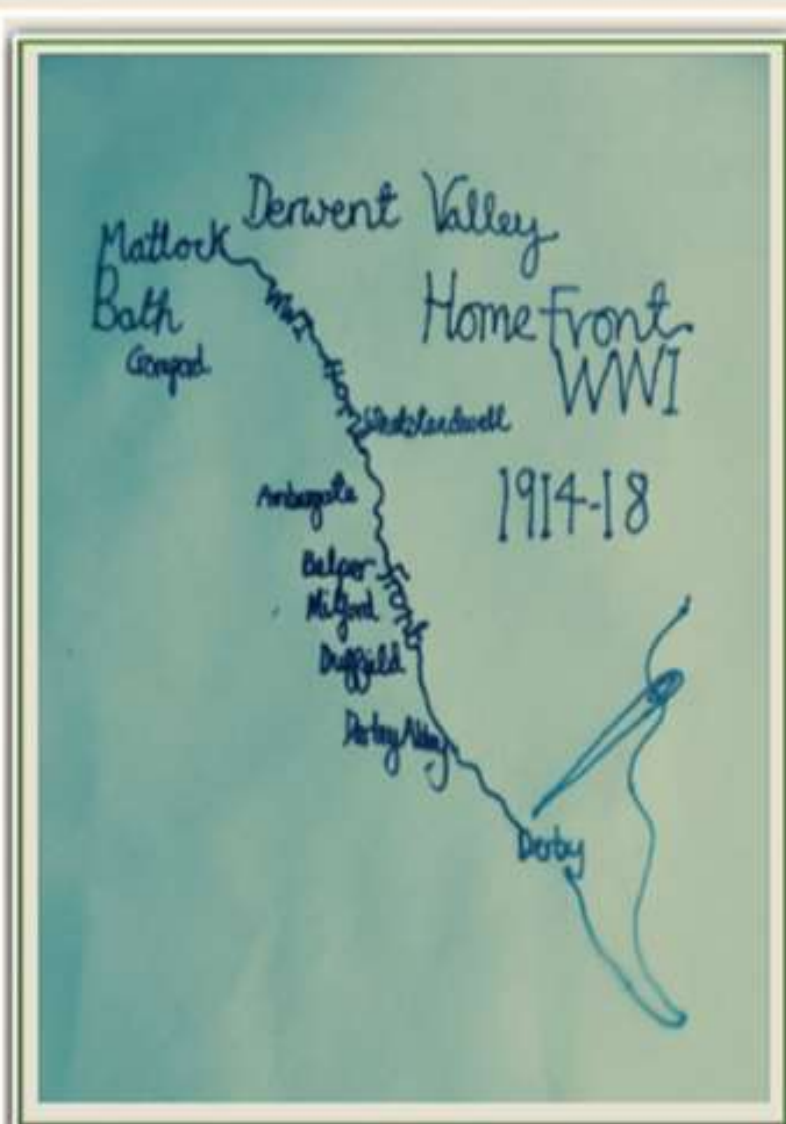


Fact & Fabrication

Glimpses of the WW1 Home Front in the Derwent Valley



Editor: Hazel Thomson

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Derwent Valley: Milford' and 'Schooling in the Derwent Valley during WW1'

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Foreword

When I first suggested a collaboration with Jenny Anthony and Maureen Elliott, as Spiral Arts, in summer 2017 they came up with a focus for a project and moved it forward. After a successful bid we were given a grant by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and 'Fact & Fabrication' was launched at the Derby Women's Day event in March, 2018. It was my responsibility to oversee the research and Jenny and Maureen had charge of the creativity. They also co-ordinated and managed the project as well as organising and running the workshops and the sewing and embroidery sessions. We had very positive comments about the Touring Exhibition and particularly the Textile Installation which was a product of their vision, imagination and ingenuity.

There is much appreciation of all the participants who gave their time to dye, print, sew and embroider the textiles that went into the Installation for the Exhibition. The whole project would not have happened without the team of researchers who 'dug and delved' to uncover the hidden history that has gone to make up this publication. A number of supporters have helped us on the way and we would particularly like to thank:

Dr Cath Feely and Dr Helen Bates, Humanities Department, University of Derby
Adrian Farmer, Heritage Co-ordinator, Derwent Valley Mills
John Mumby, Factory Guide and Historian and Jane Middleton-Smith, Archivist at John Smedley
... and those who have provided and helped us with images.

