

Follow Newark's trauma in The Great War as it happened 100 years ago this week

Edited by Trevor Frecknall, author of *Newark in The Great War*

Great War Bulletin

No. 80...Newark...Monday 7 February 1916

WANTED: WOMEN READY TO 'SLUDGE-UP'

THE local War Agricultural Sub-committee, meeting in Newark's Royal Oak Hotel on Wednesday, wrestled with the difficult problem of how to attract women workers to the fields.

Herbert Hopkinson said he would be lucky to find three out of 30 women in his village, South Muskham, prepared to "get sludged-up".

Joseph Gibson countered that women were playing a huge part in Collingham's carrot-growing industry.

It was agreed that all Parish Councils and parish meetings be asked to organise meetings and "hear expressions of opinion".

RE's boosts for orphans and widows

THE Royal Engineers Corps stationed at Newark while they train for action on the Western Front, have begun a week of variety performances in the Beaumont Hall on Cartergate.

They will inevitably raise the spirits of all those in their audiences – but their prime intention is to raise funds for widows and orphans of RE's, Sherwood Rangers and the 8th Battalion Sherwood Foresters.

Church pays up

The committee in charge of the Newark Parish Church Reparation Fund held its final meeting, chaired by ex-Mayor John Kew. Total donations were £2,319 17s 11d.

The surplus after all bills were paid was £52 3s 8d.

Stricken Sergeant too ill...

KELHAM's Sergeant Smith cannot be brought home to die, after all, it transpired on Saturday. He is too ill to be moved from Pontefract Infirmary – the institution that brought his plight to public notice by asking the Southwell Board of Guardians to pay for his upkeep.

The Southwell board declined to pay but offered to find a bed for him, which would enable his Kelham relations to visit him. But doctors decreed his cancer is too serious; the journey would be too painful for him. His relatives have agreed to pay for his upkeep.

Three more deaths

THREE more families in Newark and district are mourning the death in action of a loved one. They are...

Father-of-two Arthur Green...

The heir to one of Newark's leading factories, Sam Quibell...

John Noble, teenage son of a nurseryman in Normanton-on-Trent.

News of Arthur Green's death at the age of 26 reached his Newark home on Sunday.

He leaves a young wife, Lily, and two babies: Lilian, aged two, and Leonard, who has just had his first birthday.

Arthur worked at Cafferatas' Hawton plant before joining the 68th Battery Royal Field Artillery as a shoeing-smith. He is remembered at the Beauval Communal Cemetery, 24km north of Amiens.

The sad intelligence arrived this morning that Major Sam Quibell – at 25, the youngest Major at the Front – has succumbed to his wounds in France.

The War Office telegram announcing his death to his parents in Shalem Lodge, Newark, arrived only a few hours after they received a postcard assuring them that he was progressing favourably from the wounds he received on 5 January. The eldest son of

Mr and Mrs Oliver Quibell was a shrewd observer; a keen and alert officer who inspired confidence and quickly gained esteem owing to his unassuming character and the wonderful initiative he displayed on many occasions when his Regiment was in a dangerous position.

Nurseryman Henry Noble at Normanton-on-Trent discovered on Thursday that his son John, only 19, was killed by a sniper at Armentieres last Saturday.

Small comfort to him and his wife: another of their sons, 21-year-old George, who had been home on leave, returned to the Front just in time to attend John's funeral.

Private 9735 Noble of the 1st Battalion Lincolnshire Regiment is remembered in the Cite Bonjean Military Cemetery, Armentieres.

Home break for Bennington boys

A PLEASANT surprise for the Rick family – dad Herbert Henry, a plumber; mum Rachel Ann; daughter Lizzie, 22; and son Sidney George, 14 – at Long Bennington: older son John, 20, arrived unexpectedly on a week's leave. Just out of his plumbing apprenticeship when War started, he has been promoted to Lance Corporal with the 8th Battalion Lincolnshire Regiment in France, working alongside doctors in the field dressing stations; and this is his first leave in 18 months.

