

AROUND KEYNSHAM & SALTFORD PAST AND PRESENT



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SPECIAL CENTENNIAL EDITION

Aspects of WW1 - Part 1.

AROUND
KEYNSHAM & SALT FORD
PAST & PRESENT
SPECIAL CENTENNIAL EDITION

Aspects of the First World War in Keynsham & Salford
in two parts.

Part 1

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Journal Production; Brian Vowles.

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Cover illustration;

N.C.O's of "C" Company 4th Somerset Light Infantry en route for India in 1914.

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NOTES FROM THE CHAIRMAN

'.....I believe.....that we shall be supported by the determination, the resolution, the courage and the endurance of the whole country.'

Thus spoke Sir Edward Grey, the British Foreign Secretary, addressing the House of Commons on the afternoon of Monday 3 August 1914, the very eve of the start of the First World War.

As he was speaking on that Bank Holiday afternoon, life in the communities of Keynsham and Saltford was going on as normal and many people were visiting the Keynsham Flower Show, although the event coincided with stormy weather. A few days earlier those attending Saltford Regatta experienced strong winds and threatening rain. Was the weather a portent of things to come?

On the morning of Tuesday 4 August it was reported that German troops had crossed the Belgian border in force. The British Government issued an ultimatum to Germany for the troops to be withdrawn immediately. No withdrawal was made and that same evening the Admiralty sent a signal to all ships in the Royal Navy *'Commence hostilities at once with Germany'*. The First World War had begun.

So how determined, resolute, courageous and enduring did the communities of Keynsham and Saltford become, in the face of such an enormous challenge?

Young men in particular - volunteers at first, but later (from 1916) conscripts - were of course tested severely. Taken from their normal occupations in huge numbers they were sent overseas to war zones from which many did not return. The memorials that still stand today serve as reminders to us of the sacrifices they made.

But as the war continued, its effects spread to the population in general - there was the fear of German air raids - not so much in Keynsham and Saltford - more in the south-east of the country. But in nearby Bath, which had an air raid warning system comprising steam hooters and fluctuating electric lights, there was chaos for two hours one day in 1916 when the system was actuated, - until everyone realised it was a false alarm! Previously Bathonians had been issued with leaflets, advising them what to do in the event of an air raid.

There were all types of shortages; many thousands of horses were requisitioned by the army, causing problems for farmers, hauliers and other businesses that had previously relied heavily on such animals. Even so, the army could not get enough, and mules were imported to help meet the shortfall. Some were brought to Keynsham and were found to be carrying a potentially deadly disease.

German U-boats sank increasing numbers of merchant ships bound for Britain with food supplies, leading to fears of shortages and perhaps even starvation.

Refugees came from Belgium to Keynsham. The town's first charity shop was set up. Women found employment in occupations normally reserved for men, but the new jobs were often described as 'only for the duration' (i.e of the war). It was accepted that men would take over again once they had been demobilised.

But one change was irreversible. The pre-1914 campaign 'Votes for Women', although suspended in deference to maintaining a united home front during the war, came partly to fruition in 1918 with the suffrage being extended to include many women over the age of thirty, enabling them to vote for the first time in the general election held in December that year.

Brian Vowles, with help from other History Society members has carried out extensive research into various aspects of the First World War's impact on our local communities and the results are published here in two parts - 'LEST WE FORGET'.

Dennis Hill

“Your battle wounds are scars upon my heart”
Vera Brittain (mother of Shirley Williams) in a poem to her beloved brother four days before he died in June 1918.

Flanders Field

In Flanders Field the poppies blow
between the crosses, row on row
That mark our place; and in the sky
the larks, still bravely singing, fly
scarce heard amid the guns below.
by John McCrae



Memorial to Frank Rayson, killed in the battle of Passchendaele. His body was never found but he is commemorated on the Memorial to the Missing at the Tyne Cot Military Cemetery, north of Ypres

The Recruitment of Volunteers 1914-15

By Brian Vowles

Britain declared war on Germany on 4 August 1914, following an "unsatisfactory reply" to the British ultimatum that Belgium must be kept neutral. During the first three days following the declaration the streets of Keynsham were jammed as an almost continuous convoy passed through with children waving to the departing troops, both regulars and reservists, on their way from Salisbury Plain to Avonmouth en route for France. Although many were carried in trucks, at times some formations would march through the town and were even billeted in local homes. An officer would knock on the door and if there was a spare room the occupant would be told (not asked) to take one or two men.

BRITONS



JOIN YOUR COUNTRY'S ARMY!
GOD SAVE THE KING

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G.  R.

NOTICE

EX-NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS

URGENTLY WANTED

LORD KITCHENER appeals to ex-non-commissioned officers of any branch of His Majesty's Forces to assist him now by re-enlisting at once for the duration of the War. Such men are chiefly wanted as Instructors for the new units now being formed, and will be promoted immediately after enlistment, ex-Regulars being given the rank they formerly held, and all others the rank of Corporal, with further promotion if found suitable.

AGE LIMIT—If accepted as Warrant Officer or as N.C.O. above the rank of Sergeant: 50 Years.
In other cases: 45 Years.

NOTE—A Pensioner re-enlisting during the present time of National Emergency will be allowed to draw his pension in addition to his pay.

Apply at any Recruiting Office for a Leaflet giving further particulars or for Enlistment.

GOD SAVE THE KING.

1914 Recruitment posters

Realising that the small British regular army would not prevail against the huge force of Germany, Lord Kitchener

made his first appeal for 100,000 volunteers three days later - thereby unleashing a great wave of patriotism that spread throughout the land.

The townsfolk of Keynsham could not fail to be infected by this fervour and so on 5 September, an excited crowd flocked to the Drill Hall on Bath Hill to a meeting arranged to drum up recruitment.



The Drill Hall,
Keynsham today

On 7 September the Western Daily Press reported the proceedings that had taken place at the meeting... *“The hall was crowded to excess, and great enthusiasm prevailed. Patriotic airs and songs were rendered by the Keynsham Town Band, and the assembly joined in heartily in the singing. Mrs. McVitie rendered ‘Land of Hope and Glory’, the chorus of which was sung with fervour”*. All the local worthies, including the sitting MP, Mr J King, the town councillors, churchmen and other persons of importance, took to the platform and the Chairman, Mr. H. Graham Bush, opened with... *“The meeting was held upon an historic and unparalleled occasion and the circumstances were such to attract the attention of every man, woman, and child of the British Empire. The German Emperor was determined to go to war and the reason England was in arms against Germany was because she was a nation of honourable men. (Applause.) England was a nation of warriors not of shopkeepers and she was going to win the fight. In conclusion, he said so capable was our Navy that English people could sleep happily in their beds without fear. (Cheers).* (The Welsh, Irish and Scots were to be excluded from these endeavours it would appear!)

Mr. Joseph King, who was greeted with cheers, said...A great change had come over the land affecting all, from the King, God bless him, - (Cheers) - on his throne, to the beggar child. The King was at war with his relations, and what must the coming battle mean to him and to every man, woman, and child? Only young men could enlist, but by sacrifice and in other ways all could help the King and country...The war would decide whether British civilisation would lead the world or Prussian bureaucracy and militarism, and whether the British Empire should be lowered to a second place in the world...Napoleon said that in war moral forces counted for three quarters and other forces for one quarter. This modern Napoleon, made in Germany, would learn this too - (cheers) - His force of a million men might cruelly devastate Belgium and humiliate France but the moral strength of Britain and her Allies would prevail. The rally to the call of King and country was magnificent and Somerset would give her best. Young men must offer themselves wholly and freely.

Col. Skrine made a strong appeal to the young men of the nation to give themselves for the honour and glory of the British nation. Mr. Hawkes said he had been sent by Mr. J.W.Lewis, the prospective Unionist candidate for the division, who had just rejoined the colours. (Loud cheers.) He appealed to the young men to join the army, as a duty to themselves, their manhood, and their King and country. (Colonel Skrine had commanded the Local Volunteers but was to die in the following March)

Captain Bunting also spoke and asked for fifteen recruits to complete the Keynsham Company of the Somerset Regiment. The recruits quickly came forward, and were greeted with enthusiastic cheers”.

The names of these volunteers were not recorded so we have no way of learning their fate but sadly it would not be long before the first deaths were being reported.

Although nationally thousands responded to Kitchener's appeal, it was still not enough to satisfy the butcher's bill and another meeting, demonising the enemy and far more jingoistic in tone, was called on 8 March 1915 - again at the Bath Hill Drill Hall with the Rev. D Hatchard MA presiding. The Chairman went on to state that 100 men from Keynsham had enlisted and they hoped that the number would be increased as a result of that meeting. He stated that... *"One great nation endeavoured to establish world domination over all other nations by crushing them. That nation was guilty of murdering of innocent victims, both men and women and even children. That nation had uttered impudent threats and in all seriousness called a blockade of our coasts. But they needed to remember that Germany had stated that her greatest enemy was England and her intentions from her systems of over-running the country with spies, was to crush this country, and make this Kingdom a province of the German Empire. It was to try and stir them to do their utmost that that meeting was held"*.

