Towards a local history of interwar Anglo-American relations: Commemorating the Pilgrim Fathers on the Humber, c.1918-1925[1]

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It was a brisk and cool autumn day of a sort familiar to those who know the North Sea coast in September. The flags – British, American and Dutch – snapped in the inshore breeze, and the crowd that had gathered for the proceedings stood in hats and warm coats. The photographs recording the occasion suggest this crowd was a few hundred in number, and at one point all clustered closely around the structure they had come to see dedicated: a monument commemorating the departure of the 'Pilgrim Fathers' for Holland in 1608. Killingholme Creek, the site for this act of commemoration, was believed to be the place identified by William Bradford in his seventeenth century history *Of Plymouth Plantation.* Writing of the spot from which the Pilgrims first fled to Holland, Bradford – a leading member of the Mayflower party – explained that 'Betweene Grimsbe and Hull…was a large comone a good way distant from any town'.[2] As these lines suggest, at no point had Bradford *specifically* mentioned either Killingholme (or Immingham, the village nearby). But those involved in the monument dedication, led by the recently formed Anglo-American Society of Hull, were nonetheless content that they had found the most likely location: an isolated tidal creek on the south bank of the Humber, just a few miles from the fishing port of Grimsby. As one speaker remarked during the ceremony: 'on this sacred spot […] the Pilgrim Fathers of Scrooby, the leaders and nucleus of the Pilgrims of the Mayflower, made their first successful attempt to carry their little Church of the Manor House over the sea to Holland'.[3]

In purpose and politics the origins of this monument, dedicated on 17 September 1925, ultimately lie in a turn of the century 'rapprochement' between the United States and Britain.[4] As Duncan Bell has recently shown, this was an era in which wealthy and influential Anglo-American elites increasingly found common cause, delighting in their imagined 'oneness', a development shaped by contemporary investment in racial Anglo-Saxonism combined with

[1] My thanks to Tom Hulme and to the participants at the Transatlantic Memories Workshop hosted by the JFK Institute, Berlin, in October 2021 for comments on earlier drafts of this article.
[2] William Bradford, *Bradford's History of Plimouth Plantation, From the Original Manuscript, with a Report of the Proceedings Incident to the Return of the Manuscript to Massachusetts* (Boston: Wright and Potter Printing Company, 1899), 18.
[3] Rev. J.G. Patton, 'The Pilgrims of the Humber', 17 September 1925 in Anglo-American Society of Hull, *Memorial to the Pilgrim Fathers at Immingham Creek*, reprinted from the Hull and East Riding Congregational Magazine, Oct. 1925, Hull History Centre (hereafter 'HHC').
[4] Bradford Perkins, *The Great Rapprochement: England and the United States, 1895-1914* (New York: Atheneum, 1968).

certain economic and geo-political realties (not least the rise of Germany).[5] But the monument was also a product of more recent events. Americans and Britons had fought together on the Western Front and tens of thousands of American Doughboys had been based in Britain during the war. New bonds had been forged and new connections made. At Killingholme this was especially apparent. Not far from the monument dedicated to the Pilgrim Fathers the US Navy had established an air base in 1918 from which its pilots flew North Sea anti-submarine patrols.[6] In this sense, the recent conflict had made 'real' the rapprochement of the 1890s. Hence all the interest after the war in marking the Tercentenary of the Mayflower sailing, an anniversary widely celebrated on both sides of the Atlantic and one which catalysed the plans for a monument at Immingham.

We should be wary, though, of allowing the pomp and ceremony of anniversaries and memorial dedications to distract us entirely from the broader situation, for the post-war period also saw the emergence of new transatlantic tensions. Even during the war, and as David Woodward has shown, relations between London and Washington were often strained.[7] By the 1920s, as memories of wartime blood brotherhood began to fade, diplomatic relations frayed still further. Disagreements over naval disarmament, the appropriate policy towards defeated Germany, and the repayment (by Britain) of war loans all caused transatlantic disputes. Enthusiastically commemorating the historic 'ties that bind' thus performed a specific (and, perhaps, necessary) diplomatic function. As arguments in the present began to dominate and as the turn of the century rapprochement dissipated, commemorations of distant historical connections became a useful means to re-orientate attention towards underlying unities (both real and imagined). In Britain, too, such commemorations were also partly shaped by contemporary domestic tensions, particularly labour conflict as well as elite fears regarding the great 'threat' of the age, Bolshevism.[8] Post-1918 municipal rituals were thus a double-edged sword; a response to emerging transatlantic concerns *and* a means to bolster civic community in the face of various perceived national and international problems.

This article focuses on one specific municipal ritual. It examines a monument dedicated at Immingham in 1925 and as such it contributes to a still nascent area of scholarship examining

[5] Duncan Bell, *Dreamworlds of Race: Empire and the Utopian Destiny of Anglo-America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020).
[6] *United States Naval Air Station Killingholme* (1918). United States Naval Academy Library; Immingham Museum, *Killingholme Seaplane Base 1914-1919* (Immingham: Immingham Museum, 1986), 7-9.
[7] David Woodward, *Trial by Friendship: Anglo-American Relations 1917-1918* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1993).
[8] Brad Beaven, 'Challenges to civic governance in post-war England: the Peace Day disturbances of 1919', *Urban History*, 33:3 (2006), 369-392.

the place and presence of the Pilgrim Fathers in British culture (studies examining American commemoration of the Mayflower Pilgrims are, in contrast, extensive).[9] In doing so, the article decentres post-1918 transatlantic relations – the majority of which have focused on the councils, committees and conferences of the metropole – and shifts attention to a more provincial Anglo-American encounter.[10] Such an approach complicates the established idea of the 1920s as an era 'distinguished by strain and tension' in Anglo-American relations whilst also skewing the very idea of 'diplomacy' in the interwar period.[11] Indeed, by examining the design and dedication of a now rather overlooked granite monument on the Humber, this article demonstrates that the post-1918 period saw the emergence of innovative forms of 'memory diplomacy' involving what Erick Goldstein has called a 'sub-structure' of various non-State actors. [12] This was the diplomacy of mayors, vicars, municipal political elites, private interest groups, and philanthropic societies. Lacking in international profile and prestige though these actors often were, in their day the activities they sponsored nonetheless had real significance, fusing in thought and action the metropole and the periphery, the local and the global. Shining a light on activities at Immingham thus exposes the *local history* of interwar transatlantic relations, a moment when various individuals and organisations across Britain used commemoration to declare their commitment to the 'Anglosphere': a racialized global

[9] See the major AHRC project led by Dr Tom Hulme, the first of its kind: https://voyagingthroughhistory.exeter.ac.uk/ Accessed:18/3/21. See also Tom Hulme, 'The Mayflower and "Mother Plymouth": Anglo-America, Civic Culture and the Urban Past', *Journal of Social and Cultural History*, 18:4 (2021), 517-537; Clara Calvo, 'Shakespeare's Church and the Pilgrim Fathers: Commemorating Plymouth Rock in Stratford', *Critical Survey*, 24:2 (2012), 54-70; Anna Scott, 'It's a Man's World. Or is it?', in Wera Grahn and Ross J. Wilson, *Gender and Heritage: Performance, Place and Politics* (London: Routledge, 2018), 81-98; Erick Goldstein, 'Diplomacy in the Service of History: Anglo-American Relations and the Return of the Bradford History of Plymouth Colony, 1898', *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 25:2, (2014), 26-40; John Seeyle, *Memory's Nation: The Place of Plymouth Rock* (London: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Udo Hebel, 'Historical Bonding with an Expiring Heritage: Revisiting Tercentenary Festivities of 1920-21' in Jurgen Heideking, Genevieve Fabre and Kai Dreisbach (eds.) *Celebrating Ethnicity and Nation: American Festive Culture from the Revolution to the Early 20th Century* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2001), pp. 257-297; Christine Arnold-Lourie, 'Baby Pilgrims, Forefathers, and One Hundred Percent Americanism: The Mayflower Tercentenary of 1920', *Massachusetts Historical Review* 17, (2015), 35-66; Hendershot, R.M. and Marsh, S. 'Celebrating the Mayflower: 400 years of Anglo-American relations', *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, 18:4 (2020), 405-414.

