrokeshire.

6.2.3 The nature of their deaths

Next in the core inscription comes a phrase describing the way in which those commemorated on the memorial died. Simple, restrained formulations are used frequently in both languages, and can be found on memorials in every county across Wales. In English, these include:

who fell

who lost their lives

who died

The Welsh language has identical expressions derived from the verbs ‘syrthio’ and ‘cwymbo’ (‘to fall’), ‘colli’ (‘to lose’), or ‘marw’ (‘to die’), namely:

a syrthiodd / syrthiasant

(who fell)

a gwypodd / gwypasant

(who fell)⁷⁰⁶

a gollodd / gollasant eu bywydau

(who lost their lives)

a fu farw

(who died)

All of these phrases are rather matter-of-fact, stating quite plainly what happened to the individuals commemorated on the memorial. No overt reference to the war is made, however: ‘died’ and ‘bu farw’ are typical of the conventional wording of family gravestones, while ‘who lost their lives’ and ‘a gollasant eu bywydau’ might appear as part of the press coverage or commemoration of a peacetime industrial or maritime disaster, for example. Indeed, the phrase ‘a gollasant eu bywydau’ was used in several newspapers describing the disastrous explosion at the Universal Colliery in Senghenydd, near Caerphilly, in October 1913.

⁷⁰⁶ Translation note: the Welsh language has considerable regional variation, and many different words with the same meaning exist. In this case, the verb ‘syrthio’ is used predominantly in the north of the country, while ‘cwymbo’ is typically heard in the south and west of Wales. The two verb endings *-odd* and *-asant* are a result of different conjugations of the verb.

The phrases ‘who fell’ and ‘a syrthiodd’ or ‘a gwympodd’ are the exception, having been used as euphemistic descriptions of death in battle on memorials to the Napoleonic Wars, Crimean War, and Boer War. Overall, though, these expressions are all fairly neutral: there are no allusions to great heroism and sacrifice but equally there is no sense of great tragedy.

Other expressions paint a different picture. These forms use more active verbs, such as ‘to give’ or ‘to sacrifice’ in English, and ‘rhoi’ (‘to give’) or ‘aberth’ (‘sacrifice’) in Welsh, portraying the deaths of those commemorated as a willing act. The following phrases often appear on memorials with inscriptions in English:

who gave their lives

who proudly gave their lives

who sacrificed their lives

who made the supreme sacrifice

who laid down their lives

Similar expressions can be found on memorials with inscriptions in Welsh:

a roddasant eu bywydau

(who gave their lives)

a roddasant eu bywydau yn aberth

(who gave their lives in sacrifice)

a aberthodd eu bywydau

(who sacrificed their lives)

Here, death is presented as an action that those named on the memorial consciously and readily undertook: their lives were not lost, but *given*. Whoever passes by the memorial is told that these people were active participants in their own deaths. Furthermore, the wording—particularly the use of ‘sacrifice’ and ‘aberth’—alludes to a great and noble cause, and suggests

that death in war was some kind of moral achievement. These forms therefore stand in stark contrast to the more neutral phrases explored above, being unique to the context of First World War commemoration.

At the other end of the scale exist formulations that describe the deaths of those commemorated with no sense of pride or glory at all. It is important to note that these forms can only be found on the memorials with inscriptions in Welsh included in this study. Such expressions include:

a gollwyd

(who were lost)

aethant yn aberth

(who went as a sacrifice)

aethant yn ebyrth

(who went as sacrifices)

The choice of verbs and the wording here is intriguing. These phrases contradict the typical rhetoric of First World War commemoration by portraying the dead in a passive, even unwilling, role: they did not sacrifice their own lives, they *were* sacrificed. Any sense of a deliberate choice is absent, with the ultimate effect that agency is removed from those commemorated even in their own deaths.



Figure 6.3: The memorial at Beddgelert, which describes those named as 'gollywd'. © Author.

A small number of memorial inscriptions blend the neutral and active expressions. These forms are only found amongst the memorials with inscriptions in English studied for this chapter, and include the following:

who fell in action

who fought and died

killed in action

who were killed in action or died of wounds

Although these phrases contain the more restrained verbs ‘died’, ‘killed’, and ‘fell’, there is nonetheless a reference to the specific circumstances in which those commemorated lost their lives by emphasising that they fought or were in action. Interestingly, while the expression ‘who fought and died’ appears on several civic memorials, such as those in Carew (Caeriw) in Pembrokeshire, St Asaph (Llanelwy), Flintshire, and Barmouth (Abermaw) in Merionethshire, the more military terms ‘fell in action’ and ‘killed in action’ tend to appear on memorials to individuals.⁷⁰⁷

Take, for example, the tablet commemorating Lieutenant William Edward George Pryse Wynn Powell in the chapel in Moriah, Cardiganshire, which reads:

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
LIEUT. W. E. POWELL,
(WELSH GUARDS,) NANT-EOS
KILLED IN ACTION, FRANCE,
NOVEMBER 6TH 1918,

⁷⁰⁷ War Memorials Register 6808: Carew, Pembrokeshire; 64631: St Asaph, Flintshire; 67792: Barmouth Memorial Park and Monument, Meirionnydd.

The phrase carries connotations of movement, heroism, and—certainly in the case of an officer being commemorated—gallant leadership, setting Lieutenant Powell apart from other individuals who did not die in a combat setting. In this way, the description of the nature of death can establish and reinforce a hierarchy of death in wartime, with death on active service prized more highly than dying of wounds or illness. This specific wording may then be a way for the Powell family to achieve or uphold a certain status locally, through the death of their son, whereas civic memorials were obliged to use a vaguer formulation to encompass those who died of wounds or illness as well as those who were killed in action.

After studying the variety of phrases listed above, we can see that the wording used to describe the manner of death is highly important. It gives us an insight into how a particular community envisioned death in war: was it an act of sacrifice for a great cause, or was it a tragedy, perhaps even a waste of life? Alternatively, were the expressions chosen for practical reasons rather than for emotional effect, with neutral verbs encompassing all types of death?

While similar expressions exist in both the English and Welsh languages, differences once again arise in the usage of these phrases in each language, suggesting that English speakers and Welsh speakers held divergent views about death in war.

⁷⁰⁸ Not listed in War Memorials Register.

Type of phrase	Use on memorials with inscriptions in Welsh (%)	Use on memorials with inscriptions in English (%)
Neutral	53.3	34.2
Willingly	20.2	42.8
Passively	7.3	0.0
Other	0.9	5.9
None	18.3	17.1

Table 6.6: How did they die?

The table above shows that memorials with Welsh inscriptions favour the more neutral descriptions of death, with 53.3 percent using forms including ‘a syrthiodd’ and ‘a fu farw’. These phrases are very straightforward, with no implication of great tragedy—but absent, too, is any sense of a deliberate choice. Such plain verbs also lack the suggestion that those commemorated died for a cause. In contrast, a number of inscriptions do contain forms which portray the death of those named on the memorial as a conscious and willing decision, such as ‘a roddasant eu bywydau’ and ‘a aberthodd eu bywydau’, but these account for 20.2 percent of the total and are clearly less popular options.

There are also forms which give a different view altogether, such as ‘a gollwyd’ and ‘aethant yn aberth’, inscribed on 16 memorials and constituting 7.3 percent of the total. While these memorials are certainly in the minority, it is interesting that these phrases are used at all, and even more telling that they only appear in Welsh.

A different picture emerges when looking at the figures for memorials with inscriptions in English. Of the 304 memorials recorded in this study, 34.2 percent use neutral descriptions of death, such as ‘fell’ and ‘died’, a smaller proportion than the equivalent body of memorials with Welsh inscriptions. The forms which portray death as a great sacrifice, on the other hand, including ‘who gave their lives’ and ‘who made the supreme sacrifice’, are considerably more common: they appear on 42.8 percent of 304 memorials compared to 20.2 percent of 218 memorials, making these expressions over twice as popular in the English language than in Welsh.

English-language inscriptions therefore tend to depict death in war as a willing act for a noble cause, with connotations of sacrifice and heroism. In Welsh, however, deaths tend to be described in muted and restrained language, matching the subdued tone of the rest of the inscription, signalling a reluctance amongst Welsh speakers to engage with popular narratives about death in war.

*

Like the other elements of a memorial inscription already explored in this chapter, different descriptions of death may be used in Welsh and English even when both languages are inscribed on the same memorial. This can be seen on four memorials amongst the sample studied for this chapter. The column commemorating the deceased members of Peniel Independent Chapel, Carmarthenshire, is inscribed with the words:

“THE GLORIOUS DEAD”

THIS MEMORIAL IS ERECTED
BY PENIEL CHURCH, IN EVER
LOVING MEMORY OF HER HEROES
WHO MADE THE SUPREME SACRIFICE
IN THE GREAT WAR
1914—1919

*

“ER MWYN ERAILL”
CODWYD Y MAEN COFFA HWN
GAN YR EGLWYS YM MHENIEL
YN ARWYDD O’I PHARCH A’I
HANWYLDEB O’I PHLANT A
GWYMPODD YN Y RHYFEL FAWR
1914—1919

(“For the sake of others” / This memorial stone was raised by Peniel Church as a mark of respect and love for her children who fell in the Great War, 1914—1919.)⁷⁰⁹

The English section of the text uses the phrase ‘who made the supreme sacrifice’, which suggests that the dead were willing to give their lives for the greater good. In contrast, the Welsh portion of the inscription employs a more neutral form, ‘a gwympodd’ (‘who fell’), which recounts what happened to those commemorated without any discernible pride or celebration.

⁷⁰⁹ War Memorials Register 56957: Peniel Independent Chapel, Peniel, Carmarthenshire.

Two other memorials replace the English expression with a Welsh phrase which portrays the dead in a passive role. In Tregaron, Cardiganshire, the memorial hall is inscribed:

ER COF AM
FECHGYN TREGARON A'R CYLCH
A GOLLWYD
YN Y RHYFEL FAWR.
CYFLWYNWYD Y NEUADD HON
IONAWR 4YDD, 1922,
AGORWYD HI GAN
R. J. R. LOXDALE, YSW.

*

THIS HALL WAS DEDICATED
AS A MEMORIAL TO
THE MEN OF TREGARON AND DISTRICT
WHO FELL IN THE GREAT WAR.

(In memory of the lads of Tregaron and district who were lost in the Great War / This hall was presented on January 4th, 1922, and was opened by R. J. R. Loxdale, Esq.)⁷¹⁰

Although the English form 'who fell' is already rather restrained in tone, the Welsh expression 'a gollwyd' ('who were lost') goes a step further: any sense of agency is removed from the deaths of the individuals commemorated, with the implication that they did not merely die, but were given to die by those in authority. The same substitution can also be observed on the plaque in Capel Gad in Cilcain, Flintshire, where the words 'who died' are replaced by the phrase 'a gollwyd'.⁷¹¹

⁷¹⁰ War Memorials Register 6917: Tregaron Memorial Hall, Ceredigion.

⁷¹¹ War Memorials Register 83126: Capel Gad, Cilcain, Flintshire.

An interesting expression is used on the memorial in Bwlchgwyn, Denbighshire. The inscription reads:

ER COF ANNWYL
AM FEIBION Y FRO HON
A'I CADAWODD I YMLADD
BRWYDRAU EU MAM-WLAD,
AC A HUNODD YMHELL OHONI.
“DROS EI WLAD Y RHOES EI LW,
DROS FÔR FE DROES I FARW.”

*

ERECTED TO THE MEMORY
OF THE MEN OF BWLCHGWYN,
WHO GAVE UP THEIR LIVES
FOR THE CAUSE OF THEIR COUNTRY
DURING THE GREAT WAR,
1914—1919.
“THEIR NAME LIVETH FOR EVERMORE.”

(In loving memory of the sons of this neighbourhood, who left to fight the battles of their motherland, and fell asleep far from it / “For his country he gave his oath, and over the sea he went to die.”)⁷¹²

Both sections of the inscription strike a patriotic note by asserting that those commemorated died for the cause of their country. The image of willing sacrifice conjured up by the English text is, however, not quite replicated in the Welsh text, which instead uses the euphemistic expression ‘a hunodd’ (‘who fell asleep’). This wording is commonly seen on gravestones in churchyards and chapelyards across Wales, and the metaphor of death as sleep also appears in

⁷¹² War Memorials Register 9044: Bwlchgwyn, Denbighshire.

several headstone inscriptions, as Chapter 5 has shown—but it is almost entirely absent from war memorial inscriptions. Its use here is particularly striking, not only contrasted with the English wording, but also alongside the line by Robert Williams Parry: the words ‘i farw’ (‘to die’) seem rather blunt in comparison.

Once again, bilingual memorials offer clear evidence that different sentiments existed within the Welsh-speaking and English-speaking communities, as these sentiments are retained even when Welsh and English are used side by side on the same memorial. These memorials furthermore show that the wording of commemorative texts was chosen with intention, and reflect and perpetuate certain narratives depending on the language used.

*

This section has shown that, overall, Welsh speakers were less likely to engage with the prevailing rhetoric about death in war. While English-language inscriptions depict death in war as a willing act for a noble cause, dwelling on the themes of sacrifice, honour, and heroism, Welsh-language texts use phrases commonly seen on family gravestones which describe death in a gentle, restrained manner. Some memorials with Welsh inscriptions even portray those commemorated in a passive role, describing them as having been lost or sacrificed, a subtle and skilful wording which implies that the responsibility, or blame, for their deaths lay with the military authorities or perhaps the British government.

The differing descriptions of death in war work in conjunction with the other elements of a memorial inscription and contribute to the divergent narratives about the conflict shared by Welsh speakers and English speakers.

6.2.4 The circumstances in which they died

The final element in the core inscription is a reference to the war in which those commemorated on the memorial died. There is very little variation between the languages in the phrases used for this part of the inscription, but there are nonetheless some interesting expressions and patterns to be explored.

A large number of memorials simply refer to the war itself. In English, the usual formulations are:

in the Great War

in the Great War, 1914—1918

during the war of 1914—1919

in the Great European War

in the Great World War

Identical expressions exist in the Welsh language, namely:

yn y Rhyfel Mawr

(in the Great War)

yn y Rhyfel Mawr, 1914—1919

(in the Great War, 1914—1919)

yn y rhyfel 1914—1918

(in the 1914—1918 War)

yn y Rhyfel Mawr Awst 4, 1914—Tach 11, 1918

*(in the Great War, August 4,
1914—November 11, 1918)*

yn y Rhyfel Europeiadd 1914 hyd 1918

*(in the European War, 1914 to
1918)*

Of these phrases, ‘the Great War’ or ‘y Rhyfel Mawr’ and simply ‘the war’ or ‘y rhyfel’ are the most commonly employed; the forms describing the war as a European or global conflict appear on just a handful of memorials, and are used predominantly in the English language. We can therefore observe a rough consensus in the naming of the conflict. There is, however, less agreement on the duration of the war, with some memorials giving 1918 as the year it ended, reflecting the fact that the Armistice brought about an end to the fighting, and others asserting that hostilities ceased in 1919, in line with the official end to war ratified by the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in June of that year. No differences can be discerned between Welsh and English in terms of the way these forms are used.

Other inscriptions give a specific cause or reason for which those named on the memorial fought and died. Sometimes this reference has a patriotic tone, invoking duty to King and country. English examples include:

for their country

in their country's service

for King and country

for God, King, and country

for their King and Empire

for God, King & Empire

Memorials with inscriptions in Welsh feature similar expressions, such as:

dros eu gwlad

(for their country)

tra'n brwydro dros ein gwlad

(while fighting for our country)

eu mam-wlad

(their motherland)

dros eu Brenin a'u gwlad

(for their King and country)

dros Dduw, eu Brenin, au gwlad

*(for God, their King, and their
country)*

These formulations are typical of First World War memorials across Britain. The war is portrayed as a noble and necessary cause, fought to defend the country and the Crown and to uphold Christian civilisation. Death in war is thus given importance and meaning.

At other times, memorial inscriptions name abstract concepts such as honour, justice, and freedom. The war is depicted as a conflict of ideals. Memorials with inscriptions in English may use one of the following expressions:

in the cause of justice and freedom

for justice, freedom, and right

in defence of liberty & honour

for the cause of human right and justice

for liberty, righteousness, and civilisation

While equivalent phrases are less common in the Welsh language, there are a handful of memorials on which the following words can be observed:

dros ryddid

(for freedom)

dros ryddid a chyfiawnder

(for freedom and justice)

dros ryddid a cyfiawnder a gwareiddiad (for freedom, justice, and civilisation)

For these communities, the war was not merely a matter of military defence of home and country, but a moral victory in which freedom and justice triumphed over militarism and tyranny. These forms also justify death in war, but ascribe to it an even higher purpose than the phrases mentioning King and country listed above.

A number of inscriptions include a reference to a mix or all of these causes, blending defence of the country with the defence of liberty, justice, and right, such as the following English expressions:

for their country, and a righteous cause

defending right, loved ones, & country

for their King, their country, and righteousness

and the similar Welsh expressions below:

dros y gwir a thros eu gwlad (for truth and for their country)

dros eu gwlad, cyfiawnder, a rhyddid (for their country, justice, and freedom)

dros eu Brenin, eu gwlad, a chyfiawnder (for their King, country, and justice)

dros ryddid a thros eu Brenin a'u gwlad (for freedom and for their King and country)

dros anrhydedd a rhyddid eu gwlad

*(for the honour and freedom of
their country)*

Here, abstract concepts are important in themselves but they are also specifically linked to the idea of the country. The country is envisioned as the home of freedom, honour, and justice, and by defending, and dying for, the country, the war dead protected these ideals as well.

Different causes are referenced elsewhere. Some memorial inscriptions discuss death in war in terms of a sacrifice for the local community, rather than for the country or the empire. In this case, the text may read:

for us

for us and for the victory

that we might live in freedom

or:

ein rhyddid

(our freedom)

These forms remind those who lived through the conflict that their survival and their freedom was ensured by the war service and death of the people named on the memorial, prompting feelings of gratitude and respect, and strengthening a sense of obligation to the dead. It was not only the community of the interwar period that was addressed, however, but future generations as well. The didactic nature of commemoration is clearly illustrated here.

One memorial, a roll of honour commemorating the members of London Road Presbyterian Church, in Neath, Glamorgan, is very certain about the cause for which the war was fought.⁷¹³

The men of the church are said to have served:

in defence of a “scrap of paper”

The names are arranged around an illustration of the ‘scrap of paper’, the 1839 Treaty of London, which guaranteed the neutrality of Belgium—neutrality which was violated by the German invasion of Belgium in August 1914. It was the invasion of Belgium that was utilised and arguably exploited by the British government to justify the decision to go to war, and it became very important in subsequent recruitment efforts, particularly in Wales. Comparisons were made between Belgium and Wales as “little five-feet-high nations”, as David Lloyd George put it during a speech delivered to the London Welsh in September 1914, and Belgium featured strongly in Welsh-language recruitment posters and in speeches made by those leading the recruiting campaign.⁷¹⁴

Despite the importance of Belgium to the recruitment process in Wales, however, references to Belgium in postwar commemoration are noticeably absent. Amongst the Welsh-language headstone inscriptions explored in the previous chapter, Belgium is not commented on once, and within the sample of war memorials studied for this chapter, the memorial in London Road Presbyterian Church is the only one to mention the plight of Belgium.

⁷¹³ Not listed in War Memorials Register.

⁷¹⁴ *The Times*, 21 September 1914, p. 12. See also Imperial War Museum Collections, PST 11406: Parliamentary Recruiting Committee poster Y Darn Papur: Ymrestrwch Heddyw (‘The Scrap of Paper: Enlist Today’), published in 1914.

In contrast to the inscriptions examined above, some memorials do not make any reference to a cause, but simply name a place of death. These phrases provide context, but do not necessarily claim that the deaths of those commemorated achieved anything, and are thus similar to the memorials that simply name the war itself.

Only one memorial with an inscription in English uses this form, a stone tablet put up to the memory of Lieutenant William Edward George Pryse Wynn Powell, which names:

France

The naming of places seems to be more common in Welsh:

<i>yn Ffrainc</i>	<i>(in France)</i>
<i>yn Salonica</i>	<i>(in Salonika)</i>
<i>ar faes y rhyfel</i>	<i>(on the battlefield)</i>
<i>ar faes y gad</i>	<i>(on the battlefield)</i>
<i>ar faes y frwydr</i>	<i>(on the battlefield)</i>
<i>yn Arras, Ffrainc</i>	<i>(in Arras, France)</i>
<i>yn Mametz Wood</i>	<i>(in Mametz Wood)</i>

While some of the above forms are used on memorials to individuals, and are therefore describing the specific circumstances of death, some can be found on civic and church or chapel memorials commemorating several members of that community. It was therefore possible to use these locations in a more general way.

The choice of wording here reflects a detailed civilian knowledge of the war and its chronology and geography. It was taken for granted that anyone passing by the memorial would immediately understand the meaning behind the phrase ‘ar faes y rhyfel’ and the references to Arras or Mametz Wood. As Chapter 4 has already shown, an awareness of the war was a feature of everyday life in the interwar period—it did not have to be explained—and it seems that some war memorial committees understood this and felt that a non-specific reference to the conflict would be enough.

A different view of the war is given by two memorials with inscriptions in Welsh, one commemorating the members of Eglwys Carmel, Conwy, Caernarfonshire, and the other raised to the memory of the members of Capel Dinmael, in Dinmael, near Corwen in Denbighshire.⁷¹⁵

The memorial in Eglwys Carmel is inscribed:

yn rhyfel alaethus 1914—1918

*(in the terrible war of 1914—
1918)*

The memorial in Capel Dinmael uses the following phrase:

Brwydr Armagedon

(the Battle of Armageddon)

These forms are a far cry from the phrases above which speak of justice, freedom, and truth, presenting the war as a kind of crusade. Instead, the war is described as something awful and tragic—and, beyond that, as ‘Armageddon’, the conflict referred to in the Book of Revelation as the cataclysm at the end of the world. The congregations of these two chapels were clearly not convinced that the war was a righteous cause, to be remembered with pride and gratitude.

⁷¹⁵ War Memorials Register, 65712: Eglwys Carmel, Conwy, Caernarfonshire. The memorial in Capel Dinmael is not listed in War Memorials Register.

Although these memorials are the only two amongst the sample studied for this chapter to utilise such language, mentions of Armageddon can be found frequently in the Welsh press in the years leading up to 1914 as well as during the war years. Gethin Matthews explains that the word Armageddon appears in a number of letters and articles published in the press in the late nineteenth century, forecasting a destructive war between nations and empires, and was then used frequently during the First World War, particularly in times of heavy fighting:

Cyn dechrau'r rhyfel, yn anaml y gwelwyd y gair ond cafwyd toreth o enghreifftiau ym misoedd cyntaf y rhyfel. Gostwng yn raddol a wnaeth y defnydd o'r gair o wanwyn 1915 hyd at wanwyn 1917 (er bod mwy o enghreifftiau wedi ymddangos yn ystod haf 1916, adeg brwydr y Somme). Yna ym mlwyddyn a hanner olaf yr ymladd ymddangosodd y gair yn fwy rheolaidd, cyn dychwelyd i tua'r un raddfa â chyn y rhyfel wedi i'r gynnaau dewi.

(Before the start of the war, the word was rarely seen, but there were plenty of examples in the first months of the war. The use of the word gradually decreased from the spring of 1915 until the spring of 1917 (although more examples appeared during the summer of 1916, at the time of the Battle of the Somme). In the last year and a half of the fighting the word appeared more regularly, before returning to roughly the same scale as before the war once the guns had fallen silent.)⁷¹⁶

The idea of the First World War as Armageddon was therefore not unprecedented at this time—nor was it even a particularly extreme view. Certainly, it seems that the imagery of this destructive and catastrophic Biblical conflict was well-established within the public consciousness. The stone tablet in Capel Dinmael may be the only memorial that features the word 'Armageddon', but it should not, I think, be considered an anomaly. Rather, it reflects

⁷¹⁶ Gethin Matthews, 'Rhwygau', in Gethin Matthews (gol.), *Creithiau: Dylanwad y Rhyfel Mawr ar Gymdeithas a Diwylliant yng Nghymru* (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 2016), pp. 1-20 (p. 11). For a visualisation of these peaks of usage, see Gethin Matthews, 'The Battle of Armageddon', *Welsh Memorials to the Great War* <<https://war-memorials.swan.ac.uk/?p=226>> [accessed 20 May 2024].

how many Welsh people described the war at the time. What *is* noteworthy is that it is a memorial with an inscription in Welsh that uses the word: the word ‘Armageddon’ in English, and any comparable phrases such as ‘the terrible war’ or ‘the dreadful war’, are entirely absent.

In general, then, the same formulations are available in each language to describe the circumstances of death or to name the cause for which the dead gave their lives. There is less variation here than in the other elements of a core inscription, but the expressions are still used in slightly different ways, as the table below shows.

