

Great War Bulletin

No. 29...Newark...Monday 15 February 1915

REUNION FOR REFUGEE

ONE of the Belgian soldiers recuperating at Mrs Violet Cogan's make-shift hospital in North Muskham had a massive shock when he and nine colleagues were declared fit enough to return to the fighting forces.

On arrival in London, he was reunited with his wife and child, whom he thought had died as the Germans rampaged through their country. They were on their way to be given refuge at Muskham Grange while he returned to the fighting front.

The *Newark Advertiser* story did not identify the family.

TEACHERS LAUNCH FARMS BATTLE

LOCAL schoolteachers were on Saturday urged to "fight strenuously" the exploitation of children on farms and in factories during the stress of War.

The rallying cry came from the former president of the National Union of Teachers, Mr T P Sykes MA, at the annual meeting of the Newark branch at Lover's Lane School.

He said it was an economic question but one which must be faced boldly by all teachers with an interest in the welfare of children.

The purchasing power of a sovereign today was, as compared with last year, 16 shillings – a 20 per cent reduction. Yet wages remained about the same and so little children were suffering.

In spite of extra profits the farmer was now making, he was clamouring for cheap child labour.

English education laws were bad enough where the children of the poor were concerned, but to further break down the laws protecting the children would be a crime to which no true teacher could countenance.

The children of the poor had few friends.

So Mr Sykes appealed to the teachers of the Newark district to be true to their sacred office in these times

of stress. While he was sure they would make any and every sacrifice for the safety of their sacred land, let them above all be true to the children in their schools.

Mr Sykes said his audience belonged to the noblest profession in the country.

They had in their hands "the making of the nation."

Their old boys were coming back on leave from the battlefronts, and in every

War on child labour

school the Roll of Honour occupied the most prominent place.

The product of the Elementary School was being tried and was being found to be of fine gold.

On the motion of Joseph Woodward, head of North Muskham School, seconded by Harry James Stibbard, the head teacher of Lover's Lane, a very cordial vote of thanks was accorded Mr Sykes for his able and eloquent address.

The Newark branch elected the Besthorpe Council School head William Wells as their new chairman. Miss Brooks of Lover's Lane School continued as secretary and Mr W H Henton (Mount School) was re-elected treasurer.

Hearing that the branch had 83 members, Mr Sykes congratulated them on their work – and urged them not to neglect physical education.

It would be vital once the children were called into the Armed Forces.

Newark sailor guarding 30 enemy prisoners

SAILOR ERNEST KELHAM has written home to Nicholson Street, Newark, telling his parents he is guarding 30 of the German prisoners rescued from an icy grave in the Battle of the Falklands on 8 December.

"The first shot was fired at 12.30pm," he wrote. "The *Invincible* and *Inflexible* engaged the two big ships and we left the other three to our five cruisers.

"Both of the enemy's larger vessels were firing at us ... We sank the *Scharnhorst* at about 4pm. She was the crack gunnery ship of the German Navy.

"And the *Gneisenau* had a similar fate about 6pm, being in action for six hours.

"It was hot work and they got a lot of hits on us. But no-one was hurt or killed.

"One shell exploded and blew my kitbag and kit all away. I have one handkerchief..."

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East Markham nurse on torpedoed hospital ship

RAILWAY platelayer William Sutton and his wife Mary at East Markham received a letter last Tuesday from the oldest of their six children, William of the Royal Army Medical Corps, who was on board the hospital ship *Austurias* when it was torpedoed in the English Channel:

"I know you will be anxiously waiting to hear from me ... I am

thankful to say we are safe. You should have seen our faces when we realised what had occurred and what a narrow escape we had, but we did not get alarmed, nor are we downhearted.

"We were on our outward journey, about 15 miles from Le Havre. We should have had only ourselves to look after if the worst

had occurred.

"What a dreadful affair it would have been had we been returning home with a load of helpless, wounded soldiers, had we been hit.

"The watchful skill and care of our officer on the bridge avoided one of the most cowardly actions in the world's history.

"We are now returning with our

wounded on board. We are cheered by all the ships which pass. All are shouting, 'Good old *Austurias*!' You know England expects every man this day to do his duty. But I hope this will not occur again. Do not trouble about me; I am not afraid in the least. I am sure God will protect us in the future as in the past..."

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DEAD MAN'S LETTER

ON the very day Private William Warriner got a letter home about his pride at having been reared in Newark's equivalent of Botany Bay, he was killed in action.

William described himself as "born and bred in the good old Botany Bay, now Victoria Gardens" in his cheery letter.

And he was equally candid about life in the trenches with the Royal Scots Fusiliers ... and a shock meeting with his brother.

"I nearly had a fit for I thought he

Newark 'Botany Bay' hero killed as family reads his cheery note

was at home sitting by the fireside," William wrote.