A wide variety of sources have been used for the material in this book. Good use has been made of the British Newspaper Archive to access relevant newspapers from the time including the Derby Daily Telegraph, Derbyshire Advertiser and Journal, Derbyshire Courier and the Belper News. The last of these was established in 1896 and from 1901 became the 'Belper News and Derbyshire Telephone'. In 1917 it reverted back to its briefer name which we have used for applicable references.

After a look at the pre-War Derwent Valley, we have developed sections that discuss various events and stories from August 1914 to July 1919. In addition, we have included chapters on key areas which we thought needed a more focused approach. Context has been provided to all areas by drawing on school log entries and newspaper items that sometimes provide further stories about life on the Home Front.

Only 20 copies of this book are available to the public in 'hard copy' but we have distributed them to a number of public archives including Derbyshire Record Office and Derby Libraries. We hope to have this publication available through some websites too so you might look for us as an internet source.

We hope you enjoy reading the stories we have uncovered.

Hazel Thomson

Fact&Fabrication

Glimpses of the WW1 Home Front in the Derwent Valley

About the Project

This publication is the culmination of a community based, National Lottery Heritage Funded project which started in March 2018. It was initiated by Jenny Anthony and Maureen Elliott as Spiral Arts in collaboration with Hazel Thomson as a newcomer to local history research.

The project innovatively brought together original historical research and creative textiles to mark the Centenary of the end of First World War hostilities and the Declaration of Peace. The project explored WW1 Home Front experiences of the people and communities along a section of the lower Derwent Valley and the surrounding area. We focused on the stretch of the River in the UNESCO World Heritage site, Derwent Valley Mills, which runs from Matlock Bath at the northern point down to the Silk Mill in Derby.

Fact

Research was carried out by a small team whose members were previously new to historical research. Information was gathered from local archives such as Derby Local Studies Library, Derbyshire Record Office and Smedley's Mill. The project enabled the team to develop research skills by providing bespoke training sessions at Derby and Matlock libraries and the University of Derby. Context of our industrial heritage and the working of the mills was provided by arranging guided tours at Masson Mill, Matlock Bath and Smedley's Mill, Lea Bridge.

Fabrication

The initial collection of data was then used to inform the creation of a textile installation. Spiral Arts led a number of workshops over the summer of 2018 in Cromford, Belper and the Arboretum in Derby. Participants experienced a range of art forms and an opportunity to develop their creative skills. Sewing sessions were organised to piece together the dyed and printed materials and to stitch and embroider enhancements onto the fabric. The entire piece was hand stitched. Around 40

Some of the Research Team outside Masson Mill, Matlock Bath 2018. Image: C. Bourne.



Researchers undertaking training at the University of Derby, 2018. Image: C. Bourne.



Dying cotton using various techniques for the textile installation 2018. Image: Becca Ward



people contributed to the fabrication of this creative initiative either through the workshops or in stitching and embroidery sessions.

The Textile Installation

The Textile Installation was inspired by the Derwent Valley, its river, industry and the resilience of the people whose stories we have uncovered. The River Derwent is a strong connecting link flowing through the studied landscape. The Valley and its industrial heritage gave the main focus to the textile piece, together with the images of the mills and factories along its edge.

The techniques used in constructing the fabric of the banner are natural indigo dyeing, arashi and itajime shibori and block printing. The dyed fabric pieces were sewn together to form a patchwork background reminiscent of both the natural and shaped landscape. Embellishment was added with the decorative stitching of words that reference the local mills, sewing tasks and phrases that locate themes in the research. Simple sewing stitches such as chain stitch, over stitch, running stitch and couching techniques were used in the construction.

The design of the display frame came about through the idea of the dynamic movement of mill machinery and the integral part the river plays in generating this power. The loom form is evocative of the work carried out inside the mills. The upper vertical section has a wheel that can be turned to reveal further stitched work. The frame was expertly constructed, to our design, by the woodworking volunteer team from the Museum of Making, Silk Mill, Derby.

