

*Gough, P.J., (2004) Corporations and commemoration – First World War remembrance, Lloyds TSB and the National Memorial Arboretum, International Journal of Heritage Studies, Winter 2004, pp. 435 – 455, ISSN 1352-7258, 4 B & W illustrations*

[Paul.gough@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:Paul.gough@uwe.ac.uk)

### **Corporations and commemoration –**

First World War remembrance, Lloyds TSB and the National Memorial Arboretum

### **Abstract**

This paper explores the role of corporations and financial organizations in maintaining a memory of employees who have served during the wars of the twentieth century. Focusing initially on memorial schemes devised by finance houses in the commemorative era after the Great War, the author examines the emergence of a broader approach to organizational memory and the social construction of collective memory. Taking the Lloyds TSB finance group as a case study, the author examines the origins of the company's war memorial in central London, and the recent attempts to re-locate a number of memorial objects and icons accumulated during the expansion of the group. This case study indicates how the social memory of an organization might be understood through an appraisal of the monumental furniture that lives, often invisibly, within an organization. The paper concludes with a number of questions concerning the nature of organizational memory when confronted with a history of merger and acquisition, and the difficulties of finding a commemorative site able to represent and safeguard these histories.

### **Introduction : the dialectic between 'known' and 'unknown'**

In his account of building the Menin Gate at Ypres, the architect Sir Reginald Blomfield identified the single greatest problem in achieving an appropriate design for the war memorial: 'I had to find space for a vast number of names, estimated at first at some 40,000 but increased as we went on to about 58,600.'

(1) Yet despite spreading the names over 1,200 panels across walls, arches, columns and even the stairwells Blomfield could cram only 54,896 names into the elongated tunnel-like arch. Expediently, the names of 'an excess of nearly 6,000' were transferred to national burial sites nearby. (2) Further south, following the line of the old Western Front, the design of the gigantic arch at Thiepval was dictated by the need to display the names of 73,367 men with no known resting place who had died during the Battle of the Somme in 1916. Designed by Edwin Lutyens, the arch consists of sixteen enormous load-bearing columns each faced by stone panels carved to a height of some six meters, the words never quite beyond legibility. It is, as Geoff Dyer reflects, a monument to the 'untellable' (3) whilst also being a monument that is 'unphotographable': no image can capture its daunting scale, its weight, and the panorama of names, 'So interminably many', Stephen Zweig notes 'that as on the columns of the Alhambra, the writing becomes decorative.' (4) It is also unnervingly precise in both its grammar and specificity: individuals who may have served (and died) under assumed or false names are listed; common names – Smith, Jones, Hughes – are further identified by their roll number, the memorial also features an Addenda and indeed, according to Barnes, a Corrigenda. (5) It is, as Middlebrook and Winter intimate, a gargantuan roll of honour created in brick and stone. (6)

In his short story, *Evermore*, Julian Barnes draws a neat parallel between the monument as text and the annual visits to the Western Front by his story teller Miss Moss, a proof reader in a publishing house who demands of the cemetery authorities a constant attention to grammatical protocol and appropriate funerary procedures. It is this attention to detail – the assiduous 'clip and mow and prune', the precision in the act of naming, and the insistence on specificity at all levels that makes it possible for the Commonwealth war graves cemeteries to commemorate the dead without glorifying war. (7)

Naming, and the evocation of names, was central to the cult of commemoration after the Great War. It was a process that mirrored the complex bureaucracies developed by the industrial armies during prolonged total war that

had seen the military machine become 'rationalised, routinised, standardised' (8) in a parody of peacetime social systems. Initial attempts, however, to co-ordinate the administration of death were haphazard. In the British army in Flanders it was the zeal of Fabian Ware and his graves registration unit that laid the foundations of a systematic audit of the dead and their place of burial where known. (9) Once Ware had understood that bodies would not be exhumed and repatriated he began to establish a method for graves registration and a scheme for permanent burial sites. His other act was to photograph all graves so that relatives might have an image and directions to the place of burial. By August 1915 an initial 2,000 negatives, each showing four grave markers, had been taken. Cards were sent in answer to individual requests, details included 'the best available indication as to the situation of the grave and, when it was in a cemetery, directions as to the nearest railway station which might be useful for those wishing to visit the country after the war.' (10) Less than nine months later Ware's makeshift organisation had registered over 50,000 graves, answered 5,000 enquiries, and supplied 2,500 photographs. (11) Little over a year later the work to gather, re-inter and individually mark the fallen had become a state responsibility, and the dead, as Heffernan,, points out were no longer allowed 'to pass unnoticed back into the private world of their families'. They were 'official property' to be accorded appropriate civic commemoration in 'solemn monuments of official remembrance'. (12)

Lacquer has pointed out the epistemological shift that came out of Ware's founding work; here, a new era of remembrance commenced - the era of the common soldiers' name. As the administration of death and grieving became ever regulated so there followed 'a historically unprecedented planting of names on the landscapes of battle.' (13) Indeed, the very words chosen for the Stone of Remembrance in each of the larger cemeteries underlines this fact: 'Their name liveth evermore.' A choice of phrase that caused Lutyens to ask 'But what are names'. For the bereaved, however, they were often all that was left.

In Belgium and France, a sizeable administration continued to cater for the needs of pilgrims and the bereaved after the war. In 1923 Longworth tells us

there was a staff in the Imperial War Grave Commission of over 2,000 men, comprising twenty clerks of work, nine travelling garden parties, eight nurseries, 200 motor vehicles and a catering section that annually dispensed half a million meals (14) Perhaps of most value to visitors was the production of registers, a copy of which was kept in each cemetery and memorial. Without the register, a visitor would be baffled by the interminable rows of identical headstones; cemetery registers were also regarded as books of honour, mementoes that often had to substitute for visits to distant burial grounds. Compilation of the final register was exhaustive: by 1930 800,000 names had been recorded in 735 separate register parts, and by this date over a quarter of a million copies had been sold. (15) Published as *The War Graves of the British Empire* the final series numbered just under a thousand published parts.