Also home in the village is Private Harold Bailey, 22, of the Royal Field Artillery, who fell seriously ill with rheumatic fever in Gallipoli but is expected to be well enough to re-join his regiment next week. His dad George is a railway platelayer; mum Ruth, 44, has four more offspring to worry about.

All systems go for Balderton signalman

JOHN GROSVENOR HODGKINSON, 41, of 11 Smith Street, Balderton, is earning rapid promotion in the Army.

Having had nine years' experience in the goods department of the Great Northern Railway as a signalman, he obtained a commission as Second Lieutenant in the Royal Engineers Transport Section in November 1914 and was sent to Rouen.

After eight months as superintendent, he moved to Abbeville and is now at Calais, having been promoted Captain. This is a fine achievement considering only five other transport officers have been promoted.

Lights too bright

MAGISTRATES at Newark County Police Court complained that two lights at Newark Midland Railway Station were so bright, they could be seen all the way up the North Road at South Muskham; this must be a danger with air raids possible.

The Borough Police say they have no power west of the Trent because 'West Newark' is a separate parish; maybe the military authorities will have more influence. The magistrates agree to write to the Midland Railway Company.

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Our last man in the Dardanelles...

SERGEANT ERNEST JONES, 23, got a letter home to his parents at 13 Wellington Road, Newark, on Friday about the evacuation from the blood-soaked beaches of the Dardanelles.

From a boat bound for Egypt, Ernie wrote: "I suppose I ought to consider myself lucky to be alive.

"This Division – the 13th – has made a record for the British Army: it was 117 days in the firing line. We were on the Peninsula from 5 August till 25 December ... under fire for four and a half months.

"The evacuation of Suvla was done gradually. It started about a week before the last lot came off; I was among them. So many men went off every night, you see. Well, our Company (72 Field Coy, RE's) went down to the beach and off about a week before the final night, leaving me in charge of 25 men to lay mines out in front of our barbed wire, and it was full moon, too. Well, we only had one man shot the first night we were out, and it was by our own men; they took us for Turks and turned the machine guns on us. It was the warmest five minutes we ever had and young Dusty Rhodes (George Seward knows him) was shot through the leg.

"We couldn't connect the mines up until the last night or our own patrols might have been blown-up as they were fired by means of a trip-wire laid along a few inches from the ground, and a person walking past would just touch the wire with his foot and his body would be found in pieces at various distances. What I mean is, he would be blown to smithereens as we had 15lb of gun-cotton in each mine. Well, by the last night there were not many men left in the firing line and the last man left at 1.30am.

"After they had passed over two bridges on the way to the beach, we had to demolish them, and we could hear the Turks firing just now and again, and it was moonlight, but not too clear as there were a few clouds in the sky (the Constantinople yarns about fog are all bunkum) and we then, after closing the gaps in the barbed wire, marched down to the beach and got aboard with the party that set fire to the ASC stores at 4 o'clock. All the stores had had petrol and paraffin poured over them, and the light lit up the sky for miles around. The stores at Sala Baba were just beginning to blaze as the stores at A Beach were lighted as the last man got aboard the lighter. It was a grand sight and the Turks started to shell the beach like billy-ho; but of course, they were quite at liberty to do as they liked then, though they didn't know it.

"We got on a boat that took us over to Imbross (an island only 15 miles from the Peninsula) and from there to Limnos, where we re-joined the Company, and we all reckoned it was a soft job getting off. Then, after a few days there, including Christmas Day, we were ordered to Cape Helles and there were a lot of very long faces when we found we had to go and evacuate there as we had evacuated Suvla and therefore had some experience.