Type of phrase	Use on memorials with inscriptions in Welsh (%)	Use on memorials with inscriptions in English (%)
The war	62.4	56.6
King and/or country	14.2	16.4
Abstract concept(s)	3.2	7.2
Both or all of the above	2.8	2.3
Other	5.5	3.0
None	11.9	14.5

Table 6.7: The circumstances in which they died.

These statistics show that, whether the core inscription was written in Welsh or in English, the majority of memorials in Wales refer simply to the war itself when contextualising the deaths of those commemorated. Forms such as ‘the Great War’ or ‘y Rhyfel Mawr’ appear on 56.6 percent of memorials with English inscriptions, and on 62.4 percent of memorials with Welsh inscriptions, a slightly higher figure.

A reference to King and country can be found on a number of memorials with inscriptions in either language. Again, there is no great difference between the English and Welsh languages in the usage of these phrases, although there is a marginally higher proportion of English-language inscriptions invoking this patriotic duty. It is important to note, however, that some memorials do not use both words. While 31 memorials with Welsh inscriptions have been included in this category, only 14 of these actually feature the word ‘brenin’ (‘king’), accounting for 45 percent of the total. Comparisons can be made with the Welsh-language personal inscriptions on war graves, amongst which references to the King are almost entirely absent. Memorials with English inscriptions are more likely to mention the King, but not overwhelmingly so: 29 memorials use the word ‘King’, constituting 58 percent of the total number of memorials included in this category, a slim majority.

These statistics show that memorials with Welsh inscriptions are less likely than memorials with English inscriptions to depict death in war as an act of loyalty to the Crown—but also that, across Wales as a whole, irrespective of language, duty to country was more resonant than duty to the King.

A mere 3.2 percent of Welsh-language inscriptions, and only 7.2 percent of English-language texts, refer to abstract concepts. This comparative scarcity amongst both languages suggests that Welsh people were reluctant to engage with rhetoric that depicted the war as some kind of crusade, fought to defend Christian values and civilisation.

It is clear from the table above that the majority of communities in Wales favoured the neutral form of naming the war, rather than ascribing a particular meaning to the deaths of those

commemorated. There are some small differences, however. Memorials with English inscriptions were slightly more likely to invoke duty to King and country, and over twice as likely to refer to concepts such as freedom, justice, and righteousness than memorials with Welsh inscriptions. It is only Welsh-language inscriptions, meanwhile, that use explicitly negative phrases such as ‘rhyfel alaethus’ and ‘Brwydr Armagedon’. Nonetheless, the lack of distinct variation here means that no strong comparisons can be made between Welsh speakers and English speakers when it comes to this particular element of the inscription.

*

There are two memorials with inscriptions in both Welsh and English that use different descriptions of the cause for which those commemorated died, rather than providing an exact translation. These can be found in Llanfyllin, Montgomeryshire, and Capel Gad in Cilcain, Flintshire, both of which have already been mentioned in this chapter.

The English section of the inscription on Llanfyllin war memorial asserts that the local men died “for their country in the Great War”. Its patriotic tone stands in contrast to the Welsh text, which says simply that the men fell “yn y Rhyfel Mawr” (‘in the Great War’). Similarly, the memorial in Capel Gad uses the phrase died “for their country in the Great War” in English, but in Welsh the men are said to have been lost “ar faes y rhyfel” (‘on the battlefield’). This is a rather stark expression, evoking images of the desolation of the front—images that the public could easily visualise, due to the press, newsreels, and the testimony of their loved ones. In comparison, the English wording is a platitude.

Other elements in the inscriptions of these two memorials maintain the divergence between the languages. The wording here conforms to the overall tone of the text in each language: the English inscription commemorating with gratitude and pride the local men who gave their lives for their country, and the Welsh inscription remembering the young people of the area whose lives were lost in the conflict.

*

The phrases explored in this section tell us how a particular community envisaged the nature and purpose of the war, and what meaning, if any, they found in the deaths of those commemorated on the memorial.

For some communities, the war involved the defence of home and country: it was a military matter, with a tangible threat and tangible consequences. For other communities, the war was fought to uphold a number of abstract ideals and to protect a certain way of life. The majority of memorials in Wales simply refer to the conflict itself, however—a choice of wording that, alone, gives death in war no specific meaning, but is instead coloured by the rest of the inscription. Indeed, a text using ‘the Great War’ which also speaks of pride at the sacrifice made by local men and women is very different to an inscription including the words ‘y Rhyfel Mawr’ which remembers with love and respect the young people who died. Even the same wording can carry contradictory connotations: war as victory, or war as catastrophe.

*

Taken as a whole, war memorials in Wales voice two separate and different interpretations of the war, the people who served and died during it, and how to remember the conflict, depending on the language of the inscription. Commemorative inscriptions indicate how Welsh speakers and English speakers thought about and experienced the war, but also reflect more entrenched attitudes. In this way, language acts as proxy for class, cultural background, and political affiliation. Gwenllian Awbery suggests that the wording of the English inscriptions would have been chosen by an English-speaking social elite “who were culturally closer to their social equivalents in England, and who accepted the official line”.⁷¹⁷ The inscriptions in Welsh, on the other hand, were formulated by Welsh speakers “less inclined” to echo the narrative of the war perpetuated by English speakers and English-speaking institutions.⁷¹⁸

These divergent views are most noticeable in the wording of the core texts, but some memorial inscriptions include quotations, and there are a number of differences between the English and Welsh languages that should also be explored. The following two sections of this chapter address these supplementary quotations.

⁷¹⁷ Awbery, ‘The Language of Remembrance’, p. 125.

⁷¹⁸ Ibid.

6.2.5 Quotations

Many of the memorials, with inscriptions in either language, included an additional quotation, such as a Bible verse, lines from a poem, a well-known patriotic saying, or a military motto. Of the 509 memorials studied for this chapter, 252 are inscribed with one quotation, and 86 are inscribed with two or more quotations. These may appear before or after the core text, or, where the memorial is free-standing, the quotations are often engraved on different faces or lower down on a supporting plinth or step.

Where the core text of the memorial is in Welsh, the additional quotations are almost always in Welsh as well. There are 183 memorials with core inscriptions in Welsh, and 136 of these have supplementary quotes: 128 of the 136 include quotations in Welsh only, just 4 have a quotation or quotations in English, 2 have quotes in both Welsh and English, and in 2 cases Latin was chosen. The dominant language in these communities was clearly Welsh, and it seems likely that catering to English speakers was not deemed necessary.

Where the core text of the memorial is in English, the pattern is less consistent. Of 269 memorials in total with core inscriptions in English, 173 include one or more quotations: 118 of the 173 have quotes in English only, 30 have quotes in Welsh, in 19 cases both English and Welsh were chosen, 5 memorials include a quotation or quotations in Latin, and 1 memorial has a line in Greek. Although the majority of the quotations are in English, there appears to be a greater willingness to draw on different sources. A phrase or quote inscribed in Welsh would represent—or perhaps appease—Welsh speakers in the community, and would acknowledge the Welsh nature of the contribution to the war effort. Latin was a natural choice for a memorial located in a church—particularly a Catholic church—but for civic memorials it may have been

a way to flex the intellectual credentials of the town or city, to lend the memorial a gravity which matched the image it had of itself, implying a preoccupation with civic pride.

The patterns seen here—Welsh-language core texts with predominantly Welsh quotations, and English-language core texts succeeded by additional quotes in a mixture of English, Welsh, and Latin—have a precedent in the inscriptions seen on gravestones across Wales. It is normal to see gravestones where the formal wording, recording the factual details, and the additional Biblical verses or poems are wholly in Welsh. It is also typical for the formal details on the gravestone to be in English and the additional quotations to be in Welsh. As Gwenllïan Awbery explains, it “may perhaps reflect a feeling that the core text of the inscription was in some sense a legal record of the death, and that English was, therefore, the appropriate language, with Welsh fully acceptable for additional elements such as poems and Biblical verses”.⁷¹⁹ There are also, however, many gravestones where all elements of the inscription are in English. This may of course indicate that English was the primary language spoken by the family, but may also reveal a desire to augment the class status of the family by identifying with English: modern, sophisticated, the language of social progress.

This blend of languages on war memorials in Wales reminds us that the language situation at this time was complex. Bilingualism and diglossia meant that no one language could be seen as completely dominant, Awbery writes, with both Welsh and English being used “by different people in different contexts and for different purposes”.⁷²⁰ The variation in usage provides an

⁷¹⁹ Awbery, ‘The Language of Remembrance’, p. 114.

⁷²⁰ Ibid.

insight into the attitudes towards each language in a particular community, as well as the role of each language in commemoration.

Where the core text of the memorial inscription is bilingual, however, the situation is much more straightforward. There are 35 memorials where the core inscription is written in both Welsh and English, and 28 of these include a supplementary quotation or quotations: 22 of the 28, a clear majority, have quotes in both languages. In these 22 communities, Welsh and English occupy an equal amount of space on the memorial, although, as we have seen, the core texts are often not direct translations of each other, and, likewise, in many cases different quotations were selected in either language.

The remaining quotation is written in Latin, and is found on a memorial where the core text is also inscribed in Latin. Perhaps unsurprisingly, it is found in a Catholic church: St Mary's Church, in Newport, Monmouthshire.⁷²¹ The quotation—ET LUX PERPETUA LUCEAT EIS—is taken from the Requiem Mass.

*

The quotations inscribed upon war memorials tend to echo the themes which are found in the core inscriptions. Pledges of everlasting remembrance, reinforcing the wording of the dedicatory text, are common. Lines of poetry or scripture dwelling on the concepts of bravery

⁷²¹ War Memorials Register 3683: St Mary's Church, Newport, Monmouthshire.

and sacrifice are also seen frequently. Other quotations complement the final element of the core text by referring to a specific cause for which the war was fought.

Most of the quotations studied here fall into one of these three categories—remembrance, heroism and sacrifice, and dying for a cause—but some are focused on different subjects. Scriptural verses and lines from hymns that speak of eternal rest and eventual resurrection are often used, providing consolation to the bereaved. Other communities, however, chose quotations which focus on death and foreground feelings of grief and loss—or even openly condemn war. These themes are present in both the Welsh and English languages, but not quite in equal proportions, as the table below illustrates:

Theme of quotation	Use in Welsh (%)	Use in English (%)
Remembrance	42.5	34.3
Heroism and sacrifice	24.6	33.9
Dying for a cause	10.0	13.0
Eternal rest and resurrection	10.0	12.3
An alternative message	6.3	0.0
Other	6.6	6.5

Table 6.8: The themes of additional quotations.

We can see that remembrance was a popular theme in the Welsh language, constituting 42.5 percent of the total number of Welsh-language quotations. Core inscriptions written in Welsh are very muted in tone, less likely to emphasise the ideals of glory and sacrifice and less sure

of the righteousness of the war, but what is nonetheless beyond doubt or debate is that the dead should be respected and remembered. Quotations making pledges of remembrance therefore reinforce this message.

Remembrance is also a common theme in the English language, accounting for 34.3 percent of all English-language quotations, but it is not quite as prevalent as it is in Welsh. The concepts of bravery and sacrifice, and the idea of dying for a cause, however, appear more often in English than they do in Welsh: 33.9 percent of the total number of quotations in English honour the heroic deeds of the war dead, compared to 24.6 percent in Welsh, and 13 percent of English quotations refer to the cause for which the war was fought, compared to 10 percent in Welsh. It certainly seems that the narrative of willing sacrifice for a noble cause resonated more deeply with English speakers, as the tone of the quotations corresponds to the tone of the core texts.

Quotations with a melancholy tone or a pacifist message can only be found in the Welsh language. These texts make up only 6.3 percent of all Welsh-language quotations, but they contribute to the overall restraint of Welsh-language commemoration—and, at times, as we will see below, they explicitly challenge and subvert the rhetoric seen in English, posing a number of intriguing questions about the complexities of commemoration in Wales.

*

Quotations on the theme of remembrance are found on a multitude of memorials across Wales. War memorial committees could choose from a great many sources, written in both English

and Welsh, but some were more popular than others. One of the most widely used quotations in this category—and indeed in the entire sample, is taken from the poem *Dyffryn Clwyd* (Vale of Clwyd) by the nineteenth-century bard John Ceiriog Hughes:

MEWN ANGOF NI CHÂNT FOD

(They shall not remain in oblivion.)

An *englyn* titled *Nid â'n Ango* (Not Forgotten), written in 1916 by Hedd Wyn, also appears frequently:

EI ABERTH NID Â HEIBIO—EI WYNEB

ANNWYL NID Â'N ANGO

ER I'R ALMAEN YSTAENIO

EI DWRN DUR YN EI WAED O.

(His sacrifice will not be passed by—his face

So dear will not be forgotten,

Although Germany has stained

Its steel fist in his blood.)

The full *englyn* is inscribed on a handful of memorials, but most memorials use just the first line, adapted for the plural to give:

EU HABERTH NID Â HEIBIO

(Their sacrifices will not be passed by.)

Another line seen regularly comes from a hymn, *Gorffwys yn y Bedd* (Resting in the Grave), written by the bard Ieuan Glan Geirionydd (Evan Evans):

EU HENWAU’N PERAROGLI SYDD

A’U HUN MOR DAWEL YW

(Their names are preserved forever, and their sleep is so peaceful.)

These three quotations express a certainty that the memory of the dead and their service and sacrifice would endure forever, a powerful and consoling thought for those who had lived through the conflict.

Identical sentiments are found in the English language. The following verse from Ecclesiasticus, one of the books of the Apocrypha, was chosen by numerous communities:

THEIR NAME LIVETH FOR EVERMORE

The verse had entered the lexicon of war commemoration through its use on the Stone of Remembrance in larger British and Commonwealth war cemeteries, chosen by Rudyard Kipling in his role as literary advisor to the Imperial War Graves Commission (IWGC). Its emphasis on names neatly sidesteps the absence of bodies, and thus the impossibility of conventional burial and mourning rituals associated with the body, and so it is unsurprising that it became one of the archetypal commemorative texts in the aftermath of the conflict.⁷²² Thomas Laqueur observes that the circumstances of the First World War created a “commemorative hyper-nominalism”, where the state “poured enormous human, financial, administrative, artistic, and diplomatic resources into preserving and remembering the names

⁷²² The verse also appears in Welsh on a small number of memorials as Y MAE EU HENW YN BYW BYTH, but seems to be more popular in English.

of individual common soldiers”.⁷²³ Names were imbued with equal, perhaps greater, importance than physical remains. The verse from Ecclesiasticus is representative of the phenomenon of naming and the preoccupation with names whilst also drawing upon the theme of eternal remembrance which was so potent in the interwar period.

A number of memorials are inscribed with lines from the poem *For the Fallen* by Laurence Binyon, written early on in the conflict in the autumn of 1914:

AT THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN AND IN THE MORNING

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

The poem also became ingrained in the language and rituals of British war commemoration. It was not only a popular choice for war memorial inscriptions, but also appears frequently on headstones in war cemeteries and as part of *in memoriam* notices, and was recited or set to music and performed at memorial services. Unlike the texts above, which simply state that the dead will be remembered, this poem specifies who is responsible for remembering the dead. This device is also seen in a line from *Recessional*, composed by Rudyard Kipling for the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1897:

LEST WE FORGET

It addresses a particular audience, just like the poem by Binyon, but frames remembrance as ‘not forgetting’, and therefore reads as a warning rather than a promise.

⁷²³ Thomas Laqueur, ‘Memory and Naming in the Great War’, in John R Gillis (ed.), *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 150-167 (p. 160; 155). See also Laqueur, *The Work of the Dead*, pp. 447-488.

The quotations above were frequently inscribed on war memorials across Wales—and across Britain—and were also used as part of *in memoriam* notices, on memorial cards, as headstone inscriptions, and during Armistice Day services. Their popularity demonstrates the existence of trends in commemorative texts, and the interplay between private and public commemoration, with each influencing the other.

Other war memorial committees chose lesser-known or less obvious quotations, whether consciously or unconsciously. An interesting example can be found on the memorial in Capel Ebeneser in Borth-y-Gest, Caernarfonshire:

AI DICHONADWY EU HANGHOFIO’N LLWYR?

(NA,) “YN ANGHOF NI CHÂNT FOD.”

(Is it possible to forget them completely? No. They will not be forgotten.)

The first phrase is adapted from a line in a poem titled *Y Storm* (The Storm), written by the nineteenth-century bard Islwyn (William Thomas) in response to the sudden death of his fiancé Ann Bowen.⁷²⁴ It is the only use of this poem amongst the memorials included in this study. The inscription goes on to answer its own question in the negative, and then, to really emphasise the point, includes an adaptation of the line from *Dyffryn Clwyd*, declaring that the dead will not be forgotten.

Quotations on the theme of remembrance were sourced from scripture, hymns, and both older and more recent poetry, written in both Welsh and English. These texts affirm, and reaffirm,

⁷²⁴ See Owen Morgan Edwards (gol.), *Gwaith Barddonol Islwyn* (Wrecsam: Hughes a’i Fab, 1897) for the full poem.

the desire to commemorate the dead, but also seem to address anxieties about the possibility of the memory of the war and those who died during it fading as time passed, by prompting or instructing passers-by to remember as well.

*

Other quotations describe why the war dead are deserving of remembrance. These texts dwell on the themes of duty, heroism, and sacrifice, and, again, can be found in both languages. A popular choice was a verse from the Gospel of John:

GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN THAN THIS,
THAT A MAN LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS

It also appears in Welsh, although not quite as often:

CARIAD MWY NA HWN NID OES GAN NEB;
SEF, BOD I UN ROI EI EINIOES DROS EI GYFEILLION

The verse speaks of sacrifice and comradeship, values which formed an integral part of wartime rhetoric and postwar commemoration. It is easy to see why: there may have been disagreement over the purpose of the war and whether or not it could be justified, but the vision of frontline comradeship, and the idea that the dead gave their lives for their families and friends at home, was indisputable.

An extract from the First Book of Samuel contains a similar sentiment, foregrounding the valiant and unwavering efforts of the war dead and those who served and returned:

THEY WERE A WALL UNTO US BOTH BY NIGHT AND DAY

The Welsh translation is seen more frequently:

MUR OEDDYNT HWY I NI NOS A DYDD

A poem written by the Reverend T. F. Royds and included in the pamphlet *Inscriptions Suggested for War Memorials*, published by the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1919, provides a variation on the theme:

SONS OF THIS PLACE, LET THIS OF YOU BE SAID

THAT YOU WHO LIVE ARE WORTHY OF YOUR DEAD

THESE GAVE THEIR LIVES THAT YOU WHO LIVE MAY REAP

A RICHER HARVEST ERE YOU FALL ASLEEP

Both of these quotations suggest that the dead gave their lives for the benefit of a named and defined community: ‘us’ and ‘sons of this place’. Note, however, the different effect achieved by the exhortation in the poem to be “worthy of your dead”. The sacrifice of the dead is not only to be praised, but is something to emulate in everyday life, it states, illustrating the didactic nature of war commemoration.

Some memorial committees took inspiration from the text of the memorial scroll sent to the next-of-kin of those who had died. Beneath the Royal Coat of Arms are the words:

HE WHOM THIS SCROLL COMMEMORATES WAS NUMBERED
AMONGST THOSE WHO, AT THE CALL OF KING AND COUNTRY, LEFT
ALL THAT WAS DEAR TO THEM, ENDURED HARDNESS, FACED
DANGER, AND FINALLY PASSED OUT OF THE SIGHT OF MEN BY THE

PATH OF DUTY AND SELF-SACRIFICE, GIVING UP THEIR OWN LIVES
THAT OTHERS MIGHT LIVE IN FREEDOM.

For use on war memorials, the pronouns were adapted for the plural, and the wording was sometimes changed, but the meaning was retained. The text describes the hardships and danger that servicemen suffered and endured, adding further meaning and poignancy to their eventual deaths. Duty, heroism, selflessness, and sacrifice were all values that those responsible for establishing war memorials could endorse.

War service is depicted here as a matter of military defence, the protection of family, home, and country. This again was an incontrovertible idea for most people in the interwar period, whether or not they also believed in the loftier narrative of justice, truth, and civilisation being successfully upheld by the British involvement in the war.

For other communities, however, the ‘big words’ did hold meaning. The allegorical memorial in Port Talbot, Glamorgan, and the cross in Clyro, Radnorshire, are inscribed with words from the hymn *O Valiant Hearts*, written in 1919 by Conservative politician Sir John Stanhope Arkwright to commemorate the war dead:

O VALIANT HEARTS WHO TO YOUR GLORY CAME
THROUGH DUST OF CONFLICT AND THROUGH BATTLE FLAME;
TRANQUIL YOU LIE, YOUR KNIGHTLY VIRTUE PROVED,
YOUR MEMORY HALLOWED IN THE LAND YOU LOVED

Utilising religious imagery as well as references to medieval chivalry, two of the most powerful influences on First World War commemoration, the hymn praises the war dead and their

bravery and sacrifice, likening them firstly to crusading knights and secondly to Christ on the cross. The war was fought to “save mankind”, the hymn declares, ascribing to it an even higher purpose than the quotations above.

A short poem composed by the bard Eifion Wyn (Eliseus Williams) especially for the memorial in Porthmadog, Caernarfonshire, also depicts the war as a conflict of ideals:

BOED COF BYTH AM EU DEWRWAITH DRUD,

DROS RYDDID BRO, DROS WAREIDDIAD BYD

(May they always be remembered for their brave and costly effort / For the freedom of the land, and
the civilisation of the world.)

The poem is not quite as fervent as *O Valiant Hearts*, but nonetheless honours the dead and their heroic sacrifice for a noble cause.

Another of the most popular quotations seen on war memorials in Wales is the motto of the Welsh Regiment:

GWELL ANGAU NA CHYWILYDD

(Better death than dishonour.)

It is found predominantly on memorials in the south of the country, in the counties of Glamorgan, Carmarthenshire, and Pembrokeshire, the historic recruiting ground of the regiment. The idea that death was preferable to dishonour makes a strong statement about the sense of duty and the heroism of the deceased.

Quotations that pay tribute to the brave deeds and sacrifice of the war dead reflect and contribute to the idea of a ‘good death’. These texts assert that the individuals commemorated on the memorial had been gallant and honourable, and gave their lives for a purpose, whether that was the defence of family, home, and country, or to uphold certain ideals. Their use on memorials as supplementary quotations reinforces the elements of the core inscription which describe the people commemorated and the nature of their deaths, and, occasionally, the cause for which it was said they died.

*

Elsewhere, the quotations chosen explicitly name the cause for which, in the view of the community, the dead gave their lives. Sometimes these are unattributed expressions, or phrases in common usage, enclosed in quotation marks to make it clear that they are separate to the core inscription. Examples include:

“FOR KING AND COUNTRY”

“DROS DDUW, DROS FRENIN, DROS WLAD”

(For God, for King, for country.)

“FOR US”

“THEY DIED THAT WE MIGHT LIVE”

At other times, existing sources were drawn upon. A quotation seen regularly is a line from *Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau* (Land of my Fathers), the Welsh national anthem:

DROS RYDDID GOLLASANT EU GWAED

(For freedom they shed their blood.)

Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau is, obviously, very patriotic. It pledges love and loyalty to Wales, to its bards, singers, and warriors, to the natural landscape, and to the Welsh language. In contrast, a small number of memorials do not refer to Wales, but England. On the cenotaph commemorating the dead of Pembroke and Monkton, Pembrokeshire, is inscribed an extract from the poem *Our British Dead* by the Scottish soldier-poet Joseph Lee:

FORGET US NOT O LAND FOR WHICH WE FELL,

MAY IT GO WELL WITH ENGLAND, STILL GO WELL,

KEEP HER BRIGHT BANNERS WITHOUT SPOT OR STAIN,

LEST WE SHOULD DREAM THAT WE HAVE DIED IN VAIN.⁷²⁵

This poem speaks in the voice of the deceased, a popular device which lends the text more authority.

A similar, though more concise, sentiment is found in a short poem titled *For a Memorial Tablet*, published in *The Times* in early 1918, and most likely composed by English writer and Classics master Arthur Campbell Ainger:

LIVE THOU FOR ENGLAND

⁷²⁵ The original poem reads 'Keep her bright banners without blot or stain'. It can be read in full in Joseph Lee, *Work-A-Day Warriors* (London: John Murray, 1917).

WE FOR ENGLAND DIED

The text appears on the memorial commemorating the men of the parishes of Builth Wells and Llanddewir Cwm, Breconshire. Three other memorials also use the poem, but alter the wording:

LIVE THOU FOR BRITAIN

WE FOR BRITAIN DIED

This wording can be seen on the cross in St Matthew's Church, Neath, Glamorgan, on the Celtic cross commemorating the dead of Llangollen and Llantysilio, Denbighshire, and on the Celtic cross in Four Crosses, Montgomeryshire. In the absence of any war memorial committee documents, it is impossible to know whether the quotation was misremembered, or whether it was deliberately altered to remove the reference to England. Nonetheless, the invocation of England and Britain on war memorials in Wales poses some interesting questions about national identity and allegiance in different areas of Wales—and possibly about the relationship between Wales and England, both generally and in terms of the war.