The Touring Exhibition

The Textile Installation formed the centrepiece of the Touring Exhibition. It was accompanied by 6 Information Panels giving glimpses of the Home Front during WW1 along the Derwent Valley, drawn from our research, along with other textile items that reflected the industrial heritage. Whilst the textile workshops were underway researchers continued to uncover history from various primary as well as secondary sources. These included Parish Magazines, school log books, newspapers through the British Newspaper Archive and a good selection of documents housed in the Derbyshire Record Office archive. We were also privileged to have the opportunity to access a range of documentation

Dyeing cotton using various techniques for the textile installation 2018. Image: Becca Ward



Stitching and embroidering textiles. Image: Spiral Arts, 2018



The Textile Installation, 2018
Image: Hazel Thomson



through John Smedley's Archive. The information on the panels only skimmed the surface of the history we uncovered and so we used some of the remainder to produce the book you are now reading.

The Exhibition was launched in October, 2018 at the Orangery in Derby Arboretum. It was a huge success and we heard, for the first time, a folk tune performed and composed for the Project by Sarah Matthews called 'From Shuttle to Clog'. The piece begins with the sound of machinery recorded at Masson Mill before the violin picks up the rhythm of the machines which in turn fades into a clog dance in time with the same pace. It could be heard playing at some of the venues that hosted our Exhibition and at the time this book went to print can be accessed on You Tube. After the launch the Exhibition went to Cromford Mill until Armistice Day, 2018 and then on to High Peak Junction followed by Wirksworth Heritage Centre. It then went to 'Respace' at Milford, the Marble Hall, Nightingale Road, Derby (Old Rolls Royce Factory), St Matthews Church at Darley Abbey, back to the Orangery and lastly to Fleet Arts at Belper in June 2019.

If you would like to know more about our project, please look at our blog
<https://factfabrication.wordpress.com>

You can contact us at spiral_arts@hotmail.co.uk

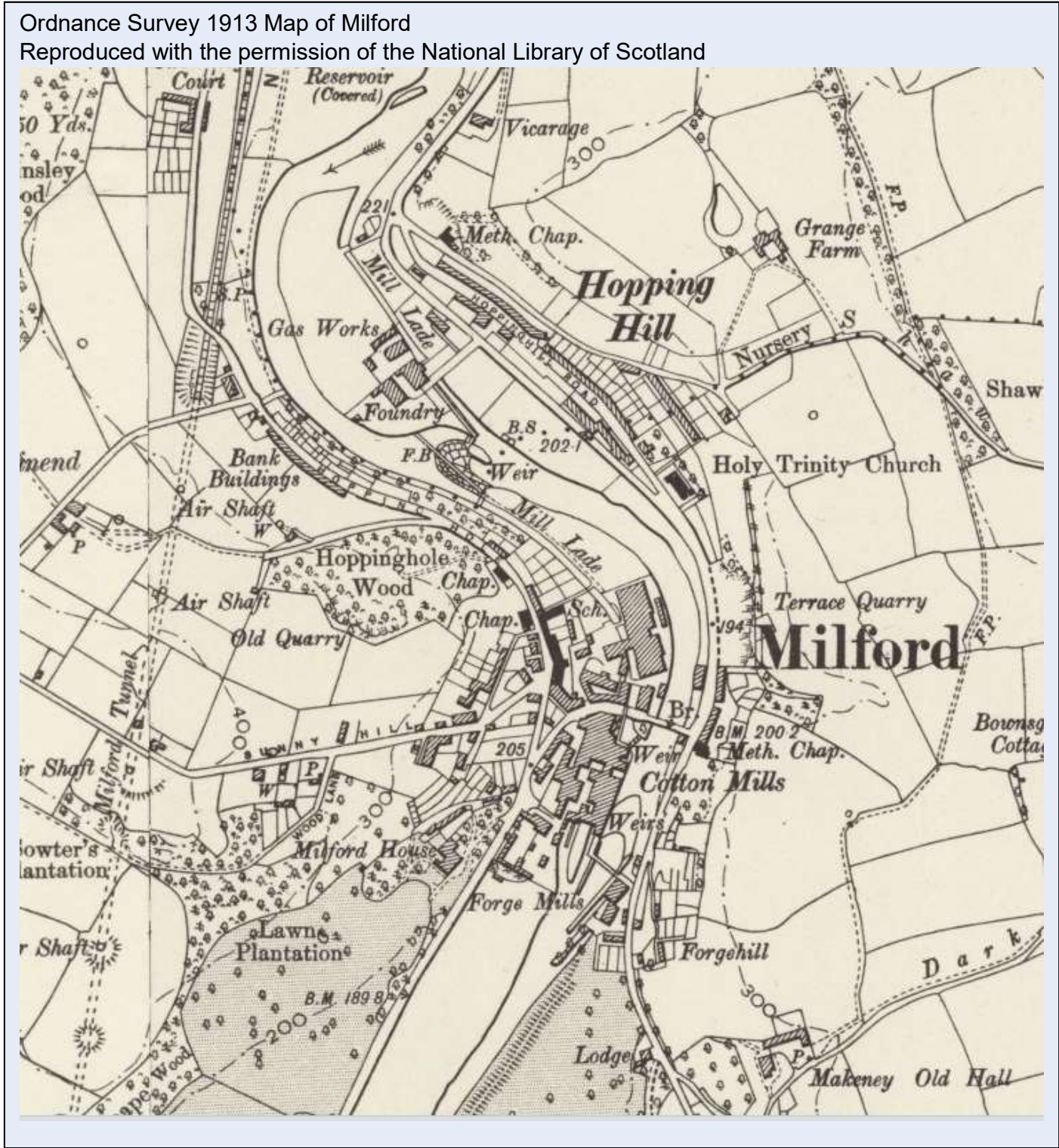
The Touring Exhibition at the Orangery, Derby Arboretum. Image: Jenny Anthony, 2019