"We landed at Helles, at Lancashire Landing on New Year's Eve, and the evacuation came off on 8 January. The previous day the Turks gave our trenches the biggest bombarding they'd ever had. It is no exaggeration to say the fellows could not see one another in the firing line for the smoke from the

SERGEANT ERNIE REVEALS THRILL OF EVACUATION

'coal boxes' that were coming over. It was awful. One regiment alone in our brigade lost 150 killed and wounded that afternoon, but they were waiting for the Turks to get out of their trenches to charge and our machine guns would have fixed every one of them, as they did in one place where the Turks charged. In fact, they charged twice but not one of them reached our trenches or their own again. Well, it was simply thunder from about 2 o' clock until 5 and then it died down. The Turks had tried and failed.

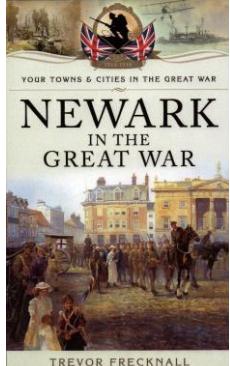
"That night we had to go up the firing line to repair the damage done, and the fellows said the Turks had been throwing messages over (the trenches were only 15 yards apart in many places, and only nine yards in some) containing the following message: 'We know you are going. Goodbye. Good luck. And a safe return. We shall meet again on the Suez.' (And perhaps we shall.) Well, the Turks found we could hold them easily, and it was the finest thing that could have happened for the success of the evacuation.

"Of course, it was a bad job, so many poor fellows getting killed. We had four of our Company badly wounded but none killed. I think the worst and most touching sight I ever saw was the horses being shot. We could see them from the hill top we were on, down in the gully below being led out one by one, and they would stand as though they knew while the fellow took careful aim with his pistol close to their heads. And as he fired they mostly seemed to give way at the knees and roll over, and after a few kicks, would lie still. In a few minutes the gully was dotted all over with the bodies of the most faithful animals man has ever had on the Peninsula. It was a rotten sight but it was done so that the enemy could not have them as they could not get off. The Turks did not capture anything of any value as we buried all the iron and stuff that would not burn, as we did at Suvla, and even slit the sandbags which formed the parapets of the trenches, and everywhere else where they were in use so that they cannot be used again. But there were tons upon tons of stuff burnt in the shape of stores and tools, but of course it could not be helped...

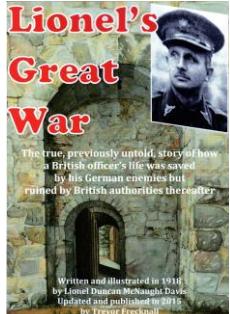
"The Suvla evacuation was an absolute surprise to the Turks, and they did not find out our firing line was empty till 8am the next morning, and then they shelled the second line trenches, and it was midday before they realised they had no enemy before them. The last man had got off at 4am. Well, they no doubt suspected the evacuation at Helles after, but they didn't know when, of course, and that bombardment of theirs on Friday was a test of our strength, no doubt. And then we suddenly cleared the following night. It was well worked; the General in charge of it was no fool ... Sir Ian Hamilton said he could not evacuate Suvla without losing at least 50% of the men, and General Birdwood did it without a single life being lost at Suvla, Anzac or Helles.

"Bit of a clever thing, wasn't it?"

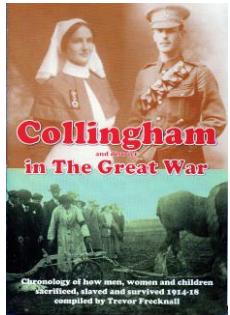
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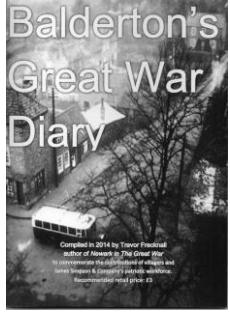
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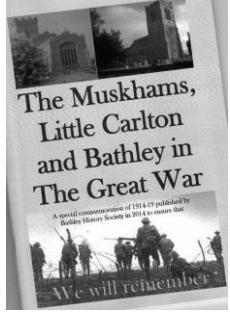
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