Mr Herbert Nield KC, MP said he was there as an illustration of the miscalculation of Germany of the opposing parties in Great Britain. *"It was clear that the response to the appeal had been very great... They knew what Germany or Prussia had done in Belgium and Luxembourg, and an undying glory must ever remain with King Albert, that brilliant young monarch who at the head of his troops put up such a gallant and heroic defence. They could not think without tears, and indignation of the heroic deeds of early August and September last. He had read of the indiscriminate shooting of clergymen and priests at Dixmunde who had dared to attempt to stay the onslaught of the Huns. It was to avenge the deaths of heroes*

that they asked more to join the Army and so strengthen the line that was greater than the annals of history”.

Mr J. Mactavish said... “a nation derived courage and inspiration from its dead heroes. Capt. Scott and Oates drew from the memory of our country’s heroes the inspiration that enabled them to die as British heroes and English gentlemen... Our men at the front were proving it. The fields of the continent were being fertilised by English soldiers, the sons of Britain’s folk, who were heroes as well as Capt. Scott, for they too, of their free will, had sacrificed their lives to testify to the greatness of the English heart. He appealed to the young manhood of Keynsham to prove to the world that while we loved peace and hated war, yet now the dogs of war were loose, their courage was being challenged: new democracy was being tested and imperilled: they too, would prove to the world that they would fight and win in war as their forefathers fought and won”. (Applause)

It is not recorded how many recruits this rhetoric produced this time or how the young men viewed the prospect of fertilising the fields of the continent!

Incidentally, Keynsham’s MP, Joseph King was absent from this meeting apologising as his wife was ill. However, in 1916 he destroyed his own reputation when he was fined £100 and 25 guineas costs for having conveyed to a friend in New York information as to the destruction of British ammunition at the front in France. His account is said to have been greatly exaggerated, but the chief point made against him was that, until the substance of his letter was published in an American newspaper, the Germans had not referred to the matter, and perhaps knew nothing about it. He carried on as MP until 1918 when he defected to the Labour Party.

The Fate of the Local Men

By Peter John

In the aftermath of what was then referred to as "The Great War" (sometimes with the addition of "for Civilisation") our local communities made several formal records of those who had left to serve and, *"by the fortunes of war"*, never returned. The parish churches in both Keynsham and Saltford erected plaques in memory of their respective parishioners, and Victoria Methodist Church in Keynsham commissioned their own tablet *"in honour of those connected with this church and in memory of the fallen"*. Keynsham UDC also commissioned a civic book of remembrance to the men of both communities who had fallen: the names recorded there were later displayed on the memorial plaque erected at the entrance to the Park in Keynsham. Almost a century later these memorials are still decorated with symbolic poppies on Remembrance Sunday each November. What is not immediately apparent from these memorials is how far afield were the theatres of war where local men fought and died.

In researching this article a number of other names have been discovered of men whose origins were apparently local, but who do not appear on surviving local memorials and the author would welcome any information on these men and their families, particularly if there is any indication as to why they were not included on any local memorial. Information on any other local memorials which may have been lost would also be gratefully received.

"Regulars"

The men who were affected most immediately by the developing European crisis at the end of July and first days of August 1914 were those who were already serving in the forces, or who still had commitments as "reservists", i.e. having been discharged after regular service within the last four years.

All these were immediately mobilised as army and navy went on to war footing, the reservists being ordered by telegram to report to regimental depots or home ports.

Locally, "Regulars" included Captain Hubert Hobbs (Saltford) of the Welsh Regiment, Privates Victor Price and Frank Rayson of the Glosters, and three sons of the Goddard family who kept the "Jolly Sailor" in Saltford (Sidney and William serving in the Navy, and Maurice in the Marines). By mid-August 1914 all these were on active service abroad, the majority with the British Expeditionary Force in Flanders (forever remembered as the "Old Contemptibles").

By the end of October the community had experienced its first losses, Midshipman Macfarlane having been drowned when HMS "Hawke" was torpedoed in the North Sea, and Pte. Beck of the 1st Glosters, killed in the opening attacks of the First Battle of Ypres.

Territorials

Other local men were also already serving, but as part-time soldiers with the Territorial Army, the local units being the North Somerset Yeomanry (cavalry) and the 4th Battalion of the Somerset Light Infantry. The TF had been set up in 1908 for purposes of home and Imperial defence, to enable units of the Regular Army engaged in peacetime garrison duties at home and abroad to be replaced by Territorial units, and thus freed up for their primary task of providing trained soldiers for any campaign overseas.

The North Somerset Yeomanry were already trained and up to full strength in 1914. Thus prepared they were paraded in September and invited to volunteer for active service "at the Front": sufficient having stepped forward they were hastily shipped across the Channel in October. By this time the badly-mauled BEF were desperately hanging on around Ypres in Belgium, where they were supported by

piecemeal Territorial reinforcements and other Regular units withdrawn from imperial service. There they fought themselves and the attacking Germans to a standstill by the latter part of November. Amongst the defending force had been 200 men of the NSY, of whom 64 had become casualties during their three days in the firing line. Of these, 22 including Pte. George Richardson had been killed.

The 4th Somersets' fate was to be different: less immediately available for front-line service their volunteers were sent to India, initially as garrison troops (available to "*aid the civil power*" should the need arise), but by 1916, now re-designated 1/4th (read this as "First Fourth": another battalion, 2/4th, the "Second Fourth", had meanwhile been raised back in UK based on the same local premises and organisation) they had been drafted to Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq) to join "Indian Expeditionary Force D", which had since early 1915 been preparing to take on the Turkish Army and advance to Baghdad. The force had advanced slowly up the River Tigris, but had become besieged by the Turks in the ancient city of Kut-el-Amara. 1/4th Somersets formed part of the force assembled and sent from India to relieve the garrison of Kut, an attempt which failed when Kut was starved into surrender in May 1916. The IEF D fought on in "Mespot", and duly captured Baghdad in 1917, but by then the campaign had claimed the lives of seven local soldiers, including 20 year-old Pte A Rayson of the Hampshire Regiment, who are now commemorated in Iraq, as well as Petty Officer Bray RN, who died in Turkish captivity having been captured at Kut. 2/4th Somersets were also sent initially to India (where Ptes. Carpenter and Tipney died), before moving to the Middle East and later to the Western Front.

Volunteers and Conscripts

At the outbreak of war Lord Kitchener, then Britain's best-known serving soldier, had been appointed Secretary of State for War. Perhaps alone amongst his colleagues in government Kitchener foresaw that the war would be long and costly (the prevailing attitude amongst popular opinion was that "*it would all be over by Christmas*") and as early as 7 August issued his first appeal for a hundred thousand men to come forward and volunteer for active service. Bearing in mind that the whole of the Regular Army in 1914 only numbered 250,000, reservists included, this signified expansion on a massive scale, but this was only the beginning. By the end of 1914 Kitchener had called for a total of half a million recruits: as the flow of volunteers dried up and casualties began to mount it was becoming clear that "voluntarism" would not be sufficient, and by degrees the country moved inexorably to the introduction of conscription by the Military Service Acts of 1916.

The volunteers of "Kitchener's Army" were recruited by local campaigns, public meetings, and newspapers: apart from a few with specialist skills (e.g. drivers, much sought-after by the Army Service Corps) men tended to join their local unit; hence the large number of Somersets (14) amongst the local casualties. By 1916, and the implementation of conscription, men would be called up in their turn and sent to whichever training depot had places available at the time. Another factor which increased the variety of units in which men served was the practice by 1917, of drafting men returning after sickness or wounding to Infantry Base Depots where they would undergo vigorous refresher training before being sent amongst drafts of reinforcements to any front-line unit needing to be brought back to strength. Before this, the returning recovered were more likely to be sent back to their original unit.

With the departure to the Continent of the BEF the regimental depots faced simultaneous crises of scarcity and over-provision - in the first months the flow of volunteers was almost overwhelming, particularly in view of the severe shortage of officers and trainers, most of the Regulars having ensured, by various means authorised and otherwise, that they had been included in the Expeditionary Force "*so as not miss the excitement*". By such expedients as promising re-joining former regular soldiers immediate promotion to sergeant, and utilising as many retired officers as could be persuaded to serve despite in many cases their lack of knowledge of current weaponry, tactics and even drill, the men of Kitchener's First New Army (i.e. those recruited in response to his first appeal for a hundred thousand) were formed into trained and serviceable units by mid-1915. Their first taste of action was as violent as their Territorial predecessors of 1914 experienced, as they went almost straight into the front line at Loos in September (where Capt. Hobbs of Saltford was killed).

For the greater part of the men of the New Armies, however, their introduction to active service was more gradual, novice units being given brief introductory periods initially in quieter parts of the front line (by the end of 1914 the Western Front had assumed the form of a continuous and elaborate system of trenches from which Allies and Germans faced each other over a length of some 500 miles from the North Sea to the Swiss frontier) and allowed to become accustomed to the semi-troglodyte conditions. By early 1916 the British Army had assumed responsibility for the line between Ypres and the coalfields of Loos, but after the Germans launched their fierce assaults on the French forces around Verdun in February the British relieved some pressure on their allies by taking over the next sectors, as far south as the River Somme.

