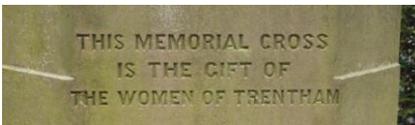
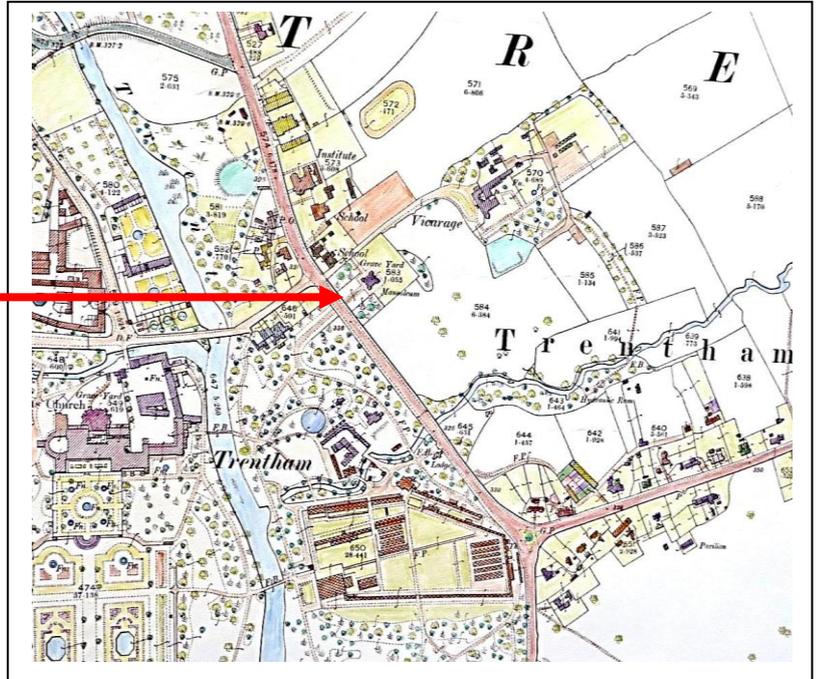


Anti-German Hysteria in 1918: A Trentham Resident and the Courts.

Over the last couple of years I have been a member of a group which has been researching Trentham village and estate during WW1. Initially, we were concerned with Trentham War memorial and in finding out about the men whose names are inscribed on it.



Trentham Memorial Cross



Trentham War Memorial is located on the A34 in front of Mausoleum, the only Grade 1 listed building in the city. Of particular interest was the reference to 'the women of Trentham' and we spent a lot of time attempting to clarify their role. This is still rather a mystery but that's another story!

Later on we decided to find out as much as possible about the people of Trentham during the period c. 1911-1922.

At first, I advised the group on sources but I became progressively more involved in researching the Sutherland papers to help with context and background information for their work. Then I read Kate Tiller's text, 'Remembrance and community: War Memorials and Local History', and was struck by the first sentence, 'Local war memorials speak of both the dead and

the living'. She went on to say that they can tell us a great deal about the local community. War memorials, of whatever type- statues, tablets, crosses, village halls, gardens etc- do not simply appear. I wondered about the people involved in making the decisions, about the form they should take, their location, the co-ordination of the project, raising funds etc and so I began to look into the background of those men (and they were all men) who were elected to the Trentham War Memorial Committee. This led me to Mr John Mortimer Power whose story you will hear today.

Mr Power was vocal at the first public meeting to discuss a possible memorial which was held on Friday 21 March 1919, and he was one of those chosen to see the project through. He urged that the dependents of the fallen soldiers should be cared for and suggested that a memorial cross should be erected bearing the names of all the men who had served (at some point this must have been changed and restricted to the names of those killed).

The problem was, that whilst I was able to find out a great deal about all the other members of the committee (they were 'the usual suspects', male, middle-class, industrialists or businessmen, some were magistrates or freemasons) John Mortimer Power could not be found. My co-workers and I searched census returns, birth and marriage certificates, trade directories- we examined them all. Why was he so difficult to trace? The answer was quite simple- until a few months before he did not exist but **Hans Carl Pauer** did. What is more, Hans Carl Pauer had been sentenced to 6 months imprisonment and ordered to pay a £100 fine in September 1918 for an offence under the Defence of the Realm Act (DoRA) viz for repeating a false statement prejudicial to the national interest. Yet in March 1919, a mere 6 months later, he was elected onto the Trentham War Memorial Committee under his new name **and everyone present at that meeting would have known who he was.**

The way in which we established that John Mortimer Power and Hans Carl Pauer were one and the same is a story in itself. It was a result of teamwork and the help of my colleagues. Initially, I noticed that POWER and PAUER sounded the same and we knew that a family called PAUER lived in Trentham we found them on the 1911 census and in trade directories, but we could find no John. Then Chris Mayer found an article in a **New Zealand** newspaper

which reported the court case against Hans Carl Pauer. Finally, we established they were one and the same after ordering his father's will.

