

Great War Bulletin

No. 18...Newark...Monday 30 November 1914

Simpson's suffer first War death

THE Simpson's workforce at Lowfield suffered its first death last Thursday. Stoker 1st Class Henry Bond, who lived on Lowfield Lane, was serving on HMS Bulwark when it simply blew-up while in-port.

Henry was among more than 700 shipmates who returned to the 15,000-ton battleship from shore leave at 7am.

It had been quietly moored for several days on No.17 buoy in Kent Reach on the River Medway, almost opposite the town of Sheerness on the Isle of Sheppey, Kent.

The crew slipped back into the ship's routine. Officers and men were having breakfast in the mess below deck. Other ranks were going about their normal duties. A band began to practise while some men were engaged in drill.

Disaster struck at 7.35am. A roaring and rumbling sound was heard. A huge sheet of flame and debris shot skyward.

The ship rose out of the water like a startled whale then fell back. There was a thick cloud of grey smoke and further explosions.

When the smoke eventually cleared, the Bulwark had sunk without trace.

A few hours later, First Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill rose in the House of Commons to make a formal statement:

"I regret to say I have some bad news for the House. The Bulwark battleship, which was lying in Sheerness this morning, blew up at 7.35 o'clock. The Vice and Rear Admiral, who were present, have reported their conviction that it was an internal magazine explosion which rent the ship asunder..."

"The loss of the ship does not sensibly affect the military position, but I regret to say the loss of life is very severe.

"Only 12 men are saved. All the officers and the rest of the crew, who, I suppose, amounted to between 700 and 800, have perished. I think the House would wish me to express on their behalf the deep sorrow with which the House heard the news, and their sympathy with those who have lost their relatives and friends."

The relative of Henry Bond – born in Paddington, London, on 24 January 1876 – was his widow Martha (nee Mossman), aged 40, who was already taking in boarders at 6 Lowfield Lane, Balderton, to help pay the rent.

WARNING TO SOLDIERS IN NEWARK:

Beware our flirty lasses!

AS IF soldiers will not be in enough danger when they face the Germans, they are also in peril on the streets of Newark ... sufficiently so for 15 parsons to write in last Saturday's *Newark Herald* ordering parents to make sure their daughters behave:

"Many girls, and especially those who are still quite young, are allowed to linger in the streets on their way home from the various employments, and not infrequently are to be seen attracting the attention of young men.

"While it is important that the troops should not be hindered in their attempts to act in accordance with Lord Kitchener's Appeal, it is equally important that the girls of our town should conduct themselves with becoming dignity.

"We therefore ask all parents to make such rules in their homes as shall enable them to know where their daughters are in the evenings, and also in whose company they are spending their time.

"Feeling also the urgency of the appeals of the late Earl Roberts and Earl Kitchener to our patriotism, we would venture to say to all our fellow townsmen: On no account let us ever treat a soldier or a recruit to strong drink."

It was signed by W Paton Hindley, Vicar of Newark; Henry Babb, Wesleyan Methodist Minister; William James Betson, Vicar of St Leonard's; William Bradley, Wesleyan Minister; Joseph Dobson Burns, Minister of London Road Congregational Church; Jonathan Dann, Primitive Methodist Minister; Hugh Farrie, Assistant Curate, Newark Parish Church; H Gorse, Magnus Grammar School; Ernest W Godfrey, Baptist Church Minister; John Edward Hadican, Holy Trinity Church; George E Jordan, Salvation Army officer; A Parkinson, Assistant Curate, Newark Parish Church; William B Sealy, Christ Church; W H S Snow, United Methodist Minister; H G Wilkinson, Wesleyan Methodist Church.

'Brutal' news for Newark parents

THE late post on Friday night brought the news that Mr and Mrs Barker Helliwell of 38 William Street had been dreading.

Their 21-year-old son Tom was killed in action on 20 November.