[10] Woodward, *Trial by Friendship*; Kathleen Burk, *Britain, America and the Sinews of War, 1914-1918* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014). First published in 1985; B.J.C. McKercher, *Anglo-American Relations in the 1920s: The Struggle for Supremacy* (London: Macmillan, 1991) 3; Donald J. Lisio *British Naval Supremacy and Anglo-American Antagonisms, 1914-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Priscilla Roberts, 'The Anglo-American Theme: American Visions of an Atlantic Alliance, 1914-1933', *Diplomatic History* 3:21 (1997), 333-364.

[11] McKercher, *Anglo-American Relations in the 1920s*, 1.

[12] Brian Etheridge, 'The Desert Fox, Memory Diplomacy, and the German Question in Early Cold War America', *Diplomatic History* 32:2 (2008), 207-238; Erick Goldstein and Melanie Hall, 'Writers, the Clergy, and the "Diplomatization" of Culture: The Sub-Structures of Anglo-American Diplomacy, 1820-1914', in Anthony Best and John Fisher (eds.), *On the Fringes of Diplomacy* (London: Ashgate, 2011).

community of 'Anglo-Saxon' English-speakers.[13] On the Humber, moreover, this was particularly creative work for the historical event at the centre of all this work concerned of course the 1608 flight of Protestant separatists from government persecution and indeed imprisonment. But as we shall see, those Britons involved skilfully shifted the focus, turning an episode originally suggestive of Anglo-American difference and separation into a moment that instead spoke of underlying unities and comradeship.

The Pilgrim Fathers and the 'Great Rapprochement', 1890-1914

Early twentieth century interest in the Pilgrim Fathers was linked to a broader political development, what Bradford Perkins called a turn of the century 'rapprochement' between the United States and Britain.[14] This was the era in which rapid American industrial development ensured that by the early 1900s it was well on track to surpass Britain as the world's pre-eminent economic power (a development consolidated after 1918). Politicians in London were cognizant of this, responding with a cautious concern that soon gave way to engaged interest and expressions of warm support. Such support was also the result of a trajectory set over the previous century: after the War of 1812, the final occasion in which the United States and Great Britain had descended into formal hostilities, those Anglo-American resentments which had lingered since the Revolution – especially regarding Britain's interests in the Western Hemisphere – largely dissipated (although occasional rivalries nonetheless still flared, and Anglophobia remained a force in domestic US politics).[15] Crucial here was the settlement of the Venezuelan boundary dispute (1895) as well as the subsequent Anglo-American agreements between 1901 and 1903 resolving those other key points of tension over Alaska and Panama.

The hard facts of growing American power were thus central to the rapprochement which developed after 1890. But so too were contemporary geo-political realities, especially the corresponding rise of the Imperial Germany. This was something which caused significant concern for successive British governments, in part because Germany was that much closer, but also because of how the Kaiser's Empire sought to assert its developing power: via the rapid growth of the Imperial Navy. This represented a clear and present threat to Britain's long-

[13] Srdjan Vucetic, *The Anglosphere: A Genealogy of a Racialized Identity in International Relations* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011)
[14] Bradford Perkins, *The Great Rapprochement: England and the United States, 1895-1914* (New York: Antheneum, 1968), 5, 8.
[15] For lingering post-1814 tensions see Kathleen Burk, *The Lion and the Eagle: The Interaction of the British and American Empires 1783-1972* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018); Kristin L. Hoganson and Jay Sexton, *Crossing Empires: Taking US History into Trans imperial Terrain* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020).

established naval supremacy, something which no government of the era could or would countenance. Cultivating closer diplomatic ties with the United States was thus a recognition by British politicians of growing American strength; but it was simultaneously an implicit acknowledgement of the perceived German threat. After all, finding common ground with Washington might later help secure future American support (political, but perhaps also military) should tensions rise with Berlin. At the very least it would ensure that Britain was not driven into an expensive naval arms race with *both* economic rivals.[16]

Informing this British turn to the West was an increasingly powerful *idea*, one which had been gestating for at least half a century but which was now articulated with a new fervour and frequency. This was the belief, popular among turn of the century cultural and political elites, that the United States and Great Britain were bound by language, history and indeed blood into an 'Anglo-Saxon' brotherhood. As Reginald Horsman has shown, Anglo-Saxonism of this sort had first become apparent at the turn of the nineteenth century and was often to be seen on both sides of the Atlantic in contemporary discussions of those ideas and institutions understood to be typically 'English': liberty, the rule of law, the rights of the individual.[17] By the middle of the nineteenth century, however, the idea had morphed into a racialised discourse.[18] Various developments informed this shift. In the United States, a combination of westward expansion, the abolition of slavery (1865), and the emergence of the pseudo-science of race encouraged an 'othering' impulse within national and, in the South especially, regional discourse. The result was an increasingly codified racial hierarchy – particularly in the post-1880 period – establishing 'nordic' and 'Anglo-Saxon' Americans at the top with indigenous

[16] Edward P. Crapol, 'From Anglophobia to Fragile Rapprochement: Anglo-American Relations in the Early Twentieth Century' in Hans-Jurgen Schroder (ed.) *Confrontation and Co-operation: Germany and the United States in the Era of World War I, 1900-1924* (Oxford: Berg, 1993), 13-32.

[17] Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Exceptionalism* (London: Harvard University Press, 1981); Reginald Horsman, 'Origins of Racial Anglo-Saxonism in Great Britain before 1850', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 37:3 (1976), 388-390; Allen Frantzen and John D. Niles (eds.) *Anglo-Saxonism and the Construction of Social Identity* (Gainsville: University of Florida Press, 1997).

[18] For racial Anglo-Saxonism, see Vucetic, *The Anglosphere*; Michael Modarelli, *The Transatlantic Genealogy of American Anglo-Saxonism* (Abingdom: Routledge, 2019); Bell, *Dreamworlds of Race*; Anna Martellone, 'In the Name of Anglo-Saxondom, for Empire and Democracy: The Anglo-American Discourse, 1880-1910, in David K. Adams and Cornelius A. Van Minnen (eds.) *Reflections on American Exceptionalism* (Keele: Keele University Press, 1994), 83-96; Paul A. Kramer, 'Empires, Exceptions and Anglo-Saxons: Race and Rule between the British and United States Empires, 1880-1910', *Journal of American History* 88:4 (2002), 1315-56; Paul A. Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Stuart Anderson, *Race and Rapprochement: Anglo-Saxonism and Anglo-American Relations, 1895-1904* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickenson University Press, 1981). The discourse also informed relations within the British Empire. See John C. Mitcham, *Race and Imperial Defence in the British World 1870-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing The Global Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

peoples, African Americans and 'new immigrants' at the bottom.[19] In Britain, meanwhile, similarly aggressive colonial expansion into Africa and Asia, an enterprise also enabled by pseudo-science and cultural chauvinism, bequeathed a parallel commitment to an imagined racial hierarchy.

As a new century dawned, therefore, 'articulate Englishmen and Americans at all levels of society declaimed about the supposed racial affinity of their two countries and described Great Britain and the United States as natural allies because of the racial bond'.[20] This was a powerful and pervasive idea, apparent in everything from transatlantic political rhetoric, to journalistic polemic, to policy, literature and historical scholarship. It especially informed the work of those antiquarians and genealogists seeking to recover the lineage of specific transatlantic bloodlines – especially the Mayflower Pilgrims – for such details might then be used to 'prove' that the idea of an Anglo-Saxon 'family' was in fact real.[21] The era even saw the founding of ancestral societies specifically geared towards celebrating this genealogy. Take, for instance, the National Society of Colonial Dames, established in 1891 and with 7,000 members by 1913;[22] or The Society of Mayflower Descendants formed in 1897.