Hans Carl Pauer was born in Fenton, Stoke-on-Trent in 1873, to William Carl and Meta Pauer. His father had been born in Hanover, Germany but became a British citizen in 1868. His grandfather had been a cabinet minister at the Court of King George III of Great Britain, who, at that time was also King of Hanover. Hans Carl was educated at Newcastle High School, and was managing director of a firm of prestigious wine merchants, Messrs Pauer Ltd of Piccadilly, Hanley. The family lived at Inglewood, Albert Drive, Trentham; after his marriage to Flora, they moved to Hem Heath nearby. He had been a sidesman at Trentham church for over 12 years and he was a freemason who had been installed as the Worshipful Master of St Michaels Lodge, Stone, in 1915. He had also served for 5 years in the 5th North Staffords Territorial Regiment. In his own words: **'He was in every sense an Englishman'**. But not, it would become clear, to everyone.



Hans Carl Pauer. Poor photo, taken from the Evening Sentinel when he was installed as Worshipful Master of St Michael's Lodge, Stone in 1915.

Mr H C Pauer was recently installed W.M. of St Michael's Lodge, Stone, No. 2387. He joined the Lodge in 1896 when Colonel Harding was W.M. He has been ever since a regular attendant, being an ardent supporter of and believer in Freemasonry. In 1906 he joined the Menturia Lodge, Hanley, but has not been a regular attendant there because of the awkward train service from Trentham where his home now is. Mr Pauer received very hearty support when installed W.M. of St Michael's, his election being very popular among the members. He is head of the firm of Messrs Pauer & Co. Ltd, wholesale wine, spirit and tobacco merchants, Hanley.

Hans Carl travelled every day from Trentham station to Hanley in a first class carriage with 3 regular companions, men he had known for at least 7 or 8 years. On 6 August 1918, their conversation centred on the news that had broken that day concerning the sinking of the Australian hospital ship Warilda, which had been torpedoed three days before in the English Channel despite being marked with the Red Cross. The ship sank in about two hours and of the 801 persons on board, 123 were killed, including all the engine room staff, all the occupants of one ward (the lowest ward containing 101 walking patients) and 19 from capsized lifeboats. As with a number of other hospital ships torpedoed during the war, Germany claimed that the ship was carrying arms, thus justifying the sinking. According to the two prosecution witnesses at Pauer's trial, AE Ruddock, district manager of the telephone exchange in Hanley and AH Greatbatch, managing director of the premier Mineral Water Company, during the course of a heated conversation about the sinking, Pauer had related a conversation he claimed to have overheard between two soldiers in the Grosvenor Tea Room, Hanley. The gist of the conversation was that one of the soldiers had said that when he had been stationed in Alexandria the previous year, he saw a hospital ship arrive and:

'to his utter astonishment 2000 men in khaki stepped out of her'.

In other words, hospital ships were carrying combatant troops, not just casualties.

Both witnesses agreed under cross-examination that Pauer had condemned the sinking of the Warilda and had agreed that the story was a lie. But it wasn't enough. Both or one of these witnesses must have repeated the story, either to the police or to someone in authority, and a summons was served on Pauer on 3rd September. Pauer admitted that he had spoken the words but denied any intention or desire to prejudice the national interest.

In the light of the recent sinking of the Warilda, Pauer's story hit a sensitive spot, so much so that his case was heard in public at Burslem Stipendiary Police Court instead of *in camera* as was usual in such cases and Major General Sir William Donovan KCB, Director of Public Services and Administrator of Hospital Ships between the Channel Ports and the Mediterranean was called to strongly refute the claim of Pauer's informant.

The most striking feature of the hearing, however, were the vicious and very personal attacks on Pauer made by the prosecuting counsel, Mr E B Sharpley, the Town Clerk of Stoke. According to one local historian, for 35 years after Federation:

'In the hands of Mr Sharpley, unelected civic power was awesome'.