The Battle of the Somme

A joint Anglo-French offensive on the Somme had been intended, but as the hard-pressed French were becoming less able to find resources the British contribution was increased. The plan was for a simultaneous attack over an eighteen-mile front, preceded by a sustained artillery bombardment of unprecedented intensity. Part of the attack was intended to be diversionary, to prevent the defenders concentrating their reinforcements in the area of the planned main thrust. By this means it was hoped that the line of continuous defences could at last be breached so that the cavalry and fresh infantry could burst through and pursue a fleeing enemy. However, insufficient attention had been given to the nature of the ground and the German defences or to the resources available to the attackers. The Germans had first taken up positions in this sector in late 1914, since which time they had constructed a formidable system of defences, secured by extensive dugouts and tunnels excavated deep in the chalk and thus virtually proof against all but the heaviest artillery. On the surface the trenches had been carefully sited to give excellent fields of fire, and were protected in front by wide belts of dense barbed wire. Machine-gun teams were trained to keep safely under cover in their deep shelters until the bombardment ceased, then race to the surface and set up their guns in pre-arranged positions. The attackers' artillery bombardment had been intended to destroy the protective wire, and it was anticipated that the defenders would have been so traumatised by the bombardment that they would be unable to make any effective response: so little fire from the defenders was anticipated that the assaulting troops were forbidden to advance at anything beyond a steady walk.

When the whistles for the assault eventually blew in the British lines at 7.30am on 1 July 1916 the troops climbed out of their trenches to face a withering fire, signalling the opening of the costliest day in British military history, when almost

60,000 men became casualties. Amongst them, taking part in the northern diversionary attack, were 1st Somersets, whose casualties that day included Pte. Shortman of Dapps Hill. The attacks on the Somme continued until finally closed down by the weather and all-embracing mud in mid-November, by which time 10 more local men had been killed.

The Western Front 1917-18

Over the winter of 1916-17 the Germans improved their situation by constructing the Hindenburg Line, an even more formidable defensive system some distance behind the devastated Somme battlefield. While the battles of Arras (April-May, local losses including Pte. Donald Stokes of Beech House, Keynsham, serving with the 12th Battalion Gloucesters "Bristol's Own"), and Cambrai (November, when L.Sgt. Woodward, 7th Somersets was killed) included attacks on part of this system, there was to be no major assault against it until 1918 as the major British effort of 1917 was to be an attempt to break out of what had become known as the Ypres Salient.

Despite the experiences of 1916 this was intended as a massive attack against well-established defences, and across badly-drained ground. The attack opened, with success, on 31 July, but the rain started the following day (this proved to be the wettest summer of the war) and conditions underfoot deteriorated, from difficult in early August to impossible by the time the offensive finally ground to a halt in November with the capture of what had once been the village of Passchendaele. These battles claimed 11 more local lives, a rate of loss exceeded only by the titanic struggles of 1918, when the Germans launched their final offensives between March and May, then succumbed to the sustained attacks of the Allies between August and November. The Western Front in 1918 cost 13 local lives.

Further afield and at home

Apart from the campaign in Mesopotamia, local men also fell in fighting the Turks on land at Gallipoli (Pte. Joyner (Royal Marines) and Capt. Rogers of Willsbridge (Dublin Fusiliers), and in Palestine (Sgt. Andrews (Dorsets); and Trooper Lock (New Zealand Forces). Pte. Tarr (RASC) succumbed to the influenza pandemic in 1919 while still serving in Egypt, which had been the supply base for the Palestine campaign. Other local men who fell in far-flung places were Ptes. Bowring RASC, of Rock Road (South Africa) and Maurice Goddard Royal Marines (Singapore). The Goddard family, of the "Jolly Sailor", Saltford, also lost two sons at sea (Stoker 1st Class Sidney of HMS "Larkspur" accidentally drowned in Glasgow, and Ldg. Seaman William who was killed aboard the destroyer HMS Spitfire during the Battle of Jutland).

In local cemeteries are laid the remains of five further servicemen who died in UK, and whose families had asked that their bodies be returned for burial - in St. Mary's, Saltford the above Stoker Goddard RN, and Pte. Mitchell (Wiltshires: died of wounds in a military hospital); and in Keynsham Town Cemetery Ptes. Cattle, (Wiltshires: struck by lightning during training) and Headington (Royal Engineers: died of meningitis while at home on leave), as well as Flt.-Lieut. Bush (Royal Naval Air Service), who died off Goodwick, Pembs. in a flying accident.



Flt.-Lieut. Eldon Bush

Official memorials and the War Graves Commission

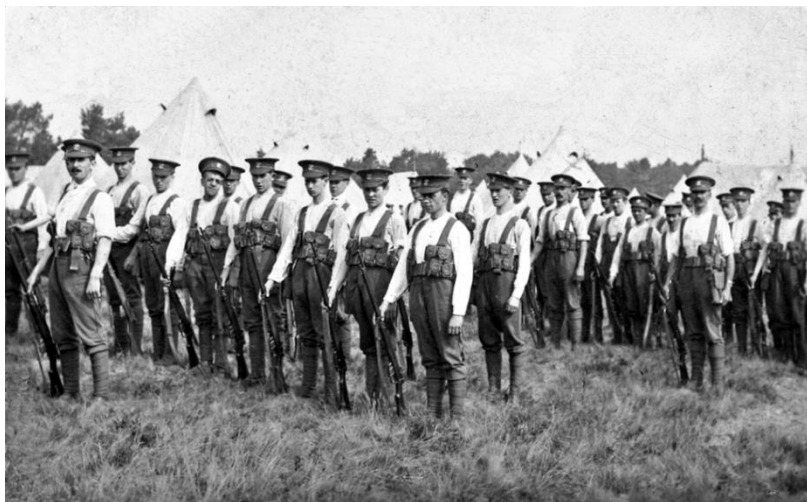
During the war it had already been decided that bodies would not be repatriated for burial at home, but would be buried "in the field" for later official commemoration. Recording of battlefield burials was initially the task of Graves Registration units, but by 1917 the Imperial (now Commonwealth) War Graves Commission had been established, with the task of providing permanent memorials. In the years after the Armistice the temporary battlefield cemeteries were transformed into the enduring, dignified sites now found all over the world, where burials are marked with uniform gravestones of standard design. Despite the efforts made during the war and much-exacerbated by many wartime cemeteries having themselves been fought over during the massive German offensives of 1918, there were not identifiable burials for a high proportion of the casualties. The names of these men were to be inscribed on a series of memorials, some of which were incorporated into the CWGC cemeteries (e.g. at Tyne Cot, near Passchendaele), but others were erected in places associated with the most protracted fighting [e.g. the Somme and Arras]. There were specific memorials for naval casualties lost at sea (e.g. at Plymouth and Chatham), and at Arras for airmen whose bodies were not recovered. It is worth reiterating that one of the moving forces in the IWGC was John Scott Parker of Upton Cheney (*see the article on John Scott Parker in part 2*).

The Keynsham Volunteers

By Brian Vowles

Keynsham had always had very enthusiastic volunteers eager to earn their beer money by joining the militia. These were later incorporated into the 1st Volunteer Battalion of the Somerset Light Infantry. In 1908 it became the 4th Battalion, a territorial unit which although based at Bath had units recruited

from Whitchurch, Bitton and of course Keynsham. Training was done mainly at the Drill Hall on Bath Hill and comprised of drill, marksmanship and skirmishing. Following the assassination of Arch Duke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914, a month later, on 28 July, the Austro-Hungarians fired the first shots in preparation for the invasion of Serbia. Against the background of rising tension the Keynsham units



The Keynsham Terriers taken at Salisbury in 1913 (4th Battalion Somerset Light Infantry)

prepared to go to camp at Bulford on Salisbury Plain and the Western Daily Press, on Monday July 20, 1914 carried the following orders...

"C" Company, 4th Batt. Somerset L.I. Orders, Monday
– Whitchurch 7.30p.m. recruit drill. Tuesday – Keynsham 8p.m. recruit drill. Wednesday – Keynsham 8 p.m. recruit drill. Thursday – Bitton 8 p.m. section drill. Friday – Keynsham 8 p.m. recruit drill, Whitchurch 7.30 p.m. recruit drill.

Orders for Camp Advance party: Corpl. Godfrey and Pte. Williams will proceed with the transport by road to Bath,

arriving at 7.30 a.m. on 21st inst to entrain for Bulford. Pte. James will leave Keynsham by the 8.25 a.m. on 21st inst arriving at Bath at 8.43 a.m. where he will join the main body of the main party.

Bitton section will parade at Bitton at 3 p.m. and proceed by break to Keynsham and join them at the Railway Station. Whitchurch section parade at Whitchurch, at 3 p.m. and proceed by break to Keynsham and join the Keynsham half company.



Keynsham soldiers 'brewing up' on the beach in Dorset

Dress for all ranks marching order, filled water bottles, haversack rations. Bed will not be taken to camp. Each N.C.O. and man will take the following articles to camp: - Great coat, khaki clothing, puttees, arms and equipment, two pairs of boots, knife fork and spoon complete. No one below the rank of Colour-sergeant will be permitted to take a box. All kit-bags to be labelled showing the man's name and company.

*Signed R.Moger Captain, commanding "C" Company,
4th S.L.I. Keynsham, July 17, 1914.*

When Britain declared war on 4 August the 1/4th Battalion Somerset Light Infantry of the Territorial Army was mustered at Lower Bristol Road, Bath as part of the South-Western Brigade of the Wessex Division. Then on 9 October after further training they sailed from Southampton landing at Bombay (Mumbai) a month later.



N.C.O.'s of "C" Company 4th Somerset Light Infantry en route for India-1914. Lance-corporal Ollis was probably one of these.

On 26 February 1916, after being stationed there for over a year, they were hurriedly sent to Mesopotamia as part of the 37th Indian Brigade of the 3rd Indian Division to try to relieve a British and Indian force that had been surrounded by the Turks at Kut. Landing at Basra, unfortunately they were beaten back and their fellow starving besieged soldiers were forced to surrender.