In due course, contemporary investment in racial Anglo-Saxonism combined with antiquarian interest in recovering transatlantic genealogical connections bequeathed British-based commemorations. In 1891, for instance, a small memorial to the Mayflower sailing was unveiled in Plymouth, whilst in 1896, a group of American Congregationalists (frequently central to Mayflower commemorations) laid the foundation stone of the John Robinson Memorial Church in Gainsborough with the American Ambassador, T.F. Bayard, in attendance.[23] A year later, another group of Americans provided funds for the restoration of Austerfield church, the parish in which William Bradford was baptised in 1589. Then, in 1909, Southampton – a long-time rival of Plymouth – got in on the act. According to the city's mayor, the idea was to establish a structure which might 'become one of the ever-increasing number

[19] John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995).
[20] Stuart Anderson, 'Racial Anglo-Saxonism and the American Response to the Boer War', *Diplomatic History*, 2:3 (1978), 222.
[21] For Anglo-American antiquarian endeavour, see Sam Edwards, ' "A Great Englishman": George Washington and Anglo-American Memory Diplomacy, c.1890-1925' in Robert M. Hendershot and Steve Marsh (eds) *Culture Matters: Anglo-American Relations and the Intangibles of 'Specialness'* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), 158-188; Sam Edwards, ' "From Here Lincoln Came": Anglo-Saxonism, the special relationship, and the anglicization of Abraham Lincoln, c.1860-1970', *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 11:1 (2013), 22-46.
[22] *National Society of the Colonial Dames of America: Its Beginnings, Its Purpose and a Record of its Work, 1891-1913* (1913), 12.
[23] See also Hulme, 'The Mayflower and "Mother Plymouth", 517-537.

of bonds which are linking together in renewed amity and respect the peoples of New England to those of Old England, and, even more widely. The nations of the British Empire to the many States of the great Republic of the West'.[24] Four years later, with the funding secured, the memorial was unveiled by the American Ambassador, Walter Hines Page, who similarly devoted particular attention to celebrating the ties of race which he clearly believed the memorial commemorated. As Page explained it, 'It was a bond of blood and solemn responsibility that bound us together', going on to declare that 'it was upon us who spoke the language of Shakespeare that the responsibility of ruling the world must rest'. Not content with a mere claim to global Imperial overlordship, however, Page rose to a crescendo in which he took great pains to claim the United States for England. As he declared to loud cheers and applause from the crowd of locals and dignitaries, the Pilgrim Fathers were 'not only God-led men, they were God-led Englishmen'. The implications were, believed Page, obvious: 'the United States was yet English-led and English-ruled'.[25] This was familiar territory for Page, who was in fact carefully cultivated during the war by British-based Anglo-Saxonist groups keen to encourage declarations of transatlantic solidarity.[26]

Humberside, the Centennial of Peace, and the Tercentenary of 1920

If, in 1913, the Esplanade at Southampton could draw such frothy and florid oratory the same could not be said of Killinghome Creek, for its role in the Mayflower story was in contrast far less well known. But as the crowd gathered in Southampton this was in the process of changing, a development connected to the return to Massachusetts in 1897 of William Bradford's history of the Plymouth colony, lost for much of the eighteenth century and then rediscovered in the 1850s in the library of the Bishop of London. This was a key source of information for the Pilgrims' journey and – as quoted above – it contained a telling if also rather vague description of the 1608 flight from north Lincolnshire, something which had occurred 'betweene Grimsbe and Hull'.[27]

Whilst the idea of a link between the Pilgrim Fathers and the south bank of the Humber seems to have been generally known by at least the 1880s, the question of the *precise* location from which the Pilgrims had fled appears to have drawn increasing attention just as the century

[24] *The Daily Telegraph*, 17 April 1909, 5.
[25] *The Scotsman*, 16 August 1913, 7; *The Southern Daily Echo*, 28 June 1909.
[26] See Patrick M. Kirkwood, 'A War Time Love Affair: The Round Table and The New Republic, c.1914–1919', *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era,* 20:1 (January 2021), 44–65; Priscilla Roberts, 'World War I and Anglo-American Relations: The Role of Philip Kerr and The Round Table', *The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs,* 95:383 (2006), 113-139.
[27] Goldstein, 'Diplomacy in the Service of History'.

turned. In 1897 – the very year Bradford's manuscript was returned to New England – the historian Edward Arber suggested that local legend favoured 'East Halton Skitter Haven' because 'it is the only break in the specified coastline of Lincolnshire viz between Hull and Great Grimsby'. A few years later, in 1905, Henry and Morton Dexter (a father and son antiquarian enterprise) suggested, in contrast, that Stallingborough 'seems to meet the conditions best', a claim which duly initiated sustained interest in that particular site (and which in later years was demonstrated to be true).[28] Elsewhere, among the interested parties were local ministers of various denominations, with Congregationalists often at the fore. Writing in the same year as Arber, it was one of these ministers, a Congregationalist named George T. Coster, who seems to have been among the first to specifically claim a connection between the Pilgrims and 'Immingham Creek'. This was a connection later further elaborated in 1901 by yet another minister, a Baptist by the name of Rev. J.E. Shepherd, who argued in the course of a lecture delivered to the good folk of the George Street Baptist Mutual Improvement Society that 'Killingholme Haven' was the 'embarking place of some of the refugees'.[29] But the boldest claim was made by an Anglican, the Rev. Miler Reid, the vicar of Immingham.

Reid's claim was motivated by the growing transatlantic interest in marking the centennial of the Treaty of Ghent. This was the agreement signed in 1814 and which had ended the War of 1812, the last occasion during which the United States and Great Britain had been formally and officially 'at war'. Plans to mark the centenary had first emerged in 1911 when an 'American National Committee' was formed in the United States, followed a year later by a parallel British committee.[30] Notably, those involved were a veritable who's who of contemporary 'Anglo-America'. Leading the American delegation were industrialist and philanthropist, Andrew Carnegie (Briton by birth and American by adoption), former president Theodore Roosevelt, former secretary of state Elihu Root (a committed Anglophile) and former ambassador to the Court of St. James, Joseph Choate.[31] A similar list of retired statesmen represented the British, including Earl Grey, the former Governor General of Canada and Harry Britain, a long-time advocate for a closer union between the United States and Great Britain (and a founding member of an organisation established in 1902 to further this aim – the Pilgrims

[28] Henry Martin Dexter and Morton Dexter, *The England and Holland of the Pilgrims* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1905), 405; Nick Bunker, *Making Haste from Babylon: The Mayflower Pilgrims and their World, A New History*, (London: Pimlico, 2011), 189-191; Dinah Tyszka, *Immingham and the Pilgrim Fathers* (Gainsborough: Immingham Branch WEA, 2008).
[29] *Hull Daily Mail*, 17 December 1901.
[30] 'Minutes of the Executive Committee (British), 21/2/12 to 17/10/18', Sulgrave Manor Archive (hereafter 'SMA'); Sam Edwards, 'A Great Englishman: George Washington and Anglo-American memory diplomacy, c.1980-1925', 165-167.
[31] Bell, *Dreamworlds of Race.*

Society[32]). These two committees developed a series of ambitious plans for the Centennial, including a variety of ceremonies, exhibitions, memorials and monuments all timed for 1914.[33] Clearly aware of all this interest (the plans were widely discussed in the press), Reid thus seized the opportunity to stake a local claim to the Pilgrims in order to secure, he hoped, financial support for his ailing church. In 1914, after declaring – wrongly – that 'Immingham was the parish in which some of them [the Pilgrims] last worshipped', Reid therefore travelled to New York and secured £2,000 in pledges to restore Immingham church as a memorial to the Pilgrim Fathers.[34]

The outbreak of war in Europe then intervened and Reid's plan – as well as all the various ambitious projects linked to the Centennial – was put on hold. But following Allied victory in 1918 interest returned, and in due course several of the memorials contemplated before the war – including statues in Britain of Abraham Lincoln and George Washington – were dedicated (all between 1919 and 1921). By 1920, moreover, transatlantic interest in the celebration of historical connections was also now sharpened by yet another anniversary: the Mayflower Tercentenary. The December 1620 landing of the Mayflower at Plymouth Rock had been commemorated in Massachusetts and beyond since at least the early nineteenth century, and by the 1850s the ceremonies in Plymouth itself had been joined in the United States by 'large-scale festivities held simultaneously […] in major cities from Boston, Philadelphia and New York to Charleston, New Orleans, Louisville, Cincinnati, Detroit, Chicago, St Louis, Sacramento and San Francisco'.[35] But the Tercentenary was to be still more extensive, involving ceremonies in three countries – the United States, Britain and Holland. For many Britons, the Tercentenary was thus a useful opportunity to secure the interest and affection of the transatlantic 'cousins' and now creditors. As the Prime Minister, Lloyd George (then engaged in often fraught negotiations with the wartime ally) explained:

> Today, when the closer Union of Great Britain and America has come to mean so much for the future well-being of the world, it would indeed be a tragedy of any political exigencies permitted misunderstanding between people whose hearts and consciences have been attuned to the same endeavour by such a past as is recorded in the story of the great pilgrimage. Let 1920 mark a deepening and strengthening of the union not by any means of bonds that change and wear and break, but by those more lasting bonds of

[32] Stephen Bowman, *The Pilgrims Society and Public Diplomacy, 1895-1945* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018).
[33] *British-American Peace Centenary: One Hundred Years of Peace*, reprinted from *The Times* of Tuesday, October 7, 1913, SMA; H.S. Perris, *A Short History of Anglo-American Relations and of the Hundred Years' Peace* (London: British Peace Centenary Committee, 1914), SMA.
[34] *Hull Daily Mail*, 17 April 1914, 5.
[35] Hebel, 'Historical Bonding with an Expiring Heritage', 259.