During the course of the war the names of the dead, missing and wounded became a common part of the fabric of the war. In the heady days of recruitment long lists of those who had volunteered appeared in local newspapers, house magazines, journals and trade newspapers. *The Studio* arts magazine, for example, frequently printed page-long lists of 'artists who have joined the services.' Amongst the lists were such artists as Eric Kennington, Paul Nash, C.S.Jagger, as well as innumerable others with pretensions (if not the talent) to be thought 'artistic.' (16) As those pages of volunteers faded, so their reverse began to appear in the long lists of casualties that soon spread across local newspapers.

### **Services recruitment patterns in banking, commerce and the professions**

Of especial significance in the story of Great War enlistment – and the persistent evocation of 'names' - is the poignancy of the so-called 'Pals Battalions'. Following his call for the first hundred thousand volunteers Field Marshal Kitchener agreed to the creation of battalions formed from men of a common background. Men were drawn from similar occupations, professions, sporting associations, even youth groups such as the Boy's Brigade, or from the larger public schools. In late August, for example, Lord Derby appealed to the

commercial and business houses of Liverpool to enlist and serve together in a single battalion of colleagues. Within three days over 2,000 men had responded to his call providing sufficient men to form two battalions. In a very short time over 300 'Pals' Battalions were formed, the majority from the northern cities of England. Assimilated into the British Expeditionary Force, as 'service' battalions they retained their unofficial status with such nicknames as the Hull Commercials, Grimsby Chums, Accrington Pals. So many enlisted that the entire infantry of the 31<sup>st</sup> Division was composed of 'Pals' although the Somme battles of 1916 brought these patriotic fraternities to a sudden end. (17)

Banking, commerce and business communities produced distinct bodies of volunteers. In Bristol, the Citizen's Recruiting Committee were sanctioned in late August 1914 to form a battalion of 'better class young men' and put out an appeal to 'Athletic, Mercantile and Professional young men' to be sent to 'Clubs (Political, Athletic and Social), Banks Insurance Offices, Merchants, Manufacturers, Brokers and large Retailers' (although they later removed the word 'Athletic' from the appeal). In less than a fortnight 500 had been recruited and the battalion, the 12<sup>th</sup> Gloucester's (Bristol Own) was up to full strength by the end of September. (18)

In the north of England, the 12<sup>th</sup> battalion of the York and Lancaster Regiment, was comprised for the most part of commercial and university workers from Sheffield. Enlistment began at the Corn Exchange on 10<sup>th</sup> September, two days later a full complement of some 1,000 men had been signed up. Official regimental historian Sparling described them as "£500 a year business men, stockbrokers, engineers, chemists, metallurgical experts, University and public school men, medical students, journalists, schoolmasters, craftsmen, shop assistants, secretaries, and all sorts of clerks". (19)

Known locally as 'the Sheffield City Battalion' it arrived in France in March 1916 after a quiet posting in Egypt, and was soon positioned on the extreme left of the 15-mile British offensive front on the Somme. In an abortive attack on the fortified village of Serre on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916 the original battalion was largely destroyed. When the remnants were taken out of the line in the evening of 3<sup>rd</sup>

July, it had suffered terrible losses: of the 651 officers and men who went into action, 266 officers and men were killed or died of wounds and 246 officers and men were wounded - a 79% casualty rate. (20)

Such devastating losses soon registered at home: the pages of the Sheffield news sheets, regional newspapers and company newsletters were dense with ranks of names of those killed, wounded and still missing. In time the systematic recitation and recording of names would become an essential part in the diction of remembrance, entered on rolls of honour and carved with great exactitude onto stone memorials. Uniquely, the Sheffield City Battalion was remembered by the naming of a tract of battlefield near Serre and a monument in that village. (21)

By comparison, the office workers of southern England were readily assimilated into the dozens of territorial force and regular battalions that had long been established in London and the Home Counties. Modelled on the regular army, but intended primarily for home defence, territorial soldiers were not meant for overseas service, although many subsequently volunteered. Like the 'Pals' battalions, groups were drawn from local commerce. One of the first 'Pals' Battalions was the 10th service battalion of the Royal Fusiliers, it had the unofficial title of 'the Stock brokers'. The 2/8th (City of London) Battalion Territorial Force was sub-titled the 'Post Office Rifles', and the 26th battalion was known as 'the Bankers' having been formed by the Lord Mayor and City of London from bank clerks and accountants. At its peak the all-territorial London Regiment, consisted of 34 volunteer battalions, but in 1916 these units were affiliated with regular regiments while retaining their unofficial titles. (22)

Lloyds Bank was one of many commercial institutions whose workers volunteered (or were later enlisted) into the armed services during the course of the First World War. It is likely that many Lloyds men would have joined the 26<sup>th</sup> service Battalion – 'the Bankers – of the Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment). Established in 1785 Lloyds had become a truly national bank in the first decades of the twentieth century following a series of expansions and mergers. By 1910, the Lombard Street office was officially recognised as the

centre of authority. (23) As Booker (24) points out the transformation of English banks from small and discrete private firms predicated on personal relationships to large, formalised institutions was reflected in the scale and grandeur of bank architecture that soon evolved from a modest 'in-house' style to the monumental classicism of London offices. The Lombard Street branch was a fine example of monumental scale and pretension. Designed by Sir John Burnet – one of the select band of architects who had worked for the Imperial War Graves Commission – it was constructed between 1927-29 and replaced an earlier and smaller Victorian building on the same site, which had been the bank's headquarters since 1912. (25)

