

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. 21...Newark...Monday 21 December 1914



Collingham schoolgirl's cruiser terror

**137 killed by
German Navy
attack on
innocents in
northern
seaside towns**

NORTH COLLINGHAM Vicar's daughter Miss Margaret Gould, 17, was at the epicentre of a cowardly attack by the German Navy that left 137 innocent civilians dead in Scarborough, Whitby and Hartlepool on Wednesday morning.

In a letter home, Miss Gould told a terrifying tale of being shelled by German cruisers while she was breakfasting at Queen Margaret's School, Scarborough, where she is a boarder:

"We sat down at 8am but almost before we had commenced the meal, there was a screech followed by a terrific explosion ... Rows of pale faces all rose as one and we stared at each other, stupefied for the moment ... We were told to go to the cloakroom and put on thick coats and boots...

"We left the school by the back way, under charge of a young mistress who was responsible for looking after about 40 girls and 12 maids.

"Shells were falling thick and fast as we fairly tore along the low road at the back of the school for about a mile and a half. Shells were falling each side of the road and the houses in many cases were in flames.

"When we got clear of the town we went through hedges, tearing our clothes and stockings, and while one of the maids was in a



'We fairly tore along for a mile and a half'

field a shell fell near her onto a chicken run which, with the chickens, was blown to smithereens.

"We had no idea we could run so fast for so long. While we were running, some of the girls started trying to sing 'Tipperary' but it all fell flat because we had not much breath left for singing."

They raced past a gas works and over a railway line, stumbling among the rails and wires. And then, as quickly as it started, the bombardment ended.

The breathless girls waited for the Headmistress and other teachers, who had stayed behind to grab food – then "we sat down at the roadside to bivouac on biscuits and other things ... after that journey, we were all ready for breakfast."

When Margaret returned to school, she had the presence of mind to pick up a souvenir – a piece of German shell that had speared into a lawn. And she brought it back home to Collingham for Christmas.

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CHOIRBOY GEORGE OF AVERHAM KILLED IN FRANCE

AVERHAM gardener George Smith and his wife Elizabeth received a letter on Thursday informing them that the oldest of their five children, 24-year-old Private George William Smith of the 1st Battalion Sherwood Foresters had been killed in action on 22 November.

A long-serving regular soldier, he had been in France for only 16 days, having previously served in India. History tells us that his Battalion was in Bombay when The Great War broke out, landed at Plymouth on 2 October, moved to Hursley Park for training, and landed at Le Havre on 5 November – an ironic day to be facing fireworks.

The last George's parents heard from him was on 19 November, when the censor would not allow him to say he was in the trenches facing the foe, but he wrote that he was "all right" and wished they would send him some cigarettes.

On Monday 21 December, the village church was packed for a memorial service; young George had spent eight years in its choir as a boy. His ultimate sacrifice is recorded on Le Touret Memorial, which a century on would contain 13,394 names.

Village lads are urged to join the fighting forces

A CAMPAIGN organised by the Newark Division Recruiting Committee to persuade more rural men to join the Military opened on Wednesday night.

There were meetings at Harby, North Clifton and Normanton-on-Trent that were well attended despite a blanket of thick fog in the Trent Valley.

Mr Frank Oates of the influential Besthorpe family presided, supported by Henry Arthur Colefax, a London-based barrister who was preparing to stand as the Liberal candidate for the Newark Division at the next General Election, and the omnipresent Major Milthorp.

There were more meetings on Friday night at Sutton-on-Trent, Radcliffe-on-Trent and Calverton – with Newark's Member of Parliament, Mr John Ralph Starkey, joining the speakers.

Every one of the 53 villages in the Newark area will be visited before the year's end.

And they will stir arguments in most of the communities about whether farm workers are 'shirking' by staying on the land rather than enlisting in the beleaguered fighting forces.

Fatstock sales of £6,200

THE annual Christmas Fatstock Market last Tuesday was minus the usual prizes provided by the Newark Tradesmen's Association because of the war.