> spirit in a common effort to benefit the whole of the human race, and in a fellowship of hardy endurance until the work is accomplished.[36]

Combined therefore, the centenary of the Treaty of Ghent, the experience of the recent war, and the widely anticipated 300th anniversary of the Mayflower's departure from Plymouth now provided a hospitable environment in which to secure public recognition of Humberside's connection to the Pilgrim Fathers.

It soon became apparent though that the initiative had passed from Rev. Reid to the community on the north bank of the river – Kingston upon Hull, a one-time 'Puritan town' with a population of 320,000 by the early 1920s, a key constituent of which was a 'growing middle class who nurtured an emerging civic consciousness'.[37] As Michael Reeve has demonstrated, in the pre-war period this civic consciousness had often sought to 'insert' Hull into a 'broader imperial framework', one which asserted its position as the nation's third major port.[38] After 1918 this endeavour persisted, but another international 'framework' also secured increasing attention, a development made clear by the foundation shortly before the war of a new philanthropic organisation: the Anglo-American Society of Hull. Hull was not alone in this endeavour, and Anglo-American Societies also emerged in other towns and cities (such as Manchester), often affiliated to the Sulgrave Institution, which had played a leading role in the original plans for the Centennial of Peace (and was similarly very involved in the Mayflower Tercentenary).[39] But whilst there was certainly a national context shaping the origins in Hull of this new Society there were also specific local concerns, especially given the Anglo-American tensions of the 1920s concerning naval power, the subject of the often tense Washington Naval Conference of 1921-22.[40] The Conference had been called by the Americans as a means to secure multi-lateral agreements over naval disarmament, and whilst a key point of tension concerned US-Japanese rivalry over the Pacific, transatlantic differences over the respective size of the British and American Navies also caused disagreement. In Hull,

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[36] H. Whitfield (ed.) *"Mother Plymouth", A Souvenir of the Mayflower Tercentenary together with the Story of the Pilgrim Fathers 1620-1920* (Devonport, Plymouth: Whitfield and Newman, 1920), 1; The Sulgrave Institution, *Celebration of 300th Anniversary, First Legislative Assembly and the Signing of the Pilgrims' Mayflower Compact*, (Sulgrave Institution, 1920).

[37] Edward Gillett and Kenneth A. MacMahon, *A History of Hull* (Hull: The University of Hull Press, 1989), 329; David Atkinson, 'The University of Hull' in David J. Starkey, David Atkinson, Briony McDonagh, Sarah McKeon, Elisabeth Salter (eds.) *Hull: Culture, History, Place* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017), 257.

[38] Michael Reeves, ' "An Empire Dock": Place Promotion and the Local Acculturation of Imperial Discourse in "Britain's Third Port"', *Northern History*, (2020), 2; *Immingham and the Pilgrim Fathers: Mayflower 70 Year*, 3. Commemorative Pamphlet accompanying re-dedication of the monument, Grimsby Library.

[39] H.S. Perris, 'Memorandum on Proposals for a Programme by the Secretary of the Society', c.1918, SMA.

[40] Lisio, *British Naval Supremacy and Anglo-American Antagonisms, 1914-1930.*

a major North Sea port that had suffered German Zeppelin attacks during the recent war, the future of British Naval power was something that very much mattered.[41]

The region had also recently developed a very particular connection to Britain's main antagonist during the Washington Conference, the US Navy, whose leaders were keen to secure the prize of parity with Britannia. Indeed, in 1918, the US Navy had established an airbase on the banks of the Humber – a seaplane facility situated, of all places, at Killingholme Haven.[42] Moreover, the Humber's connection to the United States military persisted into the post-1918 period, even after the US Navy had returned the base at Killingholme to British control.[43] This was a fact tragically demonstrated on 24 August 1921, when the Airship R38, on trials from its base in Howdon, exploded over the river killing forty-four of the forty-nine crew on board, sixteen of whom were Americans readying the vessel for transfer to the US Navy.[44] Three years later, in 1924, a memorial – 'draped with the flags of the flying services of Great Britain and the USA' – was unveiled in Hull Western Cemetery by the Bishop of Hull, and in the presence of a gathered crowd of Anglo-American military figures as well as the American Consul, John Grout (also central, as we shall see, to the subsequent Pilgrims commemorations).[45] In Hull, therefore, questions of historic Anglo-American connection *and* of contemporary naval rivalry were not merely 'academic'. These were questions that impressed themselves on those local elites conditioned by class, culture and politics to use their municipal platform for expressions of civic pride and for demonstrations of their political agency.[46] Such was the context in which Rev. Reid's pre-war plans for a memorial to the Pilgrim Fathers in the vicinity of Immingham were revisited. However, the focus now was not on restoring the parish church but, rather, the erection of a stone marker intended to ensure that the Humber's link to the Pilgrim Fathers would no longer be overlooked.

Realising the Monument, c. 1920-1925

Absent the records of the Anglo-American Society of Hull (destroyed during the 1941 Blitz on Hull), the realisation of the Immingham monument can nonetheless be recovered from a combination of contemporary press coverage as well as from some of the surviving dedication

[41] David J. Starkey, David Atkinson, Briony McDonagh, Sarah McKeon, Elizabeth Salter (eds.) *Hull: Culture, History, Place* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017), 240.
[42] Immingham Museum, *Killingholme Seaplane Base 1914-1919*, 7-9.
[43] T.N. Hancock, *Bomber County: A History of the Royal Air Force in Lincolnshire* (Lincoln: Lincolnshire Library Service, 1978), 4.
[44] *Hull Daily Mail*, 25 August 1921, 5; Ken Delve, *The Military Airfields of Britain: Northern England* (Ramsbury: The Crowood Press, 2006), 295-296.
[45] *Hull Daily Mail*, 11 April 1924, 5.
[46] Reeves, '"An Empire Dock"'.

day pamphlets and other ephemera. The project appears to have catalysed in September 1920, during the Mayflower Tercentenary, which was celebrated in Hull with a civic reception in City Hall during which one speaker later (mistakenly) claimed the 'connection with Immingham was discovered'.[47] Accompanying this occasion was an open air commemoration led by a local minister – Rev. W. Graham Bell – at what the *Hull Daily Mail* called 'Old Killingholme Creek', the spot from where 'the Independents of Scrooby, Austerfield, Gainsborough, and district' left England 'in search of liberty and worship'.[48] The star of the show however seems to have been a different minister, Rev. J.G. Patton, whose lengthy address is most notable for being the first detailed iteration of themes that recurred again in both 1924 and 1925.