### **First World War commemoration; remembering 'office workers'**

At the end of the Great War the price paid by the various stake-holders had been great, and the need to grieve, and to commemorate all who had died in the conflict, rather than just generals and politicians, saw an unprecedented groundswell of feeling. As Mosse and Winter relate, the acts of commemoration were many and various, ranging from the temporal – the Two Minutes Silence – to the permanent and immutable, these invariably took the form of statues, tombs and buildings. (26) As Boorman records, the Bank of England gave a particular lead to the financial professions when, in February 1919, it initiated a memorial scheme that embraced both reverential and secular intent: a memorial service, the endowment of a hospital bed, and a memorial in the Bank garden. (27) Two months later at a ceremony in Southwark Cathedral the names of those employees who had died in the war were read aloud from the steps of the altar. These same seventy-one names are reproduced on three sides of the memorial pedestal that was unveiled on Armistice Day 1921; nearby a parallel memorial carries a list of those bank employees who served during the war.

Large financial concerns such as Lloyds and Prudential Assurance were similarly occupied with the process of corporate commemoration. Nationally, Lloyds Bank had suffered the loss of 686 former employees and their names and

places of work were listed in a 137 page 'memorial album, 1914-1918' published shortly after the Great War. Over 9,000 Prudential Assurance employees had served in the war, of whom 798 (8.6%) died. After the war Company Directors decided that a Prudential War Memorial should be erected at Head Office in Waterhouse Square and the artist Ferdinand Blunstone created a bold, twenty foot high granite and bronze ensemble depicting (amongst other scenes) a dying soldier in the arms of two magnificently winged angels. Unveiled amidst grand ceremony in March 1922 the names of the Prudential dead occupy three sides of the main base. At Lombard Street, headquarters of the Lloyds banking empire, a rather more modest memorial plaque had been unveiled by Sir Richard Vassar-Smith BT, Chairman of Lloyds Bank, (28) on 8<sup>th</sup> February 1921. Eight years later, it was re-positioned overlooking the main banking hall in the new Burnet building. Like its counterparts in the Bank of England and Prudential assurance there was an emphasis on accurately recording names and places of work. This is clearly emphasized in the text that accompanies the list of Lloyds employees who died:

The men of ours/at the call of the 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. Let those who come/after see to it/that their names/are not forgotten/1914-1918/

However, as we shall see, this rather modest tablet would have an active 'after-life', as its position, status and relevance changed over the following ninety years.

### **Orthodoxies of commemoration and the 'afterlife' of memorials**

Monuments and memorials, although durable as objects, are subject to a constant evolution of meaning. More often they are 'forgotten, abandoned, and allowed to deteriorate' as those who come after leave and die. (29) Monuments,



in particular those empty tombs designed to commemorate mass death during the Great War, do develop complex afterlives, retaining a social and human resonance even as their cultural and political meanings alter and mutate. (30) Various interpretations of this phenomenon have been posited, suggesting on the one hand that sites of memory merely provide convenient foci for the projection of anxieties and longings, or that they encapsulate a continuous state of 'potentiality'. Foster captures the 'fixture and flux' of these mnemonic resonances in the phrase 'durable-but-mutable'. (31) For his part Jay Winter proposes a tripartite cycle in the afterlife of these *lieux de memoire*: an initial, constructive and creative phase, marked by monument building and the creation of ceremony. Secondly, the grounding of ritual action through a process of institutionalisation and routinisation, so that the creative form adopts a temporal mode. This is followed by a final and crucial stage during which the sites of memory are either transformed or disappear, a process that is largely contingent on whether a second generation of mourners inherits the earlier meanings attached to the place or event and is able to add new meanings. As Winter concludes, without frequent re-inscription the date and place of commemoration simply fade away as entropy takes over and memory atrophies: the monument loses its potency to re-invigorate memory. However, the manner of 're-inscription' is quite crucial in this unfolding process of ownership and moral jurisdiction. (31) It is known for memorials to be used for purposes for which they were never intended by those who devised them, their original meanings and intentions distorted, forgotten and re-inscribed with other readings.

This complex process is most pronounced in the case of monuments to distant wars. Here as Inglis suggests, the terminological difference is significant: 'Where the French speak of *monuments aux morts*, the English say *war memorials*.' (32) *Memorial* leaves open the form of commemoration which may, or may not, be monumental. Commemoration, essentially anti-entropic, draws on the suggestion that the 'monument' is a physical force that arrests the effects of time; it might be considered a 'single point [that] continues in the present and into the future' (33) By comparison, the German word for monument '*denkmal*' –

literally 'a means to thought' - offers a conceptual vehicle that is more closely attuned to the idea that human perceptions shift and adjust, and that monuments – like so much rhetorical *topoi* – can become irrelevant, invisible and, yet also capable of arousing intense debate. (34)

Most corporate memorials in Britain lie dormant for the better part of the calendar year, awaiting re-activation (if at all) in the approach to Armistice Day and/or Remembrance Sunday. They have earned the invisibility noted by Lewis Mumford who warned that public monumentalia would always blend back into the undifferentiated landscape because memory is profoundly unstable, 'something has impregnated them against attention'. (35) However, in the past decade Britain has seen a renewed enthusiasm for ritual commemoration. Perhaps nowhere has this been more evident than in the national campaigns to record public artworks, especially war memorials. Since 1997 exhaustive schemes have been undertaken by, amongst others, the Public Memorials and Sculptures Association (PMSA), the National Inventory of War Memorials (NIWM) and the Local Heritage Initiative (LHI). These schemes have been extraordinarily ambitious in their scope: the PMSA's *National Recording Project* was established to catalogue 'every piece of public sculpture and every public monument in the British Isles': a catalogue expected to contain some tens of thousands of pieces of public art. Relying on a network of volunteer and amateur historians (underpinned by association with regional universities) the recording project also aimed to establish and maintain a catalogue of images and texts in digital form for public access. (36)