The subsequent treatment of the prisoners was so callous that as they were marched into captivity across the

Syrian Desert thousands died in spite of efforts by the British Government to ransom them. However the 1/4th then remained in Mesopotamia for the rest of the war successfully protecting the oil wells upon which the British relied to keep their fleet afloat. A number of Keynsham men died in this campaign.

Amongst them were Ptes. Willcox (died 19 April 1916 and buried at Amara) and Ethel (died 29 September 1916 and buried at Basra).

Not all deaths were as the result of battle with disease causing as many casualties as gunfire.

In August 1916 came the news... *"The death is announced of Lance Corporal J A W Ollis of the Somerset Light Infantry who died of fever in Mesopotamia on July 28. He was the eldest son of the late Mr A P H Ollis and Mrs Ollis, Temple Street, Keynsham. He was in the locomotive Department of the Great Western Railway. On the outbreak of war he joined the regiment named, and was sent to India on August 29 1914 where he did his training, and was then drafted to Mesopotamia in August 1915. The sad news of his death is keenly felt by his mother, sisters, and relatives, also the residents of the village who knew him from his boyhood. He was loved and respected by all"*.



Lance Corporal Ollis

The 2/4th Battalion was formed at Bath in September 1914 as a Second line battalion and became part of the 135th Brigade of the 2nd Wessex Division. On 12 December 1914 they also landed in India moving to the Andaman Islands in August 1915 but by January 1916 they had returned to India.

Whilst in India Pte Charles Carpenter died and was buried at Barrackpore on 24 July 1916 and another Keynsham man Pte Percy Tipney was buried at Dinapore on 14 December 1916.

25 September 1917 saw them being landed at Suez in Egypt where they came under the orders of the 232nd Brigade of the 75th Division. Along with other Somerset battalions in the Middle East, (the 12th, formerly the West Somerset Yeomanry and the 1/5th), the 2/4th were occupied with the recapture of Palestine from the Turks. These battalions took part in the second and third battles of Gaza. This last offensive, launched on 31 October 1917, was a success and by mid-December the British had regained control of Jerusalem.

Then on 1 June 1918 they landed at Marseilles and proceeded to the Western Front.

As the need for man-power became more desperate and the net of conscription cast wider, Keynsham men were absorbed into the other regular Somerset L. I. battalions as well as infantry regiments such as the Gloucesters and the Royal Berkshires. In addition some found themselves directed to the other branches of the services including the Royal Navy and the fledgling Royal Flying Corps.

Other local village losses

From Compton Dando, an early casualty was Benjamin Harding who was a stoker on H.M.S Pegasus which was destroyed by gunfire from the German cruiser "Königsberg" in Zanzibar Harbour on 20 September 1914. Henry Harvey of 11th Battalion, Royal Berkshire Regiment was killed on 30 July 1916 and commemorated on the Theipval Monument. Another from the same village was Gunner Frederick Light who had emigrated to Australia but who had returned with the Australian Field Artillery and was killed at Poziers on the Somme on 23 July 1916 aged 26.

The Saltford dead are recorded in a later article.

Bitton lost thirty two men. Amongst them was Pte. C Ashmore who served in 1st/4th Bn. Somerset Light Infantry and died on Thursday 13 April 1916. He is buried in the Amara War Cemetery, Iraq. Also Pte. Edward Batley who served in 7th Bn. Somerset Light Infantry and died on Tuesday 11 September 1917 aged 21 yrs. He has no known grave but is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial. He was the son of William John and Alice Maud Batley, of Upton Cheney, Bitton. L.Corporal Albert Amos Ford served in "C" Coy. 1st/6th Bn. Gloucestershire Regt. and died on Sunday 23 July 1916 aged 30 yrs. He has no known grave either but is commemorated on the Theipval Memorial. He was the son of George and Ruth Ford of Willsbridge. Petty Officer Stoker Andrew Short R N served on H M S "Begonia" and died on Saturday 6 October 1917 aged 38 yrs. He is commemorated on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial. He was the son of Andrew and Selina Short of Bitton and husband of E L Short of The Gables, Upton Cheney, Bitton.

One of the commonly held misapprehensions of WW1 is that all of the men enthusiastically rushed to enlist. Although initially true, in actual fact as it became obvious that "Death or Glory" became more death and less glory, less than half of the soldiers who fought in the Great War actually volunteered to fight. Most were conscripted after the passing of the Military Service Act, 1916, and some of those who volunteered only did so once their conscription became inevitable. On 2 March 1916 all single men between the ages of 19 and 41 were deemed to have enlisted unless they had previously obtained an exemption certificate. From 25 May conscription was extended to married men, and before the war ended the upper age limit was even raised to 51. Although the death toll would be horrendous, still 80% of all 'Tommies' would survive the trenches physically if not mentally unaffected by the experience.

Civilian life and the disruption to social events

The war brought to a sudden end many of the annual social events normally planned for the area. The Saltford Regatta and the Keynsham Flower Show were abandoned for the duration. On October 15 1914 the Bristol Bicycle and Motor Club met to give out prizes and medals at Keynsham but they decided that their 1915 programme was "*in the lap of the gods*". They gave any outstanding prize money to the war fund but were unable to do the same with the medals as they had already been ordered.

The Keynsham Mules

As part of the war effort thousands of horses and mules were requisitioned from farms across the land but even these were insufficient to carry the enormous amounts of ammunition, food and other material supplies up to the front-line and 8,000,000 animals were to be lost in the conflict (about the same number as men). To keep up with demand 200,000 mules were imported from South America, Spain and Ireland and the animals had to be trained to supply the front lines across inhospitable terrain. Well known for its fine pasture, the military powers decided that Keynsham would be an ideal staging post at which to concentrate a number of the animals and fatten them up prior to their journey from Avonmouth to France. Keynsham was a quiet sleepy little town in those days and this sudden intrusion made a lasting impression on those alive at the time.

Hundreds of mules were brought in by train from Avonmouth to the goods yard where they were unloaded from cattle trucks by "*a very rough band of soldiers*" as one eye witness described them. An early member of the society, the local historian Miss Mary Fairclough remembered the night the mules arrived ... "*I do remember from the bedroom window at 16 Avon Mill Lane (now Avon Road) being lifted up to see the droves of mules being brought in from the goods yard where they had been unloaded from the cattle trucks and were being driven past our*

house.. I think they took them up past the police station and down Pogham's Lane (at the side of the New Inn), past Brick Town (the now cleared Woodbine Cottages), over the bridge and up Workhouse Lane to Conygre Farm, which was the most direct route and would cause least disturbance to any traffic, though there was very little in those days. As they passed us I can remember seeing the lanterns and hearing much shouting. It must have been evening, and the noise woke me up. My impression was of the moving creatures, shouting, and the lights at the front and the back and of small boys blocking garden paths". Mary thought the light was from hurricane lamps as she believed she saw flames in one of them. "The year was probably 1914 or 1915, as father was called up in 1916".

Another inhabitant of Keynsham recalled that... *"the fields below Wellsway were so thick with animals that you couldn't see a blade of grass".*

Len Ellis who was chairman of the Keynsham U.D.C. from 1961 to 1964, recalled... *"A very vivid memory is of the mules that were kept at the end of Park Road, where the allotments now are. There seemed to be hundreds of them and they kept breaking out, especially at night and then we would hear the soldiers on their mules galloping all round Keynsham to round them up, and driving them out of people's gardens. Towards the end of the war, there was an outbreak of anthrax (I think the disease was) and many were killed and thrown into lime pits. They burnt hundreds of them. Soon after that, they closed the whole operation down".* However not all the animals were put down as Gwen Newman remembered ... *"Unfortunately, anthrax broke out among the mules and those infected were killed, burned and buried in lime in the area between Conygre Farm and the allotments. However, many mules survived the outbreak, and Charles Glover (her father) was among the Army Service Corps soldiers from Keynsham who herded the animals on to trains at Keynsham goods station, and went with them to France. Gwen,*

then aged seven, was one of the many local children who saw their fathers off to the front.

The bored troops frequented the pubs consuming copious amounts of alcohol and liaisons between the soldiers and local girls were common giving rise to much gossip in the town although a number of the Army Service Corps drovers did marry and returned after the conflict was over. Recently the existence and location of the burial pits became one of the objections raised by campaigners trying to halt the housing development planned for the area. In May 2012 an investigation into these concerns was commissioned by builders Taylor Woodrow. When it published its results found no evidence of anthrax spores present in an old quarry (that had been in filled in 1931) on the site of the old poultry farm off Dunster Road.



V A D nurses delivering materials to a shop run by volunteers in the High Street. In 1909 it was decided to form Voluntary Aid Detachments (VADs) to provide medical assistance in time of war. By the summer of 1914 there were over 2,500 Voluntary Aid Detachments in Britain.

Charity Organisations

As life became dominated by the war, one of the phenomena that emerged was the surge in charitable activities as many of the non-combatants (by then mainly women), either from conscience or from a desire to ‘do their bit’, worked hard to support the various organisations that had sprung up during the conflict. The photograph above shows a scene in Keynsham High Street during the war. The house on the left was on the site of what is now the Fear Hall (formerly the J.N.Fear Institute) and the front room was turned into a shop where people brought things they had made to sell for the Bath War Hospital or to contribute vegetables to feed its patients.