Patton started with a question: 'Why all this ado?' given that the Pilgrims were a mere 'company of country folk'. He spent the rest of his oration delivering an answer. As Patton explained to the gathered crowd of local dignitaries, naval officers, and the American Consul, the significance of the Pilgrim Fathers lay in what they had instigated and bequeathed: 'Modern democracy had been born in them. They stood for reality, spirituality, and simplicity of Christian worship. These men had saved the Church from drifting back to Rome'.[49] And herein lay the importance of Old Killingholme Creek, for 'on that spot' began the 'most noble historic achievement', one that for Patton at least was clearly both political *and* theological.[50] Later that evening during a 'great gathering at City Hall' John Grout reciprocated. Telling the assembled crowd that he felt as if he 'were talking to the other part of the family', the American Consul proceeded to celebrate the unity of the 'Anglo-Saxon peoples' who 'stood for truth, justice and liberty'.[51] Remembering the Pilgrim Fathers in Hull was thus a useful means to stake an English claim to 'modern' – that is, American – democracy, and all at the very moment that British politics itself visibly democratised: see the Representation of the People Act in 1918 not to mention Lloyd George's hearty endorsement during the war of a Wilsonian rhetoric of freedom and 'democracy'. At the same time, commemorating the Pilgrim Fathers also provided an invaluable forum in which to revisit and deploy the Anglo-Saxonist rhetoric popular in transatlantic diplomatic discourse since the 1890s.

In Hull, the driving force behind all this was Charles Wray, a wealthy and influential local merchant 'prominently connected with the Hull fruit trade'. It was Wray who suggested

[47] *Hull Daily Mail*, 1 December 1922, 4; *Hull Daily Mail*, 20 January 1928, 5.
[48] *Hull Daily Mail*, 3 September 1920, 3.
[49] *Hull Daily Mail*, 7 September 1920, 5.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.

establishing a permanent marker of the Pilgrim Fathers connection, and the proceedings of the Anglo-American Society of Hull's first annual dinner, during which Wray delivered an oration, reveals his inspiration.[52] Starting with the idea that 'the future of the world depends upon the whole English-speaking race standing together', Wray summarised those factors which demanded Anglo-American solidarity. Central among these was the importance of 'Anglo-American friendship', something Wray clearly believed would serve as a 'bulwark against chaos' whilst also ensuring the two 'English-speaking' powers might avoid the 'petty jealousy for war traditions and the widespread misunderstanding with regard to our debt to America'. Here is a clear nod towards some of the tensions then brewing: American refusal to join the League of Nations, the connected rise of an often Anglophobic isolationist sentiment, and disagreements over the issue of Naval parity and British war debt all produced tensions between London and Washington. Wray's words also hint at contemporary fears of social unrest and Bolshevism (the 'chaos'), the latter then a recurrent worry amongst British elites, particularly in Hull which had experienced rioting at the port in 1919.[53] But here, too, is a suggestion as to how Wray believed such problems might be overcome: by celebrating the deep history – as he saw it – of transatlantic connection and comradeship, one predicated on the assumption of a racial bond binding Britons to their 'kinsmen across the Atlantic'. In this respect Wray was very much in tune with the views of the parent Anglo-American Society, based at Sulgrave. For as the Society's secretary, Harry Perris, explained in a confidential memorandum to the Tercentenary organising committee, the 'visible commemoration of the Pilgrim Fathers, and of the racial kinship between the two peoples, in marble and bronze' was to be central to the planned programme of activities.[54]

In concert with a keen desire to cultivate an Anglo-American racial alliance, Wray also saw in the plans for a monument at Immingham the chance to put 'Hull on the map'. Such an idea is significant in what it reveals: when the dock at Immingham was first opened in 1912 there were some in Hull who feared it might threaten the future of their own port. After 1918, however, a regional rearrangement of the railways in fact 'favoured Hull', thus the interest of the city's elites in erecting a monument on the other side of the Humber makes clear they now saw Immingham as ancillary rather than competitor.[55] Celebrating Immingham, in short, was a means also to celebrate Hull. As Wray explained: 'hitherto, pilgrims from America have only

[52] *Hull Daily Mail*, 1 December 1922, 4; Anglo-American Society of Hull, *American Thanksgiving Day Dinner, Thursday 30 November 1922*, HHC.
[53] See Beaven, 'Challenges to civic governance in post-war England'.
[54] H.S. Perris, 'Memorandum on Proposals for a Programme by the Secretary of the Society', c.1918, 5, SMA.
[55] Henry Thorold, *Lincolnshire* (London: Pimlico, 1996), 38.

visited Plymouth which was merely the last place in England which the settlers touched on their voyage to the New World' plans were now afoot to 'mark the actual spot from which the Pilgrim Father set out'.[56] And that spot was Immingham Creek, 'the place where the pilgrims boarded the vessel'. By marking this location with a suitable memorial those involved hoped to accrue two specific benefits. First, 'there will be every inducement for Americans to visit Hull in order to see the place where their ancestors moved off'.[57] Second, there was the 'wider aspect in relation to the trade of the port'.[58] As Wray explained: 'influential Americans visiting Hull cannot fail to be struck with our magnificent docks and the facilities for goods, and the result will be an influx of fresh trade into the port thus decreasing our grievous burden of unemployment and increasing the prosperity of Hull'.[59] The monument thus offered an invaluable means to secure for Immingham (and Hull) a place on the still developing map of Anglo-American history and memory.

The importance of this latter issue should not be discounted: the post-1890 rapprochement saw the subject of so-called American 'shrines' in Britain receive engaged attention, and those locations that subsequently featured in the volumes and travelogues which followed benefitted from the nascent American tourist market. A notable example of this developing genre is the lavishly illustrated tome *The American Pilgrim's Way in England* (1907) by American author Marcus Huish. In three hundred pages of often rather purple prose Huish has plenty of time for various locations in Lincolnshire connected to the Pilgrims – Boston, Scrooby and Gainsborough all get a mention. But with regard to the 1608 departure to Holland, Huish confines himself simply to repeating Bradford's account, nothing more.[60] Even a post-1918 iteration of this genre overlooks the 1608 departure. This volume – *American Shrines on English Soil* (1924) – erroneously suggested that the Pilgrims might have left from Hull itself, and in 1610 (rather than 1608).[61] Signposting Immingham's connection to the Pilgrim Fathers was therefore most certainly about memory, but it was also about money; or, rather, it was a means to attract to the area those wealthy Americans known to be keen to discover the bonds with what Nathanial Hawthorne had long called *Our Old Home* (1863).[62]

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[56] *Hull Daily Mail*, 1 December 1922, 4
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid. For civic boosterism, see Tom Hulme, *After the Shock City: Urban Culture and the Making of Modern Citizenship* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2019), 71-106.
[60] Marcus Huish, *The American Pilgrim's Way in England* (London: The Fine Art Society, 1907), 122.
[61] J.F. Muirhead, *American Shines on English Soil*, (London: The Doorland Agency, 1924), 172.
[62] Nathanial Hawthorne, *Our Old Home* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1863). Revealingly, American tourists of this very type were memorably 'sent up' in H.V. Morton's *In Search of England* (1928), which includes gently

The proposed monument thus had some rather heavy lifting to do. It was to celebrate the Anglo-Saxon racial bond with the 'American cousins' whilst also staking an English claim to the origins of American democracy; it was to correct the historical record as to the 'real' start of the Mayflower story; and it was to draw to Hull and the Humber American tourists and merchants, the latter of whom might be sufficiently free with their dollars as to solve the problem of rising post-war unemployment, which in Hull was 'rather worse than the national average' for much of the interwar period.[63] At Hull, in short, the third major port in the land, local elites intended to establish a stone monument so as to bind their community into a peaceful and prosperous Anglosphere.[64]

Work on the plans continued over the coming two years led by a specially formed sub-committee consisting of the Lord Mayor of Hull (Councillor Wokes), two local worthies (T. Shepherd and T. Toogood), and the aforementioned Wray and John Grout.[65] For all those involved a clear motivating factor remained a sense that Humberside's connection to the Pilgrim Fathers was marginalised. As a July 1924 article explained: 'certain south coast towns claim that the [Mayflower] party emigrated from their shores, and celebrate the event yearly. This is not correct, however, for the Pilgrims were composed of almost entirely Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and Lancashire men and women, who started for no other place than Immingham'. Once erected, the monument – 'a simple structure', costing £255 – would thus provide a much-needed corrective.[66] The first component of this 'simple structure' – the foundation stone – was duly unveiled on 31 July 1924, and in attendance at the ceremony were various local dignitaries (including, of course, Charles Wray) as well as a visiting cohort of British and American sailors drawn from three naval vessels docked at the port – HMS *Godetia*, USS *Yale*, and the Massachusetts Nautical Training Ship *Nantucket*, the latter crewed by 200 Naval Cadets.[67] Upon the stone itself was carved the following inscription:

From this Creek,
The Pilgrim Fathers first left England
in 1609 in search of Religious Liberty.
The granite top-stone was taken from

mocking scenes of visiting Yankees pursuing the Pilgrim Fathers on the south coast and in Lincolnshire. See H.V. Morton, *In Search of England*, (New York: Robert M. McBride, 1928), 84-94, 248-254.