The National Inventory of War Memorials suggests that there may be over 54,000 war memorials throughout the United Kingdom. These take such diverse forms as lych gates and church organs, as well as more common chapel windows, carved stones and reverential monuments. The template for recording the details of each memorial runs to four pages and the project has expanded from its millennium ambitions to a twelve year campaign involving three full time and five voluntary staff and over 500 volunteer fieldworkers. A predilection for audit, enumeration and data-gathering appears to have been keenly stimulated

by the reflective atmosphere of the 'millennium' period. It also owes much to the 'democratization of memory' (37) and a fascination with local histories, genealogy and family lore. Added to this is the interest in preserving the data and the fabric of the actual monuments. Taking Winter's model, it is clear that most of the Great War civic memorials are re-inscribed each Remembrance Sunday, although most have been freighted with additional meanings and martial memory that were clearly outside their initial remit. Invisible for much of the year, city centre cenotaphs burst like a floral aneurysm each November. Similarly, the corporate world has followed suit; a renewed interest in memorials located in banks, insurance companies and other national organizations is keenly recorded in such journals as that published by the Western Front Association. An orthodoxy of public-spirited commemoration (a phenomenon described 'recreational grief' (38)) has spread across British business and chief executive officers are expected to condone, indeed promote, the rhetoric of commemoration. Indeed, the Group Chief Executive of Lloyds TSB, was required in November 2002 to explain to the national workforce 'why wasn't a two minutes silence observed company wide? ' In his column, Peter Ellwood apologized and assured the business staff that Remembrance Day was taken very seriously throughout the Group, adding that recent research showed that 92% of the general public favoured the permanent re-instatement of the two minute silence on 11<sup>th</sup> November. He clarified future policy by stating that, in future years, the Group would also recognize the silence, adding that this token of respect would "not 'break the bank". (39)

### **The basis of organizational memory**

Organisational memory is normally considered to reside entirely in the archive of an organization, and is formed out of the histories of merger, acquisition, transaction and financial strategy. Captured primarily by those who study information systems, the dominating line of enquiry regards 'organizational memory' as a repository for organizational knowledge, or rather data. There are

several understandings of what constitutes organizational memory: it may be understood or framed as a static repository; as a dynamic, social construct, or as a process (40) Much of the present pre-occupation of organizations is concerned with how such repositories may be set up and maintained. At its most simple, organizational memory is defined as a 'set of repositories of information and knowledge that the organization has and retains' (41) Here, 'memory' is often stripped of any historical context, or indeed, of much meaning: other, that is, than in a normative way that suggests organizations might lose something of possible future use to them if they do not maintain an archival memory. (42) In their typology of corporate memory, Nissley and Casey draw parallels between the static structures of the corporate museum and the archival repositories of large organizations, describing them as little more than 'warehouses of history'. (43)

Drawing on work undertaken by psychologists and social historians, recent research has blurred the lines between an understanding of organizational memory as a means of retaining static information, to a more complex understanding of it as a socially constructed and mediated process. Recent research into the histories of corporate symbolism in the USA has investigated how corporations use means such as theme parks and corporate museums as 'strategic assets that influence organizational actions' (44) to manage their identity and, in part, to sanction and secure their corporate memory. Arguably, the nature of the corporate museum is deeply political; stories selected for inclusion in these 'warehouses of memory' are employed strategically and are integral to the management and development of corporate brand and image. Through an analysis of corporate museums in the USA (amongst them the Jack Daniels's Distillery, Hershey Food Corporation's Chocolate World, and the SPAM Museum in USA) Danilov notes that they each seek to project a

'favourable image of the company' (45). Of course, the organization of memory is also bound up in the politics of memory, a phenomenon appraised by Yanow who first identified a complex fabric of 'textual silences' while studying museum buildings as organizational and interpretative narratives. (46) Although outside the scope of the present paper it is pertinent to note that organizations, through the selection of artifacts and 'stories' contained within their corporate museums and theme parks, choose what to remember, but they also choose what to forget, an 'abuse' of organizational memory that is examined by Walsh and Ungson, (47)

As has been explored earlier in this paper, the politics of forgetting has been central to the ways in which nations choose how to remember their part played in distant wars. Analyses of organizational memory in Britain tend to have focused on the inter-relationship between economic decline in manufacturing industries, the demise of the 'factory tour' and the emergence of corporate heritage parks, such as Cadbury World in Bourneville (48)

Less attention has been focused on how the social memory of an organization can be understood through an appraisal of the monumental furniture that lives, often invisibly, within the estate of the organization. The burden of memory that is embedded in such monumentalia becomes increasingly important as larger organizations merge with, or buy out, smaller companies, thus 'acquiring' their corporate memories.