Clara Shortman, the wife of Pte.Shortman, 1/Somerset Light Infantry (k.i.a. 01.07.16) is the lady on the extreme left of the middle row: it is believed that this photograph is of Keynsham women whose husbands were away in the forces, possibly having gathered for a collective knitting session (at least one sock is visible in the back row). . Information and photo provided by Mrs. Jane Bradley, Willsbridge, granddaughter of James & Clara Shortman, of Dapps Hill.

V.A.D. nurses from the hospital would often bring bandages for re-rolling or clothes that needed re-sewing. The residents of Keynsham responded in many different ways. There was a surge in voluntary efforts to support the troops with such events as the knitting session shown above.

The date is very probably prior to 1 July 1916 when the disastrous battle of the Somme commenced as amongst those taking part is Clara Ann Shortman. She is not in 'widow's weeds' as her husband Thomas Shortman was still alive then but he was killed on the opening day of the offensive and was buried in the Thistle Dump Cemetery, High Wood, Longueval, on the Somme. He was 44. As previously mentioned he was a keen gardener living at 14 Dapps Hill before he had enlisted in the Somerset Light Infantry.

Throughout the land there were National Egg Collections for Wounded Soldiers organised by the Red Cross that amounted up to 10,000 per week. During the week ended 3 July 1915 the Burnett Wesleyan Chapel contributed 120 following its Sunday service and on 4 September 651 new laid eggs were donated locally from Keynsham; Saltford gave 100, Queen Charlton, 40, and Burnett, 24 - amounting to 850 in total.

On Wednesday 26 April 1916 the inhabitants of Keynsham were treated to the first of two performances of the Mikado given by the Amateur Dramatic Society in aid of the Parish Nurse Fund and the Red Cross. An appreciative audience crowded into the in Drill Hall where they were treated to a spirited rendering of the songs, many of which had to be repeated. A special mention was made of the scenery. Although the performance was enthusiastically received the audience shivered. A reporter complained... *"We sat in overcoats, mufflers and were even forced to the gross breach of courtesy and etiquette to wear our hats all through the*

performance. Even then we left the hall with feet so benumbed that it was necessary to go stamping up the street to get the circulation going!" Whether this was due to the shortage of coal is not clear but a subsequent performance was made by the company for wounded soldiers at a warmer venue at the Bath Mineral Water Hospital.

On 21 November 1916 a concert was held in aid of the Y.M.C.A. Hut Fund. The local paper reported... *"an enjoyable entertainment was given last evening in the Drill Hall, Keynsham, by Fred A Wiltshire's concert party, and there was a crowded attendance. The concert was the outcome of a lecture recently given by Mr Wiltshire on the subject of Bernhardi* (Friedrich Adolf Julius von Bernhardi was a Prussian general and military historian. He was one of the best-selling authors prior to World War I. A militarist, he is perhaps best known for his bellicose book 'Deutschland und der Nächste Krieg' (Germany and the Next War), printed in 1911. He advocated a policy of ruthless aggression and complete disregard of treaties and regarded war as a "divine business"). *Following that he readily agreed to arrange a concert to raise funds for the YMCA Hut fund. During an interval in the programme Mr A J Coles of the Bristol YMCA gave a brief account of the YMCA work which was being done in Bristol and the neighbourhood for the soldiers and said it was desired to establish a link between Keynsham and Bristol in the work of the association. He hoped that soon a YMCA would be formed in Keynsham so that when the men returned from the Front, familiar with the YMCA Huts they would find a similar place in which to gather in Keynsham for they would flock to it from force of habit."*

Charles and Caroline Paget of Elm Farm, Burnett played a leading role in the local support for the war effort; Caroline coordinating considerable contributions of money, vegetables etc. from the Burnett Wesleyan Chapel to various

Bristol Hospitals whilst Charles, in addition to his role as K.R.D.councillor, served on various committees.

On 1 May 1918 the Keynsham Branch of the Somerset Farmers Union, supporting the British Farmers Red Cross fund, held a second agricultural jumble sale at the Drill Hall. In addition to Mr Paget's efforts, the organising committee consisted of Mr W R Golledge (fellow chairman) Mr J Gerrish of Keynsham, Mr G Roch of Saltford (Hon. Secretaries). Mrs Gollege, Miss Wills, Mrs Stephen Fox, Mrs Paget, Mrs Bonville-Fox (proprietor of the private asylum for the insane at Brislington) and Miss Wood with a representative Committee of ladies from the local detachment of the V A D and the Keynsham Women's' Institute were in charge of the stalls in the hall. The farm produce – 'real' butter on sale for a few breathless minutes – was disposed of by wives of farmers from the district. Mr Albert Wood acted as hon. Auctioneer, and, following the example set by the Lord Mayor of Bristol who auctioned a carriage whip (bought by Mrs Bonville-Fox for £2), he sold off the sheep, fowls, coal, wood implements, and the wide assortment of things brought to the sale-yard for the good of the cause. Mr Paget presided at the opening ceremony, and the Lord Mayor, after paying a tribute to the organisers of the sale, said the men and women of the country were beginning to realise that agriculture was the country's greatest industry and to have some idea of its tremendous importance. He spoke of what was being done by those at home for the men who were giving their all for their country, and he said the British Red Cross Society stood out prominently for the noble work it was carrying out. He mentioned that 130,000 men had been treated at the Bristol Hospitals alone, and he felt that thousands of ladies who were now working hard at some form of war work would never again be content with a life of idleness (a statement surely resented by many). He congratulated the Keynsham farmers upon the magnificent sum

raised at the last sale, and said he had no doubt that they would break that record on this occasion.

As to be expected the absence of men had an effect on everyday life in many different ways. When on 9 July 1915 the well-respected grocer, Edward Chappell, was taken to court for having left his motor van parked outside his shop for an hour, he claimed that they were very busy and as six employees had gone to the front they had no one else to run the shop. The bench decided that there was a clear case of obstruction but considering the circumstances a fine of 5s would meet the matter.

There was considerable resentment shown towards those men whose conscience deterred them from joining up. Some were Quakers, but others also withheld their taxes in protest at the conflict. At the Keynsham Petty Sessions held on 15th October 1915 four male 'passive resisters' George Maggs, Thomas Maggs, Frank Lewis and Sidney Cox were summoned for non-payment of a portion of the poor rate levied on 20 April, the amounts being withheld ranged from 2s 6d to 3s 9d. The bench ordered one distress warrant to be issued to cover all four cases but two other passive resisters at Keynsham intimated that they would pay the full amount of the poor rate for the duration of the war.

Incidentally one of the above, Sidney John Cox (1864–1949) was a wire drawer at the brassmills who lived in Albert Road. His daughter Lucy Annie Cox, who deserves to be better known, from lowly origins became an important international socialist propagandist and politician in later life. She was born, on 9 May 1894 and, after being educated at the local schools, as a bright girl gained a scholarship to study at Colston Girls' School in Bristol. Following training to be a teacher at Bristol University she worked for ten years in various schools in the west of England. She had developed an interest in politics from

her father, a radical Liberal with pacifist leanings, and in 1916 she joined the Independent Labour Party (ILP). In 1919 she became secretary of the Keynsham branch and attended annual conferences, speaking in 1924 on grants for divisional councils and on disarmament. In the late 1930s Lucy was adopted as the Labour candidate for Plymouth Sutton (the seat held by Nancy Astor), and she won the seat in the Labour victory of 1945. Although she lost it in 1951 she remained an influential member of the labour party. By October 1983, however, declining health forced her to enter Wandle Valley Hospital, Carshalton, where she died on 20 November 1983 from a cerebral thrombosis and Parkinson's disease.

The Defence of the Realm Act (DORA)

An almost immediate consequence of the declaration of war was the beginning of the state's intervention in the running of everyday life which has lasted until the present day. Four days after it entered the war the government gave itself wide-ranging powers during the war period, such as the power to requisite buildings or land needed for the military or to make regulations creating criminal offences. Outlawed were actions such as talking on the telephone in a foreign language and hailing a cab at night. It also ushered in a variety of authoritarian social control mechanisms, such as censorship;

"No person shall by word of mouth or in writing spread reports likely to cause disaffection or alarm among any of His Majesty's forces or among the civilian population"

Anti-war activists were sent to prison and trivial peacetime activities that were no longer permitted included flying kites, starting bonfires, buying binoculars, feeding wild animals bread, discussing naval and military matters or buying alcohol on public transport. Controls on the use of 'motor spirit' were introduced but on November 9 1917 at the Keynsham Petty Sessions a Maurice Cruise of Warminster had

his summons for using motor spirit contrary to the DORA regulations quashed and his train fare from Warminster refunded.

At another sitting of the Keynsham Petty Sessions held on Friday 1 December 1916, Percy Stadward of Brislington was fined £1 for “allowing more than a subdued light to be visible from his dwelling house on 9 November at 9.30p.m.”.