1. A pre-WW1 Glimpse into the Derwent Valley: Milford

The unique importance of the Derwent Valley Mills in Derbyshire was recognised when it became a UNESCO World Heritage site in December 2001. The area is the birthplace of the factory system where in the 18th Century water power was used to drive newly invented machinery for the mass production of cotton spinning, textiles and garments. The family names of Arkwright, Strutt, Lombe, Smedley and Evans are now synonymous with contributing to our manufacturing heritage, changing the physical landscape and establishing industrialised communities.

To give a context for this publication we offer a focus on a particular village which is typical of the communities that developed along the lower section of the River Derwent. Jedediah Strutt bought



land in Milford in 1781 creating a cotton-spinning mill and later housing for the workforce. The family, like others in the valley, remained as benefactors for the village providing a school and other social facilities for their workers and their families. By using 1911 census data and other research material the following account gives an indication of what the pre-war Derwent Valley looked like and provides a comparison of some of the many changes to the workforce's lives that occurred during the Great War.

Milford is a small village in the Derwent Valley, lying two miles south of Belper and approximately 6 miles from the southern end of the Derwent Valley, Derby's Silk Mill. On the 1913 Ordnance Survey map Milford spans both sides of the River Derwent with a bridge carrying the road linking the two sides. There is a residential area on each side with the mills dominating the west bank of the river. The Derby to Matlock railway passed under the village (as it still does) through a tunnel to the west of the river. To the south of Milford is Makeney Hall where Herbert Strutt and his family lived - well away from a foundry and gas works to the north. As well as Holy Trinity Church there were a number of chapels dotted around the village.

The village mainly owes its existence to the Strutt family who were well known as mill owners and philanthropists in the area. Mills they had owned at Belper and Milford had been sold to the English Sewing Company by 1911 but George Herbert Strutt (known as 'Herbert'), who headed the family at the time lived at Makeney House, under half a mile from the village. In Belper he granted land for a boathouse in 1905 with the boating rights to a three mile stretch of the Derwent to the Belper Boating Association. After further developments funded by Strutt the River Gardens were officially opened in April 1906. He was also instrumental in creating the Herbert Strutt School which he also funded for Belper and surrounding villages.