### **Mergers, acquisitions and the strategic use of corporate memory**

*As part of his commitment to the two minute's silence, Lloyds Chief Executive Peter Ellwood, noted the 'ongoing commemorative activity' being done to keep*

*alive the corporate memory of those employees who had lost their lives in war: these included an annual Remembrance Sunday ceremony, a newly printed Roll of Honour and slate memorial stone to be installed at the new Gresham Street Group headquarters, and the decision to refurbish and resite a number of Lloyds TSB and Group memorials at the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) in Staffordshire.*

Lloyds is unusual in that it has constantly sought to activate its commemorative relationship to the wars of the last century. This is most evident in the number of revisions that have been made to the original stone tablet installed in the Victorian headquarters and unveiled by Sir Richard Vassar-Smart in February 1921. An illustration in the March 1922 issue of *Dark Horse*, the Lloyds in-house magazine, shows the original configuration of the memorial: a bronze dedication plaque, flanked by a pair of bronze plaques that comprise the 'roll of honour' listing the names of 686 bank employees killed in the Great War. These plaques were set in an 'architectural' stone framework, with a base band, top cornice, broken segmental pediment, and, unusually, a small bronze statuette – a female figure identified as 'Britannia' - framed within the pediment. Eight years later, the entire memorial was removed and positioned in the new Burnet building, occupying a key vantage point in the main banking hall, centrally placed beneath a window on the half-landing leading to the mezzanine. At this stage, it already was missing several of its original features: the central bronze plaque had been replaced in stone, though with the same caption, and the statuette was removed. (49)

Shortly afterwards, around 1930, the memorial was moved and altered again, possibly to allow a less cramped space for the annual Armistice Day ceremony. Its new position was also visually more prominent as it was now at the foot of the same stairs at the west end of the banking hall, between a pair of ionic columns. The memorial was incorporated into an existing low marble bench, the back of which was raised so as to accommodate the pair of name plaques, which flanked the central inscribed plaque as before. The raised back was topped by a dentilated strip and the statuette was restored to the centre. The existing glass

uplighters of the bench's two flanking lights were replaced by torch –like shades, presumably to resemble eternal flames – a standard feature in the iconography of such reverential monumentalia.

The need to commemorate Lloyds staff who died in the Second World War saw a further need to enlarge the existing memorial. A bronze tablet, matching the existing plaques and listing the dead of 1939-45 was added onto the top of the existing memorial, this required the removal of the dentilated strip and the addition of a marble scallop shell placed behind the statuette, perhaps to give it greater presence. (50) However, the additional height meant that the view of the main stairs from the banking hall was now obscured. Now commanding an even more pronounced role at the heart of Lloyds the enhanced memorial was unveiled on 11<sup>th</sup> November 1949, with Lord Balfour of Burleigh officiating.

As we have noted, little changed in the pattern of commemoration for the next forty years. However, as the Lloyds Group expanded its global operations, it absorbed – through acquisition and merger – a number of other banking concerns. Where this brought about the closure of offices and branches a number of war memorial plaques and other commemorative objects came to be deposited at Lombard Street. These included memorial plaques commemorating staff who died in both world wars from the Anglo-South American Bank (UKNIWM Ref.21726), British Bank of South America (UKNIWM 39032), London and River Plate bank (UKNIWM 39033), and the London and Brazilian Bank (51) UKNIWM 390366). A set of memorial gates from Lloyds Bank Sports Ground in Beckenham, Greater London (from Copers Cope Road, Beckenham, Bromley (52) has, since September 1999 when the sports ground was sold, also been stored at Lombard Street. Typical of many utilitarian memorials to the Great War, each gate carried the 'Black Horse' emblem and the dates of each war (53) Two further plaques – one representing the 1914-1918 staff who worked at the Risbygate branch, Bury St Edmunds (UKNIWM 40428); and another from the Trustee Savings Bank, Surrey Street, Norwich remembering staff who died in the Second World War (UKNIWM 20110) have also been left in Lombard Street.

It is envisaged that, as the Lloyds Group continues to acquire or merge with other financial institutions, it will also acquire the corporate memory of their respective histories. (54)

### **Expanding corporate memory - the case of Lloyds TSB Group**

With the heightened interest in audit, enumeration and data-gathering that was stimulated by the Millennium period, and a continued fascination with the local histories, genealogy and family legacies related to the great wars of the twentieth century, came a recognition by individuals within larger financial corporations that the 'corporate past' is an asset that had to be preserved and promoted. As we have seen, sensitivities about how best to remember had been raised within the multi-national Lloyds Group. These concerns were furthered during 2002-03 as the Group considered how best to house its archive of *monumentalia* when it moved from its historic headquarters building in Lombard Street to a striking high-tech building in Gresham Street, in the City of London, a multi-storey glass cube designed by Nicholas Grimshaw and Partners. In discussion with the National Inventory of War Memorials it became clear that a number of financial organizations faced a similar predicament. Royal and Sun Alliance had resolved to move their memorials to the newly devised National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, a decision also reached by the Peninsular and Oriental Navigation Company (P and O). (55) Lloyds Group faced two problems: whether to maintain some form of war memorial in a new building that lacked both space and aesthetic flexibility; and how to house memorial plaques and gates that needed to be properly and sympathetically housed in some form of national scheme.

Between March 2002 and November 2003 a working group of Lloyds employees, chaired by a Deputy Chairman, and with staff representation from the Royal British Legion, set out to achieve both aims: an inscribed memorial slate stone that was compatible with the Gresham Street building, and the successful refurbishment and re-siting of the memorial plaques and gates in Alrewas.