Alcoholic beverages were watered down and pub opening times were restricted to noon–3pm and 6:30pm–9:30p.m. (less in places). Transgressions that seem petty to us today had to be seen to be punished and the aptly named Keynsham Petty Sessions dealt with a number of infringements of the regulations. On Friday 29 April 1916 Thomas Garrett, the landlord of the Kings Arms at Brislington was summoned for allowing his barmaid to sell a bottle of stout to a woman at 8.30p.m. as it was illegal to do so after 8.o’clock. On Friday 29 September of that year Mrs Francis, the licensee of the Bird in Hand at Saltford was summoned for “*selling beer to a railway worker named Ford who resides at Sheffield, contrary to the provisions of the Central Control Board*” A police sergeant who was talking to Mrs Francis noticed her serving two glasses of beer to Ford who took one outside to his wife and he felt it was his duty to report the offence. Fortunately common sense prevailed and the bench dismissed the charges against the licensee and Ford, although they still had to pay the costs of the court (Ford had already had to pay his fare from Sheffield to answer the charge).

On 30 August 1918 Edward Lane, licensee of the Ship public house, Keynsham, was fined £5 at the local Petty Session for supplying liquor after hours. The police had visited the premises at 9.25p.m. and found beer being consumed.

However a shortage of alcohol did not deter determined drinkers. Again at the same Keynsham Petty Sessions on

November 9 1917 the bench had to deal with “*disorderly scenes at Keynsham*”. It appears that on 5 November Thomas Barnes, who had already served three years and two months as a gunner in the Royal Field Artillery, was home on leave and celebrating Guy Fawkes night with his brother Edward a labourer with a wooden leg and his cousin Albert Barnes a miner. They were all from Compton Dando and at 11.30p.m. they were creating a disturbance on their way home along the Burnett Road (now the Wellsway). The police sergeant called to the scene found Thomas lying flat on the road with the other two struggling on top of him. An altercation ensued and he had to blow his whistle for help as Thomas bellowed that “*forty policemen would not take him to the station*”. An extended fracas took place lasting an hour and a half during which the sergeant and another constable were forced to use their staves to subdue the trio who were trying to kick and bite them. In the morning when charged with assault, drunkenness and disorder the three defendants stated that they could not remember anything about the previous evening! Thomas was sentenced to four months and the other two three months hard labour.

The Belgian Refugees

Following the invasion of Belgium in August 1914, stories (many of them lurid accounts of atrocities committed by the German army) began to appear in the press and religious sermons. As a result, a wave of sympathy for ‘poor little Belgium’ and poor little Belgians spread throughout the land. At the end of September 1914 at a meeting of the Keynsham Union it was decided to place notices in various post offices asking persons, desirous and willing to take in or to provide hospitality for Belgian refugees, to send in their names to the hon. Secretary of the sub-committee.

A fortnight later on 16 October 1914 it was reported that... “*The Committee of the Keynsham Constitutional Club have taken a house opposite Keynsham Parish Church to be*

used as home for Belgian refugees. The Committee will be glad of any assistance, irrespective of politics. Here is example which might well be followed every village". This was an old house between Milward House and the Old Manor which has since been demolished. The plight of the Belgians helped with fund raising. The Western Daily Press printed on 15 May 1915 added...

"A Whit Monday gathering is being arranged at Burnett, the pretty village lying a little beyond Keynsham, in aid of the Red Cross Society. The effort is one in which the whole parish is represented, and it is hoped that residents from Keynsham and from many of the villages around Burnett will support the movement and then a substantial sum will be assured for the splendid object in view. The gathering will be held in the park near the church. The committee of ladies is hoping to have the Belgian refugees from Keynsham as their guests, also the Home Defence Battalion from there. Refreshments will be served on the ground and there will be a stall of useful and ornamental articles. After meeting the small expenses involved, the whole of the takings will be handed to the Red Cross Fund. The neighbourhood of Burnett has exceptional charm and for Bristolians who are fond of natural scenery a pleasant afternoon could be spent there". However as the war progressed that empathy diminished as a fear crept in that the expected victory was being sabotaged by foreign agents, and the Belgians and other foreigners were subjected to regulations governing their movements (The Aliens Restriction Act of 1914 required foreign nationals to register with police and were aimed at controlling foreign 'enemy' aliens already settled in London, particularly Germans.) On 15 August 1915 the Western Daily Press reported a case at the magistrates' Court at Keynsham...

"A Belgian's Omission, Sent to prison for not registering. At a special sitting of the Keynsham magistrates

yesterday, Arthur Monette of Saltford was charged under the Aliens Act with failing to register. It appeared that the defendant moved from Bristol to Saltford on 14th inst. He admitted that he was told by the Bristol police that he must register himself there at once but had failed to do so. He was arrested on Tuesday and was remanded until yesterday. He pleaded that he remembered on Monday that he had not registered and on inquiring for a police station, found that there was not one at Saltford. When he was arrested he had a draft of a letter he was going to write to the police. The magistrate said in time of war the law must be strictly enforced. The accused had ample warning of what he ought to do but failed to do it and he must go to prison for a month without hard labour." Rough justice indeed! And a year later on 30 September 1916 other verdicts were passed at the Justices' Court at Keynsham...

"Two Belgian refugees (Camille Roche and his wife Marie) who when the war broke out were keeping the Turkish baths at Antwerp, were summoned under the Aliens Restriction Order. The defendants came to Bristol with an early batch of refugees and they live at 12 Badminton Road, Ashley Road. On the 16th the woman went to Keynsham - a prohibited area - and without having obtained the necessary permit from the Aliens Officer in Bristol and she stayed that night at the Lamb and Lark. The following day her husband visited her at Keynsham and when challenged could not produce his identity book. Both pleaded ignorance of the law, which forbids them to go outside a five mile radius without a permit. The man said he was being called up for service in the Belgian army and his identity book had been sent to London. The police accepted the explanation as regards the identity book but Inspector Jennings said there was so much trouble with the Belgian refugees in connection with the Order that they were bound to bring the cases to court. Defendants who wept copiously said they had

never been in a police court before. The woman was fined 20s and her husband 10s.”

Even after the war ended the restrictions on aliens were continued. On Friday 2 May 1919 another case was heard at the Keynsham petty sessions...

“At Keynsham yesterday, Edmund L. Crombeke, Claremont, West View Road, Keynsham artist and his wife, Rose Ida Crombeke of Belgian nationality were summoned as aliens for failing to notify their change of address. Sarah Eliza Barnes, High Street restaurant proprietress, was summoned for failing to notify the Registration Officer of the district of the presence of aliens in her household. Margaret Amelia Forster, Claremont, West View Road, Keynsham widow, was also summoned for failing to notify the presence of aliens in her household. Inspector Parfitt said the defendant, Mrs Crombeke called at the police station on April 24 to report, and in answer to the witness said she arrived in Keynsham on 19th. Mr and Mrs Crombeke admitted the offence. They had thought that, the war being over, the regulations had been rescinded. They had not notified the London police on leaving. Supt Jennings said both Mr and Mrs Crombeke were registered in London. They came to the police station when they discovered they ought to be registered. Mr Crombeke said he had lived in this country 20 years and on his discharge from the army service he came back to resume his employment in Bristol. The cases against Mr and Mrs Crombeke and also against Mrs Forster (in whose house they were living) were dismissed on payment of costs. Mrs Barnes, as keeper of a public restaurant was fined 20s.

One wonders whether these regulations ever impinged upon the investigations of a certain Monsieur Poirot!

Doctors go to war

Medical care was diminished when two of Keynsham's three doctors left to serve in the Royal Army Medical Corps. In

1916 Dr Claude Harrison joined the Territorial force as a Lieutenant in the R.A.M.C. He rose to the rank of Major and was awarded the Military Cross.

Dr Peach Taylor joined the corps in 1915 and served until 1917. He was posted to Alexandria in Egypt to a military hospital. He also worked on a hospital ship bringing casualties back to Tilbury, having to operate on the wounded in their bunks. His arrival back in Keynsham coincided with the arrival of the great flu epidemic when his services were in great demand.

Food Production

By 1917 the terrible toll suffered by merchant shipping due to unrestricted submarine warfare resulted in severe food shortages. The price of the little there was rocketed and there was real risk of starvation. The restrictions introduced by the Defence of the Realm Act failed and the government then tried to introduce a voluntary code of rationing whereby people limited themselves to what they should eat. Any area that could grow food was converted to do so - gardens were turned into allotments and chickens etc. were kept in back gardens. The powers introduced by DORA empowered the government to take over land when it felt that it was necessary to do so. In 1917, the government took over 2.5 million acres of land for farming and by the end of the war, Britain had an extra three million acres of farming land. Those who would have normally been employed on the land - young men - had been called up, so the work was taken over by the Women's Land Army. Despite the measures taken malnutrition was seen in poor communities and as a result the government was forced to introduce rationing in 1918. Food products were added to the list as the year progressed. In January 1918, sugar was rationed and by the end of April meat, butter, cheese and margarine were added. As an agricultural area, the importance of

Keynsham's role in feeding the nation increased but maintaining that supply became increasingly difficult.

Prices of animal food stuffs rose and labour dwindled. On 11 May 1917 at a meeting of the Somerset Farmers Union in Bristol attended by Keynsham farmers, J G Roch, R J Knight and C Paget from Burnett, a Mr Walker complained on behalf of the Chew Valley branch that they had suffered a serious blow as the local tribunal had called up their miller who ran two mills and they had only given him a month to report for duty. He urged that the meeting register with the Board of Agriculture and the War Office its "extreme regret and grave apprehension" at the calling up of millers from country mills. He also complained about the price received for milk and urged that farmers should annul their contracts with the Food controller as he had the idea they could still produce cheap milk. Theirs was the cheapest in the country but feeding stuffs were as dear here as elsewhere. Another concern was the shortage of sugar to turn the promised bountiful crop of fruit into jam and the price of £7.15s per cwt for cheddar cheese should be guaranteed for three months.