"Four days later when we came back from the trenches, he visited me in my billet.

"He had frosted feet, poor devil ... I have also got frost-bitten feet but we have to stick it out until we fall down...

"If the Allies have had a victory we

forget about our sore feet and jump and shout with joy...

"I have had two narrow escapes from snipers' rifle fire.

"And a lance-corporal in the section next to us in the firing line put his valise on the top of the parapet. No sooner had he put it there than a sniper's bullet went through it and a tin box and a

match box and lodged in a second box of matches. He now carries it about with him as a souvenir.

"We get some very dirty work out here. Sometimes we are sitting up to the knees in water and slush all day and night long when we are in the trenches.

"It's awful in some places. I think this letter will get through [the censors] as I have only put the bright side of things in it."

Only a week later, it transpired that he died on the very day his letter arrived – Wednesday 10 February.

The 32-year-old husband of Kathleen Warriner, 27, and father of Ellen, 9, and 7-year-old Grace, William is remembered on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial.

Egmanton mourns

A MEMORIAL service was held at Egmanton on Friday for 18-year-old Private Frederick Robinson, who had served at the altar of the village church on the very day he went off in August 1914 to enlist in the Coldstream Guards.

Born and bred in the village, the only son of railway platelayer William Robinson, he had worked on Bryan Bartle's farm before answering the patriotic call.

He went out to France in November and was killed on 25 January.

The memorial service was conducted by the Vicar, the Rev A H M Hope; and muffled peals were rung on the bells.

Private 11024 Robinson is remembered at the Woburn Abbey Cemetery, Cuinchy, a village in the Pas de Calais.

Hospital ship torpedoed

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"I am sure if our young men in England could see what I see among our poor wounded soldiers, they would not hesitate to go and help them to bring this dreadful war to an end."

The *Austurias* was painted white and had huge red crosses on each side plus its funnel.

Germany explained its attack by claiming: "Britain is about to send troops and war material to France and we must use all military means to prevent the success of that enterprise."

By a grisly coincidence, a British hospital ship named *Asturias* would be torpedoed without warning during night of 20-21 March 1917: 41 will be lost.

Foresters' football victory

THE 8th Reserve Battalion Sherwood Foresters upheld local honour on the Newark Town football ground by defeating a team of Royal Engineers from Northumberland who are learning to build pontoon bridges across the Trent. Severely handicapped by not having proper football boots, the Northumbrians conceded 15 goals.

Naval Battle of Falklands

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"We saved a lot of Germans off the boat we sank. But it was awful to see them in the water. Some were without clothes and making a horrible wailing noise.

"A great many died just after we got them on board, so we buried them at sea.

"We had the lifeboats out with ropes over the sides. A lot of 'them' got hold of the ropes but could not hold on.

"One German officer who was picked up started to fight with our men, so they dumped him in 'the ditch' again.

"Well, four enemy ships were sunk and the *Dresden* got away on fire. We gave chase but could not see her.

"I have got a good job as sentry over 30 prisoners, some of whom can speak English and have told me a lot of things about their ship and its doings."

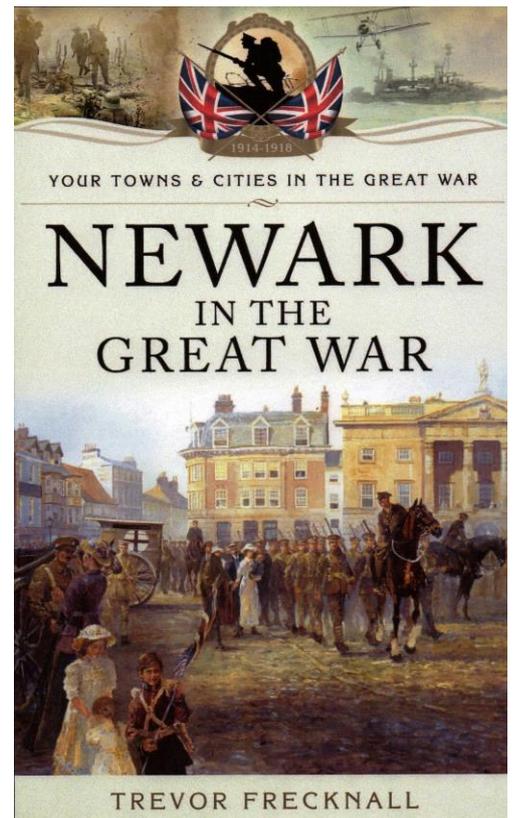
The Battle of the Falklands enabled the Royal Navy to take full revenge for the losses of the *Monmouth* and the *Good Hope* off the Chile coast in November.

Ten British lives were lost. German losses topped 2,000.

Whist comforts

MORE THAN 240 players took part in a whist drive organised by Newark Primrose League on Thursday evening and raised £25 4s 9d to provide comforts for troops.

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