Herbert took an interest in the welfare of his neighbours in Milford supporting other ventures including those which were war-related. The Strutt's had provided a school in the 1830s within the mill complex for village children. When the mill was sold to the English Sewing Cotton Company in 1899 rent for the school was payable to them but went unpaid for some years. Although it appears that the school officially had its own budget, it invariably ran at a loss with Herbert making up the deficit. Once the situation over the rent was realised Herbert took it upon himself to settle that debt too. The same building still houses the local school.

George Herbert Strutt
Image: Strutts at strutts.org.uk



Milford Road Sign 2018
Image: Jenny Anthony



Stages in the cotton spinning process at Masson Mill, Matlock Bath. Images: C. Bourne 2018



In Milford 1911 there were 1161 households of hard-working people and employment levels were high. Children could start work from around the age of 12 but it was raised to 14 in 1918: people in the country worked an average of 56 hours per week. Men, it seemed continued to work for as long as they could. In the 1911 census, one 81 year old listed his occupation as 'farmer' and a 94 year old stated he was a framework knitter! Three years earlier Lloyd George's Old Age Pensions Act had been passed and single men and women over 70 were entitled to 5/- (25p) a week or 7/6 (37½p) for a couple. As it was means tested the amount could be reduced if a person's annual income was over £21 a year (worth around £2,450 in 2019).

Most men were employed in either the mills, the iron foundry or the loco works and their work tended to be heavy and skilled. In the mills the jobs included framework knitter, macramé polisher, cotton dyer, bleacher and warehouse man whereas in the foundry jobs included moulder and blacksmith and jobs in the loco works included engineer and fitter.

The working pattern of women was different from that of men. Generally they would expect to work until they married and so few women in the village over 30 years of age were in identified employment. The exceptions to this were those who had been widowed and those who were married to someone that worked from home, such as a publican, a shopkeeper or a farmer. The mills employed around 80% of Milford women in their teens and twenties. The younger girls and boys were usually in support roles such as bobbin carriers and messengers and the older women had jobs usually using fine motor skills such as fast hosiery seamer, mender, finisher and embroiderer.

The number of people living in a dwelling in 1911 was often much greater than today. Some houses had occupants of parents and their unmarried children and these generally housed up to 7 people.

13 June 1918

Messrs. The English Sewing Cotton Company Ltd

Dear Sirs

MILFORD SCHOOLS

With reference to the rent of £1 per annum, which is payable to me by the School Managers under lease dated 25/1/1903, I beg to say that this rent is not actually collected, as there is usually a deficiency on the school accounts which is made good by me. Accordingly there is no object in asking the School Managers to make payment of this rent to myself, and, for me in turn, to include the amount when squaring the deficiency on the year's working. In the circumstances, I suggest you allow the matter to be dealt with in the same way as present.

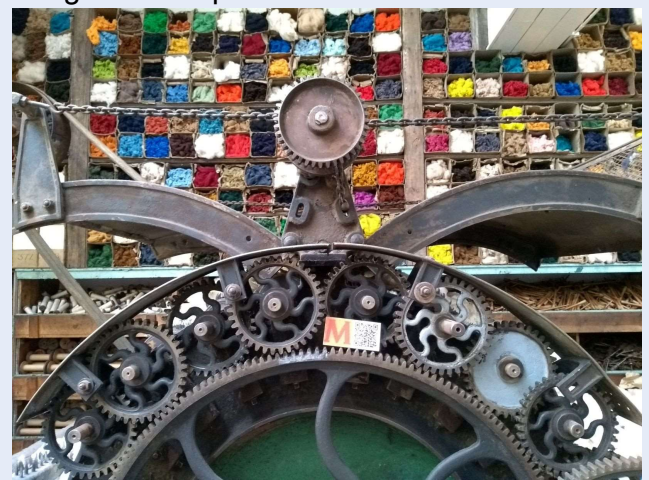
You will, of course, be quite safe, so far as maintaining your legal title in the property is concerned, in doing this, as I have already given you a formal acknowledgement that the property is vested in the Company under the Conveyances of Belper and Milford Properties to the Company, dated 25/3/1912 and your title under this Conveyance will not, in any degree, be impaired by your assenting to the above suggestion. Further, I will continue payment to you of 1/- per annum acknowledgement, as recently arranged.