At a meeting of the Keynsham District War Agriculture Sub-committee held two weeks later, Mr Napier of the County War Agricultural Executive Committee explained details of the government's scheme for 1918 for providing sufficient food for the United Kingdom to be self-sustaining. The selection of land to be ploughed up would be left to the discretion of the County Executive committee but the district sub-committees were asked to survey the land and report, and also furnish details of the minimum additional requirements in the way of labour, horses and machinery. Mr Napier mentioned that 40,000 tractor ploughs would be available for ploughing.

Not all farmers were ready to comply with these committee's proposals. On 15 March 1918 William Harding, a

Marksbury farmer, was taken to court for “*wilfully failing to cultivate land by ploughing and sowing contrary to regulations under the defence of the realm act.*” In his defence his counsel Mr Roberts said that... *the defendant was 72 years of age and for thirty years he had occupied this holding, he was the fourth of his family to succeed to the farm and he knew best how to produce the largest possible output from his land. Already more than double the area of land was being cultivated for food purposes than last year. There was a shortage of labour and he held that the defendant had met the order by ploughing the extra land.* After hearing the evidence and the fact that the offer of a tractor had been made, the magistrates fined Mr Harding £25 including costs.

However, the shortages did have benefits for those farmers who had stock to sell. A local newspaper reported on 16 August 1917...

The Keynsham Fair – Ready sale of cattle and sheep. Years ago pleasure and business were associated with the Keynsham Fair, but the merry making part has fallen into desuetude leaving a still extensive agricultural trade to be done. Thus buyers were attracted from various parts of the western Counties to Keynsham yesterday when a large number of cattle and sheep changed hands at prices which in many instances were double those which were obtained in pre-war times. The sale was held in a field off the Bath Road being used for the purpose. Mr Albert Ford started with the sheep of which over a thousand were penned and few were left unsold. There were sheep and lambs from Mr C Paget and Mr Penney of Burnett, Mr E Brooks of Compton Dando, Mr G Date of Inglesbatch, Mr S Hember and Mr J Loxton of Queen Charlton, Mr T Adams and Mrs Carpenter of Whitchurch, Mr W Fowler and Mr W Hazell of Keynsham, Mr J Nicholls of Corston and others. Over a hundred head of cattle were sold by Mr Young. There were fat and store cattle from Mr G

Weston and Mr G Roch of Saltford, Mr T Davis of Keynsham; Messrs Barnard and Mr Hill of Compton Dando, Mr J Baber of Lansdown, Mr E Griffin of Hanham, Mr W Edgell of Keynsham and Mr J Loxton of Queen Charlton.

This change in fortunes was only temporary however as farming was to go into a sharp decline as soon as the war ended and cheap foreign imports became available once more.

The Parish Council was also determined to further self-sufficiency by promoting the use of allotments. After the annual Parish meeting held on 27 February 1917 a meeting of applicants for allotments was then held during which the Chairman gave particulars of the scheme which had been prepared by the Parish Council. He stated that lands in Charlton Park, Charlton Road and Rock Road had been obtained and the council were negotiating for other lands. These lands would be divided into plots of ten perches which would be let at 2s6d per plot; the council proposing to plough land and where necessary fence it. The land was to be let for the duration of the war and for a reasonable time after to allow crops to be gathered. He went on to add that it was not a scheme prepared under the usual allotment method but was rather an emergency measure to meet the situation which had arisen in the national crisis and to induce parishioners to do their utmost to produce food...

Over forty applicants had applied and the council hoped to meet all requirements. It was arranged to hold a meeting in the following week to draw lots for the various plots.

On 7 March 1917 the Parish Council records add...*"The action of the committee in obtaining rented land and utilising the recreation ground for increasing food production was approved."* And a month later...*"It was reported that Mr Willoughby had consented to a further part of*

the recreation ground being ploughed up for the production of foodstuffs.”

The subject was still high on the agenda nine months later on 16 February 1918...*“Details of a scheme to acquire about 2 acres of land owned by Mr Godfrey behind the Workhouse were put forward for a period of two years after the war at a rental of £7.00 per annum. This was approved. The committee recommended that the new piece of land to be purchased adjoining the cemetery be used partly for allotments and this was approved.”*

Food shortages continued to be of great concern. At a Keynsham District Council meeting on 2 April 1918 Mrs Bonville-Fox (the widowed proprietor of the asylum at Brislington and who served in many different roles during this period) urged the council to establish a ‘National Kitchen’ in the town. She suggested that the empty eyelet factory (where previously munitions had been made) in the High Street should be utilised for the purpose and that in the summer the kitchen could be used for making jam and preserving vegetables for the winter as during the winter school children would have to be fed almost entirely by communal kitchens. However several members of the Board expressed doubts about starting such a scheme as it was believed that country people could manage quite well on their rations and Mr Lloyd George had told them that there was plenty of food in the country at the moment. As a result further discussion was to be deferred until August. Much of the meeting on 6 August however was spent discussing the collection of fruit stones and nuts as these were required by the army. Although children could do this the Chairman said he didn’t think that there would be many fruit stones to collect at this time but it was suggested that the local Boy Scouts might be involved. On 14 September 1918 Mrs Bonville-Fox then as President and organiser of the Keynsham Growers Association opened an exhibition of vegetables

produced by allotment holders in the Drill Hall with the exhibits being subsequently sold for Red Cross Funds.

Women fill the gaps



Some of the Keynsham women employed to do the men's jobs sweeping the road at Bath Hill

Although many Keynsham women volunteered to serve as V.A.D. (Volunteer Aid Detachment) nurses or to work with the Red Cross, with so many men being drafted into the services it soon became clear that the only way to fill the vacuum was to replace them with female labour. Although this seems obvious to us today, then it was a foreign idea to many. Already it had been accepted that working class women were 'rough' enough to toil in the fields and mills and a number of Keynsham women wearing khaki overalls with a green armband were set to replace the men sweeping the roads (only recently tarmacked in 1911). Others worked in the 'munitions factories'. One of which was in the eyelet factory in the High Street in the early days of the war and another at the Tangent

Tool Company on the Bath Road. Some may have worked in the brass mills creating shell cases. However it was felt that middle class ladies were too genteel to soil their delicate hands and their place was in the home. One of the organisations formed to counter this perception was the Women's Patriotic League. The object of the meeting of the Somerset group in Bristol on Thursday 24 June 1915 was to discuss the best means of promoting the organisation of women on the land. They were addressed by Miss Deane from the Board of Trade who said that the Somerset Women's League had started before the Government had appealed to women to sign the War Service Register. She stated that... *"Work on the farms was good for a number of people and for women it was a healthy occupation but in many parts there was a difficulty or prejudice of women workers in agricultural spheres."*

She then added... *"There was quite a lot of farm work that could be done exceedingly well by women. Quite a number of women had shown much ability in rearing stock...The farmer had to look to the year 1916. Now they were able to manage but in 1916 they might not be able to obtain any men at all. It looked revolutionary, this drafting of women into the spheres of labour hitherto solely done by men but it would not be without its advantage in the future"*.

Mrs Paget (the wife of the farmer from Burnett) said... *"it would be a good thing if some of the farmers' daughters would take up the matter and teach others and thus encourage them. One good way was for ladies in the country districts to keep registers of the various available workers and the kinds of work they could do"*.

Whether this was done is not known but at a meeting of the Somerset War Agricultural committee on 28 February 1916 Lord St Audries remarked that although it was feared that it would be difficult to get women unaccustomed to working on

the land to take up that employment, it had however turned out that women were quite anxious to come forward and that farmers were ready to accept their services (this being understandable as the women were to be paid only two-thirds of the men's wages!)

In addition an offshoot of the 'Women's Farm & Garden Association' (founded in 1899 to further opportunities for women to work on the land) and called the 'Women's National Land Service Corps' was created. 20,000 women signed up nationally and the organisation later developed into the first women's Land Army.

Many of the Keynsham women were taken to the fields by a horse and trap to hoe, plant and harvest but of course at the end of the war these jobs were to revert to the returning soldiers and the women took up their domestic chores once more (some more reluctantly than others).



One of the women working on the Paget's Elm farm at Burnett

One of the results of the involvement of women in these wartime activities was that their demand for the vote could no longer be ignored. If they could be trusted with the duties of the police officer and responsible enough to create explosives then it was ridiculous to deny them that right any longer. In 1918 the Representation of the People Act 1918 was passed, enfranchising women over the age of 30 who met minimum property qualifications and this was later extended to all women over the age of 21 in 1928.

Local Tribunals

Declining recruiting totals led to increasing calls for compulsory military service. On 27 January 1916, the first Military Service Act introduced conscription for single men of military age, this being extended to married men by a second Military Service Act on 25 May 1916.

Following the terrible casualties suffered by the army by 1916 greater efforts were being made to 'comb out' (like nits?) as many recruits as possible. Unsurprisingly, by then, much of the initial enthusiasm for the conflict had evaporated and to counter the many (often desperate and heartfelt) appeals by both individuals and employers, tribunals were set up to decide who would go and who would be exempt from conscription

into the armed forces. These were bodies formed by borough, urban district and rural district councils to hear these applications for exemption.

