

# Great War Bulletin

No. 23...Newark...Monday 4 January 1915

## Bishop floats to Newark service

AFTER being all but stranded by floods around Kelham on Sunday, the Bishop of Southwell arrived by milk float to conduct a service for 1,000 servicemen in Newark Parish Church.

His problem began when his chauffeur ran into floods just beyond Kelham Bridge and the car engine stopped. As luck would have it, a horse-drawn milk float came along, the Bishop good humouredly clambered aboard and the service went ahead as planned.

Afterwards, a party of Engineers proceeded to the stranded car, limbered her up and towed her to dry land. Amazingly, the car started and the Bishop was driven safely home.

# Christmas truce!

## Christ Church boy tells of brutal enemy

THE brutality of German soldiers is the subject of a letter received by the Christ Church Boys' School headmaster Frederick James Trout from one of his ex-pupils.

Private Fred Kelsall, who had been a house painter before joining the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Sherwood Foresters, wrote from the Western Front:

"There are several old Christ Church boys here and they asked me to send you a few lines to show they had not forgotten the old school and its master.

"They are glad to be Englishmen and have been brought up and educated to be sportsmen and humane – not as the Germans are showing themselves to be.

"It is horrible, sir, to see the devastated villages and homes of the poor people in this part of France.

"They will almost worship you for a crust of bread or a tin of bully beef. It gives me immense satisfaction every time I have the chance of wiping out a German."

Kelsall's parents Fred, a 45-year-old wholesaler clothier, and 44-year-old Mary live at 98 Victoria Street with the youngest three of their five children. Mr Trout resides nearby at 22 Albert Street.

**NORTHGATE cobbler's son William Setchfield has written home from the Western Front with an amazing tale of friendship among foes.**

William, who is in the trenches with the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, wrote to his brother Alfred at 28 Northgate about an unofficial truce which so embarrassed the Army's top brass that they began to introduce stricter censorship of what serving men were allowed to communicate to the folk back home.

His letter sounded as if British troops had welcomed their friendly neighbours over to tea:

**"We spent a wonderful Christmas. The Germans came over to us in the afternoon and we had our photos taken with them.**

"But it would be a big task to put everything that happened in a letter."

Research a century later by Newark Town FC historian Francis Towndrow offered the possibility that William, a goalkeeper in the Newark League pre-War, had taken part in the football match between the enemies that became part of legend.

But William made no mention of a game in his letter, merely going on:

"Forest made a draw with Derby, I see, although I

## Friendship – and football – among foes

haven't seen anything about the game yet.

"I thought of you on Boxing Day especially. I was having a game of cards in my dug-out with three or four more. 'I wonder what they're doing at home,' were the chief words mentioned..."

"We're still 'hanging on' as the saying goes. Awful weather we've been having, but I'm still in excellent health and so have plenty to be thankful for.

"I shall write again when our turn comes to leave the trenches."

## Local sailor's Atlantic tears

**PROUD MUM** Mrs Annie Kirk of 167 Barnbygate received a letter over Christmas from her 21-year-old son Arthur, an Ordinary Seaman on *HMS Glasgow*.

It was dated 8 November and addressed to both Annie and her husband Herbert Joseph, a boiler man in a maltster's brewhouse...

"I am still alive and quite all right in every way.

"No doubt before you receive this letter you will have read about the engagement we had in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of Chili (Chile) and have been a bit anxious to hear whether I was all right or not.

"I am very sorry to say that we lost the fight but we were not disgraced, thank God as we fought superior ships and were out-numbered by five to three – the Good Hope, Monmouth and Glasgow – and we are the only one left to tell the tale. When we look back on it, it seems a miracle that we were not blown to smithereens as when the other two ships went

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## Soldier killed in Appletongate

**DRIVER** John O'Connor, aged 41, of the Royal Engineers died after being violently thrown from his horse near the Friary in Appletongate last Tuesday.

When the inquest was held two days later, Coroner F B Foottit was horrified to learn that Driver O'Connor's saddle had only one

girth. "There ought to be two," he asserted.

Informed that the Army always provided only one, he retorted: "Then the authorities don't know much about it..."

"This man has been lost probably through not having two girths, and we don't want to lose

men. We want all we can get."

After the jury returned a verdict of accidental death with no blame attached to anyone, Mr Foottit made it clear that he disagreed.

He clearly believed that the Army authorities were to blame for this death.



## High praise for the reserve Sherwoods

ONE of Britain's most famous officers, Major-General Sir Reginald Pole-Carew, handed out high praise to the Reserve Battalion of the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion Sherwood Foresters after carrying out a formal inspection at their training ground.

