

Memorial that stands as a landmark for history

KATE JONES pays tribute to a notable local monument

THE stark obelisk brooding over the busy road on Stalling Down is a local landmark which tends to be taken for granted. Yet the Glamorgan Yeomanry War Memorial is an important part of our heritage, with a claim to be the county cenotaph.

It is dedicated to the men who fell in the Great War, and was funded by subscription from the officers of the regiment. The character of the memorial was intended to be as simple as possible, and the designer was Mr Clarke, of Llandaff. The site, with its views across the Vale of Glamorgan, was the gift of Lord Bute, as lord of the manor.

The regiment served in Egypt, where obelisks originated as sacred stones associated with the sun god. The divine rulers, the Pharaohs, used them as symbols of power, and to proclaim victories. In antiquity obelisks were monoliths, but in the Christian world, where they became symbols of victory and of death, they were often constructed of separate stones.

Here the blocks of dressed stone are of local liassic limestone, rich in shell and marine fossils. Mr (later Sir) Sidney Hutchinson Byass, of Llandough Castle, donated the stone from one of his quarries, in order to make it a true county memorial.

The monument bears the regimental badge of the three feathers, and two polished granite plaques, one inscribed with the simple dedication, the other listing the battle honours. No names were placed on the stone because it proved impossible to obtain a complete and correct list.

The Earl of Plymouth, Lord Lieutenant of the County of Glamorgan, unveiled the memorial on November 1, 1922 and it was dedicated by the Bishop of Llandaff, assisted by the Rev Henry S Nicholl, chaplain to the regiment. Among those present were Colonel W H Wyndham-

Quin, CB, DSO, commander during the Boer War, Colonel G Bruce, CMG, DSO, who took the regiment out to the front in the Great War, and colonels Lord Swansea Prichard, Homfray, Nicholl and Helme.

The memorial is a reminder of the cost of war, commemorating the suffering and loss of comrades. Attempts to embellish the severe stone were opposed by members of the Old Comrades' Association; as the last Captain Tom Loveluck said, "It is a rugged memorial to the rugged men of Glamorgan. Let it remain so."

Even before the unveiling ceremony, the Glamorgan Yeomanry had been disbanded, for financial reasons, but the name lived on in units of the Territorial Army. In April this year, when HM The Queen inspected the Bicentenary Review of the Yeomanry at Windsor, the 21-gun royal salute was fired by the Glamorgan Yeomanry Battery.

It has been said that few who pass by know the purpose of the monument, but Glamorgan memories are long.