The quotations explored above refer to a number of different causes that Welsh people used to explain the war. One popular choice, a line from the Welsh national anthem, asserts that the dead gave their lives for freedom. Other quotations refer to King and country, and the protection of those at home.

In two instances, England is mentioned, prompting questions about identity and allegiance in certain areas of Wales. The memorials are located in the counties of Breconshire and Pembrokeshire, where the percentage of the population who spoke English was extremely

high—and the percentage of people who spoke only English far outweighed those who could speak both English and Welsh. We know that, in Wales at this time, the connection between language ability and cultural identity was a strong one. Perhaps this explains the usage of ‘England’ as opposed to ‘Wales’. On the other hand, it may be indicative of how Welsh people viewed the conflict: was it ‘England’s war’, and fighting it an act of service for England? Or it may simply be the usual conflation of England as Britain and Britain as England.⁷²⁶ Without any definitive evidence in the primary sources, it is difficult to say, but a more focused study on how ‘Wales’, ‘England’, and ‘Britain’ were utilised during the war and in war commemoration may prove worthwhile.

Overall, quotations in this category are not as widespread as texts dwelling on other themes. This may reflect the comparative lack of specific causes given in the core inscriptions, as most memorial inscriptions, whether written in Welsh or English, simply named ‘the Great War’ or ‘y Rhyfel Mawr’.

*

Other quotations are focused not on war and death in war, but what came afterwards. These texts are taken from scripture or hymns, or from poems drawing directly on Christian beliefs, and portray death as eternal rest or sleep, and look forward to eventual resurrection. Some were well-established as memorial texts, appearing in a civilian context on family gravestones, but

⁷²⁶ See, for example, Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707—1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Krishan Kumar, ‘‘Englishness’ and English National Identity’, in David Morley and Kevin Robins (eds.), *British Cultural Studies: Geography, Nationality, and Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 41-55.

some were written during the war or in its aftermath, and, although clearly inspired by religious belief, include references to the conflict and therefore belong in the context of war commemoration.

The memorial in Capel Salem, Caernarfon, uses the phrase:

HUNANT MEWN HEDD

(Rest in peace.)

This is, of course, a typical formulation, seen on many family gravestones and on several headstones in war cemeteries. Perhaps unexpectedly, it only appears once amongst the memorials studied for this chapter in its Welsh form. Other communities seem to have favoured more expressive quotations, such as the following verse from the Book of Revelation:

NI FYDD ARNYNT NA NEWYN MWYACH, NA SYCHED MWYACH;

AC NI DDISGYN ARNYNT NA'R HAUL, NA DIM GWRES

(They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them,
nor any heat.)

A similar thought can be found in a verse from the hymn *Gorffwys yn y Bedd* (Resting in the Grave) by Ieuan Glan Geirionydd (Evan Evans):

LLAIS UN GORTHRYMYDD BYTH NI DDAW

I'W DEFFRO I WYLAW MWY

NA PHROFEDIGAETH LEM, NA CHROES—

UN LOES NI THEIMLANT HWY

(Never more will the voice of an oppressor come to provoke them to tears, nor severe affliction, nor suffering / They will feel no more anguish.)

These two quotations envisage the dead at peace, past earthly troubles like hunger and thirst, and free from suffering, anguish, and pain, a consoling image for the bereaved.

The metaphor of death as sleep is also present in the English language. Phrases such as REST IN PEACE or REST WELL WON are common, as is a line from the Anglican burial service, translated from the original Latin:

ETERNAL REST GRANT UNTO THEM, O LORD
AND LET LIGHT PERPETUAL SHINE UPON THEM

A stanza from the poem *Happy Warriors* by pilot and war poet Arthur Lewis Jenkins was selected by the people of Penrycae in Denbighshire:

SURELY THEY SLEEP CONTENT, OUR VALIANT DEAD
FALLEN UNTIMELY IN THE SAVAGE STRIFE:
THEY HAVE BUT FOLLOWED WHITHER DUTY LED,
TO FIND A FULLER LIFE

Here, the violence of battle is contrasted to contented sleep, mirroring the imagery of the Welsh-language texts above. The final line also alludes to resurrection and eternal life after death.

An interesting quotation on the theme of resurrection, taken from the Book of Ezekiel, can be found on the memorial gates in Cilgerran, Pembrokeshire:

“COME FROM THE FOUR WINDS
OH BREATH, AND BREATHE UPON
THESE SLAIN, THAT THEY MAY LIVE.”

The word “slain” is typical of the language used in the Old Testament, but the image it provokes is assuaged by the thought that the dead might live again, the thought that the loss of life and destruction of the war years might somehow be undone.

Quotations concerned with the ideas of life after death and resurrection, drawn directly from religious doctrine, are not particularly prevalent amongst the memorials studied for this chapter. They appear, more often than not, on church or chapel memorials, in a location where death would naturally be linked to resurrection.

Across Wales, however, whether the memorials were located in a secular or religious setting, and whether the texts were written in Welsh or English, it was the theme of remembrance that seems to have struck a chord. The concept of remembrance was undeniably important, and could be utilised in a number of ways: to supplement the core inscription, to console the bereaved, or to offer moral instruction.

*

The quotations explored above, and many more like them, reflect the sentiments expressed in the core inscriptions, and are representative of the general tone of commemoration in Britain. Divergent narratives do exist, however: there are several memorials using quotations which express inconsolable grief, and even explicitly condemn war.

In contrast to the imagery of heroic and willing sacrifice present in some other quotations, the following line from an *englyn* by the celebrated poet Robert Williams Parry describes death in rather stark terms:

DROS FÔR FE DROES I FARW

(Over the sea he went to die.)

This line was used on the memorial in Bwlchgwyn, Denbighshire, and on the Welsh National War Memorial in Cardiff, Glamorgan. It was one of three literary quotations inscribed on the entrances to the inner of the National Memorial, each corresponding to a sculpture of a serviceman arranged around a central pylon. This line appears over the entrance opposite the sculpture of the sailor.

It is certainly an interesting choice for the National Memorial, especially compared to the English-language text inscribed on the inner frieze of the colonnade, composed by English poet and novelist Sir Henry Newbolt:

REMEMBER HERE IN PEACE THOSE WHO IN TUMULT OF WAR

BY SEA, ON LAND, IN AIR,

FOR US AND FOR OUR VICTORY ENDURED UNTO DEATH.⁷²⁷

But, in fact, all of the Welsh texts are remarkably restrained. The core inscription, seen on the outer frieze of the memorial, is typical of other Welsh-language inscriptions explored in this chapter:

I FEIBION CYMRU A RODDES

EU BYWYD DROS EU GWLAD

YN RHYFEL MCMXIV—MCMXVIII

(To the sons of Wales who gave their lives for their country in the 1914—1918 War.)

Meanwhile, the other two quotations, accompanying the sculptures of the soldier and the airman, are similarly muted:

GER Y FFOS YN GORFFWYSO

(Near the trench—resting.)⁷²⁸

YN Y NWYFRE YN HOFRAN

(Grappling in the central blue.)⁷²⁹

Indeed, the Order of Service printed for the unveiling and dedication ceremony describes that one inscription, intended for the airman, was proposed but dismissed because “the word

⁷²⁷ Sir Henry Newbolt is best remembered for his 1892 poem, *Vitai Lampada*, which spawned many of the war-as-sport metaphors of the First World War.

⁷²⁸ This line is taken from another poem by Robert Williams Parry, entitled *Englynion Coffa Hedd Wyn* (Elegy for Hedd Wyn).

⁷²⁹ This line is taken from an *awdl* (‘ode’) titled *Ymadawiad Arthur* (The Departure of Arthur), with which Thomas Gwynn Jones won the bardic chair at the 1902 National Eisteddfod. It translates literally as ‘hovering in the sky’, but I have used the translation given in the booklet printed for the service of unveiling and dedication, which retains its poetic quality.

‘gallantry’ struck a note that had not been characteristic of the other inscriptions”—a tantalising glimpse into the process of selecting an inscription for a war memorial, and undoubtedly an indication that inscriptions were chosen with deliberation, perhaps to evoke, or to conform to, a certain mood.⁷³⁰ Above all, the Welsh inscriptions on the National Memorial show that the tone of Welsh-language commemoration was consistent at a local and national level.

An extract from another poem by Robert Williams Parry also uses rather blunt language to describe death, and in this case emphasises the distance between home and the grave. The poem was written to commemorate the poet Hedd Wyn, but was found to be appropriate by the villages of Llanddewi Brefi in Cardiganshire, Dyffryn Ardudwy in Merionethshire, and the congregation of Bethel Chapel in Llangyfelach, Glamorgan, to remember their own dead.

GARW RHOI’I BRIDD I’R BRIDDELL

MWYAF GARW MARW YMHELL

(It is cruel that he was given to the earth, but crueller still that he died so far away.)

The quotation laments the fact that the men died and were buried so far away from their homes and families, articulating feelings of loss and anguish shared by many in the interwar period, denied the return of the bodies of their loved ones. As explained in Chapter 5, there is an added significance in these communities using a poem mourning a man who very quickly came to symbolise the loss of thousands of Welsh-speaking men, and the injustices surrounding the relationship between Wales and England. Its use as a headstone inscription is striking enough, but to be quoted on a war memorial, representing an entire community, is highly significant.

⁷³⁰ Glamorgan Archives / Archifau Morgannwg, D985/6/1: Order of Service at the Ceremony of Unveiling and Dedication of the Welsh National War Memorial.

Sorrow and desolation imbue the following line from *Y Gododdin* (The Gododdin), a medieval Welsh poem attributed to the bard Aneurin, which appears on the plaque commemorating the members of Tabernacle Chapel, Bangor, Caernarfonshire:

BYRR EU HOEDL, HIR EU HOED AR EU CARANT

(Short were their lives; long is the grief of those who loved them.)

Y Gododdin consists of a series of elegies and eulogies for men who fell in a battle against a force of vastly superior numbers. Death in battle, destruction and ruin, and the grief of women are repeated themes throughout the poem—themes which certainly would have resonated for Welsh people in the aftermath of the First World War.⁷³¹ It stands in contrast to other medieval influences in postwar commemoration, which dwell on the values of nobility and chivalry and the concept of self-sacrifice, and portray the war as a crusade sanctioned by God. This quotation is a rare example, of course, but it is intriguing, in terms of its tone as well as its source.

Existing literature was drawn upon by many communities, but it was also not uncommon for Welsh poets to compose and contribute verses for their local war memorial. This reflects the importance of poetry within Welsh culture—particularly Welsh language culture—at this time, and the Welsh tradition of the *englyn bedd*, or grave elegy, previously discussed in Chapter 5. One of these original compositions, written by Robert Williams Parry for the memorial in Penygroes, Caernarfonshire, became very well-known, and was later inscribed on the memorials in Bethesda, also in Caernarfonshire, and in Penycae, Denbighshire.

O GOFADAIL GOFIDIAU—TAD A MAM;

⁷³¹ Perhaps the finest piece of Welsh literature in English to emerge from the First World War, the epic prose-poem *In Parenthesis* by David Jones, is heavily inspired by *Y Gododdin*. The narrative of *Y Gododdin* underpins and illuminates all of *In Parenthesis*, providing a perfect framework for Jones' account of the Battle of Mametz Wood and the deaths of his soldier characters.

TYDI MWY, DRWY'R OESAU,
DDYSGI FFORDD I DDWYS GOFFÂU
Y RHWYG O GOLLI'R HOGIAU.

(O, monument to the sorrows of fathers and mothers / You alone will, throughout the ages, teach the
way to solemnly remember the wrench of losing the boys.)

This *englyn* states that the memorial stands not as a testament to heroic sacrifice, nor as a mark of pride and gratitude, but as a permanent reminder of sorrow and loss. Grief is depicted as something physical, a tearing or cleaving, suggesting that it could not be easily processed or relieved. For the communities of Penygroes, Bethesda, and Penycae, commemoration was about solemn remembrance, in which sorrow, the pain of grief, and the loss of the deceased were foregrounded.



Figure 6.4: The memorial at Bethesda, inscribed with the poem composed by Robert Williams Parry. © Author.

Another poem, inscribed on the Celtic cross in Glyndyfrdwy, in the historic county of Merionethshire, also likens the suffering caused by war to a physical injury:

“YSTYRIA FY NGYFAILL PAN EDRYCH AR HON,
A CHOFIA FOD RHYFEL ‘N ARCHOLL EIN BRON.”

(When you look at this [memorial], my friend, consider and remember that war wounds our heart.)

Again, the memorial is seen to serve as a reminder of painful experiences and emotions: it embraces and emphasises grief and suffering, rather than seeking to assuage it. Nothing is known about the author of this poem, nor about the process of selecting the text, but the sentiment must have been accepted by the whole community for it to have been inscribed on the memorial.

The quotations above articulate feelings of grief, desolation, and anguish or anger at the distance between Wales and the graves of the war dead. Other quotations go further, condemning the First World War, and all wars, and praising the laying down of arms.

One of these explicitly anti-war quotations can be found on the memorial in Llanilar, Cardiganshire, a cross on which hangs a sheathed sword and a branch of oak. The memorial commemorates one man, David Morris Evans, who was killed in 1917 and is named on the Arras Memorial in France, and the wording of the core inscription is typical of many other memorials in Wales:

ADEILADWYD GAN
DRIGOLION Y FRO, ER
PARCHUS GOFFADWRIAETH
AM

DAVID MORRIS EVANS,
PENBONT, (1/13TH LONDON REGIMENT)
A SYRTHIODD YN ARRAS, FFRAINIC, TRA’N
BRWYDRO DROS EIN GWLAD
YN Y RHYFEL FAWR MAI 12—1917
YN 31 AIN OED

(Erected by the people of the district in respectful memory of David Morris Evans, Penbont (1/13th London Regiment), who fell in Arras, France, while fighting for our country in the Great War, 12 May 1917, aged 31.)

This core inscription is succeeded, however, by a poignant plea for peace:

“IOR NEF! GWNA DI I RYFEL BEIDIO A BOD,
A’R GWAEDLYD GLEDD I RYDU ER DY GLOD.”

(Lord of Heaven! Make war cease to exist, and let the bloody sword rust in Thy honour.)

The author of this couplet is not known, but their view on war could not be clearer: war is an aberration, and divine intervention is needed to bring about an end to all conflict and violence. As Gwenllian Awbery observes, the memorial inscription balances respect for the dead with pacifist sentiment.⁷³² David Morris Evans is honoured and mourned, but the war in which he died is not condoned—implying, then, that his death is unjustifiable. Any notion of willing sacrifice for a noble cause is entirely absent here.

Another anti-war quotation, taken from a poem by the bard Emrys (William Ambrose), is inscribed on the stone tablet in Capel Pendref, in Bangor, Caernarfonshire, and on the memorial

⁷³² Awbery, ‘The Language of Remembrance’, p. 129.

in Llangynog, Carmarthenshire. The situation in Llangynog is interesting. Here, the core inscription of the memorial is written in English:

REMEMBER
WITH ALL HONOUR THE NAMES OF
[list of names]
WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES FOR THEIR KING AND
EMPIRE IN THE GREAT WAR 1914—1918

Honour, willing sacrifice, and defence of King and Empire are foregrounded in this inscription, phrases characteristic of English-language commemoration. The effect of this wording is enhanced by the physical appearance of the memorial, a cross identical to the Cross of Sacrifice designed by Sir Reginald Blomfield for the IWGC, which combines the Christian symbol of sacrifice with a crusader's sword.⁷³³ A quotation on the theme of bravery or sacrifice might be expected to accompany this core inscription, but the text is actually preceded by the lines written by Emrys:

SEGURDOD YW CLOD Y CLEDD

A RHWD YW EI ANRHYDEDD

(Idleness is praiseworthy in a sword, and rust is its honour.)

⁷³³ See Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory*.



Figure 6.5: The inscription on the memorial at Llangynog. © Author.

The attitude towards war expressed here is completely at odds with the meaning of the English-language inscription and of the memorial itself, and in fact seems to undermine the wording and design of the memorial. Its presence on the memorial prompts a number of questions. How and why was the quotation chosen? Who was responsible for selecting it? And, perhaps most importantly, did the English speakers living in the community of Llangynog realise what was being said in Welsh?

Unfortunately, in the absence of memorial committee records, and with contemporary newspaper coverage equally lacking in information, it is not possible to provide a definite answer to any of these questions. There appears to have been no complaints published in the

contemporary newspapers, suggesting that English speakers were unaware of the meaning of the Welsh quotation, or, if they did understand it, were unbothered by it.

Perhaps there was an awareness that different perceptions of the war existed amongst Welsh speakers as opposed to English speakers? Or perhaps, as Gwenllian Awbery suggests, the Welsh language was indeed used to subvert dominant narratives about war and death in war, facilitated by the diglossic linguistic situation?⁷³⁴ More questions exist than answers, but the use of these texts is still significant in itself, demonstrating the range of opinion present in Welsh-language commemoration.

Although the sombre, despairing, or even pacifist quotations explored in this section are very firmly in the minority, their usage on war memorials, in a public setting, nonetheless implies that the sentiments were shared by entire communities. It shows that there was space in war commemoration for a whole spectrum of emotions and opinions, and that these could be expressed at an individual and collective level. Significantly, all are Welsh-language quotations, demonstrating that the more muted or negative attitudes towards war, death in war, and the experience of bereavement were prevalent amongst Welsh-speaking communities.

*

⁷³⁴ Awbery, 'The Language of Remembrance', p. 129.

Quotations on memorials were selected from a wide variety of sources. Some are more popular than others, used on many memorials in Wales and across Britain, as well as on headstones in war cemeteries, as part of *in memoriam* notices, and during memorial unveiling or Armistice Day services—and were thus embedded in the language and ritual of British war commemoration. Other quotations appear on just a handful of memorials, and some were composed specifically for one memorial. Just like the families of the war dead searching for a personal inscription, war memorial committees and communities in Wales mined all appropriate written sources.

The Bible provided many quotations, inscribed in both English and Welsh. Hymns and poetry were also regularly drawn upon. English or Anglophone writers whose works were sampled include famous figures like Rudyard Kipling, Laurence Binyon, John Oxenham, and Sir John Stanhope Arkwright, and others such as Daphne de Waal, John Maxwell Edmonds, Arthur Lewis Jenkins, Joseph Ellerton, Joseph Lee, and Maurice Baring.

Welsh-language sources include hymn-writers such as Ieuan Glan Geirionydd, and poets ranging from Aneurin, to Ceiriog and Emrys, to Hedd Wyn, Robert Williams Parry, John Brynach Davies, Eifion Wyn, and Thomas Gwynn Jones. Indeed, the quotations found on war memorials in Wales span the entirety of Welsh-language literature: from *Y Gododdin*, one of the earliest surviving works of Welsh poetry, to the poems written during the First World War and in its aftermath.

The quotations dwell on a number of themes. Some are expected: remembrance, heroic sacrifice, a specific cause, and of course the ideas of eternal rest and resurrection inspired by religious beliefs. Others are somewhat surprising: death, portrayed in very stark terms, inconsolable grief, and explicitly anti-war declarations.

It is worth pointing out that there are two ways in which these quotations, just like the core inscriptions, may be framed. They may provide a commentary on the war or the war dead, or they may be focused outwards, constructed as an instruction or a warning. This suggests that there was variation in how communities viewed the purpose of commemoration: was it about simply honouring and remembering the dead, or did it offer an opportunity for moral and social improvement? Memorials may act in either role, and both at the same time, serving as a reminder—and a caution—to historians who would depict commemoration purely as the result of mass bereavement and a need to mourn, on the one hand, or purely as a form of social control, on the other.

Above all, the quotations seen on war memorials in Wales, like the core inscriptions, reflect substantially different attitudes between English-speaking and Welsh-speaking communities, observable on memorials with an inscription in only one language, and on memorials which use both Welsh and English. Each text reflects the opinions and priorities of the people who chose it and were able to understand it, but, at times, it seems possible that the texts written in Welsh work to undermine the narrative typical of English-language inscriptions. This conclusion has significant implications for our understanding of First World War commemoration, and, more broadly, of Welsh society and politics at this time.

6.3 Reflections on war memorial inscriptions

Inscriptions on war memorials across Britain, Angela Gaffney writes in *Aftermath*, often invoked notions of honour, sacrifice, and loyalty, and “memorials in Wales were no exception, whether the sentiments were expressed in Welsh or English”.⁷³⁵ This chapter has shown, undeniably, that this argument is not true. Analysis of each component of the inscriptions of war memorials in Wales has revealed substantial differences in the ways in which the war was remembered between English-speaking and Welsh-speaking communities. English-language inscriptions are shaped by the emotions of pride and gratitude, assert that those commemorated were loyal to their King, country, and Empire, and evoke the ideals of heroism, duty, and sacrifice. In contrast, Welsh-language inscriptions are muted and sombre, rarely utilising the rhetoric of heroic sacrifice, emphasising instead the youth of those commemorated and the loss felt by the whole community in the wake of their deaths.

The conclusions reached in this chapter have posed their own set of questions and opened up several avenues for further research. There is, for example, an opportunity to examine the placement of each language on a war memorial, and, assuming that the dominant language is the primary language of that community, to consider whether this affects the tone of the inscription. A study of war memorial iconography combined with analysis of the inscriptions, to determine whether there is a connection between the design of a particular memorial and the wording of its inscription, would certainly be worthwhile. There is also plenty of scope for similar studies on other bilingual societies, generally and comparatively.

⁷³⁵ Gaffney, *Aftermath*, p. 174.

But while there is clearly a need for further research, this chapter has shown decisively that war memorials in Wales voice two separate and different interpretations of the war, the people who served and died during it, and how to remember the conflict, depending on the language of the inscription. It has intriguing implications for our understanding of war commemoration in Britain, for our knowledge of the relationship between Wales and England, and between Welshness and Englishness, and for our ideas on how war remembrance in twenty-first century Wales might be practised.

Interstice III

A poem written by the bard Cynan (Albert Evans-Jones)

Balâd wrth Gofeb y Milwyr

(Anerchiad *nas* clywir oddiar risiau Cofeb yr un o'n Colegau, Ddydd y Cadoediad)

O fro'r cysgodion gwelw y dof

Yn gennad dros eich bechgyn chwi

I weld pa fodd y cedwch gof

Yng Nghymru am ein diwedd ni,

Ni fynnem glodydd gwag na bri;

Ond beth yw hyn er ein sarhad? —

Carreg a'r celwydd arni hi,

MELYS YW MARW DROS EIN GWLAD.

Pan wneid y galon wyllt yn ddof

Gan frath y fidog ddannedd lli,

A hogwyd gan anghelfydd of,

Neu frath y fwled boeth ei si;

Pan glywit hir, ofnadwy gri

Y siel yn troi yn oerach nâd;

Tybed mai canu a wnaet ti

MELYS YW MARW DROS EIN GWLAD?

Tybed mai melys, waeth lle y trof,
 Fydd gweled *heno* ddawnsio ffri
Gan blant eich budrelwyr? — Rhof
 Y cerrig hyn yn fara i
 Hen ffrindiau'r ffos a'i sifalri
Sydd heddiw'n llwgu am eich brad,
 A chwithau'n canu'n dorf ddi ri
MELYS YW MARW DROS EIN GWLAD.

L'Envoi

Ffrind, yma yng ngwisg yr "O.T.C."
 Am fod y celwydd mewn parhad,
Ryw ddydd fe gofi 'ngeiriau i;
 MELYS YW MARW DROS EIN GWLAD.

Ballade by the War Memorial

(A speech that would *not* be heard on Armistice Day)

From ghostly realms I come, a shade,
 On your dead sons' behalf, to see
What honour, praise, or accolade
 We would return to, not that we
 Would wish for your false eulogy.
But what is this? — the old, old lie
 On stones, to shame our memory:
For one's own land, it's sweet to die.

When the wild heart of youth was made
 Tame by the clumsy artistry
Of some rough blacksmith's bayonet blade,
 Or the hot bullet's ecstasy,
 Or when the shells whined endlessly,
And then became a colder cry,
 Would you still sing so joyously:
For one's own land, it's sweet to die?

But is it sweet to be dismayed
 On seeing those whom we made free,
Through war grown wealthy, while, betrayed,
 My friends who fought for victory
 Now starve: I'd break these stones to be
Bread for old comrades of days gone by
 While you still sing with so much glee—
For one's own land, it's sweet to die.

L'Envoi

Friends, in the colours of the OTC,
One day you will remember why
I challenged such hypocrisy:
For one's own land, it's sweet to die.

