

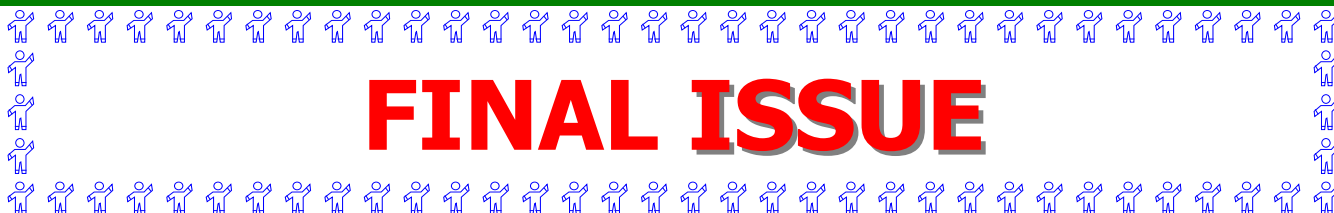


NORTH EAST WAR MEMORIALS PROJECT

CHARITY NO 1113088

NEWSLETTER NO 9

SUMMER 2008



FINAL ISSUE

NORTH EAST WAR MEMORIALS PROJECT

TWO YEARS ON

The history of the North East War Memorials Project stretches back over twenty years but the Project as seen now has been the work of a small group of people: *Janet Brown* (Chair), *Dorothy Hall* (Secretary), *John Dixon* (Treasurer), *Tony Harding*, *James Pasby*, *Mavis Dixon* and *Colin Sanders*.

We were awarded a Heritage Lottery grant of £49,300 to educate the public of the North East about the heritage and importance of War Memorials via a searchable internet based website. The Website design was launched at the Durham Light Infantry Museum and Durham Art Gallery on 1st July 2006 – the 90th Anniversary of the first day of the Battle of the Somme – in conjunction with an important exhibition on the Battle, and a key presentation on the history of the battle of the Somme by *Peter Hart*, Oral Historian at the Imperial War Museum.

The formal launch of the Website, www.newmp.org.uk, and a demonstration of the database in use, took place at County Hall, Morpeth, on November 11th 2006, in conjunction with a Remembrance Service at the County Hall Memorials, and in the presence of Civic leaders, representatives of Veterans' organisations, and members of the crew of H.M.S. 'Northumberland'. BBC TV "Look North" featured the ceremony on that evening's news bulletin, and a video clip of the broadcast can be seen on the Website – thanks to the technical staff at the BBC.

How far has the Project progressed since those key events?

In the first eighteen months of operating the Website, we have had 595,586 unique visits from users – counted on the basis of at least one visit per day from specific e-mail addresses - with multiple visits each day not being counted.

We have added around 280 War Memorials to the database as a result of information sent in by members of the public, taking the total to over 3,780 Memorials. As a result of enhancements to the Website structure, we have also been able to add the results of local history and family history research to the files on individual Memorials – making that research available to Internet visitors across the world. Members of the Project group have continued to research local War Memorials, retake photographs and check names. Our information on the sources of Memorial quotations, and the Project bibliography, has continued to expand.

We held nineteen "Drop-In Sessions" at Libraries throughout the Region in 2007, giving local people the opportunity to bring in their information, and helping them with their own enquiries and researches. As our database has thrown up instances of relatives being commemorated on Memorials, previously unknown to their descendants, these occasions have sometimes proved to be emotive for all concerned. Project members have been privileged to help in closing long-standing gaps in family histories. A number of family "stories" have finally been laid to rest, and a few tears shed in the process.

We have issued eight editions of a quarterly Newsletter – posting out some 650 copies on each occasion. An electronic version has been e-mailed to a growing list of subscribers, and all the Newsletters are available to download free from the Website. After Edition 9 any news items will be distributed electronically – **so sign up on the Website now!**

In this same period, our Chair *Janet Brown* has given her talk on War Memorials to 36 groups and societies, including WI's, Ladies Groups, Veterans' Groups, U3A and 2 to Infants' Schools.

Our Educational Pack – for Primary School pupils at Key Stage 1 – was launched at the 2007 National Family History Fair in Gateshead. Teachers can download the Pack by visiting the Website and looking at "Educational Resources" on the Home Page. Further Educational Resources are planned for Secondary Schools, and work is underway to develop this.



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What remains to be done?

The Project members are keen to encourage joint working with Local History Societies and would be pleased to hear from anyone contemplating researching local War Memorials – either the Memorials as physical artefacts, or the names commemorated on them – professional advice from *David Butler* on how best to do this is already on the Website.

There is also the facility to add research by the general public on local history and family history to the files on individual Memorials and parishes-making that research available to internet visitors across the world.

We have also added our "Working Indexes" to the Website – one for each County – and would be grateful if members of the public would check the towns and villages they know on those Indexes to see what information it is that we need to complete the database records. Many War Memorials only exist now as faded newspaper reports of unveilings – does anyone have that key photograph, postcard or unveiling programme in the attic, and would be prepared to allow us to scan it for the database?

What else can you do?

Would you be interested in helping to check the accuracy of the information we hold, or be prepared to take better photographs than those we have? Let us know – we'd be delighted to hear from you. All help is acknowledged on the relevant file.

Please check those County Working Indexes for what we know against what you know. Keep us informed of any church/building closures, movement of War Memorials and dedication of new ones.

Add your research to our website.

Contact us at enquiries@newmp.org.uk

The Heritage Lottery Funding is ending but the work of the North East War Memorials Project goes on!

NORTH EAST WAR MEMORIALS PROJECT

Charity No. 1113088

We need your support to keep the website going.

The cost of running the website, continual up dating of the database and running costs of the Group amount to about £1000 per year.

Please remember us when you are making Grants to Charities!

All donations however small are gratefully received.

Help us to continue to make this the most comprehensive and respectful record of North East service and sacrifice.

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CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE www.newn