Mr E B Sharpley in a Mayoral procession

One aspect of Sharpley's role, described as archaic, was that he was able to act as criminal prosecutor in police courts and had:

'overall control over who should and who should not be prosecuted',

this is now the function of the Crown Prosecution Service. Sharpley lived at Tittensor and it is extremely likely he would have known Pauer. He had also been a freemason in Ramsgate in 1909 but subsequently left under circumstances I can't explain - he never rejoined the freemasons in Staffordshire. Was there some kind of ill-feeling between Sharpley and Pauer? The way in which the prosecution was conducted points to this.

From his opening remarks Sharpley alleged that Pauer had invented the story in order to justify the sinking of the Warilda. The reason for this, Sharpley maintained, was that Pauer was a German, regardless of his birthplace at Fenton. Despite Pauer's vigorous protests, Sharpley continued to question Pauer's loyalty to Britain saying:

'Apart from that accident of being born in Fenton you would be entitled to be interned'.

Pauer put up a spirited defence – he pointed out that his nephew had been serving in France for 18 months and had been awarded the Military Medal and that two cousins were serving, one in the Air Force where he had

brought out an invention of great value to the Air Force.

He had himself been called up at the age of 45 and was due to join the forces on 1 November and he would be very pleased to do so.

But it made no difference; he was fined £100 and sentenced to 6 months imprisonment without hard labour- the **maximum** sentence that could be imposed for the **worst** offence of that kind. On appeal in October the fine remained the same but the sentence was reduced to one month in Strangeways.

Between the original hearing and the appeal Pauer's business was disposed of and, according to his defence counsel, his client had suffered considerable financial loss owing to the case. This loss was in all probability exacerbated by his own legal fees; Sir Edward Marshall Hall, KC and MP, an English barrister with a formidable reputation for oratory, did not come cheap. Certainly at the time of his father's death in 1920, Hans Carl, now John Mortimer Power, still owed his father £5000. It's clear that his family, horrified at the verdict and the severity of the sentence, sent for the best defence counsel money could buy. The appeal took the form of a re-hearing and Sir Edward was strongly critical of Sharpley and his remarks saying that:

Mr Pauer was entitled to English justice, not as a German but as an Englishman'.

He maintained that Pauer had been indiscreet but had thought he was amongst friends and had trusted them not to repeat his account of the soldiers' conversation. The antagonism and anti-German sentiments of one of the witnesses against Pauer, Mr Ruddock, became very obvious under cross-examination by Sir Edward. Pauer, he said, had spoken in a 'Prussian manner' but withdrew this phrase when challenged to explain himself;

'He [then] said that Mr Pauer spoke in his usual loud voice'.

In conclusion, the Recorder decided that while he did not agree with the term of imprisonment imposed by the Stipendiary Magistrate he thought that:

'a heavy fine might be only a matter of annoyance to a man of his means',

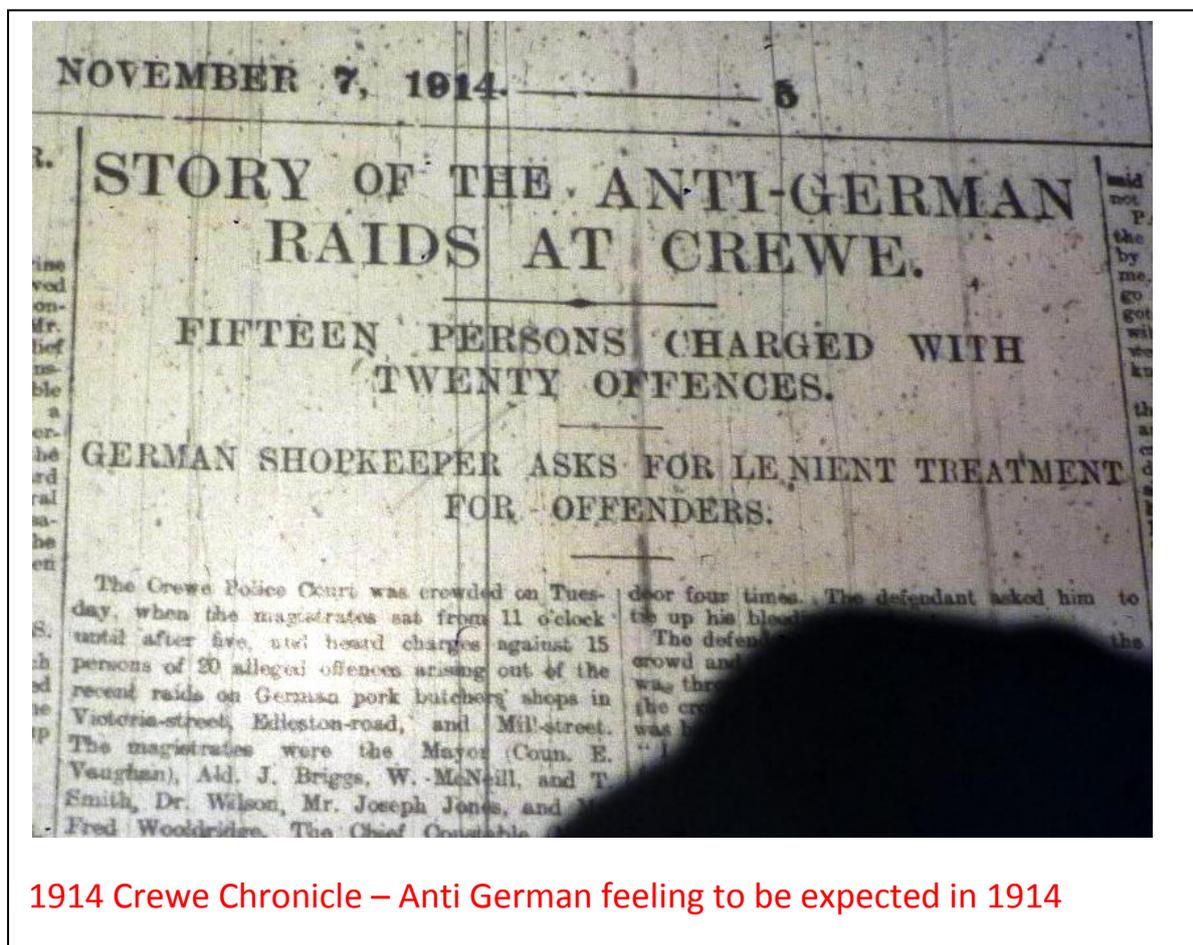
and not sufficient for this offence. He took into account Pauer's previous character and the fact that he was about to join the Army where:

'He was sure he would be more usefulthan in gaol'.

The result was that the appeal was dismissed though the sentence was varied and Pauer would have to pay the costs of both sides. The Sentinel reported that Pauer was:

'greeted by members of his family at the close of the case and Mrs Pauer affectionately kissed her husband as he was leaving court. He was taken to Strangeways Gaol, Manchester in a motor car at his own expense.'

A current researcher into Germanophobia has told me that it reached new heights in 1918 – after all, even the king had been forced to change his family name the previous year.



1914 Crewe Chronicle – Anti German feeling to be expected in 1914

Sharpley was rabidly anti-German- or was his vindictive attitude based on something more personal? Pauer had been indiscreet at a particularly sensitive time of the war. Reading the Sentinel reports of his trial it does resemble a witch-hunt rather than a fair trial. Yet, surely the most remarkable feature of this entire episode is that a mere 6 months later, the newly-named John Mortimer Power was elected onto the Trentham Memorial committee apparently without dissent or even one mention of the recent court case.

Did the Trentham residents see the case for what it was – a storm in a teacup? The court room at the appeal was packed with Trentham residents including several of those who later joined him on the war memorial committee. Archdeacon Graham, the chairman of that committee and the Trentham vicar, even appeared as a character witness saying:

'Mr Pauer was a sides-man at his church and he had every confidence in him'

Admittedly, the Freemasons threw him out but the people of Trentham, including some of its most influential inhabitants, took a more sympathetic view – no witch-hunt there.

Pauer's trial can be seen as the dying throes of the anti-German hysteria that arose in World War I heightened, in his case by the sinking of the Warilda and German propaganda. The authorities set out to make a very public point about the use of hospital ships and Sharpley might have been settling a private grudge.

At the local level, Power's election onto the memorial committee might have been about making an alternative point; it was certainly a strong indication how the Trentham community viewed his treatment.

Despite his rehabilitation within the local community Pauer felt that changing his name was not enough after his very public humiliation. By July 1920, he had moved to Hampstead in London where he lived as a gentleman, no doubt assisted by the money his father had left him in his will. Sharpley remained as Town Clerk until 1945 but his ability to act as criminal prosecutor was removed in 1936 after a confrontation with the new Chief Constable. During the Second World War he was himself prosecuted for petrol offences and fined £330 with 50 guineas costs, ***but lack of criminal intent enabled him to keep his job***. He retired in 1946.