(translated from the Welsh by Alan Llwyd)

7 Conclusion

This thesis opened with the *englyn* composed by Robert Williams Parry for the memorial in Penygroes, and it seems appropriate to return to it at the end. It is perhaps difficult, over a century on, to appreciate the shock of the First World War. Of course, Welsh people at the beginning of the twentieth century were no strangers to death, absence, and grief. Mining and other industrial disasters were common: the worst of these, and indeed the worst mining accident to occur in the United Kingdom, was the 1913 explosion at the Universal Colliery in Senghenydd which killed over four hundred people, but other incidents routinely claimed the lives of tens of people at a time. Economic hardships led some Welshmen to emigrate to Canada, Australia, New Zealand, or the United States of America, leaving their parents behind in Wales. Furthermore, although infant mortality was decreasing, census forms show that many families did still suffer the deaths of one or more children in infancy.

Warfare on the scale of the First World War, and death in war, were not, however, a normal or accepted part of everyday life. The drawn-out experience of the war, mass bereavement, and the long-lasting effects of the conflict were all keenly felt in Wales, as elsewhere, and it is easy to see how the memory of the war, and remembering the war, pervaded Welsh society, politics, and cultural life during the 1920s and 1930s. Living with ‘the wrench of losing the boys’ was a long and complicated process.

This thesis has examined a variety of forms of war commemoration performed in Wales and by Welsh people from 1914 to 1939. It focused, firstly, on commemorative rituals such as the placing of an *in memoriam* notice, battlefield pilgrimages and visits, and the services conducted at war memorials, and observed how these rituals incorporated variations that were specific to Wales. It then analysed the wording and meaning of the texts inscribed on war graves and on war memorials, and discovered that significant differences in tone emerge between Welsh-language texts and English-language texts.

Each chapter in this thesis has drawn upon a large body of secondary literature, utilising and developing concepts and conclusions presented by other historians, but has also involved a vast amount of original research, making use of primary sources such as newspapers, council minute books, war memorial committee records, memorial unveiling programmes, the historic enquiry files held by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, as well as war graves and war memorials themselves, and the inscriptions engraved on them. This thesis has therefore added to our existing understanding of war commemoration, but has also broken new ground, particularly in the analysis of the texts inscribed on war graves and war memorials: to my knowledge, Chapters 5 and 6 represent the first time there has been a comprehensive study, involving both quantitative and qualitative research, on either war grave inscriptions or war memorial inscriptions. Significantly, this thesis has also advanced our knowledge of war commemoration in Wales, breaking with a broader trend within the field which tends to use non-English examples for illustrative and not analytical purposes.

Throughout, this thesis has demonstrated that Welsh people showed a determination to remember the war and the war dead in a specifically Welsh way. At times, this resulted in

certain rituals taking on a Welsh character or perspective; at other times, a distinct and somewhat subversive memory of the war emerges, one that was, meaningfully, developed along linguistic lines and thus shared by Welsh speakers. The thesis has therefore revealed the differing attitudes towards war, bereavement, and remembrance that were found in Wales during this time, with intriguing implications for our understanding of war commemoration.

This is, of course, not to suggest that local variations and specificities were found only in Wales. Rather, I have aimed to underline the importance of national, regional, and local studies, and their ability to draw out the nuances in commemorative rituals and narratives, in order to break down the idea of ‘British’ commemoration as a fixed and identical phenomenon, and indeed the vision of Britain as a uniform and unified whole. But it is true that Wales must be considered and discussed as a separate nation with its own distinct language, class structures, political landscape, and religious composition. It is crucial that Wales be shown the same respect and the same scholarly attention that has been given to the other constituent nations of the United Kingdom.

*

Reminders of the war, and remembering the war, were significant features of Welsh life in the 1920s and 1930s. War commemoration intersected with so many things—with everything—and influenced and was influenced by countless events, developments, and movements. Researching and writing this thesis has only made me aware of how much more there is to research and discuss.

I acknowledge the limitations of this thesis and admit that it is not exhaustive. But it was never my intention to write an exhaustive study of First World War commemoration in Wales—but rather to open up avenues of further study and debate. There are numerous subjects that I have not been able to include here that deserve attention. Several chapters, or sections of chapters, could be full-length studies. There is additionally plenty of room for comparative studies, not only with England, Scotland, or Ireland, but also with other nations or regions where two separate cultural identities exist and two languages are used side by side.

This thesis has, nonetheless, made a significant and original contribution to our understanding of war commemoration. It has explored a number of forms of commemorative activity from a Welsh perspective, revisiting the claim that commemoration in Wales followed the same pattern as anywhere else in Britain, and presenting several new findings, particularly on the role the Welsh language played in challenging dominant narratives about the war. There is also important commentary here on the performance of national or cultural identities through war commemoration, the influence of local dynamics and priorities, and the relationship between Wales and England, and Welshness and Englishness, at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Perhaps above all, there is the opportunity to begin a discussion about the future of war commemoration in Wales. At present, the rituals of remembrance that we engage in follow a standard, generalised, and somewhat stagnant script. But this thesis has shown beyond all doubt that Welsh people remembered in their own ways and on their own terms. It is time to realign modern commemoration with the experiences and feelings of those who lived through the war.

Appendices

Appendix I: List of First World War casualties with Welsh-language personal inscriptions

SERVICE NUMBER	SURNAME	FORENAME(S)	RANK
1158	ALLEN	S	GUARDSMAN
332798	AMBROSE	RICHARD	PRIVATE
60702	ARTHUR	EDWARD MANUEL	PRIVATE
1301	AUBREY	WILLIAM GEORGE	GUARDSMAN
74769	BEDDOE	OWEN ARTHUR	GUNNER
126603	BELLIS	J	SAPPER
29118	BENJAMIN	GEORGE	PRIVATE
54429	BENJAMIN	C	PRIVATE
117324	BEVAN	OSWALD	PRIVATE
290206	BEVAN	BRINLEY RICHARD	PRIVATE
	BEVERS	ISAAC GWILYM	SECOND LIEUTENANT
12632	BEYNON	LANCELOT	PRIVATE
5/14540	BONNER	J	PRIVATE
18324	BOWEN	G	CORPORAL
161311	BREEZE	LOTTON	GUNNER
15/1325	BROWN	EBENEZER	PRIVATE
14644	BUNFORD	RICHARD JOHN	CORPORAL
29278	CHARLES	G	PRIVATE
201168	CLOSE	EVAN JAMES	PRIVATE
20500	CLOSE	WILLIAM JOHN	PRIVATE
18201	CRADDOCK	ALBERT	LANCE CORPORAL
1933	DANIEL	THOMAS BENJAMIN	GUARDSMAN
202975	DANIEL	TREVOR	PRIVATE
18763	DAVID	E M	PRIVATE
2160	DAVIES	DAVID MORRIS	SERGEANT
29566	DAVIES	JOHN	PRIVATE
17881	DAVIES	S D	PRIVATE
63057	DAVIES	W	SAPPER
58397	DAVIES	MORGAN REES	PRIVATE
75033	DAVIES	EDWARD	PRIVATE
241723	DAVIES	LLEWELLYN	PRIVATE

21306	DAVIES	DAVID	PRIVATE
DEAL/3477(S)	DAVIES	JAMES	LANCE CORPORAL
25815	DAVIES	EVAN	PRIVATE
20630	DAVIES	JOHN	PRIVATE
15502	DAVIES	THOMAS OWEN	PRIVATE
15470	DAVIES	JOHN ROBERT	PRIVATE
61573	DAVIES	T	PRIVATE
49608	DAVIES	EVAN	PRIVATE
49607	DAVIES	RICHARD	PRIVATE
	DAVIES	ERNEST GLYN	CAPTAIN
174191	DAVIES	DAVID ROBERT	GUNNER
436795	DAVIES	TOM	PRIVATE
424728	DAVIES	THOMAS ROSSER	PRIVATE
756	DAVIES	OWEN	PRIVATE
42471	DAVIES	DAVID WILLIAM	BOMBARDIER
49450	DAVIES	DANIEL	PRIVATE
55267	DAVIES	W V	PRIVATE
25465	DAVIES	DAVID RICHARD	PRIVATE
229970	DAVIES	ROBERT	GUNNER
54589	DAVIES	GORONWY OWEN	PRIVATE
26752	DAVIES	THOMAS LEWIS	PRIVATE
20366	DAVIES	A	LANCE CORPORAL
43794	DAVIES	DANIEL JAMES	PRIVATE
115007	DAVIES	LLOYD	GUNNER
44388	DAVIES	JOHN	PRIVATE
19965	DAVIES	EVAN	LANCE CORPORAL
190066	DAVIES	WILLIAM SAMUEL	GUNNER
46421	DAVIES	WILLIAM	PRIVATE
37132	DAVIES	THOMAS	PRIVATE
88592	DAVIES	THOMAS	PRIVATE
13916	DAVIES	LLEWELLYN OSWALD	PRIVATE
W/5135	DAVIES	DAVID	LANCE BOMBARDIER
15761	DAVIES	JAMES	PRIVATE
W/902	DAVIES	W O	SERGEANT
82357	DAVIES	BRINLEY	DRIVER
64841	DAVIES	GRIFFITH	PRIVATE
906	DAVIES	THOMAS MAELOR	PRIVATE
86740	DAVIES	DAVID JOHN	BOMBARDIER
203689	DAVIES	WILLIAM JONES	PRIVATE
15250	DAVIES	JOHN EDGAR	PRIVATE
21418	DAVIES	G	PRIVATE
	DAVIES	DAVID ETHELSTONE	LIEUTENANT
355317	DAVIES	DAVID WATKIN	PRIVATE
39870	DAVIES	DAVID JOHN	LANCE CORPORAL

14400	DAVIES	DAVID REES	SERGEANT
72993	DAVIES	W J	LANCE CORPORAL
DM2/117601	DAVIES	IVOR	DRIVER
35434	DAVIES	EVAN DAVID	PRIVATE
28947	DAVIES	J	PRIVATE
65351	DAVIES	DAVID JAMES	PRIVATE
	DAVIES	FREDERICK CHARLES	CAPTAIN
240286	DAVIES	DAVID BENJAMIN	COMPANY SERGEANT MAJOR
266472	DAVIES	DAVID LLEWELLYN	PRIVATE
203818	DAVIES	THOMAS	PRIVATE
6746	DAVIES	JOHN	PRIVATE
3566	DEVONALD	DAVID BRINLEY	BOMBARDIER
235774	DRINKWATER	THOMAS	PRIVATE
40399	EBENEZER	JOHN DANIEL	LANCE CORPORAL
	EDWARDS	HYWEL	SECOND LIEUTENANT
36828	EDWARDS	A R	PRIVATE
	EDWARDS	WILLIAM JOHN	SEAMAN
S/3247	EDWARDS	W	RIFLEMAN
310491	EDWARDS	JOHN	GUNNER
17420	EDWARDS	EDWARD	PRIVATE
M2/349143	EDWARDS	WILLIAM RICHARD	PRIVATE
87005	EDWARDS	H O	PRIVATE
33327	EDWARDS	EDWIN	PRIVATE
675	EDWARDS	JOHN SIDNEY	GUARDSMAN
55334	EDWARDS	ARTHUR	PRIVATE
36863	EDWARDS	G O	PRIVATE
203320	EDWARDS	E W	PRIVATE
81735	EDWARDS	W H	PRIVATE
116845	EDWARDS	CHARLES	DRIVER
213066	EDWARDS	THOMAS CHARLES	GUNNER
291305	ELLIS	WILLIAM	PRIVATE
137098	ESAU	D E	DRIVER
W/1445	EVANS	E J	BOMBARDIER
266411	EVANS	ROBERT HENRY	PRIVATE
13921	EVANS	ROBERT	PRIVATE
19136	EVANS	JOSEPH ALBERT	LANCE CORPORAL
200343	EVANS	JOHN	PRIVATE
	EVANS	DAVID WILLIAMS	SECOND LIEUTENANT
81875	EVANS	JOHN EDWARD	PRIVATE
782	EVANS	T	PRIVATE
129818	EVANS	G H	PRIVATE
W/4530	EVANS	THOMAS	GUNNER
38479	EVANS	WILLIAM JAMES	LANCE CORPORAL
447951	EVANS	WILLIAM	PRIVATE

67570	EVANS	RHYS DANIEL	PRIVATE
259444	EVANS	W H	GUNNER
126606	EVANS	JOHN	SAPPER
	EVANS	JOHN	SECOND LIEUTENANT
114274	EVANS	WATKIN LLEWELYN	RIFLEMAN
M2/053041	EVANS	WALTER	CORPORAL
387123	EVANS	JOHN	SAPPER
33284	EVANS	JOHN	PRIVATE
203739	EVANS	ROBERT GRIFFITH	PRIVATE
28998	EVANS	LLEWELYN	PRIVATE
69143	EVANS	EVAN	PRIVATE
53877	EVANS	WILLIAM JOHN	PRIVATE
156259	EVANS	ARTHUR	PRIVATE
	EVANS	SIMON DAVIES	LIEUTENANT
49588	EVANS	WILLIAM EDWARD	PRIVATE
71056	EVANS	HUGH	SAPPER
81734	EVANS	HUGH EDWARD	PRIVATE
310372	EVANS	EVAN GORDON	GUNNER
147701	EVANS	ENOCH STANLEY	SAPPER
26120	EVANS	OWEN	PRIVATE
	EVANS	ROBERT PRITCHARD	SECOND LIEUTENANT
14472	EVANS	GRIFFITH	PRIVATE
R/9439	EVANS	DAVID RICE	RIFLEMAN
94199	EVANS	ARTHUR ZACHARIAH	PRIVATE
27464	EVANS	T J	PRIVATE
40432	EVANS	W A	PRIVATE
33513	EVANS	HUMPHREY	PRIVATE
160172	EVANS	THOMAS EDWARD	PRIVATE
75286	EVANS	DAVID JOHN	PRIVATE
21492	EVANS	GRIFFITH LLOYD	PRIVATE
44132	EVANS	OWEN	PRIVATE
	EVANS	EMRYS	SECOND LIEUTENANT
234318	EVANS	JOHN PARRY	PRIVATE
61117	EVANS	ELLIS HUMPHREY	PRIVATE
138487	EVANS	R	AIR MECHANIC SECOND CLASS
66479	EVANS	HUGH	GUNNER
159513	EVANS	EVAN PIERCE	LANCE CORPORAL
29659	EVANS	ANEURIN MALDWYN	PRIVATE
K/39559	EVANS	ROBERT O	STOKER SECOND CLASS
61673	EVANS	EVAN DAVID	PRIVATE
39185	EVANS	EVAN	CORPORAL
85951	EVANS	EDGAR PROSSER	PRIVATE
26421	EVANS	JOSEPH HENRY	PRIVATE
33024	FELIX	DAVID HENRY	PRIVATE

23449	FOULKES	JOSEPH	PRIVATE
18783	FOX	WILLIAM	PRIVATE
	GEORGE	T	SECOND LIEUTENANT
1725	GOULD	IVOR DAVIES	PRIVATE
	GRIFFITH	OSWALD	LIEUTENANT
39912	GRIFFITH	ELLIS	PRIVATE
73269	GRIFFITHS	JOSEPH	PRIVATE
20752	GRIFFITHS	HUGH PARRY	PRIVATE
4054	GRIFFITHS	W J	PRIVATE
12550	GRIFFITHS	MATTHEW HENRY	LANCE CORPORAL
58345	GRIFFITHS	JOHN	PRIVATE
766923	GRIFFITHS	GARNET	PRIVATE
128155	GRIFFITHS	DAVID JOHN	PRIVATE
88336	GRIFFITHS	HUGH PARRY	SAPPER
24709	GRIFFITHS	SAMUEL	LANCE CORPORAL
581	GRIFFITHS	EVAN EVANS	PRIVATE
40109	GRIFFITHS	ROBERT BENJAMIN	PRIVATE
57935	GRIFFITHS	RHYS	PRIVATE
73954	GRIFFITHS	DAVID	PRIVATE
69416	GRIFFITHS	RICHARD	PRIVATE
285128	GRIFFITHS	DAVID GOMER	PRIVATE
39580	GRIFFITHS	JAMES	PRIVATE
	GRONOW	CHARLES DAVID	SECOND LIEUTENANT
91945	HARLEY	JOHN ARTHUR	DRIVER
150308	HARPER	EVAN KYFFIN	GUNNER
15031	HARRIES	GWILYM JOHN	SERGEANT
616	HARRIES	THOMAS JAMES	RIFLEMAN
840925	HARRIS	REES HOWELL	GUNNER
22281	HARRIS	W	LANCE CORPORAL
79690	HARRIS	H R	GUNNER
48941	HARRIS	DANIEL	PRIVATE
4715	HARRIS	DAVID RIXON	PRIVATE
79543	HARRIS	WILLIAM JOHN	PRIVATE
196067	HENRY	G J	PIONEER
40970	HERBERT	JAMES PRICE	LANCE CORPORAL
49758	HICKS	WALTER RAYMOND	PRIVATE
19901	HILL	RHYS IVOR	CORPORAL
37122	HILL	GEORGE	PRIVATE
	HINDS	WILLIAM PUGH	LIEUTENANT
14541	HOPKINS	HOPKIN	PRIVATE
2620	HOPKINS	SIDNEY	GUNNER
	HOWELL	RICHARD DAVID	SECOND LIEUTENANT
	HOWELL	THOMAS	CHAPLAIN FOURTH CLASS
92196	HOWELLS	WILLIAM GEORGE	PRIVATE

17967	HOWELLS	JAMES TREHARNE	PRIVATE
79886	HOWELLS	JOHN THOMAS	SAPPER
88942	HOWELLS	T J	PRIVATE
371373	HOWELLS	GRAHAM	GUNNER
WR/195804	HUGHES	J	SAPPER
28071	HUGHES	WILLIAM GRIFFITH	PRIVATE
44973	HUGHES	SIMON	PRIVATE
201220	HUGHES	W	PRIVATE
184403	HUGHES	HOWELL TUDOR	GUNNER
19035	HUGHES	WILLIAM HENRY	PRIVATE
40893	HUGHES	W R	PRIVATE
5100	HUGHES	W	GUNNER
25861	HUGHES	JOHN	PRIVATE
21638	HUGHES	OWEN J	PRIVATE
10554	HUGHES	WILLIAM	PRIVATE
69871	HUGHES	HUGH THOMAS	PRIVATE
55223	HUGHES	DAVID	PRIVATE
56109	HUGHES	J	PRIVATE
6282	HUGHES	T J	SAPPER
29447	HUGHES	THOMAS GLYNN	PRIVATE
42695	HUGHES	JOHN HENRY	PRIVATE
A/20859 / 420859	HUGHES	WILLIAM	PRIVATE
84486	HUGHES	R	PRIVATE
114152	HUGHES	ROBERT HUGH	GUNNER
13926	HUGHES	DAVID JOHN	PRIVATE
149616	HUGHES	WILLIAM DAVID	SAPPER
202528	HUGHES	ROBERT ISAAC	PRIVATE
14881	HUGHES	THOMAS J	PRIVATE
203688	HUMPHREYS	T	PRIVATE
904354	HUMPHREYS	WILLIAM	PRIVATE
54007	HUSBAND	THOMAS	LANCE CORPORAL
532667 (5589)	JAMES	TOM ARTHUR	PRIVATE
1454	JAMES	A	GUARDSMAN
267081	JAMES	SAMUEL	PRIVATE
4804	JAMES	DAVID THOMAS	SERGEANT
503230	JAMES	RICHARD	SAPPER
BZ/571	JAMES	EVAN T	ABLE SEAMAN
W/1341	JAMES	EDGAR LEWIS	DRIVER
29195	JAMES	ARTHUR	PRIVATE
46290	JENKINS	ALFRED	PRIVATE
23353	JENKINS	JOSEPH CYRIL WYNNE	PRIVATE
56604	JENKINS	DAVID	PRIVATE
M/349914	JENKINS	E	PRIVATE
35538	JENKINS	OWEN	LANCE CORPORAL

81462	JENKINS	ARTHUR MEREDITH	PRIVATE
226584	JENKINS	WILLIAM	PIONEER
166601	JEREMY	DAVID	GUNNER
17869	JERVIS	R	PRIVATE
43591	JOHN	D	SAPPER
320374	JOHN	JOHN JAMES	PRIVATE
162165	JOHN	TREVOR	PRIVATE
54504	JOHN	JOHN	PRIVATE
41378	JOHN	DEWI ELWYN	PRIVATE
	JOHN	IORWERTH GLYNDWR	SECOND LIEUTENANT
105809	JONES	JOHN	GUNNER
266589	JONES	JOHN R	PRIVATE
24719	JONES	ROBERT	PRIVATE
265723	JONES	OWEN	PRIVATE
216769	JONES	J J	SAPPER
265469	JONES	R	LANCE SERGEANT
38509	JONES	OWEN ARTHUR	PRIVATE
26433	JONES	JOHN RICHARD	PRIVATE
4377	JONES	H G	RIFLEMAN
18151	JONES	HENRY	PRIVATE
WR/355251	JONES	THOMAS HENRY	SAPPER
30418	JONES	EDGAR	PRIVATE
35285	JONES	R W	PRIVATE
20432	JONES	ROBERT EVAN	PRIVATE
20583	JONES	HUGH JOHN	PRIVATE
266448	JONES	E	PRIVATE
PALACE Z/3699	JONES	WILLIAM HENRY	ABLE SEAMAN
2075	JONES	EVAN	PRIVATE
91122	JONES	WILLIAM ROBERTS	PRIVATE
42533	JONES	E	PRIVATE
332013	JONES	R	PRIVATE
24617	JONES	EVAN GORDON	PRIVATE
22135	JONES	JAMES MORRIS	PRIVATE
17392	JONES	THOMAS HARRI	PRIVATE
121728	JONES	A	SECOND CORPORAL
28023	JONES	JOHN	CORPORAL
144815	JONES	PHILIP REES	PRIVATE
203590	JONES	R	PRIVATE
34749	JONES	DAVID HENRY	CORPORAL
25064	JONES	DAVID GRIFFITH	PRIVATE
S/17888	JONES	JOHN	PRIVATE
53748	JONES	HUGH	PRIVATE
61188	JONES	ROBERT	PRIVATE
	JONES	JAMES THOMAS	SECOND LIEUTENANT

265875	JONES	WILLIAM HUMPHREY	LANCE CORPORAL
25807	JONES	JOHN HAYDN	DRIVER
202827	JONES	LLEWELLYN	LANCE CORPORAL
48022	JONES	T	PRIVATE
	JONES	W E	CHAPLAIN FOURTH CLASS
25095	JONES	JOHN DANIEL	PRIVATE
653423	JONES	WILLIAM	RIFLEMAN
W/298	JONES	WILLIAM ELLIS	SERGEANT
235388	JONES	JOHN C	PRIVATE
54409	JONES	WILLIAM ARTHUR	PRIVATE
7342	JONES	ISAAC PRICE	PRIVATE
265670	JONES	WILLIAM	SERGEANT
121735	JONES	ROBERT EVAN	SAPPER
225863	JONES	EDGAR WILLIAM	LANCE CORPORAL
13345	JONES	ROBERT	PRIVATE
266595	JONES	T	PRIVATE
21849	JONES	LEWIS	PRIVATE
200550	JONES	R T	PRIVATE
171927	JONES	BENJAMIN	GUNNER
310444	JONES	W T	GUNNER
18566	JONES	GWILYM REES	CORPORAL
49870	JONES	T H	PRIVATE
38508	JONES	DAVID THOMAS	PRIVATE
G/20767	JONES	OWEN	PRIVATE
31234	JONES	D	PRIVATE
22222	JONES	HUGH RICHARD	PRIVATE
271452	JONES	DAVID	PIONEER
200300	JONES	CHARLES HERBERT	SERGEANT
36627	JONES	WILLIAM EDWARD	LANCE CORPORAL
8481	JONES	HENRY	PRIVATE
91446	JONES	J O	PRIVATE
84810	JONES	JOHN STEPHEN	GUNNER
15228	JONES	R P	PRIVATE
36297	JONES	DAVID RICHARD	PRIVATE
	JONES	THOMAS WILLIAM	LIEUTENANT
130582	JONES	E J	LANCE CORPORAL
310424	JONES	JOHN ELLIS	GUNNER
2279	JONES	LOUIS	PRIVATE
50779	JONES	JOHN	PRIVATE
29697	JONES	ENOS	GUNNER
	JONES	SIM J	LIEUTENANT
1784	JONES	JOHN GREGSON	GUARDSMAN
123626	JONES	JOHN REES	PRIVATE
40372	JONES	W	PRIVATE