His greatest friend in the Guards, J Victor Bell wrote: "Tom was shot instantly and he never murmured as he fell. I cannot tell you the name of the place as we are not allowed to mention names in our letters. Please forgive me if I have seemed brutal in breaking the news to you."

Trooper Thomas Herbert Helliwell of the 1st Life Guards, to give him his full title, was born on 12 February 1893, brought up in the Wesleyan Day School, worked in the drawing office at Simpson's for three years, transferred to Ransome's and continued his education at night at the Science and Art School.

But his heart was always with the military: he graduated from Scouts to the Notts Territorials; and he was nominated to the Guards two years ago, having grown 6ft 3in tall.

When he last came home in July, he wore many meritorious badges; his parents said his military bearing had been a delight to see.

Now his name will stand forever on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial.

Court lenient on RE motor cyclist

CORPORAL Thomas Shanks, 24, of the Royal Engineers pleaded Guilty before Newark Magistrates today to riding a motor bicycle in Lombard Street at 8pm without a light when he nipped to a garage to refuel. The magistrates dismissed the case on payment of 3s 6d costs.

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

UNDER FIRE IN THE TRENCHES

THE Dobbs family at Jessamine Cottage, Lovers' Lane, received a second letter from their son, Private C R Dobbs of the 2nd Battalion Sherwood Foresters, who has been invalided to a Nottingham hospital. He wrote of his experiences in the trenches:

"The Captain took us out one morning to fill some sandbags to stop the Germans cross-firing at us but we had hardly set to work when the enemy saw us and we had to retire for they had the range of that trench to a 't' and gave us a few 'coal boxes' to be going on with.

"But we went and finished our work after dark. We didn't light a candle, either!

"One night while on our way to the trenches to relieve B Company the Germans attacked our trenches and

as we were nearing them (the trenches) they gave us it pretty hot, trying to destroy the relieving party.

"They set fire to several houses, haystacks, barns and anything that would enable them to locate us but after a struggle we landed safely, crossing ploughed fields and mangold fields.

"When we got settled down in our mud beds they fired at us all night long trying to blow the trench up, but it didn't come off. Although we had no sleep that night, we were little the worse for our experience.

"I and two more formed a guard for part of the trench, our time was from 7am to 7am the next day. After we had finished the night guard we found 36 bullet holes just behind where the sentry stands.

"It is a pitiful sight to see people leaving their homes with only what they can carry, the mother carrying the baby on her back, and perhaps three or four following her with as much as they can carry, and some of them are very small.

"The Germans were three whole days setting a village church on fire. They also destroyed the whole village as well.

"On the Sunday we saw the clergyman and his congregation hold Mass outside the ruined church. It was a pitiful sight and all through the service the devils were shelling the village. There were several nights when we had to 'get down to it' with a wet shirt for it would hail, blow and snow while we were digging trenches."

Volunteers' school

WITH the notion of a Citizen Army catching on nationwide, the Newark Volunteer Reserve last week received permission to use the big room at the Mount Schools for drill on wet Saturdays on payment of 1 shilling a time for cleaning.

Railwaymen's relief

LUCKY for some ... The Great Northern Railways Goods and Grain staff donated 13 shillings to the Mayor's War Relief Fund for the 13th successive week. The Fund now stands at £2,145 4s 10d.

Workhouse death

AN inquest was held this evening into the death of 87-year-old Eliza Wilson, an inmate at the town's Workhouse. Nurse Anna Kemp said Eliza fell, cutting her head and blacking an eye, on a trip to the lavatory. The jury decided she "died of old age, accelerated by an accidental fall".

Church mortgage

LONDON Road Congregational Church's sale of work on Thursday afternoon raised £30 to help pay off their £45 yearly mortgage and £16 interest.

Villages' heroes

THE neighbouring villages of Grassthorpe and Sutton-on-Trent received dramatic – but different – news of their 'boys' in the heat of battles around the world.

