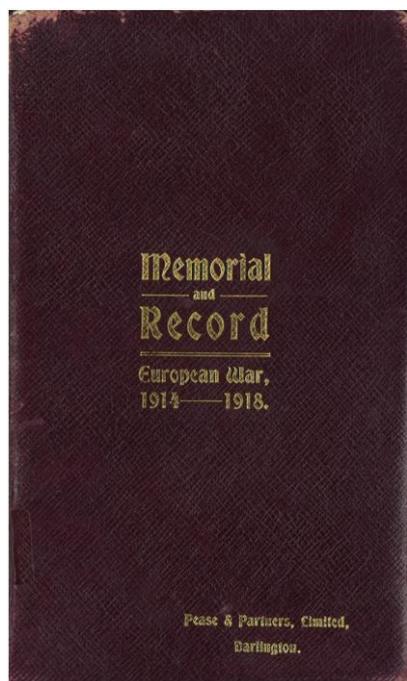


Memorial and Record, European War 1914-1918

Pease and Partners, Ltd, Darlington 1920



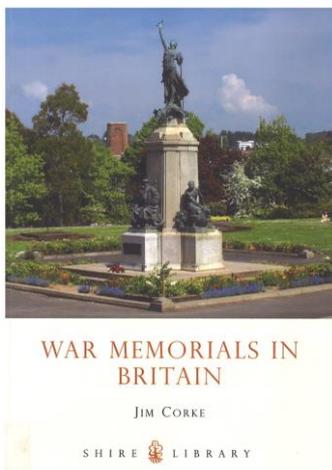
This little book is an invaluable resource in the Centre for Local Studies. It is a record of all the officials and workmen (categories which are always kept distinct from each other) who were employed by the Pease businesses during the First World War: all of the men that is, who served in the Forces, and what became of them.

Pease and Partners were responsible at this period for workforces in collieries, ironstone mines, limestone quarries, ironworks and what we would now call 'backroom office' staff. 31.74% of the total workforce of 13,154 joined up. Of these 4,174 men, 543 died on active service; 124 received medals for bravery.

The first section, 'In Memorium', gives the name, rank, date and location of death, with the distinction between being killed outright, dying later of wounds received, or listed as missing. As well as the obvious infliction of war trauma, there are also deaths from malaria, pneumonia, sickness, gas poisoning, drowning and even the 'accidentally killed'. After this, in 'Record', the men are listed by name, rank, regiment and decoration. The final section concentrates on the decorations, including some details as to specifically what bravery was involved. The heroism is often extreme, although the language is very much of its time, the men are praised for 'great dash', 'coolness', 'steadiness and contempt of danger'.

War Memorials in Britain

Jim Corke 2005



By way of contrast, here is another small book with an update on the culture of memorialising. This is a national survey of – and indeed history of – the practice of creating works of significance intended to provoke respect, pride and perhaps even remorse for those lost in battle.

The Imperial War Museum has an Inventory of 60,000 war memorials, spanning two thousand years. The small selection in this book is illustrated throughout with many colour photographs, together with an occasionally wry commentary. There are chapters on Long stones and high crosses, Monuments, Stained glass and what the author calls ‘Singularities’ – unusual edifices and architecture, where there is a utilitarian as well as metaphysical function behind the construction.

Darlington is mentioned in the index for its commemorative obelisk in the forecourt of The War Memorial Hospital.

Some intriguing entries include the memorial stone (at Southampton Municipal Golf Course) to a horse, Warrior, who despite being wounded by shrapnel in 1914 recovered to serve out the war and lived on until 1936. In Ashford, Kent there is a Mark IV tank, which was presented to the town, deemed to have made an important contribution to victory in the First World War. It was used for some years subsequently as an electricity substation, renovated in the 1980's by the Army Engineers, who gave it a protective shelter. At the National Memorial Arboretum there is a life-size sculpture of a polar bear, commemorating the 49th (West Yorkshire) Division in the Second World War – they were prominent in the Arctic campaigns.

There also examples here of the more familiar representations of the soldiers themselves, which cannot but convey the more haunting aspect of memorial. These also make the artistry of the individual sculptor more prominent than, say, in some of the more obviously patriotic and massive columns and towers.