40217	JONES	LLEWELYN	PRIVATE
188952	JONES	THOMAS	GUNNER
74114	JONES	WILLIAM R	PRIVATE
54797	JONES	EDWARD	PRIVATE
51682	JONES	BENJAMIN	PRIVATE
54620	JONES	RICHARD	PRIVATE
60748	JONES	D F	PRIVATE
10959	JONES	ELIAS	PRIVATE
168240	JONES	EDWARD	GUNNER
2841	JONES	THOMAS HUGH	GUARDSMAN
161036	JONES	THOMAS D	GUNNER
50063	JONES	L M	PRIVATE
320238	JONES	THOMAS JOHN	PRIVATE
33495	JONES	THOMAS	PRIVATE
401047	JONES	GRIFFITH HARTLEY	PRIVATE
268541	JONES	EDWARD LEWIS	PRIVATE
387683	JONES	GWILYM	SAPPER
700793	JONES	ROBERT EVAN	PRIVATE
54560	JONES	ROBERT J HOWELLS	SERGEANT
40309	JONES	GRIFFITH EDWIN	PRIVATE
25942	JONES	IDWAL SAMUEL	PRIVATE
334	JONES	WILLIAM	CORPORAL
21381	JONES	WATKIN	PRIVATE
7339	JONES	W C	PRIVATE
29252	JONES	ROBERT	GUNNER
164708	JONES	GORONWY	LANCE CORPORAL
10089	JONES	JOHN IVOR	PRIVATE
29509	JONES	NATHANIEL BEBB	PRIVATE
43634	JONES	EVAN TOM	PRIVATE
30656	JONES	T	PRIVATE
370072	JONES	TREVOR	PRIVATE
28269	JONES	R S	PRIVATE
2738	JONES	OWEN	GUARDSMAN
125618	JONES	JOHN OWEN	PRIVATE
	JONES	DAVID	SECOND LIEUTENANT
11710	JONES	HUMPHREY	PRIVATE
292188	JONES	W	PRIVATE
1347	JONES	J	PRIVATE
74170	JONES	WILLIAM	PRIVATE
106380	JONES	ROBERT HENRY	GUNNER
241150	JONES	WILLIAM	LANCE CORPORAL
3015	JONES	DANIEL EVANS	GUARDSMAN
37344	JONES	THOMAS	PRIVATE
53859	JONES	IFOR	PRIVATE

73506	JONES	EVAN WILLIAM	PRIVATE
	JONES	GWILYM ARTHUR TEGID	LIEUTENANT
DM2/164823	JONES	HUGH	PRIVATE
R/4677	JONES	HUGH HUGHES	ABLE SEAMAN
40302	JONES	DAVID	PRIVATE
20249	JONES	JOHN	PRIVATE
P/6572	JONES	D	LANCE CORPORAL
34129	JONES	N	PRIVATE
2509	JONES	ROBERT HUMPHREY	PRIVATE
17283	JONES	ALUN MABON	PRIVATE
	JONES	JOHN HUGH	ABLE SEAMAN
93935	JONES	JOHN	PRIVATE
27894	JONES	THOMAS WYNNE	PRIVATE
3061	JONES	D	CORPORAL
29210	JONES	J E	GUNNER
203726	JONES	HENRY	PRIVATE
54824	JONES	THOMAS JOHN	PRIVATE
55239	JONES	WILLIAM	PRIVATE
	JONES	EVAN LEWIS	SECOND LIEUTENANT
5352	JONES	JOHN THOMAS	PRIVATE
18176	JONES	D	PRIVATE
202697	JONES	TECWYN	PRIVATE
R/9434	JONES	JOSEPH EMRYS	CORPORAL
26127	JONES	WILLIAM ARTHUR	PRIVATE
79521	JONES	DANIEL JAMES	GUNNER
266317	JONES	WILLIAM LLOYD	PRIVATE
48311	JONES	GRIFFITH JOHN	SERGEANT
93756	JONES	WILLIAM	PRIVATE
40692	JONES	HUGHIE	PRIVATE
446269	JONES	ARTHUR	PRIVATE
240104	JONES	ALFRED	LANCE SERGEANT
	JONES	EVAN GWILYM	SECOND LIEUTENANT
90236	JONES	THOMAS	PRIVATE
243704	JONES	JOHN	GUNNER
19138	JONES	JOHN HENRY	LANCE CORPORAL
69617	JONES	ARTHUR	PRIVATE
292299	JONES	LLEWELYN WYN	PRIVATE
43590	JONES	JOHN LEWIS	PRIVATE
204315	JONES	JOHN OSWALD	PRIVATE
320234	JONES	JOHN	PRIVATE
302390	JOSEPH	JOSEPH RICHARD	LANCE CORPORAL
	KEEPFER	WILLIAM ROBERT CYRIL	SECOND LIEUTENANT
G/13230	LAUGHARNE	WILLIAM THOMAS	PRIVATE

6246	LAWRENCE	C	LANCE CORPORAL
202542	LEWIS	E	PRIVATE
23756	LEWIS	DAVID	PRIVATE
3446	LEWIS	DANIEL	GUARDSMAN
98557	LEWIS	E T	GUNNER
23346	LEWIS	ROBERT	PRIVATE
2827	LEWIS	DAVID WILLIAM	DRIVER
76673	LEWIS	HENRY	PRIVATE
12089	LEWIS	JOHN	PRIVATE
S/4251	LEWIS	JONATHAN	RIFLEMAN
88713	LEWIS	JOHN DAVID	GUNNER
22130	LEWIS	A	PRIVATE
267153	LEWIS	W	PRIVATE
29232	LEWIS	EMYR H	PRIVATE
1386	LEWIS	WILLIAM THOMAS	PRIVATE
201357	LEWIS	ELLIS	PRIVATE
S/18422	LEWIS	EVAN TOM	PRIVATE
14134	LEWIS	W G	PRIVATE
58428	LEWIS	JOHN DAVID	PRIVATE
14019	LEWIS	W	PRIVATE
291018	LEWIS	WILLIAM JOHN	PRIVATE
1955	LEYSHON	LEYSHON JAMES	PRIVATE
371963	LLEWELLYN	WILLIAM DAVID	LANCE CORPORAL
125837	LLEWELYN	JACOB DILLWYN	PRIVATE
69272	LLOYD	HUMPHREY	PRIVATE
29556	LLOYD	DAVID	PRIVATE
61528	LLOYD	M	PRIVATE
23726	LLOYD	ROBERT THOMAS	PRIVATE
245129	LLOYD	WILLIAM DAVID	LANCE CORPORAL
	LLOYD	JOHN LEWIS	CAPTAIN
54257	LLOYD	DAVID	PRIVATE
87229	LLOYD	ROBERT	PRIVATE
	LLOYD-WILLIAMS	KELYTH PIERCE	SECOND LIEUTENANT
1609	LOUGHER	DAVID WILLIAM	PRIVATE
48505	MAINWARING	WILLIAM	SAPPER
48405	MAINWARING	DAN	PIONEER
	MEREDITH	ARTHUR LLEWELLYN	SECOND LIEUTENANT
267315	MICHAEL	DAVID	PRIVATE
	MILLS	ROBERT HENRY	MAJOR
54232	MORGAN	ALWYN	PRIVATE
291462	MORGAN	EVAN	PRIVATE
B/20341	MORGAN	W I	PRIVATE
14340	MORGAN	G F	PRIVATE
73176	MORGAN	THOMAS	PRIVATE

72957	MORGAN	DAVID ELIAS	PRIVATE
	MORGAN	ALFRED	SECOND LIEUTENANT
	MORGAN	EMLYN THOMAS	LIEUTENANT
229883	MORGAN	D	PRIVATE
60697	MORGAN	JOSEPH OWEN	PRIVATE
94601	MORGAN	HEZEKIAH	AIR MECHANIC SECOND CLASS
75544	MORGAN	LEMUEL GARNET	PRIVATE
23562	MORGAN	JOHN	PRIVATE
	MORGAN	BRINLEY ARTHUR	SECOND LIEUTENANT
19293	MORGAN	HOPKIN	PRIVATE
W/5508	MORGAN	WALTER EWART	GUNNER
5287	MORGAN	HARRY	PRIVATE
202934	MORGANS	THOMAS	CORPORAL
525	MORGANS	DAVID JAMES	GUARDSMAN
36247	MORGANS	JOHN	PRIVATE
S/14869	MORGANS	MORGAN	PRIVATE
	MORGANS	THOMAS	SECOND LIEUTENANT
29247	MORGANS	DAVID THOMAS	PRIVATE
21128	MORRIS	MICHAEL	PRIVATE
202027	MORRIS	D C	PRIVATE
39645	MORRIS	HUGH	PRIVATE
	MORRIS	WILLIAM	CAPTAIN
	MORRIS	JAMES	LIEUTENANT
648321	MORRIS	JOHN THOMAS	PRIVATE
6053	MORRIS	EVAN LLOYD	CORPORAL
46381	MORRIS	BENJAMIN	PRIVATE
155380	MORRIS	HAYDN GWION	PIONEER
40126	MORRIS	HUGH	PRIVATE
W/674	MORRIS	R O	DRIVER
21957	MORRIS	R	PRIVATE
200614	MORRIS	EBEN	PRIVATE
19865	MORRIS	EMRYS	PRIVATE
40890	MORRIS	OWEN	PRIVATE
	MORRIS	ROBERT PARRY	CAPTAIN
54510	MORRIS	RICHARD EDWARD	PRIVATE
M/321457	MORSE	TOM	SERGEANT
155373	MORT	DAVID ARTHUR	PRIVATE
531153	NICHOLAS	JOSEPH HAYDN	CORPORAL
	NICHOLAS	JOHN ALLEN	CAPTAIN
54631	OLIVER	DAVID	PRIVATE
M2/073324	OWEN	THOMAS JOHN	PRIVATE
73182	OWEN	LEWIS ROBERTS	PRIVATE
23309	OWEN	OWEN	SERGEANT
46866	OWEN	TREVOR	PRIVATE

203798	OWEN	LEWIS	PRIVATE
670869	OWEN	OWEN JONAH	PRIVATE
25208	OWEN	RICHARD	SERGEANT
130586	OWEN	DANIEL	PIONEER
54149	OWEN	THOMAS	PRIVATE
72826	OWEN	EDWARD O	LANCE CORPORAL
78005	OWEN	G	PRIVATE
40905	OWEN	OWEN RAWSON	LANCE CORPORAL
9677	OWEN	FRANK	DRIVER
285370	OWEN	R R	PRIVATE
48735	OWEN	D	PRIVATE
73789	OWEN	WILLIAM	PRIVATE
40359	OWEN	D	PRIVATE
21892	OWEN	EBENEZER JAMES	CORPORAL
44030	OWEN	GRIFFITH JOHN	PRIVATE
73785	OWEN	THOMAS ARTHUR	PRIVATE
	OWEN	VERNON E	SECOND LIEUTENANT
	OWEN	WILLIAM HENRY KENRICK	LIEUTENANT
267281	OWEN	WILLIAM	PRIVATE
251882	OWEN	J A	SAPPER
40042	OWEN	DAVID PIERCE	PRIVATE
42308	OWEN	WALTER GLYN	PRIVATE
9234	OWEN	EDWARD JOHN	PRIVATE
	OWEN	GRIFFITH CHRISTMAS	SECOND LIEUTENANT
265218	OWEN	WILLIE	LANCE CORPORAL
66134	OWEN	ROBERT EVAN	PRIVATE
32307	OWEN	THOMAS	PRIVATE
266510	OWEN	HENRY JONES	PRIVATE
90685	OWEN	DAVID LLOYD	PRIVATE
T2/9501	OWENS	HARRY	SERGEANT
73932	OWENS	OWEN	PRIVATE
7/45055	OWENS	JOHN	PRIVATE
559	OWENS	JOHN	PRIVATE
345583	OWENS	DAVID	PRIVATE
15227	OWENS	JOHN	PRIVATE
1349	PARRY	W	PRIVATE
310577	PARRY	WILLIAM	GUNNER
68453	PARRY	ARTHUR	PRIVATE
31077	PARRY	R J	SAPPER
687439	PARRY	JOHN ARMFIELD	LANCE CORPORAL
3199	PARRY	IVOR VAUGHAN	PRIVATE
44077	PARRY	THOMAS LLEWELYN	PRIVATE
203183	PARRY	WILLIAM	PRIVATE
WR/261751	PARRY	EVAN	SAPPER

	PARRY	DAVID THOMAS	SECOND LIEUTENANT
57283	PARRY	DOUGLAS	PRIVATE
135523	PARRY	DAVID	CLERK
265231	PARRY	O W	PRIVATE
87421	PARRY	JOSIAH	PRIVATE
17546	PARRY	EDWARD	PRIVATE
15537	PARRY	HUGH	PRIVATE
357245	PARRY	HAROLD	PRIVATE
203396	PARRY	D J	PRIVATE
28074	PARRY	ROBERT HENRY	PRIVATE
257558	PARRY	HENRY RICHARD	PRIVATE
290651	PARRY-JONES	JOHN	LANCE SERGEANT
618314	PHILLIPS	WILLIAM	GUNNER
54113	PHILLIPS	BENJAMIN	PRIVATE
15448	PHILLIPS	CERWYN EWART	PRIVATE
320314	PHILLIPS	JAMES HOWELL	LANCE CORPORAL
	PHILLIPS	GWILYM	SECOND LIEUTENANT
260177	PHILLIPS	IDRIS	PRIVATE
291354	POWELL	R	PRIVATE
16676	POWELL	EDGAR (DAVID EDGAR?)	PRIVATE
	POWELL	DAFYDD EMRYS	LIEUTENANT
131900	POWNALL	WILLIAM HUGH	GUNNER
1855	PRICE	WILLIAM HENRY	PRIVATE
39140	PRICE	PETER	PRIVATE
13036	PRICE	WILLIAM POWELL	LANCE CORPORAL
130542	PRICE	ROGER	PRIVATE
443355	PRICE	RICHARD THOMAS	SAPPER
	PRICHARD	THOMAS LEWIS	CAPTAIN
29287	PRITCHARD	W R	PRIVATE
2217	PRITCHARD	ISAAC	PRIVATE
53872	PRITCHARD	ROBERT O	PRIVATE
25511	PRITCHARD	OWEN	PRIVATE
54087	PRITCHARD	JOHN	PRIVATE
6869	PRITCHARD	JAMES	PRIVATE
29579	PRITCHARD	WILLIAM JOHN	PRIVATE
266274	PRITCHARD	OWEN	PRIVATE
40856	PRITCHARD	WILLIAM JOHN	PRIVATE
291376	PRITCHARD	JOHN	PRIVATE
139291	PUGH	LEWIS RHYS	GUNNER
2365	PUGH	RICHARD	PRIVATE
355546	READ	R	SERGEANT
	REES	MORGAN JAMES	CAPTAIN
34450	REES	REES	PRIVATE
12581	REES	DANIEL	PRIVATE

368241	REES	DANIEL	PRIVATE
19976	REES	LEWIS THOMAS	PRIVATE
204750	REES	JOHN	PRIVATE
	REES	ROBERT GRIFFITH	LIEUTENANT
58539	REES	CHRISTMAS JACOB	PRIVATE
201535	REES	BENJAMIN SIMON	PRIVATE
64073	REES	GEORGE	PRIVATE
200879	REES	R W	PRIVATE
	REES	JOHN CYRIL	SECOND LIEUTENANT
30142	REES	TYDWAL	PRIVATE
3094	REES	GRIFFITH HENRY	PRIVATE
2720	REES	GEORGE GORDON	GUARDSMAN
30885	REYNOLDS	ROLAND	PRIVATE
244531	RICHARDS	WILLIAM JOHN	LIEUTENANT
31742	RICHARDS	HENRY MORGAN	PRIVATE
53229	ROBERTS	DAVID	PRIVATE
3603	ROBERTS	R L	GUNNER
201101	ROBERTS	ROBERT	LANCE CORPORAL
25643	ROBERTS	RICHARD	PRIVATE
T4/263172	ROBERTS	R H	DRIVER
288051	ROBERTS	THOMAS CYRIL	PRIVATE
204476	ROBERTS	ROBERT	PRIVATE
203969	ROBERTS	EVAN	PRIVATE
36628	ROBERTS	H	PRIVATE
R/1877	ROBERTS	WILLIAM	ABLE SEAMAN
67601	ROBERTS	WILLIAM HENRY	AIR MECHANIC SECOND CLASS
114194	ROBERTS	HUGH MICHAEL	GUNNER
23335	ROBERTS	ROBERT	CORPORAL
	ROBERTS	THOMAS	LIEUTENANT
	ROBERTS	THOMAS OWEN	SECOND LIEUTENANT
54652	ROBERTS	THOMAS WILLIAM	PRIVATE
201958	ROBERTS	EVAN REES	PRIVATE
54579	ROBERTS	LEWIS JOHN	PRIVATE
47573	ROBERTS	E	PRIVATE
43688	ROBERTS	THOMAS JOHN	PRIVATE
266579	ROBERTS	A L	PRIVATE
25938	ROBERTS	RICHARD HUMPHREYS	PRIVATE
203626	ROBERTS	LLEWELYN ROBERTS	PRIVATE
44039	ROBERTS	D A	PRIVATE
61123	ROBERTS	OWEN	PRIVATE
291171	ROBERTS	ROBERT	PRIVATE
R/3417	ROBERTS	ROBERT WILLIAM	ABLE SEAMAN
40142	ROBERTS	OWEN	PRIVATE
71105	ROBERTS	EVAN RICHARD	SAPPER

11451	ROBERTS	BENJAMIN	SERGEANT
265621	ROBERTS	THOMAS	LANCE CORPORAL
58858	ROBERTS	WILLIAM	PRIVATE
54108	ROBERTS	WILLIAM	CORPORAL
3519	ROBERTS	DAVID JOHN	PRIVATE
18393	ROBERTS	WILLIAM	PRIVATE
13439	ROBERTS	DAVID	PRIVATE
3190	ROBERTS	JOHN	PRIVATE
3001	ROBERTS	THOMAS	GUARDSMAN
15563	ROBERTS	RHYS	PRIVATE
61140	ROBERTS	WILLIAM	PRIVATE
21703	ROBERTS	W	PRIVATE
150571	ROBERTS	GEORGE ALBERT	GUNNER
69694	ROBERTS	GRIFFITH	PRIVATE
290888	ROBERTS	WILLIAM	PRIVATE
552364	ROBERTS	JOHN WILLIAM	CORPORAL
79702	ROBERTS	HUGHIE	LANCE CORPORAL
201885	ROBERTS	WILLIAM	PRIVATE
	ROBERTS	VICTOR GEORGE	SECOND LIEUTENANT
O39828	ROBERTS	JOHN ALUN	PRIVATE
61051	ROBERTS	WILLIAM	PRIVATE
432404	ROBERTS	REES LLOYD	CORPORAL
	ROBERTS	DAVID CHARLES	SECOND LIEUTENANT
91837	ROBERTS	RICHARD	PRIVATE
	RODERICK	HUME BUCKLEY	CAPTAIN
1451	ROGERS	D	LANCE CORPORAL
20463	ROGERS	GEORGE L	PRIVATE
150556	ROWLANDS	J E	GUNNER
19964	ROWLANDS	EVAN DAVID	LANCE CORPORAL
15352	SALMON	WILLIAM ERNEST	PRIVATE
35478	SHELBY	CLEDWYN	PRIVATE
48856	STANFORD	ISLWYN	LANCE CORPORAL
156560	STEPHENS	WILLIAM DAVID	GUNNER
282516	STURDY	D	GUNNER
200214	STURDY	HARRY	SERGEANT
1298	THOMAS	WILLIAM	LANCE CORPORAL
268247	THOMAS	ARTHUR	PRIVATE
17891	THOMAS	D	PRIVATE
48332	THOMAS	DANIEL EDGAR	PRIVATE
166492	THOMAS	WILLIAM JOHN	SAPPER
	THOMAS	JOHN MEURIG	SECOND LIEUTENANT
42471	THOMAS	JOSHUA	SHOEING SMITH
29525	THOMAS	WILLIAM	SERGEANT
75162	THOMAS	LUTHER JENKIN	PRIVATE

38555	THOMAS	DAVID OSWALD	PRIVATE
39897	THOMAS	GRIFFITH JOHN	CORPORAL
33782	THOMAS	JOHN JAMES	PRIVATE
57071	THOMAS	EVAN JAMES	PRIVATE
55672	THOMAS	GWYN	CORPORAL
125782	THOMAS	DANIEL	PRIVATE
39304	THOMAS	THOMAS REES	PRIVATE
WR/289716	THOMAS	HUGH	SAPPER
1003	THOMAS	TOMMY	PRIVATE
171623	THOMAS	THOMAS	GUNNER
	THOMAS	THOMAS	CAPTAIN
45409	THOMAS	JENKIN	PRIVATE
	THOMAS	LLEWELYN	SECOND LIEUTENANT
34154	THOMAS	LEWIS	PRIVATE
3193	THOMAS	DAVID	GUARDSMAN
78054	THOMAS	WILLIE PARRY	PRIVATE
198641	THOMAS	ARTHUR	GUNNER
12467	THOMAS	D	PRIVATE
54597	THOMAS	THOMAS GWYNFOR	PRIVATE
41299	THOMAS	J	PRIVATE
290390	THOMAS	J	PRIVATE
106526	THOMAS	DILLWYN	CORPORAL
32796	THOMAS	T	CORPORAL
80686	THOMAS	WILLIAM	PRIVATE
525494	THOMAS	O	PRIVATE
75091	THOMAS	GWYTHYR BARCLEY	PRIVATE
	THOMAS	THOMAS	LIEUTENANT
14035	THOMAS	HOWELL	PRIVATE
46748	THOMAS	JOHN	PRIVATE
75173	THOMAS	WILLIAM JOHN	PRIVATE
K/51445	THOMAS	DAVID	STOKER SECOND CLASS
238185	THOMAS	T	PRIVATE
40680	THOMAS	JOHN	PRIVATE
29616	THOMAS	W O	PRIVATE
14956	THOMAS	JOHN	SERGEANT
20915	THOMAS	ROBERT OWEN	LANCE CORPORAL
29204	THOMAS	WALTER GWYN	PRIVATE
282394	THOMAS	RHYS MADDOCKS	PRIVATE
355874	THOMAS	JOHN RHYS	CORPORAL
2591	THOMAS	ADOLPHUS	GUARDSMAN
2415	THOMAS	HUGH	GUARDSMAN
730936	TOWY RHYS	IVOR	DRIVER
46909	TURK	GEORGE	PRIVATE
216495	TWIST	DAVID ROBERTS	CORPORAL

50028	VALENTINE	W T	LANCE CORPORAL
	VAUGHAN	JOHN DAVID	SECOND LIEUTENANT
	VENMORE	JAMES FREDERICK	LIEUTENANT
542471	WAGG	BENJAMIN	SAPPER
	WALTERS	DAVID	SECOND LIEUTENANT
TS/10286	WATKIN	DAVID	SADDLER
16294	WATKINS	D G	PRIVATE
1314	WATKINS	EDWARD	PRIVATE
	WIGLEY	LEWIS	FIRST ENGINEER
1778	WILCOXON	JOSEPH OSWALD	GUARDSMAN
R/1811	WILLIAMS	T	ABLE SEAMAN
5969	WILLIAMS	W	PRIVATE
T4/058348	WILLIAMS	DAVID	DRIVER
146081	WILLIAMS	DAVID EDWARD	SAPPER
21104	WILLIAMS	E J	PRIVATE
35598	WILLIAMS	T	LANCE CORPORAL
265580	WILLIAMS	ROBERT	SERGEANT
265729	WILLIAMS	WILLIAM JOHN	PRIVATE
WALES Z/2398	WILLIAMS	JOHN	ABLE SEAMAN
16297	WILLIAMS	RICHARD	LANCE CORPORAL
91382	WILLIAMS	R J	AIR MECHANIC THIRD CLASS
82050	WILLIAMS	RICHARD EMRYS	AIR MECHANIC THIRD CLASS
150480	WILLIAMS	DAVID	GUNNER
54311	WILLIAMS	R E	PRIVATE
310418	WILLIAMS	WILLIAM GRIFFITH	GUNNER
69252	WILLIAMS	R D	PRIVATE
14842	WILLIAMS	W	PRIVATE
43195	WILLIAMS	J G	PRIVATE
290431	WILLIAMS	THOMAS JOHN	LANCE CORPORAL
	WILLIAMS	JOHN	CAPTAIN
25576	WILLIAMS	J	PRIVATE
59743	WILLIAMS	J J	PRIVATE
345654	WILLIAMS	ROBERT CHARLES	PRIVATE
43792	WILLIAMS	REES MEREDITH	PRIVATE
265668	WILLIAMS	OWEN	PRIVATE
R/4943	WILLIAMS	WILLIAM ELLIS	ABLE SEAMAN
291338	WILLIAMS	LEWIS EDWARD	PRIVATE
12272	WILLIAMS	DAVID LLOYD	CORPORAL
	WILLIAMS	JENNIE	NURSE
63090	WILLIAMS	ANTHONY	SAPPER
14520	WILLIAMS	WILLIAM DANIEL	PRIVATE
17871	WILLIAMS	AARON	SERGEANT
49148	WILLIAMS	RHYS LLEWELYN	LANCE CORPORAL