Yours faithfully

GHS

Machinery at Masson Mill

Image: Christopher Bourne 2018



Others had widowed parents or widowed children with their offspring living with them and some had boarders; a few had a live-in servant. There would be up to 10 people in these households. The housing often comprised two ground floor reception rooms, two bedrooms and an attic. Only four of the elderly people living in Milford at the time of the 1911 census lived alone.

In addition to housing, the cotton mills and the brass and iron foundry, the small scale map of Milford in the early 20th century shows four areas of allotment gardens, Terrace Quarry playground, a school, two public houses, a Church of England church and four non-conformist chapels. There was an additional Wesleyan Methodist chapel within the mills complex.

Much of the social life of the village revolved around the places of worship and places of work with the school used as a venue for events. There were regular clubs such as the Mothers Union, the Girls' Friendly Society and the Girls Brigade. Activity of these groups included charitable work. The Mothers Union Sewing Party met monthly and sewed to raise funds for the Melanesian Mission¹ and for medical missions in India. The Girls' Friendly Society was regularly reported to be providing entertainment for village social events. In 1913 they provided entertainment through action songs and the Band of Hope went on a brake drive by Wirksworth, Middleton and Via Gelia.

Education of adults also took place in the village. In October 1911 there was the second in a course of lectures on poultry keeping in the Council School, Milford. This must have been popular as there was a suggestion that a poultry club should be formed.

The generosity of the Strutt family to the villagers of Milford was to be seen in other treats and outings. Mrs Strutt funded the Sunday School Teachers' Outing to Chester in 1913 and, in the

Belper News

1st December 1911

A MILFORD WORTHY

One of the oldest and best known residents of Milford, Mr Elijah Allsopp, died on Thursday, at the Derby Infirmary, at the age of 87, after a brief illness. ... Deceased was born on July 16th, 1824, and went to work at the early age of eight years at the Milford Mills, where he worked for the rest of his life. He had likewise occupied the same house during his entire career. At the mills he became the manager of the dyeing and bleaching department, and only retired from work in June 1899, on the mills being taken over by the English Sewing Cotton Syndicate.

Belper News

Friday 27th October, 1911

PREACHERS FOR SUNDAY - MILFORD

Primitive Methodist	Mr. J. Sellors
United Methodist Church	Mr. R. Palmer
Wesleyan Methodist	Mr. Shaw
Baptist	Mr. J. Pritchard

Belper News

Friday 17th March, 1911

In the Milford School on Saturday, a tea and entertainment was promoted by the Brotherhood, which is associated with the Wesleyan Connexion but is open to all denominations. At the tea 300 were present... An entertainment followed and was a huge success, over 400 attending, and the proceeds amounted to £8.

Belper News Friday

6th October 1911

THE CRYSTAL PALACE CHOIR. – Belper and Milford supplied their contingents to the Derbyshire Choir which visited the Festival of Empire at the Crystal Palace, London and the programme was repeated at Belper and Milford. At Belper the audience was large and appreciative, and the choir of about 100 voices rendered a programme of choruses and part songs, including excerpts from the Crystal Palace concert with considerable fervour and effect.

¹ The Melanesian Mission had a duty entrusted to it by the New Zealand Church, of building up a Christian civilisation among the Islanders of the South-West Pacific. The president of the 'Home Base' was the Archbishop of Canterbury and the executive committee included The Rt. Rev. The Lord Bishop of Derby.

same year, there was a Sunday School Treat at the Strutt's home.

The Strutt's were not the only benefactors in the locality. Messrs. Allwood Bros, who owned the Derwent Foundry at Milford, were reported in the local press as funding their employees for various activities and giving support to the wider community. For example, Arthur Allwood, one of the brothers in the company, went on to be a Guardian of Belper Union Workhouse. He was also an excellent singer and joined with others for concerts and other performances at numerous local events.

In June, 1911 George Allwood, Arthur's son, came-of-age and to celebrate George organised a dinner for the workmen employed at the Derwent Foundry where he had worked since he was 16. The workmen presented him with a travelling case. In giving a response to various toasts he "urged the apprentices to take advantage of the technical instruction classes conducted at the Herbert Strutt School, which would be of great use to them" in their later life. George was a mechanical engineer having had scientific training at Derby Technical Schools and practical training at the Milford Foundry. In October of the same year he left Derbyshire for Philadelphia to follow in his father's footsteps and take up employment in his field.