But despite the absence of the traditional incentives, auctioneers Edward Bailey & Son sold 193 beast, 322 sheep and 183 pigs for a total of £6,195 7s.

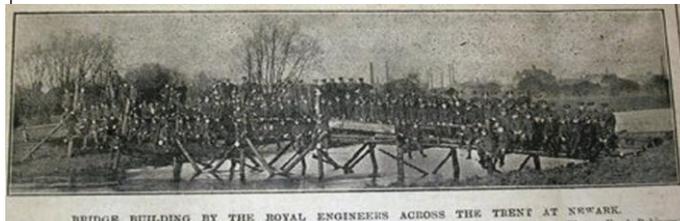
The amount was considered to be "immensely satisfactory in the circumstances" – and proved that butchers will have ample stock to offer for Christmas dinners.

Collingham's chapel charity

COLLINGHAM Wesleyan Church sale of work contributed £49 to Church work, foreign missions and the National Children's Home and Orphanage.

Solicitor dies

NEWARK solicitor Michael Herbert Colton died aged 50 on Sunday – three days after the death of his widowed mother Esther Eleanor (83) at the family home, South Scarle Hall. It proved to be but the start of the family's war-time mourning...



BRIDGE BUILDING BY THE ROYAL ENGINEERS ACROSS THE TRENT AT NEWARK.

Here come the L-plate Engineers!

PLANS were announced on Saturday for 200 Royal Engineers from Yorkshire and 70 horses to be billeted in the Trentside villages immediately north of Newark.

Their primary task will be to carry out pontoon practice across the fastest-flowing stretches of the river, similar to that pictured above on the Farndon side of Newark.

With heavy rain having fallen recently, many meadows are flooded so the Engineers will have challenging conditions in which to begin their practice.

The pre-Christmas news turned into a gift that simply kept on giving in the district.

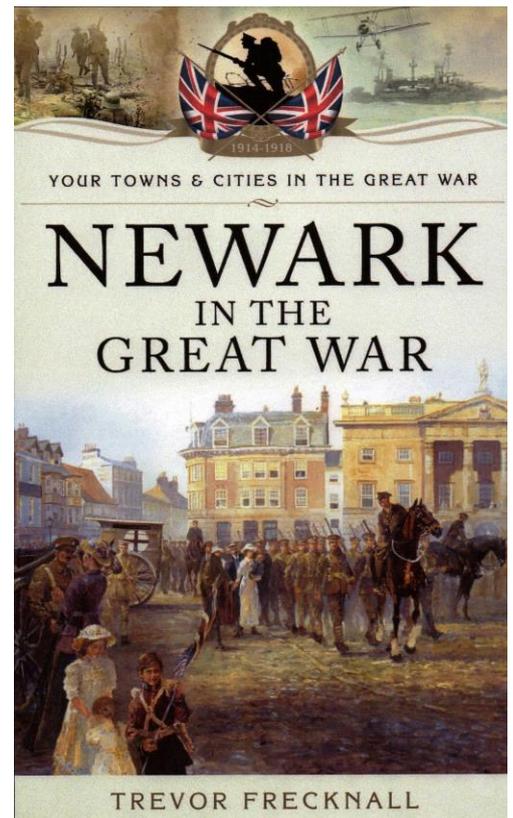
For by the end of The Great War, economists estimated that trainee Royal Engineers had boosted the wealth of the Newark district by a massive £1million in fees paid to needy families who provided lodgings for the soldiers and the money they spent before they went to War.

The down side was that they would take over many schools and other public buildings.

Magnus rot

NEWARK Education Authority, at its monthly meeting last Tuesday, accepted a tender of £378 18s from G Brown & Son to tackle the dry rot in the historic Magnus Buildings in Appletongate.

Now read the full dramatic account of...



TREVOR FRECKNALL

£14.99 from WH Smith

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