15225	WILLIAMS	DAVID	PRIVATE
61435	WILLIAMS	DAVID	PRIVATE
26070	WILLIAMS	ALAN RAWSON	PRIVATE
37465	WILLIAMS	JOHN	LANCE CORPORAL
181935	WILLIAMS	SAM MARSHALL	SAPPER
	WILLIAMS	EVAN	SECOND LIEUTENANT
265519	WILLIAMS	JOSEPH	LANCE CORPORAL
1419	WILLIAMS	S R	GUARDSMAN
7/18834	WILLIAMS	S	PRIVATE
	WILLIAMS	HUGH POWELL	CAPTAIN
M2/222533	WILLIAMS	D L	PRIVATE
W/4754	WILLIAMS	W	GUNNER
	WILLIAMS	RICHARD LLOYD	CAPTAIN
95847	WILLIAMS	DAVID HENRY	PRIVATE
2591	WILLIAMS	WILLIE	PRIVATE
44982	WILLIAMS	H O	PRIVATE
49699	WILLIAMS	E R	PRIVATE
WR/274864	WILLIAMS	H	SAPPER
552390	WILLIAMS	W J	RIFLEMAN
	WILLIAMS	JAMES GRIFFITH	LIEUTENANT
4029	WILLIAMS	R H	PRIVATE
106112	WILLIAMS	RICHARD GEIRIONYDD	CORPORAL
51713	WILLIAMS	WILLIAM GRIFFITH	PRIVATE
203157	WILLIAMS	EVAN	LANCE CORPORAL
40371	WILLIAMS	JOHN FOULK	PRIVATE
12592	WILLIAMS	J R	PRIVATE
200492	WILLIAMS	BENJAMIN	PRIVATE
22990	WILLIAMS	MORRIS	PRIVATE
43934	WILLIAMS	WILLIAM	PRIVATE
58030	WILLIAMS	WILLIAM MORGAN	PRIVATE
56164	WILLIAMS	D	GUNNER
	WILLIAMS	THOMAS JONES	SECOND LIEUTENANT
	WILLIAMS	WILLIAM IFOR	SECOND LIEUTENANT
240101	WILLIAMS	DAVID MATTHIAS	SERGEANT
W/1980	WILLIAMS	DAVID	DRIVER
310231	WILLIAMS	GRIFFITH	SHOEING SMITH
31771	WILLIAMS	JENKIN	PRIVATE
13424	WILLIAMS	WILLIAM	PRIVATE
4123	WILLIAMS	THOMAS	PRIVATE
2727	WILLIAMS	ROBERT	PRIVATE
344/V	WILLIAMS	N	STOKER
113107	WILLIAMS	W O	GUNNER
54583	WILLIAMS	WILLIE	PRIVATE
203757	WILLIAMS	WILLIAM EWART	PRIVATE

26917	WILLIAMS	J W	GUARDSMAN
20209	WILLIAMS	W H	PRIVATE
45679	WILLIAMS	E J	PRIVATE
11091	WILLIAMS	W D	PRIVATE
61432	WILLIAMS	DAVID GLYN	PRIVATE
693	WILLIAMS	R H	PRIVATE
2414	WILLIAMS	DAVID ROWLAND	GUARDSMAN
26396	WILLIAMS	WILLIAM JOHN	PRIVATE
F/2729	WILLIAMS	JOHNNIE	LANCE CORPORAL
707355	WILLIAMS	ELLIS GRIFFITH	GUNNER
	WILLIAMS	WILFRED BRYNMOR	SECOND LIEUTENANT
614463	WILLIAMS	OWEN	DRIVER
73224	WILLIAMS	T J	PRIVATE
15613	WILLIAMS	LEWYS JONES	CORPORAL
12801	WILLIAMS	DANIEL	SERGEANT
2351	WILLIAMS	OWEN BENJAMIN	GUARDSMAN
M/287507	WILLIAMS	JOHN HENRY	PRIVATE
15301	WILLIAMS	CLIFFORD AINSLIE	PRIVATE
12021	WILLIAMS	DAVID	LANCE CORPORAL
DM2/163795	WILLIAMS	WILLIAM DAVIES	PRIVATE
	WILLIAMS	RICHARD	SECOND LIEUTENANT
412	WILLIAMS	EDWARD PIERCE	GUARDSMAN
66192	WILLIAMS	EVAN LLOYD	PRIVATE
25379	WILLIAMS	OWEN	PRIVATE
2614	WILLIAMS	THOMAS POWELL	PRIVATE
220361	WYNNE	WILLIAM	DRIVER

Appendix 2: List of war memorials in Wales recorded and studied for this thesis

LOCATION	MEMORIAL NAME	WMR REFERENCE
ABATY CWM-HIR	ABBEYCWMHIR WAR MEMORIAL	60715
ABERAERON	ABERAERON MEMORIAL HALL	17467
ABERAERON	HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, ABERAERON	6981
ABERAVON	ST MARY'S CHURCH, ABERAVON	84904
ABERAVON	ST PAUL'S CHURCH, ABERAVON	84912
ABERBANC	ABERBANC WAR MEMORIAL	64739
ABERBANC	CAPEL Y DRINDOD, ABERBANC	12735
ABERCARN	ABERCARN WAR MEMORIAL	3665
ABERCARN	ABERCARN TINPLATERS' MEMORIAL INSTITUTE	3668
ABERCYNON	ABERCYNON WAR MEMORIAL	6727
ABERDARE	ABERDARE WAR MEMORIAL	17689
ABERDARE	CARMEL ENGLISH BAPTIST CHURCH, ABERDARE	
ABERDYFI	ABERDYFI WAR MEMORIAL	6829
ABERFAN	ABERFAN WAR MEMORIAL	6733
ABERGAVENNY	ABERGAVENNY WAR MEMORIAL	17563
ABERGAVENNY	MONMOUTHSHIRE REGIMENT WAR MEMORIAL, ABERGAVENNY	3667
ABERGAVENNY	WHITFIELD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (PEN-Y-POUND), ABERGAVENNY	17569
ABERGELE	ABERGELE WAR MEMORIAL	31098
ABERGWILI	ABERGWILI MEMORIAL CROSS	17432
ABERHAFESP	ABERHAFESP WAR MEMORIAL	17387
ABERPORTH	ABERPORTH WAR MEMORIAL	12699
ABERTILLERY	ABERTILLERY WAR MEMORIAL	3598
ABERYSCIR	ABERYSCIR WAR MEMORIAL	
ABERYSTWYTH	ABERYSTWYTH WAR MEMORIAL	6913
ABERYSTWYTH	HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, ABERYSTWYTH	17462

ABERYSTWYTH	EGLWYS Y SANTES FAIR, ABERYSTWYTH	
ABERYSTWYTH	CAPEL SEILO, ABERYSTWYTH	
ABERYSTWYTH	TABERNACLE CHAPEL, ABERYSTWYTH	6929
AMLWCH	AMLWCH MEMORIAL HALL	48332
AMMANFORD	AMMANFORD WAR MEMORIAL	36677
AMMANFORD	BETHANY METHODIST CHAPEL, AMMANFORD	64745
AMROTH	AMROTH WAR MEMORIAL	50488
ARTHOG	HOREB CHAPEL, ARTHOG	60677
BAGILLT	BAGILLT WAR MEMORIAL	9046
BALA	BALA WAR MEMORIAL	37079
BANGOR	HEROIC SONS OF GWYNEDD AND POWYS	17390
BANGOR	BANGOR WAR MEMORIAL	6999
BANGOR	TABERNACLE CHAPEL, BANGOR	24518
BANGOR	CAPEL HIRAEI/ CAPEL ENGELAIM, BANGOR	48731
BANGOR	CAPEL PENDREF, BANGOR	48729
BANGOR	CAPEL Y GRAIG, BANGOR	63957
BANGOR TEIFI	BANGOR TEIFI WAR MEMORIAL	2066
BARMOUTH	BARMOUTH WAR MEMORIAL	67792
BARMOUTH	CAPEL CAERSALEM, BARMOUTH	60674
BARMOUTH	CAPEL SILOAM, BARMOUTH	60675
BARRY	BARRY WAR MEMORIAL	17700
BARRY	BARRY MEMORIAL HALL	6633
BARRY	ST HELEN'S PARISH, BARRY	6632
BARRY	EGLWYS PENUEL, BARRY	65400
BEAUFORT	ST DAVID'S CHURCH, BEAUFORT	
BEAUMARIS	BEAUMARIS WAR MEMORIAL	
BEAUMARIS	BEAUMARIS GRAMMAR SCHOOL	24479
BEDDGELERT	BEDDGELERT WAR MEMORIAL	24481
BEDWAS	BEDWAS AND TRETHOMAS WAR MEMORIAL	6737
BEGELLY	BEGELLY WAR MEMORIAL	6942
BEGUILDY	BEGUILDY WAR MEMORIAL	37190
BENLLECH	BENLLECH WAR MEMORIAL	24443
BETHESDA	BETHESDA AND DYFFRYN OGWEN	6830
BETHESDA	BETHESDA INDEPENDENT CHAPEL	13349
BETWS BLEDRWS	ST BLEDDRWS' CHURCH, BETWS BLEDRWS	112615

BETWS GWERFUL GOCH	BETWS GWERFUL GOCH WAR MEMORIAL	106394
BETWS LLEUCU	ST LUCIA'S CHURCH, BETWS LLEUCU	112612
BETWS-Y-COED	BETWS-Y-COED MEMORIAL HALL	36959
BETWS-YN-RHOS	BETWS-YN-RHOS WAR MEMORIAL	31105
BEULAH	BEULAH CONGREGATIONAL CHAPEL	7092
BLAENAU FFESTINIOG	FFESTINIOG MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, BLAENAU FFESTINIOG	51548
BLAENAU FFESTINIOG	BETHANIA CHAPEL, BLAENAU FFESTINIOG	37108
BLAENAU FFESTINIOG	JERUSALEM CHAPEL, BLAENAU FFESTINIOG	37092
BLAENAU FFESTINIOG	BOWYDD CHAPEL, BLAENAU FFESTINIOG	7011
BLAENAU FFESTINIOG	CAPEL SALEM, BLAENAU FFESTINIOG	37097
BLAENRHONDDA	BLAENRHONDDA WAR MEMORIAL	17667
BODEDERN	BODEDERN VILLAGE HALL	24440
BODELWYDDAN	ST MARGARET'S CHURCH, BODELWYDDAN	7174
BODFARI	BODFARI WAR MEMORIAL	2218
BODWROG	BODWROG MEMORIAL HALL	7063
BONTDDU	BONTDDU WAR MEMORIAL	
BONVILSTON	CAPEL CARMEL, BONVILSTON	84965
BORTH	ST MATTHEW'S CHURCH, BORTH	36576
BORTH	CAPEL GERLAN, BORTH	36582
BORTH-Y-GEST	CAPEL EBENEZER, BORTH-Y- GEST	37109
BOSHERSTON	BOSHERSTON WAR MEMORIAL	
BRECON	BRECONSHIRE WAR MEMORIAL HOSPITAL	38017
BRECON	BRECON WAR MEMORIAL	6835
BRECON	SOUTH WALES BORDERERS MEMORIAL, BRECON	36938
BRIDGEND	BRIDGEND WAR MEMORIAL	6738
BRIDGEND	ST MARY'S CHURCH, BRIDGEND	83029
BRIDGEND	HOPE ENGLISH BAPTIST CHURCH, BRIDGEND	83027
BRITON FERRY	BRITON FERRY WAR MEMORIAL	6609
BRITON FERRY	REHOBOTH CHAPEL, BRITON FERRY	84631
BROAD HAVEN	BROAD HAVEN AND LITTLE HAVEN WAR MEMORIAL	61707
BRYMBO	BRYMBO WAR MEMORIAL	9042
BRYN DU	BRYN DU WAR MEMORIAL	37009

BRYNAMMAN	BRYNAMMAN WAR MEMORIAL	6806
BRYNEGLWYS	BRYNEGLWYS WAR MEMORIAL	38108
BRYNGWENITH	BRYNGWENITH CHAPEL, BRYNGWENITH	48777
BRYNGWRAN	BRYNGWRAN WAR MEMORIAL	24484
BRYNMAWR	BRYNMAWR WAR MEMORIAL	3588
BRYNMAWR	BAILEY STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHAPEL, BRYNMAWR	
BRYNMAWR	QUEEN STREET CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, BRYNMAWR	
BRYNMAWR	CALVARY BAPTIST CHAPEL, BRYNMAWR	
BRYNMAWR	ST MARY'S, BRYNMAWR	
BRYNREFAIL	BRYNREFAIL WAR MEMORIAL	24476
BRYNSIENCYN	BRYNSIENCYN MEMORIAL HALL	74051
BUILTH WELLS	BUILTH WELLS AND LLANDDEWIR CWM	6837
BUILTH WELLS	CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES OF BUILTH WELLS, SALEM, AND CEFN-Y-BEDD	70884
BWLCHGWYN	BWLCHGWYN WAR MEMORIAL	9044
BWLCHYGROES	BWLCHYGROES INDEPENDENT CHAPEL, BWLCHYGROES	50056
CAERGWRLE	CAERGWRLE WAR MEMORIAL	2963
CAERNARFON	CAERNARFON WAR MEMORIAL	6831
CAERNARFON	ST MARY'S CHURCH, CAERNARFON	37061
CAERNARFON	CAPEL CAERSALEM, CAERNARFON	24448
CAERNARFON	CAPEL EBENESER, CAERNARFON	24500
CAERNARFON	CASTLE SQUARE ENGLISH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, CAERNARFON	24473
CAERNARFON	CAPEL SALEM, CAERNARFON	24452
CAERNARFON	CAPEL BEULAH, CAERNARFON	24502
CAERPHILLY	CAERPHILLY WAR MEMORIAL	6746
CAERPHILLY	MOUNT CARMEL BAPTIST CHURCH, CAERPHILLY	50836
CAERPHILLY	TON Y FELIN WELSH BAPTIST CHURCH, CAERPHILLY	50854

CAERPHILLY	VAN ROAD ENGLISH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, CAERPHILLY	17678
CAERSWS	LLANWNOG PARISH WAR MEMORIAL	6839
CAERWENT	CAERWENT WAR MEMORIAL	17576
CAIO	CAIO WAR MEMORIAL	112627
CAPEL DEWI	CAPEL DEWI WAR MEMORIAL	36608
CAPEL GARMON	CAPEL GARMON WAR MEMORIAL	65693
CAPEL IWAN	CAPEL IWAN WAR MEMORIAL	
CAPEL SEION	CAPEL SEION, CAPEL SEION	49951
CAPEL SEION	CAPEL MORIAH, CAPEL SEION	
CARDIFF	WELSH NATIONAL WAR MEMORIAL	6640
CARDIFF	BETHANY BAPTIST CHURCH, CENTRAL CARDIFF	37317
CARDIFF	WHITCHURCH WAR MEMORIAL	6724
CARDIFF	ARARAT BAPTIST CHURCH, WHITCHURCH	87271
CARDIFF	CRWYS ROAD WESLEYAN METHODIST CHURCH, CATHAYS	6678
CARDIFF	CRWYS HALL CALVINISTIC METHODISTS, CATHAYS	17680
CARDIFF	RUMNEY WAR MEMORIAL HALL	6714
CARDIFF	LLANDAFF WAR MEMORIAL	6883
CARDIFF	LLANDAFF CATHEDRAL SCHOOL, LLANDAFF	6688
CARDIFF	GRANGETOWN WAR MEMORIAL	6684
CARDIFF	ST PAUL'S CHURCH, GRANGETOWN	51013
CARDIFF	SALTMEAD HALL, GRANGETOWN	
CARDIFF	CAPEL SALEM, CANTON	
CARDIFF	ST MARGARET'S CHURCH, ROATH	38023
CARDIFF	PLASNEWYDD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ROATH	50920
CARDIFF	ROATH PARK WESLEYAN CHURCH, ROATH	50940
CARDIFF	ROATH PARK WESLEYAN CHURCH, ROATH	17698
CARDIFF	ROATH PARK CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, ROATH	
CARDIFF	ROATH ROAD ENGLISH WESLEYAN METHODIST CHAPEL, ADAMSDOWN	
CARDIFF	RADYR WAR MEMORIAL	2011

CARDIFF	ST MARK'S CHURCH, GABALFA	6681
CARDIFF	GABALFA BAPTIST CHURCH, GABALFA	30104
CARDIFF	ST SAVIOUR'S CHURCH, SPLOTT	6721
CARDIGAN	CARDIGAN WAR MEMORIAL	6905
CARDIGAN	BETHANIA CHAPEL, CARDIGAN	64740
CAREW	CAREW WAR MEMORIAL	6808
CAREW	ZOAR CHAPEL, CAREW	113229
CARMARTHEN	CARMARTHEN COUNTY WAR MEMORIAL	6809
CARMARTHEN	ST PETER'S CHURCH, CARMARTHEN	36575
CARMARTHEN	CAPEL HEOL AWST, CARMARTHEN	36599
CARMARTHEN	CAPEL HEOL DWR, CARMARTHEN	36605
CARMARTHEN	CARMARTHEN ENGLISH WESLEYAN METHODISTS, CARMARTHEN	36601
CARNO	CARNO WAR MEMORIAL	6840
CEFN COED	VAYNOR AND CEFN COED	6754
CELLAN	CELLAN WAR MEMORIAL	36642
CEMAES BAY	CEMAES BAY WAR MEMORIAL	69068
CEMMAES	CEMMAES WAR MEMORIAL	6841
CENARTH	CENARTH WAR MEMORIAL	36630
CHEPSTOW	CHEPSTOW WAR MEMORIAL	3674
CHIRK (Y WAUN)	CHIRK WAR MEMORIAL	17780
CILCAIN	CAPEL GAD, CILCAIN	83126
CILCENNIN	CILCENNIN WAR MEMORIAL	49978
CILFREW	CILFREW WAR MEMORIAL	6611
CILGERRAN	CILGERRAN WAR MEMORIAL	65970
CILGERRAN	TY RHOS CHAPEL, CILGERRAN	
CLATTER	CLATTER SCHOOL WAR MEMORIAL, CLATTER	31167
CLEIRWY	CLEIRWY WAR MEMORIAL	37194
CLOCAENOG	CLOCAENOG WAR MEMORIAL	38133
COLWYN BAY	COLWYN BAY WAR MEMORIAL	2230
COLWYN BAY	ST PAUL'S CHURCH, COLWYN BAY	60352
CONNAH'S QUAY	CONNAH'S QUAY AND SHOTTON WAR MEMORIAL	7116
CONNAH'S QUAY	ST MARK'S CHURCH, CONNAH'S QUAY	31087
CONNAH'S QUAY	WEPRE ENGLISH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, CONNAH'S QUAY	36483

CONWY	CONWY WAR MEMORIAL	6992
CONWY	EGLWYS CARMEL, CONWY	65712
CORRIS	CORRIS MEMORIAL INSTITUTE	48696
CORWEN	CORWEN WAR MEMORIAL	17804
CRICCIETH	CRICCIETH MEMORIAL HALL	24475
CRICKHOWELL	CRICKHOWELL COTTAGE HOSPITAL	86956
CROESGOCH	CROESGOCH WAR MEMORIAL	113239
CROSS HANDS	CROSS HANDS WAR MEMORIAL	6810
CROSS OAK	CROSS OAK WAR MEMORIAL	7072
CWMCARN	CWMCARN AND PONTYWAUN WAR MEMORIAL	3666
DAWN	REHOBOTH CHAPEL, DAWN	31142
DEINIOLEN (EBENEZER)	DEINIOLEN WAR MEMORIAL	83725
DENBIGH	DENBIGH WAR MEMORIAL	60410
DENBIGH	PENDREF CHAPEL, DENBIGH	60413
DEVIL'S BRIDGE	DEVIL'S BRIDGE WAR MEMORIAL	36659
DINAS POWYS	DINAS POWYS WAR MEMORIAL	6680
DINMAEL	CAPEL DINMAEL, DINMAEL	
DOLANOG	DOLANOG WAR MEMORIAL	17411
DOLGELLAU	DOLGELLAU WAR MEMORIAL	37114
DOLGELLAU	ST MARY'S CHURCH, DOLGELLAU	37119
DOLWYDDELAN	DOLWYDDELAN WAR MEMORIAL	17366
DREFACH	DREFACH WAR MEMORIAL	17480
DREFACH VELINDRE	PENBOYR PARISH WAR MEMORIAL	9045
DREFELIN	CLOS-Y-GRAIG CHAPEL, DREFELIN	
DYFFRYN ARDUDWY	DYFFRYN ARDUDWY WAR MEMORIAL	6833
EBBW VALE	EBBW VALE WAR MEMORIAL	2116
EBBW VALE	EBBW VALE COMPANY WAR MEMORIAL	51228
EVENJOBB	EVENJOBB WAR MEMORIAL	7111
FELINFOEL	FELINFOEL WAR MEMORIAL	
FERNDALE	FERNDALE WAR MEMORIAL	6871
FFAIRFACH	CAPEL TABERNACL, FFAIRFACH	
FISHGUARD	FISHGUARD WAR MEMORIAL	6811
FLINT	FLINT WAR MEMORIAL	17765
FOUR CROSSES	FOUR CROSSES WAR MEMORIAL	17468

GAERWEN	GAERWEN WAR MEMORIAL	24449
GAERWEN	ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH, GAERWEN	87486
GELLIGAER	ST CATTWG'S CHURCH, GELLIGAER	36860
GELLIGAER	HOREB BAPTIST CHURCH, GELLIGAER	
GLASBURY	GLASBURY WAR MEMORIAL	
GLYNDYFRDWY	GLYNDYFRDWY WAR MEMORIAL	17916
GOGINAN	CAPEL JEZREEL, GOGINAN	36662
GUILSFIELD	GUILSFIELD WAR MEMORIAL	17452
GWALCHMAI	GWALCHMAI WAR MEMORIAL	17399
GWAUN CAE GURWEN	GWAUN CAE GURWEN WAR MEMORIAL	6856
GWERSYLLT	GWERSYLLT WAR MEMORIAL	17873
GWYDDELWERN	GWYDDELWERN WAR MEMORIAL	49742
HALKYN	HALKYN WAR MEMORIAL	7131
HARLECH	HARLECH WAR MEMORIAL	37131
HAVERFORDWEST	PEMBROKESHIRE COUNTY WAR MEMORIAL	6812
HAWARDEN	HAWARDEN WAR MEMORIAL	7183
HAWEN	HAWEN CONGREGATIONAL CHAPEL, HAWEN	70437
HAY-ON-WYE	HAY AND CUSOP WAR MEMORIAL	6843
HENEGLWYS	ST LLWYDIAN'S, HENEGLWYS	
HENLLAN	EGLWYS DEWI SANT, HENLLAN	3733
HENLLAN	HENLLAN WAR MEMORIAL	7139
HIRNANT	HIRNANT WAR MEMORIAL	17413
HIRWAUN	HIRWAUN WAR MEMORIAL	6761
HOLYHEAD	HOLYHEAD WAR MEMORIAL	2031
HOLYHEAD	CAPEL EBENESER, HOLYHEAD	60613
HOLYHEAD	CAPEL NODDFA, HOLYHEAD	60624
HOLYHEAD	CAPEL ARMENIA, HOLYHEAD	83797
HOLYHEAD	CAPEL HYFRYDLE, HOLYHEAD	60619
HYSSINGTON	PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHURCH, HYSSINGTON	17538
KERRY	KERRY WAR MEMORIAL	17412
KIDWELLY	KIDWELLY WAR MEMORIAL	36633
KNIGHTON	KNIGHTON WAR MEMORIAL	37273
LAMPETER	LAMPETER WAR MEMORIAL	6813
LAMPETER	CAPEL SOAR, LAMPETER	
LAMPETER	CAPEL SOAR, LAMPETER	