At the Somerset Appeal Tribunal held on 8 December 1916 the appeal was heard regarding the case of a gardener, aged 37 and passed for B2, who was employed by a private resident at Keynsham said to be the largest donor of fruit and vegetables to the Bath War Hospital. The tribunal adjourned the case for a fortnight to enable the man to become a substitute to a market gardener passed for general service.

Another was that of an appeal against the conditional exemption of a Keynsham solicitor, 37 years-old Frank



Whittuck who was the clerk to the Keynsham Rural District Council, the education sub-committee and to the local tribunal itself. This was considered at the sitting of the Somerset Tribunal in Bath on 12 May 1917. No decision was reached and the matter was deferred until the next meeting on 9 June.

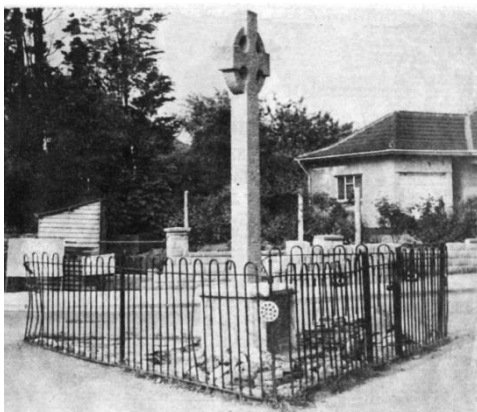
At that same meeting a military appeal against the conditional exemption of Jedediah Johnstone, the highway surveyor to Keynsham Rural District Council, was dismissed.

However by 16 June the tribunal under pressure, having decided to withdraw their exemption for Frank Whittuck, appointed his brother Charles to the post in his place leaving him free to join the Inns of Court Officers Training Corps. Fortunately he survived the conflict and was back at his old post by 1920.

The Sacrifice of the men of Saltford village during WW1.

By Hilary Smedley.

From the small village of Saltford, seventeen men gave their lives in the First World War. In recognition of their supreme effort for the country, a war memorial was erected at the top of the High Street in the middle of the road in 1920 - this was at the end of the village which shows



The Saltford Memorial in its original position.

how small the village was then. It was later surrounded by a railing to protect it from traffic, but after an accident the

memorial was moved to the end of Mrs. Mould's garden opposite Tunnel House. This was in about 1963. From the list of names on the Memorial, I have tried to find out more information about these gentlemen - their Regiment, age and place of death.

Here are some of the details:-

Major Arthur Henry Hobbs. 1st Battalion, Welsh Regiment, killed in action at Loos 2 October 1915 aged 34. He was the son of Col. Arthur Henry & Agnes M.A. Hobbs of 'The Mount', Saltford. Having no known grave he is commemorated on Panel 77 of the Loos Memorial as well as in St. Mary's Church (dedicated window and entry on memorial tablet), in the municipal Book of Remembrance and on the panel at the entrance to Keynsham Park. He was 2nd in command of his battalion since they had returned from India in January. He had been invalided to the UK as sick in February, but returned to his unit in July. He was posted as 'missing in action' after a German counter-attack on position known as Hollenzollern Redoubt.

Lt. Henry James Gale 2/5 Bn., Lincolnshire Regiment, died 21 March 1918 aged 23. The only son of Mrs. Alice Gale and the fiancé of Gladys Hudson, Bath Rd., he was a grocer's assistant before joining up. Born Saltford on 2 August 1894, he enlisted into the 9/Som.LI at Taunton on 12 September 1915 and was commissioned on 26 June 1917. He was killed in action at Bullecourt and is commemorated on Panel 23 and 24 of the Pozieres Memorial.

Captain John Kenneth Gilmore. Gloucester Regiment, died on 22 August 1916 and his memorial is at Thiepval, Somme, France (The Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme is a major war memorial to 72,191 missing British and South African men who died in the Battles of the Somme of the First World War between 1915 and 1918 with no known grave).He lived at Mount Verdon, Saltford

Lt. Frank A Haycroft., 10th Battalion, Kings Royal Rifle Corp died 10 August 1917 aged 27 near Langemarck, Flanders - this action was part of the Passchendaele battle. His memorial is at Ypres on the Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing. His parents lived at Craigside, Saltford, and his name is inscribed on a tombstone in St. Mary's Churchyard together that of his father Charles and his brother.

Lt. Henry Charles Hardman Tarr. Royal Army Service Corps, died of pneumonia at the Ras-el-Tin Military Hospital on 2 February 1919 aged 45. Buried Row C, Gr. 171, Alexandria (Hedre) War Memorial Cemetery. He was the son of Mr J and Mrs S A Tarr and husband of Charity Tarr of Tunnel House, Saltford.

Lance Sgt. H Andrews Dorsetshire Regiment, died 23 November 1917 aged 21 years and he is buried in the Jerusalem War Cemetery. (The cemetery is 4.5 kilometres north of the walled city and is situated on the neck of land at the north end of the Mount of Olives, to the west of Mount Scopus). He was the son of James and Edith Andrews, 20 Newton St Loe.



The Grave of Stoker
Goddard

Pte. Edward Barnett of the Gloucestershire Regiment, died 19 July 1917 aged 24. He is also remembered on the Thiepval memorial. He was the son of Mrs Sarah Barnett of the Brass Mills.

Stoker S Goddard RN 1st Class 311234. He served on HMS Larkspur, a mine sweeper and died on 3 November 1915. He was a collier before enlisting on 17 January 1907. He

accidentally drowned at Merklands Wharf in Glasgow His grave is in St. Mary's Church.

On the 2nd column:-

Pte. Oliver George Dukes of the Somerset Light Infantry, died 3 October 1916 aged 24. He is remembered at Guillemont, which is a village 12 kilometres east of Albert.

Gnr.Lionel Alfred King Royal Marine Artillery, HMS Vanguard who died on 9 July 1917 aged 20. He was the nephew of Edwin Robert King of 8 Maud Buildings, Saltford and stepson of Edward and Florence Carpenter, 7 Church Rd, Weston-s-Mare. Commemorated on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial Panel 27.

Tpr. Herbert James Hoddinott Lock. Wellington Mounted Rifles, NZ Expeditionary Force who died 14 November 1917 aged 42 having previously served in South Africa. He was the son of late James Candy and Sarah Jane Lock, Wick House, Saltford. He is buried Row B, Grave 53, Ramleh War Cemetery, Israel.

Pte. Reginald James Lowman. Of the Machine Gun Corp, died 22 March 1918 aged 19 years and he is remembered on the Pozieres Memorial. The cemetery, which is enclosed by the Pozieres Memorial, is a little south-west of the village on the north side of the main road (D929) from Albert to Pozieres. He was the son of Joseph and Minnie Lowman of 7 Maud's Buildings.

Pte. Henry Mitchell. Wiltshire Regiment, died 14 October 1917 aged 25 and he is buried in St. Mary's Churchyard. He was the only son of George Robert & Selina Mitchell of South View, Saltford

Pte. A Skinner. Somerset Light Infantry, died 19th December 1915 and his memorial is in Chapelle-d'Armentieres New Military Cemetery, France. La Chapelle-d'Armentieres is a village 1.5 kilometres to the west of Armentieres, a large

town in the north of France and the New Military Cemetery was begun in October 1915, when the Old Cemetery was closed. It was used for three months.

Pte. Francis (Frank) George Weymouth. He served in the 31st Battalion Machine Gun Corps and died 10 April 1918 of wounds received on 23 March 1918 aged 20. He was the son of Mr. H G and Mrs A Weymouth of Thorncliffe Cottage, Saltford in the Batch. The cottage has since been demolished for two modern houses to be built there. He was baptised 3 April 1898, and is buried in Etaples Military Cemetery, France. During the First World War, the area around Etaples was the scene of immense concentrations of Commonwealth reinforcement camps and hospitals. Frank Weymouth was the uncle of Peter Weymouth late of Norman Rd, and I am grateful for this information kindly given by his widow.

Pte. M A Goddard. Royal Marine Light Infantry served on HMS Cornwall and died 16 September 1916. He is buried in the Kranji War Cemetery which is 22 kilometres north of the city of Singapore, on the north side of Singapore Island overlooking the Straits of Johore. It is located just to the West of the Singapore-Johore road.

Leading Seaman William Goddard. Royal Navy. He was killed at the Battle of Jutland on 31 May 1916, one of five fatalities aboard the destroyer HMS Spitfire. Aged 29, he was the brother of Pte Maurice and Stoker Sidney Goddard and son of Albert and Mary of "The Jolly Sailor", Saltford. He is commemorated on Panel 12 of the Portsmouth Naval Memorial.

The Saltford War Memorial was dedicated on 14 November 1920 by the Rector of Saltford, the Rev. William Hall in the presence of a large congregation and Keynsham Town Band accompanied the hymns A large number of floral tributes were laid at the memorial including a wreath of white chrysanthemums with the words *'in revered memory from the*



The window in St Mary's Church, Saltford dedicated to Francis Ward

Saltford Ex-service Men' In St. Mary's Church, there is a stained glass window on the north side of the church donated by the Rev.C R Ward in memory of his nephew Captain F. W. Ward. Ninian Cowper designed windows for many churches including Westminster Abbey and Downside Abbey. His work can always be recognised by strawberry leaves and fruit found in the bottom right-hand corner of the window.

The memorial script at the base says 'In gratitude for a loving and much loved nephew Francis Welsford Ward, Captain 4th Gloucestershire Regiment, killed in action near Poelcapelle 9 October 1917 aged 30 years'.

More aspects of the war in Part 2