

# Great War Bulletin

No. 72...Newark...Monday 13 December 1915

## BATHS FOR THE POOR!

THE APPEARANCE of thousands of trainee Royal Engineers in Newark looks like having a beneficial effect for working folk.

# Good health for babies

### THE PLIGHT of Newark's children - War or no war – has suddenly come under an intense spotlight.

The Women's Thrift Committee based in the town held a meeting in the Town Hall on Thursday afternoon on the subject of "Mothercraft and Babies Welcomes".

The guest speaker was Mrs Alys Russell BA, secretary of the London-based St Pancras School for Mothers, an American-born lady who is at the forefront of women's suffrage (or liberation, as it would be called a century later).

Mrs Russell, who is building a considerable reputation as a campaigner for better social conditions for poor women, emphasised that saving babies is vital for the future health of the nation.

As if to underline the importance of her attempts to highlight the connection between poor housing conditions and ill-health among youngsters, eight-year-old Olive Mary Gravell died on Saturday in Newark Isolation Hospital, which is attached to the Workhouse on Bow-bridge Road.

She was the second-oldest of the five children of joiner William Gravell and his wife Mary Helen (nee Mawson), of Portland Street, Newark, and attended Christ Church School.

No cause of death was given, but the fact that little Olive was being treated in isolation is proof that she suffered from one of the many notifiable diseases that literally plague the nation.

Alys Whitall Pearsall Smith (born 1867 in Philadelphia, USA) married Bertrand Russell in 1894. They separated in 1911 and were divorced in 1921.



*Mrs Alys Russell with her husband, Bertrand.*

For six baths with hot and cold running water have suddenly appeared in a building owned by the Newark Corporation in Queen's Road.

They are available for the Royal Engineers, who are building-up a daily sweat by learning to build bridges over the River Trent and to dig networks of trenches on various pieces of spare land in and around the town.

They were provided in only four days after the Borough Surveyor, Mr Joseph E Wilkes, obtained the go-ahead for the work from the Borough Councillors.

The lightning provision was helped by Nicholson's ironworks beside the Trent providing a boiler on Saturday.

It is estimated that the modern facility will prove so popular that there will be 800 baths a week.

The even better news for the citizens of Newark is that, after the War, the bath-house may be used by the working class of the neighbourhood.

And it is perfectly situated at the mid-point between the two-up, two-down terraced houses in all the yards off Northgate, Slaughterhouse Lane and Appletongate.

So the days of the iron bath in front of the living room fire look to be strictly numbered!

## Son was killed two months ago

**GARDENER** Thomas William Rains George and his wife of 44 years Mary Elizabeth of 29 Charles Street, Newark, who have had nine children, discovered last Wednesday that one of their sons has been dead for more than two months – another victim of the Battle of Loos.

The news arrived in a letter to the dead soldier's own wife of nine years Eliza Annie (nee Meredith) from a Sergeant of the Middlesex Regiment who had paused in the aftermath of the action and picked up a pay book and some photographs from beside the body of a dead Corporal of The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment).

The documents belonged to 34-year-old Arthur William George, who had been in the service of Sir Stephen Gatty at Lochbuie House on the Isle of Mull until he volunteered to serve his country.

His date of death has been determined as 25 September by the military authorities.

Arthur, born when his father served as a coachman and gardener, became a footman to Sir Stephen, an eccentric who was in the habit of causing consternation by switching on all his house lights at midnight, apparently oblivious of the dangers posed by German submarines and Zeppelins that may have ventured across the North Sea.

## Major Becher is still fighting



THE LATEST news of Major John Pickard Becher DSO is that, although his condition remains very grave, he can be said to be a shade better.

The gallant major is putting up a great fight to overcome the wounds suffered when he led the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion Sherwood Foresters on their storming of the German fortification known as the Hohenzollern Redoubt during the Battle of Loos on 25 September.

His wife, whose two brothers were killed outright during the same action, is maintaining a vigil at the bedside of her husband.

## Floods add to problems in and around Newark

WINTER weather descended on Newark and district with a vengeance last week.