LAMPETER	SHILOH CHAPEL, LAMPETER	6979
LAMPETER VELFREY	LAMPETER VELFREY WAR MEMORIAL	17500
LEESWOOD	BETHANIA CHAPEL, LEESWOOD	36545
LLANASA	ST ASAPH AND ST CYNDERYN PARISHIONERS, LLANASA	83144
LLANBADARN FAWR	LLANBADARN FAWR WAR MEMORIAL	6920
LLANBEDR	LLANBEDR WAR MEMORIAL	24501
LLANBERIS	LLANBERIS WAR MEMORIAL	7024
LLANBOIDY	LLANBOIDY WAR MEMORIAL	56913
LLANDDANIEL FAB	LLANDDANIEL FAB WAR MEMORIAL	73978
LLANDDEWI BREFI	LLANDDEWI BREFI WAR MEMORIAL	66192
LLANDDEWI VELFREY	LLANDDEWI VELFREY WAR MEMORIAL	6815
LLANDDONA	CAPEL PENIEL, LLANDDONA	83421
LLANDDYFNAN	LLANDDYFNAN WAR MEMORIAL	37044
LLANDEILO	ST TEILO'S PARISHIONERS, LLANDEILO	36698
LLANDEILO	EBENEZER CHAPEL, LLANDEILO	87326
LLANDISSILIO	LLANDISSILIO WAR MEMORIAL	50327
LLANDOGO	LLANDOGO WAR MEMORIAL	3676
LLANDOVERY	LLANDOVERY WAR MEMORIAL	6816
LLANDOVERY	ST DINGAT'S CHURCH, LLANDOVERY	
LLANDRILLO YN EDEIRNION	LLANDRILLO YN EDEIRNION WAR MEMORIAL	36497
LLANDRINDOD WELLS	COUNTY WAR MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS	31171
LLANDRINDOD WELLS	LLANDRINDOD WELLS WAR MEMORIAL	6845
LLANDRINDOD WELLS	TABERNACLE CHURCH, LLANDRINDOD WELLS	37268
LLANDRINDOD WELLS	HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, LLANDRINDOD WELLS	37286
LLANDRINIO	LLANDRINIO WAR MEMORIAL	17477
LLANDRYGARN	CAPEL SEION, LLANDRYGARN	7064
LLANDUDNO	LLANDUDNO WAR MEMORIAL	7030
LLANDYBIE	WAENLLAN CHAPEL, LLANDYBIE	
LLANDYSUL	LLANDYSUL WAR MEMORIAL	6933
LLANDYSUL	CAPEL Y GRAIG, LLANDYSUL	48791

LLANEGRYN	LLANEGRYN WAR MEMORIAL	109205
LLANELIDAN	LLANELIDAN WAR MEMORIAL	102064
LLANELLI	LLANELLI WAR MEMORIAL	6817
LLANELLI	CAPEL ALS, LLANELLI	36767
LLANELLI	CAPEL EBENEZER, LLANELLI	6807
LLANELLI	CAPEL TABERNACL, LLANELLI	36768
LLANELLI	CAMPBELL STREET WESLEYAN CHAPEL	36763
LLANELLI	OLD CASTLE TINPLATE WORKS, LLANELLI	37294
LLANERCHYMEDD	LLANERCHYMEDD WAR MEMORIAL	24486
LLANFACHRETH	LLANFACHRETH WAR MEMORIAL	60678
LLANFAIR CAEREINION	LLANFAIR CAEREINION WAR MEMORIAL	17441
LLANFAIR DYFFRYN CLWYD	LLANFAIR DYFFRYN CLWYD WAR MEMORIAL	7147
LLANFAIR MATHAFARN EITHAF	CAPEL SEION, LLANFAIR MATHAFARN EITHAF	
LLANFAIRFECHAN	LLANFAIRFECHAN WAR MEMORIAL	13376
LLANFAIRPWLLGWYNGYLL	LLANFAIR PG, LLANEDWEN, AND PENMYNYDD WAR MEMORIAL	7002
LLANFAIRPWLLGWYNGYLL	ST MARY'S CHURCH, LLANFAIR PG	7004
LLANFAIRPWLLGWYNGYLL	RHOS-Y-GAD CHAPEL, LLANFAIR PG	7005
LLANFEHELL	LLANFEHELL WAR MEMORIAL	24454
LLANFIHANGEL CRUCORNAU	LLANFIHANGEL CRUCORNAU WAR MEMORIAL	3614
LLANFIHANGEL HELYGEN	ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH, LLANFIHANGEL HELYGEN	
LLANFIHANGEL YSTUM LLYWERN	LLANFIHANGEL YSTUM LLYWERN WAR MEMORIAL	3618
LLANFRYNACH	ST BRYNACH'S CHURCH, LLANFRYNACH	
LLANFYLLIN	LLANFYLLIN WAR MEMORIAL	17405
LLANGADOG	CAPEL GOSEN, LLANGADOG	64770
LLANGADWALADR	ST CADWALADR'S, LLANGADWALADR	60610
LLANGAMMARCH WELLS	LLANGAMMARCH WELLS WAR MEMORIAL	7084
LLANGEFNI	ST CYNGAR'S, LLANGEFNI	60639
LLANGEFNI	LLANGEFNI COUNTY SCHOOL, LLANGEFNI	7060
LLANGEINWEN	DWYRAN CHAPEL, LLANGEINWEN	83422
LLANGEITHO	LLANGEITHO WAR MEMORIAL	17479

LLANGENNECH	MORLAIS TINPLATE WORKS LTD, LLANGENNECH	37295
LLANGIBBY	LLANGIBBY AND COED Y PAEN WAR MEMORIAL	3595
LLANGOLLEN	LLANGOLLEN & LLANTYSILIO WAR MEMORIAL	17803
LLANGYFELACH	BETHEL CHAPEL, LLANGYFELACH	83319
LLANGYNIEW	LLANGYNIEW WAR MEMORIAL	60708
LLANGYNLLO	LLANGYNLLO WAR MEMORIAL	3587
LLANGYNOG	LLANGYNOG WAR MEMORIAL	56958
LLANGYNOG	LLANGYNOG MEMORIAL HALL	38263
LLANHAMLACH	LLANHAMLACH WAR MEMORIAL	31141
LLANIDLOES	LLANIDLOES WAR MEMORIAL	17428
LLANILAR	LLANILAR WAR MEMORIAL	36673
LLANLLECHID	LLANLLECHID	13337
LLANLLECHID	CAPEL SALEM, LLANLLECHID	24446
LLANLLECHID	CAPEL SALEM, LLANLLECHID	24444
LLANLLECHID	CAPEL CARMEL, LLANLLECHID	24442
LLANLLECHID	CAPEL CARMEL, LLANLLECHID	24523
LLANLLŶR	LLANLLŶR WAR MEMORIAL	17531
LLANRWST	LLANRWST MEMORIAL INSTITUTE	24520 & 24547
LLANSANTFFRAED	LLANSANTFFRAED PARISHIONERS	7070
LLANSANTFFRAID-YM-MECHAIN	LLANSANTFFRAID-YM-MECHAIN WAR MEMORIAL	17450
LLANUWCHLLYN	LLANUWCHLLYN WAR MEMORIAL	37139
LLANWRTYD	LLANWRTYD WAR MEMORIAL INSTITUTE	7095
LLANYBRI	CAPEL NEWYDD, LLANYBRI	56955
LOUGHOR	LOUGHOR WAR MEMORIAL	6616
MACHYNLLETH	MACHYNLLETH WAR MEMORIAL	6847
MACHYNLLETH	MAENGWYN CHAPEL, MACHYNLLETH	
MAENCLOCHOG	HEN GAPEL, MAENCLOCHOG	6938
MAENTWROG	MAENTWROG WAR MEMORIAL	7059
MAENTWROG	GILGAL CHAPEL, MAENTWROG	60681
MAESTEG	MAESTEG WAR MEMORIAL	6767
MAGWYR	MAGOR AND SURROUNDING AREA WAR MEMORIAL, MAGWYR	36946

MALLTRAETH	EGLWYS CRIST Y BRENIN, MALLTRAETH	
MANORBIER	MANORBIER WAR MEMORIAL	6972
MATHERN	MATHERN WAR MEMORIAL	3593
MENAI BRIDGE	MENAI BRIDGE WAR MEMORIAL	24462
MERLIN'S BRIDGE	MERLIN'S BRIDGE WAR MEMORIAL	6966
MERTHYR CYNOG	DYFFRYN HONDDU WAR MEMORIAL	60692
MERTHYR TYDFIL	MERTHYR TYDFIL WAR MEMORIAL	2009
MIDDLETOWN	GREAT WOLLASTON PARISH WAR MEMORIAL, MIDDLETOWN	6849
MILFORD HAVEN	MILFORD HAVEN WAR MEMORIAL	6969
MOLD	MOLD WAR MEMORIAL	13478
MOLD	BETHESDA CHAPEL, MOLD	60387
MONMOUTH	MONMOUTH WAR MEMORIAL	3589
MONTGOMERY	MONTGOMERYSHIRE COUNTY WAR MEMORIAL	17435
MOUNTAIN ASH	MOUNTAIN ASH WAR MEMORIAL	6777
NANTGLYN	NANTGLYN WAR MEMORIAL	38226
NANTMEL	NANTMEL WAR MEMORIAL	37328
NANTYGLO	HERMON BAPTIST CHURCH, NANTYGLO	
NARBERTH	NARBERTH, NARBERTH NORTH, AND CRINOW WAR MEMORIAL	6821
NEATH	NEATH WAR MEMORIAL	6619
NEATH	ST THOMAS' PARISH, NEATH	65449
NEATH	ST THOMAS' CHURCH MEMBERS, NEATH	84764
NEATH	ST MATTHEW'S CHURCH, NEATH	84693
NEATH	BETHANIA BAPTIST CHAPEL, NEATH	84705
NEATH	LONDON ROAD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NEATH	84708
NEATH	LONDON ROAD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NEATH	
NEATH	LONDON ROAD WESLEYAN METHODIST CHURCH, NEATH	84724
NEATH	ORCHARD PLACE BAPTIST CHURCH, NEATH	84726
NEBO	NEBO CHAPEL, NEBO	112738
NEW QUAY	NEW QUAY WAR MEMORIAL	36697
NEW RADNOR	NEW RADNOR WAR MEMORIAL	17540

NEWBOROUGH	NEWBOROUGH PARISHIONERS	37042
NEWCASTLE EMLYN	NEWCASTLE EMLYN WAR MEMORIAL	36690
NEWCASTLE EMLYN	BETHEL CHAPEL, NEWCASTLE EMLYN	36696
NEWCASTLE EMLYN	EBENEZER CHAPEL, NEWCASTLE EMLYN	
NEWMARKET	NEWMARKET WAR MEMORIAL	7156
NEWPORT	NEWPORT WAR MEMORIAL	2044
NEWPORT	ST MARY'S CHURCH, NEWPORT	3683
NEWPORT	HAVELOCK STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NEWPORT	65609
NEWTOWN	NEWTON AND LLANLLWCHAIARN WAR MEMORIAL	7184
NORTON	NORTON WAR MEMORIAL	37329
OLD COLWYN	OLD COLWYN WAR MEMORIAL	31150
OLD COLWYN	CALFARI CHAPEL, OLD COLWYN	31148
OLD RADNOR	OLD RADNOR WAR MEMORIAL	7109
PANT	PANT WAR MEMORIAL	6780
PANTEG	PANTEG WAR MEMORIAL	3699
PEMBROKE	PEMBROKE AND MONKTON WAR MEMORIAL	6939
PEMBROKE	ST MARY THE VIRGIN CHURCH, PEMBROKE	60575
PEMBROKE	WESTGATE CALVINISTIC METHODIST CHURCH, PEMBROKE	60577
PEMBROKE DOCK	PEMBROKE DOCK WAR MEMORIAL	6822
PENALLT	PENALLT WAR MEMORIAL	60812
PENARTH	PENARTH WAR MEMORIAL	6703
PENARTH	PENARTH YACHT CLUB MEMORIAL	6704
PENARTH	TRINITY WESLEYAN CHURCH, PENARTH	37246
PENCADER	PENCADER WAR MEMORIAL	6984
PENDERYN	ST CYNOG'S, PENDERYN	50659
PENIEL	PENIEL WAR MEMORIAL	56957
PENMACHNO	PENMACHNO WAR MEMORIAL	48660
PENMAENMAWR	PENMAENMAWR YOUNG MEN'S INSTITUTE	24511
PENMAENMAWR	ST DAVID'S, PENMAENMAWR	36983
PENMAENMAWR	CAPEL JERUSALEM, PENMAENMAWR	17367
PENNAL	PENNAL WAR MEMORIAL	13365

PENRHIWCEIBR	PENRHIWCEIBR WAR MEMORIAL	6782
PENRHIWLLAN	GWERNLLWYN CHAPEL, PENRHIWLLAN	60246
PENRHOS	PENRHOS WAR MEMORIAL	9034
PENRHYNDEUDRAETH	PENRHYNDEUDRAETH MEMORIAL HALL	24487
PENRHYN SIDE	PENRHYN SIDE WAR MEMORIAL	60602
PENTRAETH	PENTRAETH WAR MEMORIAL	7007
PENYBONT	CEFNLLYS, LLANBADARN FAWR, AND LLANDEGLEY WAR MEMORIAL	7102
PENYCAE	PENYCAE WAR MEMORIAL	17876
PICTON	LLANASA AND PICTON WAR MEMORIAL	7125
PONTARDDUL AIS	PONTARDDUL AIS WAR MEMORIAL	6623
PONTARDDUL AIS	TABERNACL CHAPEL, PONTARDDUL AIS	
PONTHIR	ZION BAPTIST CHURCH, PONTHIR	3635
PONTRHYDFENDIGAID	PONTRHYDFENDIGAID WAR MEMORIAL	36714
PONTSIAN	EGLWYS SANT IOAN, PONTSIAN	50069
PONTYCYMER	TABERNACL CHAPEL, PONTYCYMER	
PONTYPRIDD	PONTYPRIDD WAR MEMORIAL PARK	6866
PORT TALBOT	PORT TALBOT WAR MEMORIAL	2060
PORT TALBOT	ABERAVON AND PORT TALBOT HEBREW CONGREGATION	65491
PORTHMADOG	PORTHMADOG WAR MEMORIAL	24485
PORTSKEWETT	PORT SKEWETT WAR MEMORIAL	3701
PRENGWYN	CAPEL CARMEL, PRENGWYN	
PRENGWYN	CAPEL PANTDEFAID, PRENGWYN	50250
PRESTATYN	PRESTATYN WAR MEMORIAL	7157
PRESTATYN	CHRIST CHURCH, PRESTATYN	7136
PRESTEIGNE	PRESTEIGNE WAR MEMORIAL	3165
PWLLHELI	CAPEL SEION, PWLLHELI	37117
PWLLHELI	CAPEL SALEM, PWLLHELI	37125
RHAGLAN	RHAGLAN WAR MEMORIAL	3604
RHANDIRMWYN	RHANDIRMWYN WAR MEMORIAL	112623
RHAYADER	RHAYADER WAR MEMORIAL	6850
RHIWBRYFDIR	OAKELEY SLATE QUARRIES MEMORIAL, RHIWBRYFDIR	17417

RHOESMOR	RHOESMOR WAR MEMORIAL	36550
RHOSNEIGR	RHOSNEIGR WAR MEMORIAL	17398
RHOSSILI	ST MARY THE VIRGIN CHURCH, RHOSSILI	84596
RHOSYBOL	RHOSYBOL WAR MEMORIAL	24469
RHYDYMAIN	RHYDYMAIN INDEPENDENT CHAPEL, RHYDYMAIN	
RHYDYMAIN	CAPEL SILOH, RHYDYMAIN	
RHYL	RHYL WAR MEMORIAL	7169
RHYMNEY	RHYMNEY WAR MEMORIAL	36869
ROCKFIELD	ROCKFIELD WAR MEMORIAL	36947
RUTHIN	RUTHIN WAR MEMORIAL	7145
SENGHENYDD	SENGHENYDD WAR MEMORIAL	6791
SKENFRITH	SKENFRITH WAR MEMORIAL	3603
SOLVA	SOLVA WAR MEMORIAL	6828
ST ASAPH	ST ASAPH WAR MEMORIAL	64631
ST ASAPH	ST ASAPH CATHEDRAL, ST ASAPH	7159
ST CLEARS	ST CLEARS WAR MEMORIAL	6975
ST DAVID'S	ST DAVID'S WAR MEMORIAL	6827
ST DAVID'S	ST DAVID'S CATHEDRAL, ST DAVID'S	88401
STACKPOLE ELIDOR	ST ELIDYR'S CHURCH, STACKPOLE ELIDOR	36807
STACKPOLE ELIDOR	STACKPOLE AND ST PETROX, STACKPOLE ELIDOR	36805
SWANSEA	SWANSEA WAR MEMORIAL	6627
SWANSEA	ST JOSEPH'S CATHEDRAL, SWANSEA	37016
SWANSEA	SWANSEA HEBREW CONGREGATION	64606
SWANSEA	HAFOD ISHA WORKS, SWANSEA	37020
SWANSEA	MORRISTON WAR MEMORIAL	17712
SWANSEA	EGLWYS SOAR, MORRISTON	84514
SWANSEA	UPPER FOREST & WORCESTER STEEL & TINPLATE WORKS, MORRISTON	36969
SWANSEA	ST CATHERINE'S CHURCH, GORSEINON	83294
SWANSEA	PENUEL CHAPEL, GORSEINON	83328
SWANSEA	EBENEZER CHAPEL, GORSEINON	83292
SWANSEA	BRYNTEG CHAPEL, GORSEINON	36901
SWANSEA	ST PAUL'S PARISH, SKETTY	37002

SWANSEA	SKETTY WESLEYAN METHODIST CHURCH, SKETTY	51213
SWANSEA	MUMBLES WAR MEMORIAL	6617
SWANSEA	LLANSAMLET WAR MEMORIAL	36953
TALGARREG	CAPEL BWLCHYFADFA, TALGARREG	50275
TALGARREG	CAPEL PISGAH, TALGARREG	50262
TALIARIS	TALIARIS WAR MEMORIAL	17482
TALLEY	TALLEY WAR MEMORIAL	113617
TALYBONT	TALYBONT MEMORIAL HALL	77401
TANYGRISIAU	BETHEL CHAPEL, TANYGRISIAU	37151
TEGRYN	CAPEL LLWYNYRHWRDD WAR MEMORIAL, TEGRYN	70364
TENBY	TENBY WAR MEMORIAL	2810
TENBY	ST MARY'S CHURCH, TENBY	6949
TENBY	ST JOHN'S CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, TENBY	17543
TENBY	WARREN STREET METHODIST CHURCH, TENBY	17528
TONYPANDY	MID RHONDDA WAR MEMORIAL	6783
TONYREFAIL	TONYREFAIL WAR MEMORIAL	6795
TRAWSFYNYDD	TRAWSFYNYDD WAR MEMORIAL	6987
TRAWSFYNYDD	HEDD WYN MEMORIAL	7028
TREDEGAR	TREDEGAR WAR MEMORIAL	2016
TREFDRAETH	ST BEUNO'S CHURCH, TREFDRAETH	
TREGARON	TREGARON MEMORIAL HALL	6917
TREGARON	TREGARON COUNTY SECONDARY SCHOOL	36744
TREGARTH	EGLWYS Y SANTES FAIR, TREGARTH	
TREGARTH	CAPEL SHILOH, TREGARTH	24455
TREGYNON	TREGYNON WAR MEMORIAL	17446
TREMADOG	TREMADOG MEMORIAL INSTITUTE	37163
TREMARCHOG	GRANSTON AND ST NICHOLAS WAR MEMORIAL	60300
TREMEIRCHION	TREMEIRCHION WAR MEMORIAL	49772
TYWYN	TYWYN & DISTRICT WAR MEMORIAL COTTAGE HOSPITAL	13368
USK	USK WAR MEMORIAL	3653
WAEN	WAEN WAR MEMORIAL	49778

WELSHPOOL	WELSHPOOL AND DISTRICT WAR MEMORIAL	17382
WELSHPOOL	HIGH STREET WESLEYAN METHODIST CHAPEL, WELSHPOOL	17533
WHITFORD	WHITFORD WAR MEMORIAL	13496
WHITLAND	WHITLAND WAR MEMORIAL	70365
WICK	WICK AND MONKNASH WAR MEMORIAL HALL	70389
WREXHAM	WREXHAM WAR MEMORIAL	31109
WREXHAM	ROYAL WELSH FUSILIERS MEMORIAL, WREXHAM	17816
WREXHAM	TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, WREXHAM	49861
YNYSHIR	YNYSHIR WAR MEMORIAL	6872
YSCEIFIOG	YSCEIFIOG WAR MEMORIAL	83205
YSTALYFERA	YSTALYFERA WAR MEMORIAL	2046
YSTRAD MYNACH	YSTRAD MYNACH AND HENGOED WAR MEMORIAL	6803
YSTRADGYNLAIS	ST CYNOG'S CHURCH, YSTRADGYNLAIS	84929
YSTUMTUEN	EBENEZER CHAPEL, YSTUMTUEN	

Bibliography

Archival sources

Bangor University Archives and Special Collections

BMSS/18021 North Wales Heroes' Memorial Official Programme

BMSS/39696 North Wales Heroes' Memorial Fund — Memorial Council Meeting

BMSS/39697 North Wales Heroes' Memorial — Minutes of the Executive Committee

BMSS/39702 North Wales Heroes' Memorial — Minutes of Memorial Council

BMSS/39713 Subscriptions to the North Wales Heroes' Memorial

Ceredigion Archives

ABY/WW1/8 Trefeurig War Memorial Unveiling Programme

ADX/404 Various Items

ADX/1357 Aberystwyth War Memorial Eisteddfod

ADX/1442 Cardigan Town Cenotaph

CDM/SE/1/1 Cardigan Borough Council Minute Books

CDM/TR/7/54 Cardigan Borough Council Cenotaph Fund

CDM/TR/8/66 Cardigan Borough Council Cenotaph Fund Account Book

DSO/94 Records of the Llanfarian War Memorial Committee

LPM/SE/2/2-1 Lampeter Borough Council War Memorial Committee Records

MUS/206/1 Lampeter War Memorial Book

Commonwealth War Graves Commission Archive

AA 30400 Shoeing Smith Griffith Williams

AA 43875 Sergeant Charles Williams

ADD 4/2/7 Petition to the Prince of Wales from Lady Florence Cecil

CWGC/9/2/2/9/5 Photographs — France and Belgium

SL 10876 Private Ellis Humphrey Evans

WG 61 Commission Meeting No. 2

WG 741 Commission Meeting No. 16

WG 1144 Commission Meeting No. 25

WG 1722 Commission Meeting No. 42

Glamorgan Archives

BB/C/228 Minutes and Related Papers of Barry War Memorial Committee and United Services Fund

BB/C/268 War Memorial Executive Committee Minutes

D264 Llandough and Leckwith War Memorial Institute, Records

D904 Grangetown War Memorial

D985/6/1 Order of Service at the Ceremony of Unveiling and Dedication of the Welsh National War Memorial

DBAP36/16 Programme of Unveiling and Dedication of War Memorial Organ

DXSL/2 Order of Service, Welch Regiment War Memorial

Gwynedd Archives, Caernarfon Record Office

XD 1/895 Caernarfon War Heroes Memorial, Borough Council papers

XM 166/77 Unveiling Programme, Caernarfon Heroes' War Memorial, 1924

XM 914/1 Order of Service for Unveiling of Criccieth War Memorial, 1924

XM 12833/1 Programme for Unveiling of Criccieth War Memorial, 1924

XM 1051/2/7 Subscription to Criccieth Memorial, 1921

XM 1395/101 Bazaar for War Memorial, 1925

XM 2942 Unveiling of Nefyn Parish War Memorial, 1923

XM 4046/1/3 Order of Service for Unveiling of Penmaenmawr War Memorial, 1925

XM 4961/124 Order of Service for Unveiling of Bethesda War Memorial, 1924

XM 5169/23 Betws-y-Coed Memorial Committee Minute Book, 1919—1928

Gwynedd Archives, Meirionnydd Record Office

Z/DAF/1862 Ffestiniog and District Heroes' Memorial Hospital

Z/DAF/1864 Ffestiniog and District Heroes' Memorial Hospital

Imperial War Museum

PST 1157 Parliamentary Recruiting Committee Poster I'r Fyddin Fechgyn Gwalia!
(‘To the Army, Men of Gwalia!’)

PST 5057 Parliamentary Recruiting Committee Poster Anibyniaeth Sydd Yn Galw Am
Ei Dewraf Dyn (‘Independence Calls for the Bravest of Men’)

PST 11406 Parliamentary Recruiting Committee poster Y Darn Papur: Ymrestrwch
Heddyw (‘The Scrap of Paper: Enlist Today’)

National Library of Wales

Minor Deposit 321: Llanbadarn Fawr War Memorial Committee papers

War Memorials Register

See Appendix 2 for the full list of memorials studied for this thesis which includes their
War Memorials Register reference.