[63] Gillet and MacMahon, *A History of Hull*, 431.

[64] Ibid; *Hull Daily Mail*, 28 November 1922, 5. See also Michael Cullinane, '100 Years of Peace among English-speaking People: Anglo-American Cultural Diplomacy, 1909-1921', *Peace and Change* 46:1, (2021), 5-34.

[65] *The Yorkshire Post*, 17 October 1922, 9.

[66] *Hull Daily Mail*, 16 July 1924 6; Anglo-American Society of Hull, *The Pilgrim Fathers Monument: The Programme of Ceremony at Immingham Creek, Thursday 31 July 1924*, HHC.

[67] *Westminster Gazette*, 1 August 1924, 3. See also *Hull Daily Mail*, 16 July 1924, 6. The winning design was selected by the committee towards the end of 1922: *Hull Daily Mail*, 14 October 1922, 4.

Plymouth Rock, Massachusetts, and pre-
sented by the Sulgrave Institution of
USA
The Memorial was erected by the
Anglo-American Society of Hull.
1924[68]

The dedication ceremony was a carefully choreographed occasion intended to celebrate Anglo-American affinity whilst also asserting Hull's place in global affairs. Witnessed by 2,00 people, it began with the singing of a hymn – "O God, our help in ages past" – before the Lord Mayor, Councillor E.E. Keighley, formally opened the proceedings 'by stressing the international significance of the ceremony', a significance he carefully connected to the fact that the people of Hull and the Humber claimed a 'brotherhood' with the 'great nation of the West'.[69] Next up was Sir Charles Wakefield, a former Lord Mayor of London and a key figure in the Sulgrave Institution.[70] For Wakefield, central to so many of the Anglo-American commemorations of this era – he personally gifted to the United States busts of two Britons popular with the colonists, Earl Chatham and Edmund Burke[71] – the significance of the Pilgrims lay in what they represented. Thus, with a hint at changing post-war sentiment vis a vis colonialism (this was the age of Wilsonian 'self-determination' and of 'mandates' rather than colonies) Wakefield declared that the Pilgrim Fathers were not mere 'Empire-builders' like 'Drake or Frobisher'; rather, they 'were devout and earnest men: home-loving, hard-working men – the very pattern of good citizenship', and what drove them was 'their need of religious freedom'. As such, wherever 'liberty was held in honour and religion a living a faith […] the example of the Pilgrim Fathers was an ever-present inspiration'. Wakefield's claim was then nuanced by Margaret Wintringham, the local MP and the only woman to have a prominent role in the proceedings. For Wintringham, clearly playing to the gathered crowd of her constituents, the ideal of liberty which the Pilgrims took to the New World was in fact a gift of 'Yorkshire', for 'Yorkshire', declared only the second woman to take a seat in the Commons, 'had done all the work'.[72] Wintringham also jested that the only substantive difference she had with Lady Astor – the American-born peer who became the first woman to

[68] Whilst those involved in the memorial were clearly aware that the Pilgrims sailed from the Humber on 1608, contemporary reports frequently gave the date as 1609.
[69] *Westminster Gazette*, 1 August 1924, 3.
[70] Wakefield, Charles Cheers, first Viscount Wakefield, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*: https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-5236?rskey=jIIpCK&result=1 Accessed: 18/3/21.
[71] *The Yorkshire Post*, 31 May 1921, 6.
[72] *The Yorkshire Post*, 1 August 1924, 12.

take a seat in the Commons – was that 'the latter insisted the Pilgrim Fathers first sailed from Plymouth, while she, of course, stood by Immingham Creek'.[73]

These claims on the Pilgrims were reciprocated by the visiting Americans, one of whom – Commander Copeland, Executive Officer of the *Nantucket* – seized the opportunity to make clear that gathered around the Foundation Stone were crewmen from the *Dale*, 'representative of the nation at large', and cadets from the *Nantucket*, purposely chosen because 'in many cases' they were the 'direct descendants of those same Pilgrim Fathers'.[74] Indeed, Cadet Bradford, a descendant of William Bradford, was tasked with laying a wreath at the stone. These actions revealed what was really at work here. For despite Commander Copeland's assertion, this was not an occasion for celebrating the United States as a polyglot people, nor as what Randolph Bourne had defined in an influential 1916 essay as 'cosmopolitan'.[75] This was the United States as rooted in New England, and New England as white, 'Anglo-Saxon', and protestant. Just as the 1924 'National Origins' Act privileged 'Nordic' migrants to America whilst limiting the entry of those from southern and eastern Europe, the ceremony at Immingham thus exposed a similar politics of identity.[76] Herein lies a key significance of these commemorations of the Pilgrim Fathers in Britain. For although this was an era of rising Nativism in American politics, contemporary historical memory in the United States was in fact – after forty years of mass immigration – starting to shift away from a century long obsession with the Pilgrim Fathers. As historian Udo Hebel has explained, when 'preparations for the tercentenary festivities were getting underway [in the US], the Anglocentric definitions of American history and culture that fuelled Forefathers' Day celebrations since the late eighteenth century had been rendered problematic, if not obsolete, by the political and social realities of the early twentieth-century United States'.[77] John Seelye has even argued that by 1920 the 'Rock' – and all that went with it – was no longer a 'useful ideological icon' for by then 'New England as a region was dead'; that is, it's cultural and political influence over the rest of the continent had long since dissipated and declined.[78] This was why in Massachusetts

[73] *The Leeds Mercury*, 1 August 1924, 7.
[74] *Westminster Gazette*, 1 August 1924, 3; The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, *Annual Report of the Commissioners of the Massachusetts Nautical School for the Year Ending November 30, 1924* (Boston: Massachusetts Nautical School Department of Education, 1924), 8.
[75] Randolph Bourne 'Trans-national America', *The Atlantic* (July 1916): https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1916/07/trans-national-america/304838/ Accessed: 18/3/20.
[76] Higham, *Strangers in the Land*. Elsewhere, this era also saw WASP elites in the United States actively 'expand' the idea of Anglo-Saxonism so that it might also include earlier generations of immigrants from supposedly 'Nordic' and 'Teutonic' regions.
[77] Hebel, *Celebrating Ethnicity and Nation*, 259.
[78] Seeyle, *Memory's Nation*, xv.

the Tercentenary of 1920 was so dominated by the now very familiar Anglo-Saxonist homilies: the proceedings were 'shaped by the fears of the decline of a romanticized colonial past' and as a result organisers and orators used the occasion 'to restrict rather than expand the definition of "American"', something which in turn produced sustained criticism.[79]

At Immingham, however, the exclusions now rendered so problematic in the United States by the 'emergence of new notions of cultural pluralism'[80] were in a sense *necessary* given the memorial's very purpose, which was to celebrate 'those bonds of national friendship that spring from, and have their source in, common ideals, common interests, and a common purpose'. Put differently, if the very point of the Tercentenary commemorations *in Britain* was to cultivate American 'fellowship' with the 'British cousins', the telling of history had to be suitably reductive, emphasising that what joined the two countries in the present was the central role played by seventeenth century Englishmen in settling North America. On the Humber, moreover, such an exclusionary historical narration had a peculiar irony, for Hull had only recently 'played a pivotal role in the movement of transmigrants via the UK': between 1850 and 1914 2.2 million Europeans passed through the port, with the vast majority destined to become the very 'new immigrants' then perceived as eroding the entrenched power and privilege of New England's 'Anglo-Saxon' elite.[81]