Heavy rains flooded Newark Town Wharf and many meadows between the conurbation and Collingham.

It meant that Market Days went ahead without the usual sales on the Wharf of fowl, rabbits and other small animals.

Cattle had to be removed from thousands of Trentside acres – no easy task for farmers who have lost many of their herdsmen to the call to arms.

And the replacement farm workers – many of them females and young boys – were unable to get on with any of the hedging, ditching and ploughing that usually takes place at this time of the year.

# A soldier's last words

WICKER chair-maker William Cliffe and his wife Fanny of Victoria Street, Newark, learned on Thursday of the death of their youngest son, Cecil, from his best mate in the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion Sherwood Foresters.

Private W Fields wrote that he and Cecil were on sentry together last Thursday at about 7.20, just as it was getting light after a freezing night...

Cecil, obviously empathising with the similarly-freezing enemy, whispered: *"Look at the Germans carrying that wood"* – and then fell dead, shot by a sniper.

He was a basket-maker for Horace Mills in Farndon Road pre-War but did not hesitate to march out with the local Territorials. And miraculously he and Fields survived the hell of the Hohenzollern Redoubt.



But now Cecil is among 793 identified casualties in the St. Vaast Post Military Cemetery [pictured above] in the village of Richebourg L'Avoué, nine kilometres north-east of Bethune, which has been held by British Forces since the autumn of 1914.

It will remain under British control until it is overrun by German units advancing west during the great Spring Offensive in April 1918; but will be reclaimed five hard months later.

As for the Cliffe family, William (born 1863, Castle Donington on the Notts-Leicestershire border) and Fanny (born 1862, Castle Bytham, near Grantham) had more children to console them: Ernest (born 1890), who was also making wicker chairs, and Dorothy (born 1893).

## Boots reach a local prisoner

PRIVATE J DAVISON of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Sherwood Foresters wrote from his prisoner of war camp in Germany to thank John Mills and Sons of Bridge Street for sending him a pair of boots.

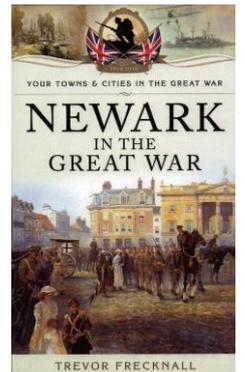
Research a century later reveals that James Davison (born 1884, Newark) was a Private in the 1st Battalion Sherwood Foresters stationed in the Gough Barracks, Trimulgherry, Deccan, India, at the time of the 1911 census.

The 1891 census found James being reared in Albion Street, Newark, by his father Henry (born 1840, Newark) a foundry labourer, and mother Mary (born 1842, Bleasby) – the "baby" along with four brothers and a sister.

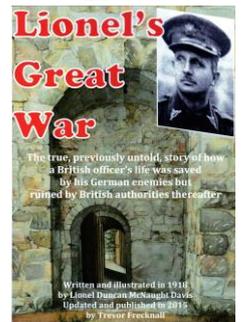
## Solicitor paralysed six years

A MEMORIAL SERVICE was held in St Leonard's Church, Newark, for Mr Robert Hodgkinson, 67, "one of the best examples of the old-time solicitor", who suffered a paralytic seizure as long ago as 1909 and never fully recovered. He died last week.

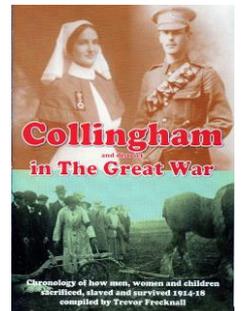
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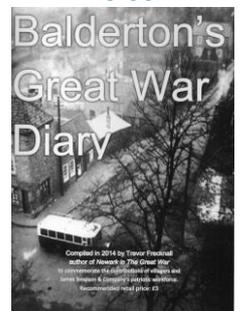
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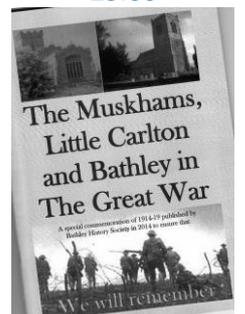
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