Neither scheme was without its problems. As has long been the issue when selecting, funding and siting war memorials, the management (and indeed, the manipulation) of choice is complex, and ridden with ambiguities (56) Funding has been identified as one of the four areas of frequent contention encountered when siting a memorial to those who have died in distant war; the others are selection of design, wording of text, location. At Gresham Street, however, the main problem lay in producing a design that met the requirements of the building specification, and then in agreeing the text to be inscribed. At Alrewas, it was an issue over finding a suitable site for the memorial gate that took time to resolve. (57)

Given the presiding orthodoxy over issues of remembrance, it may seem perplexing that icons of corporate reverence and remembrance such as a corporate war memorial should still arouse lengthy debate. But this is to ignore the many debates about the way in which memorials encapsulate and perpetuate memory. As Johnson tells us, the selection of locations as 'lieux de memoire' (to borrow Pierre Nora's construction of 'sites of memory') are rarely arbitrary assignments: instead they are "consciously situated to connect or compete with existing nodes of collective remembering." (58). Containing and conveying collective memory, war memorials exist not only as aesthetic devices but as an apparatus of social memory, a phenomenon Boyer has described as 'rhetorical topoi' : these have the power to extend our understanding of national and local heritage and remind us of our public responsibilities. (59) Equally, Bodnar has argued that the actual focus of commemoration is not the past at all 'but serious matters in the present.' (60) Drawing on his survey of the processes of 'public memory' in the United States he identifies a 'dichotomy of intentions and interests between the official groups who institute commemorations and the various groups who make up the mass of participants and audience.' (61) Bodnar further maintains that the very process of negotiation between the many groups is in itself a unifying act, engendering a framework of understanding within which the participants locate, and then re-locate, their own particular viewpoints. Indeed, these administrative and political acts become the very medium of

commemoration and are encouraged by the homogenising power of an official administration. At both Gresham Street and Alrewas the commissioning and situating of the various Lloyds TSB memorials rehearsed in microcosm many of the arguments fought between rival groups – the bereaved, relatives, municipal planners, subscribers and donors – in the 1920s, and again in the late 1940s. However, the many layers of argument, coercion and eventual agreement – across a wide spectrum of Lloyds TSB employees, from chief executive to ex-servicemen employees - tell us much about the power of corporate memory and its recognition as a communicative and cohesive tool.

As a repository of national memory - located symbolically at the very heart of England - the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) purports to be an index of the nation's experiences of the twentieth century. Uniformed, martial experience predominates, although there are plots set aside to commemorate a diverse range of non-military national campaigns – the 'Unborn Child', 'Campaign Against Road Deaths', National Rotary Clubs, amongst others. As archetypal 'theatres of memory', the mnemonic structure of the garden is perfectly matched to the task of memorialisation. (62) As dramaturgical space, the physical vulnerability and transience of the garden is suggestive both of decay and renewal, an effect that further heightens the effort of commemoration. Garden-memorials have perhaps the unique capacity to evoke poignant analogies between human existence, the fragility of nature and 'consolations of cyclic regeneration.' (63) These modes of signification are emphasized by the knowledge that many gardens and arboreta will not achieve their intended design until long after their designers have passed away. (64) As the preferred venue for the collection of Lloyds TSB Group memorials, the NMA location met the criteria dictated by the working group. However, by November 2003 the NMA that there site was 'full', with no further room for organizations to create, donate or pay to maintain a plot. Like most cemetery and other funerary environments the NMA has had to 'stop the clock', although this has less to do with creating *the* moment that is continually eternal, but rather more to do with the prosaic issues of site logistics, administration and revenue. Initially, the Lloyds TSB Group (like P and

O, and Royal and Sun Alliance before them) agreed terms that allowed the organization to house its memorial plaques. For Lloyds TSB, this required a major investment to design and build a stone gateway that could house the plaques (not all of which were found to be weather-proof) and to support the two memorial gates. Designed by the Lloyds Group property team, the memorial project offered an opportunity to design and build an edifice that would establish higher standards of memorial architecture than had been achieved elsewhere in the park. Based on historic models drawn from the neo-classical era of post-Great War cemetery building. It was intended that the covered area would have sufficient space to house the plaques and panels from Lombard Street. Despite its considered and sensitive design, the quality of the build, and its central location in the arboretum's overall layout, the gateway merely added to the slightly muddled design aesthetic of the arboretum. The NMA, perhaps purposefully, eschews homogeneity and unified shape, its somewhat chaotic disparity echoes what Foucault described as 'the real spaces of society' and which he coined as 'heterotopias' - places that have the power to create discordant juxtapositions, divergent memory systems and collapsed temporal dimensions in a single utopian space'. (65)

Despite an executive ruling that the rituals of annual remembrance would be endorsed – an act that 'would not break the bank' – and despite the negotiated agreements of a working group, the Lloyds TSB Group was unable to agree the conditions for the satisfactory housing of its corporate memory in the National Memorial Arboretum – the site having been decreed as 'officially full'. The working group has now devised a scheme to house all the gathered war memorials in the group headquarters in Canon's House. Bristol.

### **Concluding remarks**

This paper has examined the role of corporations and financial organizations in maintaining, even enhancing, the memory of its employees who served during the wars of the twentieth century. By first focusing on the heightened importance of evoking names, we have seen how the great recruitment drives of the first part

of the Great War maintained, for a short period, the integrity of social and working groups. After the war these same groups were remembered through the creation of memorial schemes, wherein the recitation of names and their perpetuation was instrumental in shaping the iconography of commemorative monumentalia.

The central section of the paper explored the progress of a campaign to enhance the standing of major corporations through a programme of active 'memory-creation.' This activity conformed with an orthodoxy of remembrance that has swept the country in the last decade (stimulated possibly by such 'nation-building' events as the death of the Princess of Wales in 1997). (66) This process has been made manifest in such schemes as the National Memorial Arboretum, but it has emerged as an adjunct to the role of larger financial companies in creating and enhancing a form of 'corporate memory'. This process is especially acute during periods of acquisition and merger, whereby dominant organizations 'collect' the latent memory (and its material manifestations) and, in a process characterized by Bourdieu as one of 'transubstantiation' transform economic power and capital into cultural capital. In the current climate of commemorative orthodoxy (recently presented as 'recreational grief') corporations have been able to become a part of 'collective memory' which could prove more durable than the usual contributions through ethical investment or charitable donation. (67)

The paper concluded with a short case study that traces the challenge faced by one multi-national finance house – Lloyds TSB Group – to re-house a number of memorial icons accumulated during its expansion. Many of the tensions in refurbishing and re-siting the various pieces, replicate the situation across the country immediately after the world wars of the last century. These tensions appear not to have been resolved by the creation of a vast arboretum that purports to be the focus of national remembrance, creating a 'heterotopian' space of discordant juxtapositions and divergent memory systems. This case study is an indication of how one British corporation has understood how the

social memory of the organization can be understood through an appraisal of the monumental furniture that lives, often invisibly, within the organization. The burden of the extensive memory systems embedded in such monumentalia of conflict becomes increasingly substantial as dominant organizations merge with, or acquire, smaller companies both nationally and across the globe.

