

Buxton Advertiser Article – 24 August 1964
[Bennett Street Memorial]

THE STREET WITH A PROUD RECORD

CALL FOR ACTION TO REPAIR WAR MEMORIAL – OR TAKE IT AWAY

BUXTON Borough Council's refusal to renovate a Great War memorial on Bennett Street has annoyed some local residents.

At their last meeting, the Borough Council decided they were not prepared to repair the wood and glass memorial hung on the side of a house at the bottom of the street. The Council thought they certainly had a duty to repair memorials concerning the whole town or large areas of the town, but not concerning individual streets.

Most of the street's residents think the memorial should be brought up to standard or completely disposed of, because it is in such a bad state of repair. Parts of it are missing, and above an old and weather-stained wreath some of the names are barely legible. The glass front has long since disappeared.

WELLS DRESSING PRIZE

The memorial was erected shortly after the Great War from funds obtained by the street for winning a wells dressing prize as the town's best-decorated street. Residents thought the finest way to use the money would be to erect a lasting tribute to the men (many of them volunteers) who gave their lives during the war.

For many years the memorial was maintained by prize money from the Wells Festival. But after the Second World War, interest in the Wells Festival faded, and no one bothered about decorating streets. No money was available to maintain the memorial, and gradually it degenerated to its present shabby state.

A few of the older residents in Bennett Street thought that perhaps the Council might step in and improve the memorial.

One of them, Mrs. Hilda Nicholls, said she was disappointed about the Council's decision because there seemed to be no other way in which the memorial could be repaired.

"Many of the older people in Bennett Street who remember when the memorial was first erected, and remember all that it stands for, are now pensioners and cannot afford to pay to have it repaired," said Mrs. Nicholls.

"A lot of young people have moved into the houses and they do not have much interest in the matter. But as it stands at the moment the memorial is in a disgraceful state. It should either be repaired properly or taken down."

REGRETTABLE

Great War veteran Mr. W. E. Caldwell thought it regrettable the Council refused to repair the memorial.

"There was not a street in Buxton," said Mr. Caldwell, "which had such a proud record as Bennett Street. People round here were very proud of the men. At the time of the 50th anniversary of the outbreak of the war, when there is so much publicity about it, it is a pity this memorial is so neglected. Veterans to the town have noticed it, and I think they have been asked why it is in such a bad state of repair."

perhaps form a committee to organize a way of repairing the memorial, and then ask for local financial help. Mr. Gould felt certain that nearly all the younger residents would be prepared to help in that way.

Mr. Albert Redfern, who fought throughout the Great War in the Royal Garrison Artillery, was in favour of the memorial being brought up to standard, if it was the majority wish of the street.

"But the young people don't realize why the memorial should be important," said Mr. Redfern. "I do not know of any other street in Buxton where so many people fought in the Great War."

Mr. Redfern thought the people in the street should organize some way of getting the memorial restored, and then approach the Council to ask for assistance.

"SHOCKED" READER

In a letter sent to this newspaper this week, a reader writing from Blackpool says: "I was shocked to read that a vote (at the Council meeting) had been taken on this matter. All the names on the memorial did not get a chance to vote before they went. Here is a street which sent so many good men to fight and protect us and our town."

"This reader hopes the Council will change their minds and honour the memorial now and in future years. If not, I would feel proud to send a donation towards the repair," he adds.