The ready recourse by British orators to a reductive and Anglo-Saxonist discourse was again demonstrated in 1924 during the evening events at Hull City Hall. The proceedings started with an organ recital interspersed with the singing of the 'Battle Hymn of the Republic' and 'Two Empires by the Sea' before Sir Charles Wakefield took the opportunity to explain away a potentially awkward aspect of the Pilgrim story. For had they not fled Britain in the pursuit of freedom? And if so, surely their tale expressed transatlantic separation rather than connection? Not so, reassured Wakefield. For the Pilgrims had in fact 'reawakened in England the essential spirit of freedom' and so it was one of the 'parodies of history that the Pilgrim Fathers were never more truly British than in the act which separated them from the land of their birth'. As such, Wakefield hoped that once complete the Immingham monument would help 'American visitors to realise what we meant when we talked of kinship', and he 'hoped, too, that it would help his own countrymen to feel that the attainment of sympathetic understanding of American problems and American contributions towards modern progress

[79] Arnold-Lourie, 'Baby Pilgrims, Sturdy Forefathers, and One Hundred Percent Americanism', 60.
[80] Hebel, *Celebrating Ethnicity and Nation*, 259.
[81] Nicholas J. Evans, 'The Making of a Mosaic: Migration and the Port-City of Kingston upon Hull', in Starkey et all, *Hull*, 158.

was necessary if we were to understand each other's finest qualities'.[82] Gathered before Wakefield were the crew of the *Yale* and *Nantucket* as well as 100 'American advertising men' who had journeyed to Britain for an exhibition in Wembley, and whose presence had been eagerly sought by the monument's committee (in the hope they might return home and help convert their brethren to the opportunities offered by Hull's port).[83] Also in attendance was, once again, the American Consul, John Grout, for whom this ceremony was amongst his very last official acts (he was shortly to retire). For Grout, ever effusive in his praise of Hull and its people, the thing which had 'gladdened him had been to work for Anglo-American rapprochement', the implication clearly being that just two years after the disputes of the Washington Naval Conference this was something still very much needed. Grout also read aloud a message from the US Tercentenary Commission who believed that 'the memorial would serve to emphasise further the abiding friendship of the Anglo-American people'.[84]

[INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE]

Such were the speeches accompanying the dedication in July 1924 of the memorial's foundation stone, which in their detail anticipated the rhetoric that followed a year later when the completed memorial was finally unveiled. Once again, the choreography for the 1925 ceremony involved a combined naval presence: two destroyers, the USS *Coghlan* and the USS *Lamson*, represented the Americans, whilst a 'fisheries cruiser' – HMS *Godetia* – flew the flag for Britannia.[85] This was all very reminiscent of the previous year's proceedings, a fact most apparent in the presence of the *Godetia*, also in attendance for the dedication of July 1924.[86] But there was also a notable difference on this occasion, for the now very familiar celebration of Anglo-American affinity was nuanced by another national presence, that of the Dutch, represented by the patrol boat *Triton* and whose commander joined his British and American counterparts in laying a wreath on the monument.

The inclusion of the Dutch made sense. After fleeing from Lincolnshire in 1608 the Pilgrim Fathers had spent eleven years in Leiden, whilst Hull itself had an established trading relationship with Holland similarly going back to the seventeenth century (and beyond). Many travellers to Hull in the eighteenth century even commentated that the town 'looked more Dutch than English'.[87] Inviting the Dutch to the 1925 ceremony also tallied with the same

[82] *Hull Daily Mail*, 1 August 1924, 5.
[83] *Hull Daily Mail*, 23 May 1924, 3; *Hull Daily Mail*, 30 April 1924, 5.
[84] *Hull Daily Mail*, 1 August 1924, 5.
[85] Anglo-American Society of Hull, *The Pilgrim Fathers' Monument, Programme of Unveiling Ceremony at Immingham Creek, Thursday, 17 September 1925*, HHC.
[86] *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 16 September 1925, 6.
[87] David and Susan Neave, 'The Merchant's Golden Age, 1650-1775', in Starkey et al, *Hull*, 90.

racialized world view which had so shaped the Anglo-American rapprochement since the 1890s. For whilst this world view – at root, of an 'Anglo-Saxon' Anglosphere – was certainly exclusionary in form and frame it nonetheless also had sufficient 'flex' to incorporate other peoples where necessary. And the Dutch were one such people, a community not infrequently assimilated into the 'Anglo-Saxon' world by virtue of centuries of North Sea trade, sustained cultural connections (especially Congregationalism, central to the 1920 Tercentenary), as well as the long-established links to North America, links then expressed most obviously by the life and lineage of Theodore Roosevelt, President of the United States from 1901 to 1909, and who had only recently died (in 1919). 'Teddy' – as he was known – had been committed to Anglo-Saxonist thought (as demonstrated by the racial vision he sketches out in his multi-volume history of the American West). But he was also proud of his Dutch ancestry; indeed he firmly believed that the Dutch and the Anglo-Saxon were racially and culturally bound.[88] The ceremony at Immingham, therefore, not unlike the figure of Roosevelt, fused the Anglo-Saxon and Dutch into a single entity joined by history, culture and blood. The various speeches on the day hinted at these ideas, with the already familiar Reverend Patton, the lead orator, purposefully praising the 'gracious invitation' the Pilgrims had 'from the magistracy of Leyden' where they lived and worked 'for eleven peaceful years'.[89]

Even so, the overwhelming theme of the day remained that of *transatlantic* – and especially Anglo-American – unity, something very apparent in the substance of Patton's address: he declared the Pilgrims to be the 'noblest type of our race' who exemplified 'the English spirit of adventure at its best'. Patton even went so far as to claim that the 'Constitution of the United States in its fundamental principles was essentially that drawn up in the Mayflower cabin'.[90] This apparent inconsistency – inviting the Dutch and then rather ignoring them – should be understood within the context of post-1918 Anglo-Dutch relations. This was an era in which trans-North Sea disputes linked to wartime Dutch neutrality and, later, the decision of the government in The Hauge to grant asylum to Kaiser Wilhelm ensured that interwar Anglo-Dutch relations were 'cordial, if distant'.[91] It was also an expression of

[88] H.A. Tulloch, 'Theodore Roosevelt and His English Correspondents: The Intellectual Roots of the Anglo-American Alliance', *Mid-America* 53:1 (1971), 12-34. For Roosevelt in American memory, see Michael Cullinane, *Theodore Roosevelt's Ghost: The History and Memory of an American Icon* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2017).
[89] Anglo-American Society of Hull, *Memorial to the Pilgrim Fathers at Immingham Creek*, reprinted from the Hull and East Riding Congregational Magazine, Oct. 1925, 6, HHC.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Nigel J. Ashton and Duco Hellema, 'Anglo-Dutch Relations and the Kaiser Question 1918-1920' in Nigel J. Ashton and Duco Hellema, *Unspoken Allies: Anglo-Dutch Relations since 1780*, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2001), 96.

contemporary geo-political realities: for those Britons involved, the Anglo-American relationship simply mattered more (in economic, political and military terms) than did the Anglo-Dutch relationship, and so the former was privileged accordingly in the commemorative rhetoric and ceremony.

The 1925 dedication also made public another recurrent exclusion. For the frequently invoked Anglo-Saxonist discourse was not only racial in tone and tenor, it was also implicitly – and frequently explicitly – gendered.[92] This was a point noted with annoyance by *The Vote*, the periodical of women's suffrage. In an issue published shortly after the dedication ceremony one of its writers even asked a deliberately pointed question: 'But why did no one mention the Pilgrim Mothers?' They continued: 'The Pilgrim Fathers did no go alone to America, and the women of the two countries have as much concern and the men in the links of friendship which bind Great Britain and America in a friendship which we all keenly desire to be everlasting'. A historical corrective followed explaining the trials endured by 'wives, daughters and maidservants' before the article concluded with a censure: 'we think it inexcusable on the part of the men who were at the unveiling of the Memorial on the Humber last week to forget to acknowledge the part which the Pilgrim Mothers played in the cause of religious liberty'.[93] This exclusion had not always been so apparent. A year previous, a 'Ladies Committee of the Anglo-American Association'[94] played a key role in helping to raise the funds necessary to enable the first order of business – the laying of a foundation stone – and as a result the Pilgrim Mothers did in fact get a mention in the July 1924 ceremony: Wakefield had admitted that it was 'essential to remember that the wives and the children of those men [the Pilgrims] were with them at Killingholme Creek and also shared their tribulations on board the Mayflower and the terrible hardships of their first winter on American land'.[95] But even such a passing (and patronising) aside was absent at the 1925 dedication, a clear consequence of the domineering power exerted by a municipal elite overwhelmingly male in composition (and in this it was of course indicative of the gendered dynamics of power at the national level, even despite the recent extension of the franchise). This exclusion was also aided by the fact that women's political power and commemorative agency were noticeably less visible than the year before: Margaret Wintringham, a key figure at the 1924 events and an active campaigner for an equal