## Endnotes

1

R. Blomfield, *Memoirs of an architect*, London: Macmillan, 1932, p.179.

2

Cited in P. Longworth, *The Unending Vigil*, London : Leo Cooper, 1985, p.96 and p.103. A decision was reached whereby the names of those who had died (and had no known grave) after the Battle of Messines in 1917 would be inscribed on the screen walls in the nearby Tyne Cot Cemetery.

Of the 54,986 names engraved on the walls of the Gate there were relatively few errors – seventy-eight minor spelling mistakes, eighteen duplications on this or other memorials, and one man subsequently found to be alive.

3

G. Dyer, *The Missing of the Somme*, London: Allen Lane, 1985.

4

T. Lacquer, 'Memory and Naming in the Great War' in J. R. Gillis (ed) *Commemorations: the politics of national identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994, p.154.

5

J. Barnes, 'Evermore', in *Cross Channel*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1995, p.98.

6

See L. Macdonald *The Somme*, London: Michael Joseph, 1983; M. Brown, *Imperial War Museum book of the Somme*, London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1986 ; M. Middlebrook & M. Middlebrook, *The Somme battlefields : a comprehensive guide from Crecy to two world wars* Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991; J.Winter *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: the Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge, 1995).

7

J. Barnes, *op.cit.* (note 5).

On the specificity of commemoration see also Paul Sheppard, *The cultivated wilderness: or, what is landscape ?*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997, p.227.

8

D. Horne, *The Great Museum, the re-presentation of history*, London and Sydney: Pluto Press 1984, p.228.

9 Longworth, *op.cit.*, (note 2)

10

F. Ware, introduction to *The Silent Cities*, Sidney C Hurst, London: Methuen, 1929, p.vii.

11

Longworth, *op.cit* (note 2) p.17.

12

M.Heffernan, 'For Ever England: the Western Front and the politics of remembrance in Britain' *Ecumene*, Vol. 2, No.3, 1995, pp. 293 – 324.

13

Laquer, *op.cit*, (note 4), pp.152 –153.

14

Longworth, *op.cit* (note 2), p.124.

15

Longworth, *op.cit* (note 2), p.127.

16

See *The Studio* magazine on December 1914 and August 1915.

17

For a history of the Pals phenomenon see: P.Simkins, *Kitchener's army: the raising of the New Armies, 1914 – 1916*, Manchester: Manchester University Press 1988; M. Middlebrook, *Your country needs you: expansion of the British Army Infantry divisions 1914-1918*, London: Allen Lane, 2000.

18

Citizen's Recruiting Committee, Minute book, Bristol Reference library B11786.  
J. Lyes, *Bristol 1914-1919*, Bristol Branch of the Historical Association, pamphlet no 107, 2003.

19

R. Sparling, *History of the 12th (Service) Battalion, York & Lancaster Regiment*, Sheffield : J. W. Northend Ltd, 1920.

20

R. Gibson & P. Oldfield, *Sheffield City Battalion*, Barnsley: Pen and Sword Books, 1990.

21

Middlebrook & Middlebrook, *op.cit* (note 6) pp. 70-80.

22

H. C. O'Neill, *Royal Fusiliers in the Great War*, original published 1922, reprint London: Navy and Military Press, 1999.

23

R.S.Sayer, *Lloyds Bank in the history of English banking*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1957.

24

J. Booker, *Temples of Mammon: the architecture of banking*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990; see also J.R. Winton, *Lloyds Bank 1918-1966*, Oxford: OUP, 1986.

25

For an appreciation of Burnet as neo-classical architect see I. Boyd Whyte, 'The Neo-Classical Revival in Turn of the Century Britain', *Edinburgh Architectural Research*, 26, <http://www.caad.ed.ac.uk/publications/ear/iain.html>

26

G. L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars*, Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1990; J. Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

27

D. Boorman,., *At the Going Down of the Sun: British First World War Memorials*, York: Derek Boorman, 1988, pp.30-31. The bed was endowed in the Astley Cooper ward of Guy's Hospital, London; the memorial was placed in the garden in the former churchyard of St. Christopher-le-Stocks.

28

Sir Richard Vassar-Smith became Chairman of Lloyds Bank in 1909 and held the position until his death in 1922.

29

J.Forster , 'Creating a tenemos, positing 'South Africanism': material memory, landscape practice, and the circulation of identity at Delville Wood', *Cultural Geographies*, in press, 2004.

30

A. King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain: the Symbolism and Politics of Remembrance*, Oxford: Berg, 1998.

31

J. Winter, *BBC History*, November 2000, pp.22 – 25.

32

K. S. Inglis, 'The Homecoming: the War Memorial Movement in Cambridge, England', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 27, 1992, pp. 583 – 605.

33

M. Treib, 'The landscape of loved ones', in *Places of Commemoration: search for identity and landscape design*, Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn, (ed.) Washington : Dumbarton Oaks, 2001, p.82.