Sutton discovered that Stoker 1st Class No. 309117 William Shipley was on *HMS Good Hope* which was lost in a ferocious sea battle off the coast of Chile.

He was 28, seventh of the eight children of gardener John Shipley and his wife Elizabeth, who lived in First Holme Lane.

It will be 23 December 1914 before word reaches Newark that William was not the only local to perish in 'The Battle of Coronel'.

It transpired that he was in an extremely inexperienced crew while the German cruiser squadron was under the cunning command of Admiral Graf Spee after whom the famous World War II pocket battleship would be named.

Grassthorpe's hero Charles Whate arrived home on furlough last Tuesday – after playing a hand in the first capture of Germany guns in the war but then being wounded in another battle just outside a place called Ypres on 2 November.

The 21-year-old son of Mr and Mrs Cook Whate, a crack shot, twice competed at Bisley in peacetime and in 1913 won an Army Championship.

He joined the war with D Company of the 1st Battalion Lincolnshire Regiment, who made a detour on a route march a few weeks ago when German guns began to harry them.

They captured seven guns, which were immediately shipped across the English Channel to be exhibited in the War Office as the first enemy 'trophies' of the conflict. An eighth gun was destroyed by British artillery fire.

Charles was then in the famous retreat from Mons and took part in the barricade fighting in the town.

He was shot four times: one bullet went clean through a finger and his rifle; another tore through the back of his overcoat; a third struck the hilt of his bayonet; and a fourth removed a buckle from his uniform.

His arrival home – to the delight of his family and friends – is testimony to the tremendous resilience of 'the British Tommy'.

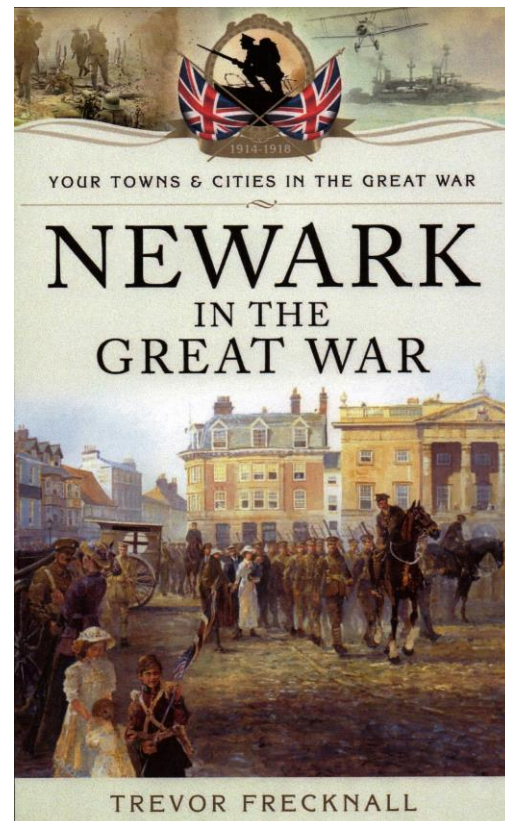
Sherwoods praised by Luton hosts

The Mayor of Luton, Mr Walter T Primmitt, wrote to Major-General the Honourable E T Montague Stuart-Wortley CB, CMG, Officer Commanding the North Midland Division (which included the 8th Sherwood Foresters) that has been stationed near the town: "Relations between the military and civilian population have been all that could be desired and I desire to inform you that the conduct of the troops has been most excellent and satisfactory in every way ... The visit will ever be remembered with pride and pleasure."

Brother's tragic news for parents

ALFRED SQUIRES of 8 Mount Pleasant, one of four brothers in the Scottish Rifles, was killed while moving to the trenches. The news is sent home by his brother Albert. Both had been moulders in a boiler works before enlisting.

Now read the full dramatic account of...



£14.99 from WH Smith

Go to www.ournottinghamshire.org.uk for all issues of Newark's Great War Bulletin