Primary sources

Published primary sources

De Waal, Daphne, *Soldiers Immortal and Other Poems* (Cape Town: Maskew Miller, 1917)

Edwards, Owen Morgan (gol.), *Gwaith Barddonol Islwyn* (Wrecsam: Hughes a'i Fab, 1897)

Evans-Jones, Albert, *Cerddi Cynan: Y Casgliad Cyflawn* (Lerpwl: Gwasg y Brython, 1959)

Griffith, Llewelyn Wyn, *Up to Mametz* (London: Faber & Faber, 1931)

Gruffydd, Ifan, *Gŵr o Baradwys* (Dinbych: Gwasg Gee, 1963)

Imperial War Conference, *Extracts from Minutes of Proceedings and Papers Laid Before the Conference: Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of His Majesty, May 1917* (London: HMSO, 1917)

Jones, David, *In Parenthesis* (London: Faber & Faber, 1937)

Kenyon, Frederic, *War Graves: How the Cemeteries Abroad will be Designed* (London: HMSO, 1918)

Lee, Joseph, *Work-A-Day Warriors* (London: John Murray, 1917)

Roberts, Kate, *Traed Mewn Cyffion* (Aberystwyth: Gwasg Aberystwyth, 1936)

Victoria and Albert Museum, *Inscriptions Suggested for War Memorials* (London: HMSO, 1919)

Watcyn-Williams, Morgan, *From Khaki to Cloth* (Carnarvon: Calvinist Methodist Book Agency, 1949)

Williams, Gwilym, *Dan Yr Helyg* (Llanelli: James Davies a'i Gwmni, 1917)

Williams, John James (gol.), *Cerddi'r Bugail: Cyfrol Goffa Hedd Wyn* (Caerdydd: William Lewis, 1918)

Newspapers and magazines

The Aberdare Leader

Yr Adsain

The Amman Valley Chronicle and East Carmarthen News

Baner ac Amserau Cymru

The Brecon County Times

Y Brython

Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald

Caerphilly Journal

The Cambria Daily Leader

Cambrian News

Carmarthen Journal

The Carmarthen Weekly Reporter

Y Clorianydd

Y Cymro

Y Darian

Denbighshire Free Press

Y Dinesydd Cymreig

Y Drych

Y Dydd

Y Genedl

Y Genedl Gymreig

Glamorgan Advertiser

Glamorgan Gazette

Y Goleuad

Gwyliedydd Newydd

The Haverfordwest and Milford Haven Telegraph

Yr Herald Cymraeg

Holyhead Mail and Anglesey Herald

Liverpool Journal of Commerce

Llais Llafur

Llanelly Star

Market Harborough Advertiser and Midland Mail

Merthyr Express

Neath Guardian

North Wales Chronicle

North Wales Weekly News

Pembrokeshire Telegraph

Pioneer

Prestatyn Weekly

Port Talbot Guardian

Porthcawl News

The Rhondda Leader

Rhos Herald

Y Seren

South Wales Argus

South Wales Daily Post

South Wales Gazette

South Wales Weekly Post

The Times

Y Wawr

Welsh Gazette

The Welshman

Western Mail

Select websites

Casgliad y Werin Cymru / People's Collection Wales <<https://www.peoplescollection.wales/>>

Commonwealth War Graves Commission <<https://www.cwgc.org/>>

Flintshire War Memorials <<https://www.flintshirewarmemorials.com/>>

‘War Memorials’, Clwyd Family History Society <<https://www.clwydfhs.org.uk/en/war-memorials>>

‘War Memorials in Anglesey’, Anglesey Info <<https://www.anglesey.info/war-memorials/>>

Welsh Centre for International Affairs / Canolfan Materion Rhyngwladol Cymru
<<https://www.wcia.org.uk/>>

Welsh Memorials to the Great War <<https://chart.swansea.ac.uk/projects/welsh-memorials-to-the-great-war/>>

West Wales War Memorial Project <<https://ww1.wales/>>

‘Women, Wales, and War’, Archif Menywod Cymru / Women’s Archive of Wales
<<https://www.womenandwar.wales/>>

Film, television, and digital media

‘Hedd Wyn’, *Gwlad Beirdd*, S4C, 14 November 2010

Hedd Wyn, dir. by Paul Turner (S4C, 1992)

Lleisiau'r Rhyfel Mawr, S4C, 4 November 2008 — 25 November 2008

Mametz, S4C, 3 July 2016

We Will Remember Them, BBC Four, 4 November 2018

Secondary sources

Journal articles, essays, and book chapters

Ashplant, Timothy, Graham Dawson, and Michael Roper, 'The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration: Contexts, Structures, and Dynamics', in Timothy Ashplant, Graham Dawson, and Michael Roper (eds.), *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 3-86

Awbery, Gwenllian, 'The Language of Remembrance: Welsh and English on First World War Memorials', *Folk Life* 55:2 (2017), pp. 112-136

— "“Eu haberth nid â heibio”": Barddoniaeth ar Gofebion Rhyfel', *Llên Cymru* 40:1 (2017), pp. 116-145

Bar-Yosef, Eitan, 'The Last Crusade? British Propaganda and the Palestine Campaign, 1917—18', *Journal of Contemporary History* 36:1 (2001), pp. 87-109

Benbough-Jackson, Mike, 'Five-Foot-Five Nation: Size, Wales, and the Great War', *Welsh History Review / Cylchgrawn Hanes Cymru* 28:4 (2017), pp. 618-645

Bushaway, Bob, 'Name Upon Name: The Great War and Remembrance', in Roy Porter (ed.), *Myths of the English* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1992), pp. 136-167

Cannadine, David, 'War and Death, Grief and Mourning in Modern Britain', in Joachim Waley (ed.), *Mirrors of Mortality: Social Studies in the History of Death* (London: Europa, 1981), pp. 187-242

Carden-Coyne, Ana, 'Gendering Death and Renewal: Classical Monuments of the First World War', *Humanities Research* 10:2 (2003), pp. 40-50

- Claeys, Dries, 'World War I and the Reconstruction of Rural Landscapes in Belgium and France: A Historiographical Essay', *Agricultural History Review* 65:1 (2017), pp. 108-129
- Damousi, Joy, 'Mourning Practices', in Jay Winter (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 358-384
- Danilova, Nataliya, and Emma Dolan, 'Scottish Soldier-Heroes and Patriotic War Heroines: The Gendered Politics of World War I Commemoration', *Gender, Place & Culture* 27:2 (2020), pp. 239-260
- Evans, Neil, 'The South Wales Race Riots of 1919', *Llafur* 3:1 (1980), pp. 5-29
- Fantauzzo, Justin, 'Dead Sea Fruit: Edmund Allenby, the First World War, and the Politics of Personal Loss', *First World War Studies* 7:3 (2016), pp. 287-302
- Foster, Ann-Marie, "'We Decided the Museum Would Be the Best Place for Them": Veterans, Families, and Mementos of the First World War', *History & Memory* 31:1 (2019), pp. 87-117
- Foster, Jeremy, 'Creating a Temenos, Positing 'South Africanism': Material Memory, Landscape Practice, and the Circulation of Identity at Delville Wood', *Cultural Geographies* 11:3 (2004), pp. 259-290
- Goebel, Stefan, 'Britain's 'Last Crusade': From War Propaganda to War Commemoration, c. 1914—1930', in David Welch and Jo Fox (eds.), *Justifying War: Propaganda, Politics, and the Modern Age* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 159-176
- Graham, Brian, and Peter Shirlow, 'The Battle of the Somme in Ulster Memory and Identity', *Political Geography* 21 (2002), pp. 881-904

- Gregory, Adrian, 'British 'War Enthusiasm' in 1914: A Reassessment', in Gail Braybon (ed.), *Evidence, History, and the Great War: Historians and the Impact of 1914—1918* (New York & Oxford: Berghahn, 2003), pp. 67-85
- Grieves, Keith, 'Investigating Local War Memorial Committees: Demobilised Soldiers, the Bereaved, and Expressions of Local Pride in Sussex Villages, 1918—1921', *Local Historian* 30 (2000), pp. 39-58
- Heffernan, Michael, 'For Ever England: The Western Front and the Politics of Remembrance in Britain', *Ecumene* 2:3 (1995), pp. 293-323
- Hucker, Jacqueline, '“Battle and Burial”: Recapturing the Cultural Meaning of Canada's National Memorial on Vimy Ridge', *The Public Historian* 31:1 (2009), pp. 89-109
- Hughes, Clive, 'The New Armies', in Ian Beckett and Keith Simpson (eds.), *A Nation in Arms: A Social Study of the British Army in the First World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), pp. 99-126
- Iles, Jennifer, 'Recalling the Ghosts of War: Performing Tourism on the Battlefields of the Western Front', *Text and Performance Quarterly* 26:2 (2006), pp. 162-180
- 'Encounters in the Fields: Tourism to the Battlefields of the Western Front', *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 6:2 (2008), pp. 138-154
- 'Going on Holiday to Imagine War: The Western Front Battlefields as Sites of Commemoration and Contestation', in Jonathan Skinner and Dimitrios Theodossopoulos (eds.), *Great Expectations: Imagination and Anticipation in Tourism* (New York & Oxford: Berghahn, 2011), pp. 155-173

- ‘Exploring Landscapes after Battle: Tourists at Home on the Old Front Lines’, in Jonathan Skinner (ed.), *Writing the Dark Side of Travel* (New York & Oxford: Berghahn, 2012), pp. 182-202
- ‘Consuming the Contested Heritage of War: Tourism, Territoriality, and the Memorial Landscapes of the Western Front’, in Glenn Hooper (ed.), *Heritage at the Interface: Interpretation and Identity* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2018), pp. 39-55
- Jones, J. Graham, ‘E. T. John and Welsh Home Rule, 1910—14’, *Welsh History Review / Cylchgrawn Hanes Cymru* 13:4 (1987), pp. 453-467
- ‘The Peacemonger’, *Journal of Liberal Democrat History* 29 (2000/2001), pp. 16-23
- Kumar, Krishan, ‘“Englishness” and English National Identity’, in David Morley and Kevin Robins (eds.), *British Cultural Studies: Geography, Nationality, and Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 41-55
- Lack, John, and Bart Ziino, ‘Requiem for Empire: Fabian Ware and the Imperial War Graves Commission’, in Andrew Jarboe and Richard Fogarty (eds.), *Empires in World War I: Shifting Frontiers and Imperial Dynamics in a Global Conflict* (New York & London: IB Tauris, 2014), pp. 351-375
- Laqueur, Thomas, ‘Memory and Naming in the Great War’, in John R Gillis (ed.), *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 150-167
- Lilley, Keith, ‘Imagined Geographies of the ‘Celtic Fringe’ and the Cultural Construction of the ‘Other’ in Medieval Wales and Ireland’, in David Harvey and others (eds.), *Celtic Geographies: Old Culture, New Times* (London & New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 21-36

- Macleod, Jenny, “‘By Scottish hands, with Scottish money, on Scottish soil’: The Scottish National War Memorial and National Identity’, *Journal of British Studies* 49 (2010), pp. 73-96
- ‘Memorials and Location: Local versus National Identity and the Scottish National War Memorial’, *The Scottish Historical Review* 89 (2010), pp. 73-95
- ‘Britishness and Commemoration: National Memorials to the First World War in Britain and Ireland’, *Journal of Contemporary History* 48:4 (2013), pp. 647-665
- Macleod, Jenny, and Yvonne Inall, ‘A Century of Armistice Day: Memorialisation in the Wake of the First World War’, *Mortality* 25:1 (2020), pp. 48-68
- Matthews, Gethin, ‘Rhwygau’, in Gethin Matthews (gol.), *Creithiau: Dylanwad y Rhyfel Mawr ar Gymdeithas a Diwylliant yng Nghymru* (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 2016), pp. 1-20
- ‘Buddugoliaeth’/ Dadrithio/ Creithiau’, in Gethin Matthews (gol.), *Creithiau: Dylanwad y Rhyfel Mawr ar Gymdeithas a Diwylliant yng Nghymru* (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 2016), pp. 258-269
- ‘Angels, Doves, and Minerva: Reading the Memorials to the Great War in Welsh Presbyterian chapels’, *Cylchgrawn Hanes y Methodistiaid Calfinaidd* 42 (2019), pp. 72-91
- Morgan, D. Densil, ‘A Century of Christianity in Wales’, in Norman Doe (ed.), *A New History of the Church in Wales: Governance and Ministry, Theology and Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp. 45-62

- Moriarty, Catherine, 'Private Grief and Public Remembrance: British First World War Memorials', in Martin Evans and Kenneth Lunn (eds.), *War and Memory in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Berg, 1997), pp. 125-142
- '“Though in a Picture Only”: Portrait Photography and the Commemoration of the First World War', in Gail Braybon (ed.), *Evidence, History, and the Great War: Historians and the Impact of 1914—18* (New York & Oxford: Berghahn, 2003), pp. 30-47
- Noakes, Lucy, 'Gender, Grief, and Bereavement in Second World War Britain', *Journal of War & Culture Studies* 8:1 (2015), pp. 72-85
- Parry, Cyril, 'Gwynedd and the Great War, 1914—1918', *Welsh History Review / Cylchgrawn Hanes Cymru* 14:1 (1988), pp. 78-117
- Pegum, John, 'The Old Front Line: Returning to the Battlefields in the Writings of Ex-Servicemen', in Jessica Meyer (ed.), *British Popular Culture and the First World War* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2008), pp. 217-236
- Peniston-Bird, Corinna, 'The Grieving Male in Memorialisation: Monuments of Discretion', *Journal of War & Culture Studies* 8:1 (2015), pp. 41-56
- Piehler, Kurt, 'The War Dead and the Gold Star: American Commemoration of the First World War', in John Gillis (ed.), *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 168-185
- Phillips, Gervase, 'Dai Bach y Soldiwr: Welsh Soldiers in the British Army, 1914—1918', *Llafur* 6:2 (1993), pp. 94-105
- Popular Memory Group, 'Popular Memory: Theory, Politics, Method', in Richard Johnson, and others (eds.), *Making Histories: Studies in History-Writing and Politics* (London & New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. 205-252

- Porter, Brian, 'David Davies: A Hunter after Peace', *Review of International Studies* 15:1 (1989), pp. 27-36
- Scates, Bruce, and Rebecca Wheatley, 'War Memorials', in Jay Winter (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 528-556
- Shelby, Karen, 'Little Flemish Heroes' Tombstones: The Great War and Twenty-First Century Belgian Politics', in Bart Ziino (ed.), *Remembering the First World War* (London & New York: Routledge, 2015), pp. 186-206
- Simkins, Peter, 'The Four Armies 1914—1918', in David Chandler and Ian Beckett (eds.), *The Oxford Illustrated History of the British Army* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 235-255
- Strange, Julie-Marie, '"She Cried a Very Little': Death, Grief and Mourning in Working-Class Culture, c. 1880—1914', *Social History* 27:2 (2002), pp. 143-161
- Stroebe, Margaret, and Henk Schut, 'Culture and Grief', *Bereavement Care* 17:1 (1998), pp. 7-11
- Switzer, Catherine, and Brian Graham, '"Ulster's Love in Letter'd Gold': The Battle of the Somme and the Ulster Memorial Tower, 1918—1935', *Journal of Historical Geography* 36 (2010), pp. 183-193
- Turner, Sarah, 'The Poetics of Permanence? Inscriptions, Memory, and Memorials of the First World War in Britain', *Sculpture Journal* 24:1 (2015), pp. 73-96
- Williams, Chris, 'Taffs in the Trenches: Welsh National Identity and Military Service, 1914—1918', in Matthew Cragoe and Chris Williams (eds.), *Wales and War: Religion,*

Society, and Politics in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), pp. 126-164

Williams, Sydna Ann, ‘‘Law Not War—Hedd Nid Cledd’’: Women and the Peace Movement in North Wales, 1926–1945’, *Welsh History Review / Cylchgrawn Hanes Cymru* 18:1 (1996), pp. 63-91

Winter, Jay, and Emmanuel Sivan, ‘Setting the Framework’, in Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (eds.), *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 6-39

Books

Abousnnouga, Gill, and David Machin, *The Language of War Monuments* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013)

Alcalde, Ángel, *War Veterans and Fascism in Interwar Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017)

Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition (London & New York: Verso, 2006)

Anderson, Julie, *Disability and Rehabilitation in Britain: ‘Soul of a Nation’* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011)

ap Glyn, Ifor, *Lleisiau’r Rhyfel Mawr* (Llanwrst: Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, 2008)

Atherton, Ian, *Britons and their Battlefields: War, Memory, and Commemoration since the Fourteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2024)

Barlow, Robin, *Wales and World War One* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 2014)

- Beckett, Ian, and Keith Simpson (eds.), *A Nation in Arms: A Social Study of the British Army in the First World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985)
- Beckett, Ian, Tim Bowman, and Mark Connelly, *The British Army and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017)
- Birn, Donald, *The League of Nations Union, 1918—1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981)
- Bourke, Joanna, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain, and the Great War* (London: Reaktion, 1996)
- Bromber, Katrin, and others (eds.), *The Long End of the First World War: Ruptures, Continuities, and Memories* (Frankfurt & New York: Campus Verlag, 2018)
- Brown, B. J., and Sally Baker, *Mothers, Wives, and Changing Lives: Women in Mid Twentieth-Century Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011)
- Carden-Coyne, Ana, *Reconstructing the Body: Classicism, Modernism, and the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009)
- Ceadel, Martin, *Thinking About Peace and War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987)
- Clouting, Laura, *A Century of Remembrance* (London: Imperial War Museum, 2018)
- Colley, Linda, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707—1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992)
- Connelly, Mark, *The Great War, Memory, and Ritual: Commemoration in the City and East London, 1916—1939* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2002)
- *Postcards from the Western Front: Pilgrims, Veterans, and Tourists after the Great War* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2022)
- Connelly, Mark, and Stefan Goebel, *Ypres* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018)

- Copsey, Nigel, and Andrzej Olechnowicz (eds.), *Varieties of Anti-Fascism: Britain in the Inter-War Period* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010)
- Corr, Charles, Donna Corr, and Kenneth Doka, *Death and Dying, Life and Living*, eighth edition (Belmont: Wadsworth, 2018)
- Crane, David, *Empires of the Dead: How One Man's Vision Led to the Creation of WWI's War Graves* (London: William Collins, 2014)
- Damousi, Joy, *The Labour of Loss: Mourning, Memory, and Wartime Bereavement in Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)
- *Living with the Aftermath: Trauma, Nostalgia, and Grief in Post-War Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)
- Davies, Janet, *The Welsh Language* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1993)
- Davies, John, *A History of Wales* (London: Penguin, 1994)
- De Barra, Caoimhín, *The Coming of the Celts, AD 1860: Celtic Nationalism in Ireland and Wales* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2018)
- Donaldson, Peter, *Ritual and Remembrance: The Memorialisation of the Great War in Kent* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006)
- Evans, Suzanne, *Mothers of Heroes, Mothers of Martyrs: World War I and the Politics of Grief* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007)
- Fantauzzo, Justin, *The Other Wars: The Experience and Memory of the First World War in the Middle East and Macedonia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020)
- Fell, Alison, *Women as Veterans in Britain and France after the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018)

- Foucault, Michel, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, translated by Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon, 1977)
- French, David, *Military Identities: The Regimental System, the British Army, and the British People c. 1870—2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005)
- Fuller, J. G., *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies, 1914—1918* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990)
- Fussell, Paul, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)
- Gaffney, Angela, *Aftermath: Remembering the Great War in Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998)
- Goebel, Stefan, *The Great War and Medieval Memory: War, Remembrance, and Medievalism in Britain and Germany, 1914—1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007)
- Grayzel, Susan, *Women's Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France during the First World War* (Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, 1999)
- Gregory, Adrian, *The Silence of Memory: Armistice Day, 1919—1946* (Oxford: Berg, 1994)
- *The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008)
- Hanna, Emma, *Sounds of War: Music in the British Armed Forces During the Great War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020)
- Harvey, John, *The Art of Piety: The Visual Culture of Welsh Nonconformity* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1995)

- Hilling, John, *The History and Architecture of Cardiff Civic Centre: Black Gold, White City* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2016)
- Hockey, Jenny, Jeanne Katz, and Neil Small (eds.), *Grief, Mourning, and Death Ritual* (Buckingham & Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2001)
- Hobsbawm, Eric, and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983)
- Hughes, Clive, “*I’r Fyddin Fechgyn Gwalia!*”: *Recriwtio i’r Fyddin yng Ngogledd-Orllewin Cymru, 1914—1916* (Llanrwst: Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, 2014)
- Jalland, Patricia, *Death in the Victorian Family* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996)
- *Death in War and Peace: A History of Loss and Grief in England, 1914—1970* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010)
- James, Manon Ceridwen, *Women, Identity, and Religion in Wales: Theology, Poetry, Story* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2018)
- Jenkins, Gwyn, *Cymry’r Rhyfel Byd Cyntaf* (Talybont: Y Lolfa, 2014)
- Johnes, Martin, *Welsh Not: Elementary Education and the Anglicisation of Nineteenth-Century Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2024)
- Jones, Anthony, *Welsh Chapels* (Cardiff: National Museums & Galleries of Wales, 1984)
- Jones, Heather, *For King and Country: The British Monarchy and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021)
- Jones, R. Merfyn, *The North Wales Quarrymen, 1874—1922* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1982)

- King, Alex, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain: The Symbolism and Politics of Remembrance* (London: Berg, 1998)
- Kitchen, James, *The British Imperial Army in the Middle East: Morale and Military Identity in the Sinai and Palestine Campaigns, 1916—18* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014)
- Laqueur, Thomas, *The Work of the Dead: A Cultural History of Mortal Remains* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015)
- Lloyd, David, *Battlefield Tourism: Pilgrimage and the Commemoration of the Great War in Britain, Australia, and Canada, 1919—1939* (Oxford: Berg, 1998)
- Llwyd, Alan (ed.), *Out of the Fire of Hell: Welsh Experience of the Great War 1914–1918 in Prose and Verse* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 2008)
- *Cofiant Hedd Wyn, 1887—1917* (Talybont: Y Lolfa, 2014)
- Longworth, Philip, *The Unending Vigil: The History of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2010)
- McCarthy, Helen, *The British People and the League of Nations: Democracy, Citizenship, and Internationalism, c. 1918—1945* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011)
- Mathers, Jenny, and Mererid Hopwood (eds.), *Yr Apêl / The Appeal* (Talybont: Y Lolfa, 2023)
- Matthews, Gethin (gol.), *Creithiau: Dylanwad y Rhyfel Mawr ar Gymdeithas a Diwylliant yng Nghymru* (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 2016)
- Miskell, Louise (ed.), *New Perspectives on Welsh Industrial History* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2020)
- Monger, David, *Patriotism and Propaganda in First World War Britain: The National War Aims Committee and Civilian Morale* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012)

- Morgan, D. Densil, *The Span of the Cross: Christian Religion and Society in Wales, 1914—2000*, second edition (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011)
- Morgan, Kenneth, *Rebirth of a Nation: Wales, 1880—1980* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981)
- Mosse, George, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991)
- Noakes, Lucy, *War and the British: Gender and National Identity, 1939—1991* (London: IB Tauris, 1997)
- Noakes, Lucy, and Juliette Pattinson (eds.), *The Cultural Memory of the Second World War in Britain* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013)
- Parsons, Gerald, *Perspectives on Civil Religion*, third volume (Abingdon & New York: Routledge, 2016)
- Peach, Linden, *Pacifism, Peace, and Modern Welsh Writing* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2019)
- Pennell, Catriona, *A Kingdom United: Popular Responses to the Outbreak of the First World War in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)
- Piehler, Kurt, *Remembering War the American Way* (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995)
- Plain, Gill, (ed.), *Scotland and the First World War: Myth, Memory, and the Legacy of Bannockburn* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2017)
- Powell, Julie, *Bodies of Work: The First World War and the Transnational Making of Rehabilitation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023)

- Pugh, Martin, *Lloyd George* (London: Longman, 1988)
- Richards, Jeffrey, *Imperialism and Music: Britain 1876—1953* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001)
- Shelby, Karen, *Flemish Nationalism and the Great War: The Politics of Memory, Visual Culture and Commemoration* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014)
- Summerfield, Penny, *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives: Discourse and Subjectivity in Oral Histories of the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998)
- Switzer, Catherine, *Unionists and Great War Commemoration in the North of Ireland 1914—1939* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2007)
- Thomas, M. Wynn, *In the Shadow of the Pulpit: Literature and Nonconformist Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2010)
- Ugolini, Wendy, *Wales in England, 1914—1945: A Social, Cultural, and Military History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2024)
- Vance, Jonathan, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997)
- Vance, Jonathan, and others (eds.), *The Great War: From Memory to History* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2015)
- Wilson, Ross, *Landscapes of the Western Front: Materiality during the Great War* (London: Routledge, 2012)
- Winter, Jay, *Remembering War: The Great War Between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006)

— *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History*
(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014)

Ziino, Bart, *A Distant Grief: Australians, War Graves, and the Great War* (Crawley: University
of Western Australia Press, 2007)

Unpublished theses

Batten, Sonia, 'Memorial Text Narratives in Britain, c. 1890—1930', unpublished PhD thesis,
University of Birmingham, 2011

Coss, Denise, 'First World War Memorials, Commemoration, and Community in North-East
England, 1918—1939', unpublished PhD thesis, Durham University, 2012

Godden, Tim, 'Designing Memory: The Junior Architects of the Imperial War Graves
Commission and the Creation of a Spatial Memorial in the British War Cemeteries on
the Western Front', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Kent, 2020

Keating, Andrew Prescott, 'Empire of the Dead: British Burial Abroad and the Formation of
National Identity', unpublished PhD thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 2011