34

P. Gough & S. J. Morgan, 'Manipulating the metonymic: the Bristol Cenotaph, 1919 - 1932', *Journal of Historical Geographies*, in press, 2004.

35

L Mumford, *The culture of cities*, New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co.,1938, p.435.

36

The National Recording Project was established to catalogue every piece of public sculpture and every public monument in the British Isles and to maintain the resulting information in digital form for public access. In early 2004 it was claimed that much of England and all of Wales, plus Glasgow and Edinburgh, has been surveyed, amounting to 70% of Britain. The exercise is managed from a network of Regional Archive Centres mostly run from academic institutions. The information is conveyed to the National Archive Centre for collation, storage and dissemination in digital form.

37

J.R.Gillis, 'Memory and identity: the history of a relationship', in J.R. Gillis, ed. *Commemorations: the politics of national identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994) p.6.

38



P. West, *Conspicuous Compassion*, London: Civitas, March 2004. The phrase is reputed to have been coined by Ian Jack in *Granta* magazine in December 1997 in an article about the events in London in the days after Princess Diana's death.

39

P.Ellwood, *talk openly*, Lloyds group intranet, November 2002.

40

G.P. Huber, 'A theory of the effects of advanced information technologies on organizational design, intelligence and decision making, *Academy of Management Review*, Vol.15, 1991, pp. 47-65 ; J.P. Walsh & G.R. Ungson, 'Organisational memory' *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 16, No.1, 1991, pp.57-91 ; A. Casey, 'Collective memory in organisations', in P.Shrivatava, A.Huff & J.Dutton (series eds.) and J.Walsh & A.Huff (volume eds.) *Advances in strategic management, Volume 14: Organisational learning and strategic management*, Greenwich: JAI Press, pp.111-151.

41

G.Huber, 'Organisational learning: the contributing processes and the literatures', *Organisation Science*, Vol.2, No.1, 1991, pp.88-115.

42

C. Booth, 'Does history matter in strategy? Historiographical possibilities and path dependence', *Management Decision*, Vol.41, no.1, 2003.

43

N.Nissley & A.Casey, 'The politics of the exhibition: viewing corporate museums through the paradigmatic lens of organizational memory, *British Academy of Management*, Vol.13, S 35 – S45, 2002, p.S37.

44

Nissley & Casey, *ibid.*, p.S39.

45

V. Danilov, *A planning guide for corporate museums, galleries and visitor centers*, Westport : Greenwood press, 1992, p.57.

46

D. Yanow, 'Space stories: studying museum buildings as organizational spaces while reflecting on interpretive methods and their narration, *Journal of Management Inquiry*, Vol.7, no.3, 1998, pp. 215 – 239.,

47

Walsh & Ungson, 'Organisational memory', *Op.cit.*, (note 40).

48

M. Rowlinson, Cadbury World, *Labour History Review*, Vol.67, No.1, 2002.

49

Registered in the United Kingdom National Inventory of War Memorials (UK NIWM) as no. 11794.

50

UK NIWM 11795.

51

Anglo-South American Bank (UKNIWM Ref.21726), British Bank of South America (UKNIWM 39032), London and River Plate bank (UKNIWM 39033), and the London and Brazilian Bank (UKNIWM 390366).

52

Memorial gates (UKNIWM 40428).

53

P. Rason, *Bromley War Memorials*, Privately published, 1999.

54

Lloyds has been merging and acquiring since its establishment, a strategy that started with the acquisition of the Wilts and Dorset Bank in 1914, to the 1995 merger between Lloyds and TSB. The acquisition of Cheltenham and Gloucester had taken place earlier that year, that of Scottish Widows in 2000.

55

Royal and Sun Alliance established a memorial garden in London as a repository for a number of memorial plaques gathered through an extended period of organizational re-structuring.

56

King, *op.cit.*, (note 30) pp.2-3.

57

After lengthy discussion a form of words was agreed.

58

N.Johnson, Cast in Stone: monuments, geography and nationalism, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 1999, pp. 51 - 65.

59

C.M.Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory*, Massachusetts, 1996, p.32; for further reflections on the issue of collective memory see J.Young, *The Texture of Memory*, Yale: Yale University Press, 1983) and P.Nora, *Les Lieux de Memoire*, Paris, 1984 – 92.

60

J. Bodnar *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992, p. 8.

61

Bodnar, *ibid.*, p.149.

62

See the collection of essays on these themes in M. Mosser & P. Nys, (eds.) *Le Jardin: art et lieu de memoire* (Becanson, 1995).

63

Foster, *op.cit.* (note 29).

64

J. Dixon Hunt, ‘“Come into the garden, Maud” : garden art as a privileged mode of commemoration & identity’, in *Places of Commemoration: search for identity and landscape design*, Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn, (ed) Washington, Dumbarton Oaks, 2001, p. 20.

65

M.Foucault, ‘Of other spaces: utopias and heterotopias’, paper presented in March 1967, first published in English in *Lotus International*, 48/49 (1985/86) pp 9-17, reprinted in J.Ockman, *Architecture Culture, 1943-1968: a documentary anthology* , New York, 1993, p.422.

66

For an exploration of the events that followed the death of the Princess of Wales, see J. Richards, S. Wilson and L. Woodhead, (eds.) *Diana: the making of a media saint*, London: I.B.Taurus, 1999.

Published in

*Gough, P.J., (2004) Corporations and commemoration – First World War remembrance, Lloyds TSB and the National Memorial Arboretum, International Journal of Heritage Studies, Winter 2004, pp. 435 – 455, ISSN 1352-7258, 4 B & W illustrations*

[Paul.gough@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:Paul.gough@uwe.ac.uk)