The paternal benevolence in the relationship between industry owners, their employees and their community was not an unfamiliar one in the industrialised Derwent Valley. These relationships continued into the war years as the following glimpses into the past reveal.

Belper News, 18th August, 1911

MILFORD EMPLOYEE EXCURSION.

The majority of the employees of the Derwent Foundry, Milford, to the number of 30, participated in an excursion to Scarborough.... The masters paid the railway fares and provided refreshment and amusement, for which they were cordially thanked.

Belper News

25th August, 1911

It will be remembered that Messrs Allwood Bros., Milford, at a very busy time made special arrangements to release nine of their employees for Territorial service at the Scarborough Camp. They visited them in the field under canvas, and met them at the station on their return with vehicles to take them home. The contrast in the treatment indicated is what we wish to emphasise.

2. 1914: Shoulder to the Wheel

On Tuesday 4th August 1914 Germany declared war on Belgium and in turn war was declared by the United Kingdom on Germany. This set in motion, across the nation, preparation for the commencement of hostilities. Weeks beforehand, the press had reported on the circumstances which led to the eventuality so plans were in place if action were needed. In Belper, as elsewhere, official notices went up informing Reservists in the Derbyshire Yeomanry and Territorial Army that they should muster on the 5th August, ready for their departure to the Front Line. Men in the Yeomanry had just returned from Yorkshire, having attended their annual training camp at Scarborough. Instead of going home, they stayed in the Drill Hall overnight so they could report for duty promptly the next day.

Although 'The War' was being fought in mainland Europe and beyond, the effects were felt in the everyday lives of people on the Home Front. Patriotic fervour initially gripped the nation and there were many excited send-offs at railway stations and at other mustering points from which local soldiers were marched down the Derwent Valley to Derby. A farmer near Milford handed out free drinks of milk to sustain soldiers on route.

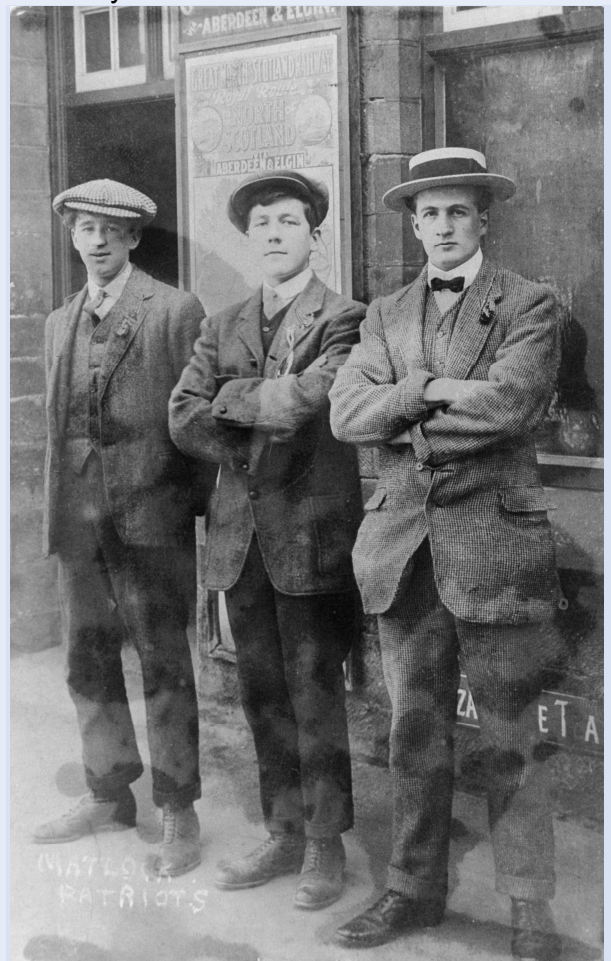
It is hard to imagine what it must have been like to find out that fathers, husbands, sons and brothers were off to fight in a different land. The gaps they left were as workers, in various occupations, trades and professions and, as war progressed, family providers. Young men were often keen to join up. For many, army wages were better than their usual paid work. There were young men, under recruitment age, who grew moustaches to make themselves look older so they could enlist. Some recruitment officers turned a blind eye to under-age hopefuls but the more ethically minded officers rejected those too young to fight.