[92] For a discussion of such gendered political discourse, see Marilyn Lake, 'The Gendered and Racialised Self who Claimed the Right to Self-Government', *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 13:1 (Spring 2012).
[93] *The Vote*, 25 September 1925, 307. The editors of *The Vote* were central to a Tercentenary commemoration of the Pilgrim Mothers held at Hampstead Heath. See http://humanities-research.exeter.ac.uk/voyagingthroughhistory/items/show/48 Accessed: 1/4/21.
[94] *Hull Daily Mail*, 24 June 1924, 7.
[95] *Hull Daily Mail*, 1 August 1924, 5.

franchise and for equal pay, was this time absent having recently lost her Louth seat to the Conservative Arthur Heneage.[96]

[INSERT FIGURE 2 HERE]

The monument dedicated that cool September day and which stood at the centre of all these exclusions and appropriations was impressive in scale. At twenty feet in height it certainly commanded attention, for it was intended to be seen 'by all vessels navigating the Humber'.[97] In construction, it was the work of a well-known Hull builder – Edwin Quibell – who used local stone for the base and pillar, atop of which sat 'a piece of grey granite brought from the identical spot at Plymouth Rock, upon which the Pilgrim Fathers landed'.[98] This latter stone was a gift of American benefactors in Massachusetts, and for some contemporaries the fine details thus appear to have been lost in translation, with the idea later emerging that the capstone was in fact hewn from Plymouth Rock itself. It was not; rather, it was part of the first protective canopy established *over* Plymouth Rock in the 1860s, and which was replaced in 1920.[99] Regardless, for the Anglo-American Society of Hull the key thing was that the memorial and its granite capstone firmly anchored Immingham into the world of the Pilgrim Fathers thereby ensuring – hopefully – that the historical neglect of previous years might at last be corrected.

Conclusions: A local history of Anglo-American relations

In the years that followed monument's dedication it continued to draw occasional interest, most notably in 1928 when it was the destination of a grand 'pilgrimage' from Hull connected to a 'historical pageant play' named 'The Mayflower' then showing in the city.[100] But over time such interest declined and the monument's fortunes faded. It was not until the next global war that it again drew significant local attention, a fact very much connected once again to an American military presence: an RAF airfield at Goxhill – just ten miles from Immingham – was given to the United States Army Air Force in 1942 and Americans, some of whom visited the Immingham memorial, were based there until the war's end (one small group was also posted to Immingham itself).[101] Some American servicemen also remained stationed in the

[96] Wintringham, Margaret, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-50055?rskey=0Aqup9&result=2 Accessed: 18/3/21.
[97] *Hull Daily Mail*, 13 June 1930, 6.
[98] *Hull Daily Mail*, 23 May 1924, 3.
[99] *Hull Daily Mail*, 17 January 1941, 4.
[100] *Hull Daily Mail*, 20 January 1928, 5.
[101] Patrick Otter, *Lincolnshire Airfields in the Second World War* (Newbury: Countryside Books, 2014), 123-128.

region into the 1950s, a fact which led one local writer to produce a small volume titled *Lincolnshire Links with the USA* (1956) in order to cultivate a 'better understanding of our common history' and to 'cement a further friendship between them [locally based American airmen] and Lincolnshire people'.[102] The author, a sub-dean at Lincoln Cathedral, recounted the connection between the Pilgrims and the 'creek near the port at Immingham', and he also included a depiction of the 1925 monument.[103] But there is little evidence his efforts drew to the Humber large numbers of American service-personnel and as the years passed the monument became increasingly forlorn, subject to the wind and rain that blows in from the North Sea. This relative neglect became especially apparent by the 1960s as the on-going expansion of the Immingham dock facilities encroached upon the 'holy ground' of the monument. The result – following some debate – was that the monument was relocated in 1970 to a new site further inland and immediately adjacent to Immingham's fifteenth-century church, within which had long hung a 'Stars and Stripes given by American sailors who were at Immingham Dock in the First World War'.[104] The monument stands on this site still today, the central feature of the village's 'Pilgrim Park' (nearby, a small community museum explains some of the history behind the connection).[105]

[INSERT FIGURE 3 HERE]

The 'heyday' for both local and transatlantic interest in the Humber's connection to the Pilgrim Fathers thus remains the immediate post-1918 period, an era in which various factors combined to make commemorating the events of 1608 attractive. First came the matter of the historical record. For whilst the details were sketchy, the Pilgrim Fathers *had* fled from somewhere on the Humber in 1608, and they *had* gone on to establish (eventually) the famed colony of Massachusetts. On the Humber, therefore, the celebration of a transatlantic Anglosphere had a certain organic quality, particularly given the politics (democracy) and religion (Protestantism) just then identified as the great gift to the world of 'Anglo-Saxon' peoples and now tied by commemoration to the Pilgrim Fathers. Geography mattered too, though. For Americans had – rather conveniently – returned to the Humber only very recently: the US Navy was based at Killingholme within sight of the Creek identified as the point of the Pilgrim's departure. Still more Americans had come when the war was done, sixteen of whom had tragically fallen to their deaths over the river in the summer of 1921 when Airship R38

[102] A.M. Cook, *Lincolnshire Links with the USA* (Lincoln: The Subdeanery, 1956), v.
[103] Ibid, 25.
[104] Arthur Mee, *The King's England: Lincolnshire* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1949).
[105] See http://www.imminghammuseum.org/?page_id=227 Accessed: 18/3/21. For details about the 1970 re-dedication, see *Immingham and the Pilgrim Fathers: Mayflower 70 Year*.

exploded into a ball of fire. At Immingham, then, History and Geography, time and space, were mutually reinforcing, with the significance of a distant and place-specific Anglo-American connection re-energised by contemporary events. And then there were the details of contemporary transatlantic politics and their implications for the local economy. For when it came to Anglo-American relations the major issue of the day concerned the question of naval power and parity, a subject which understandably drew attention in Hull, Britain's third major port and a city only very recently made aware of its vulnerability to naval attack. Moreover, if the good folk of Hull – just then developing their civic consciousness – were keen to use commemoration to help ease contemporary Anglo-American naval tensions, they were equally keen to seek more immediate, tangible, benefits for their port and community, especially given the tensions and occasional social unrest of the moment. After all, in an age when wealthy American tourists were known to be enthusiastically interested in the sites and shrines linking the Great Republic to the 'old country', how better to ensure that at least some of them journeyed to the Humber than by providing a suitable destination? Even better if amongst their number were the merchants, manufacturers and bankers who might be well-placed to assist in the city's post-war economic recovery.

This was the local, national, and transatlantic context shaping the monument dedicated at Killingholme Creek on 17 September 1925. Understanding the details of the monument's origins and realisation furthers our understanding of the interplay between the local and the global in post-1918 Anglo-American relations. It demonstrates that the business of Anglo-American diplomacy was not just something undertaken at Whitehall or in Westminster, and it complicates – usefully – our understanding of the transatlantic relationship in the 1920s. At the level of 'high diplomacy' this was most certainly an era of tension replete with all the arguments and disputes one might expect given the profound shifts in the transatlantic balance of power then underway. But elsewhere in Britain local and provincial diplomatic actors, eager to assist in diffusing and de-centring these tensions, cultivated historical memory and put it to the service of the moment. In an important sense, therefore, this is the history which the monument at Immingham – ostensibly dedicated to the Pilgrims' flight of 1608 – actually records. It is a marker in granite of that transitionary moment when the Anglo-American alliance of 1917-18 had faded, but before the 'special relationship' of the 1940s had been forged. And it signposts the efforts of local elites on the North Sea coast to help realise the grand project of the age: an English-speaking global order guaranteeing peace and prosperity for all time.