The venue was a field adjoining The Grove at New Balderton, loaned for the purpose by Mrs Sarah Quibell, whose husband Thomas Oliver, a well-to-do agricultural merchant, had died in 1908.

The 1,000-strong force had set off from their Drill Hall at 9.15am on Sunday – there being no question in Wartime of the Sabbath being a day of rest – headed by the Bugle Band and under the command of Major Gowrie Aitchison while Colonel William Cope Oates – who had been informed of the inspection only the previous evening – hurried to Northgate Station to meet Sir Reginald, who was Inspector-General of Territorial Forces.

After the rigorous drill and inspection, Sir Reginald confessed that he was “astonished to see what good progress has been made in so short a time.

“The drill that I have seen this morning I consider reflects very great credit on all ranks, and I am convinced that if you continue to improve as you have begun, in a very short while you will be able to hold your own against any battalion in England.”

Born on May Day 1849, Sir Reginald served in Afghanistan in 1880, Egypt 1882, Burma 1886–87 and the Boer War 1899–1900; and was Member of Parliament for Bodmin in his native Cornwall.

Two decades later, the official history of the War-time deeds of the Sherwood Foresters revealed that Sir Reginald had initially berated Colonel Oates for importing regular soldiers to drill. He had taken lots of convincing they were recruits.

PICTURED here are the officers of the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion Sherwood Foresters (from left to right)...

Top row: 2<sup>nd</sup> Lts A Dobson, J S C Oates, A Hacking, E Hacking, W Weetman, Lts H Handford, J Lane, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lts J Eddison, H Kirby.

Second row: 2<sup>nd</sup> Lts J Gray, W Wright, H Wright, B Vann, J Edge, Lt G Clarke, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lts W Hollins, E James, J Turner, Lt C Davenport.

## Leaders of local Terriers

Third row: Capts R Hodgkinson, W Allen, AC Clarke, the Rev J Hales (Chaplain), Capt and Adjutant E Collin,

Lt-Col C Huskinson, Major G Fowler, Capts J Becher, M Martyn, A Ashwell, H Stallard (Medical Officer).

Front row: 2<sup>nd</sup> Lts R Piggford, A Hamilton.

What nobody could imagine as they came towards the end of their training was how many of them would not live to see the end of 1915, never mind the conclusion of The Great War.

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down, all the five German boats concentrated their fire on the good old *Glasgow*, and we owe our salvation to our speed, which enabled us to leave the enemy ships behind when they chased us.

**“All aboard our ship wept like children, and the Captain also, when we fell-in next morning to read prayers...”**

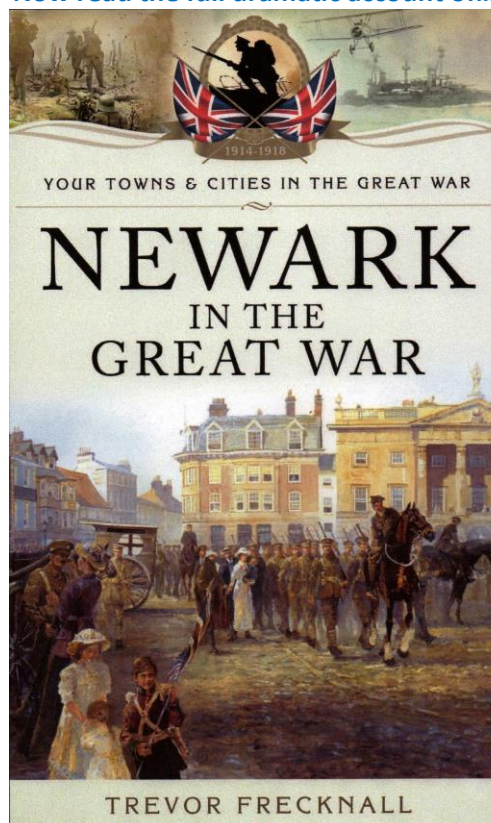
“The *Good Hope* caught fire and flew up. The *Monmouth* also caught fire but got it under control all right. But when the engagement was over (it was a pitch dark night) our Captain made a signal to the *Monmouth* asking if they were all right and she replied she was making water very badly and had no hope of keeping afloat for long.

“Then their brave Captain turned his ship about and ran full speed into the enemy and tried to sink them, but whether he did or not we shall never know, but they died a noble death and it ought to make us doubly thankful that we are still here...”

“We sustained a lot of damage to our side from the shells and we have had a hard struggle to keep on the top. We arrive ----- Islands at 6 o’ clock in the morning so I think we are pretty safe now.”

Their destination was censored.

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