The expectation of war set in action the military machine. After the Declaration, civilians also sprang into action, responding to various requests to support the assembling forces transferring to barracks, training points and overseas. Committees were formed to prepare for attending to wounded soldiers and making provisions for those at the front. As early as the 7th August, the Belper News was reporting that 4,000 soldiers were expected in Belper and would be quartered in the River Gardens, public halls and schools and in other suitable places. Belper residents were asked to provide accommodation for the officers.

Belper News, 7th August 1914

The vicinity of the railway station presented on Wednesday morning a scene of unusual animation when some hundreds of people scrambled to see the Yeomanry of the Belper district depart, under the command of Sergt. H. Gilbert, who has also volunteered for field duty. The men, some twenty-two in number, received a hearty send-off upon the platform and were lustily cheered as the train steamed out of the station.

First Three Men to Enlist at Matlock Station.
Beverley Toone. Source: Picture the Past



Belper Union Board of Guardians Minute Book, 8th August 1914

Beds to be provided for persons injured in the war in a letter from Miss Montford, Quartermaster of the Voluntary Aid Detachments of the British Red Cross Society.

Space made in the workhouse for Military Authorities to use for putting up soldiers.

Territorials, who had already left Belper for Derby, were billeted at the Abbey Street Schools. Mr. Strutt placed Bridge Hill House at the disposal of officers; the Belper Conservative Club and the Derwent Club, King Street were open for the free use of the Territorial officers and non-commissioned officers, passing through the town. The whole of the available accommodation, at the Belper Union Workhouse, was initially given over to military use and Belper Baths were open to all men in uniform. In the first few days of war, these were dramatic changes and disconcerting to those in the Derwent Valley, faced with the prospect of being "stopped at the point of a bayonet late at night": the railway and bridges at Ambergate were guarded by armed sentries with fixed bayonets.

One local recruit was Josiah Fletcher, Jesse to those who knew him, who lived in Aqueduct Cottage on Cromford Canal. He worked in the 'Dressing/Wash House' at the John Smedley Factory at Lea Mills. Smedley's paid two shillings per week to the family of each employee, serving in the forces, for the duration of the War and contributed one shilling per week to the local relief fund.

Jesse's first attempt at joining up was rejected on the grounds of 'having bad teeth'. At Derby Recruitment Office, on Tuesday 25th August 1914, Jesse enlisted as a Private with the Sherwood Foresters. On the day he joined his Regiment he is said to have walked to Matlock Station, from Riber Village, accompanied by his fourteen-year-old sister Beatrice and brothers Jack and Fred. From there, he caught the train and reported for duty at Normanton Barracks in Derby.

The Sherwood Foresters began their basic training at a tented camp in Markeaton Park and then moved to Earl Brownlow's estate at Belton Park, near Grantham in Lincolnshire with similar accommodation. In October 1914, Jesse was discharged with varicose veins and went back to work at John Smedley's. He re-enlisted with the 'Chatsworth Rifles' in June 1915 but in September 1916, Jesse and another mill worker from Matlock Bath, were seriously injured and died two days later from their wounds.

Commandeering Horses

Horses were needed by the military for: moving heavy weaponry, transport in battle and for officers' personal use. Made known by the film "War Horse", these animals were commandeered nationally with many of them dying in the conflict. Until this point, horses were essential for most forms of transport and in agriculture. Their loss created some difficulties in the short-term and major changes in the long-term.

Belper News 21st August 1914

Lord Kitchener's military scheme was indirectly responsible for a meeting held at the Parish Room, Duffield on Monday evening, with the object of obtaining recruits for the regular army and territorials. ... the following resolution was unanimously carried:- "That the inhabitants of Duffield, in public meeting assembled, pledged themselves to use their utmost endeavours to obtain recruits for the Regular Army (age 19 to 30 years) and also for the Territorial Force for home service (age 17 to 35 years). It was also decided to do all possible to get employers to secure their employees their situations in case of their volunteering." We are informed that one or two recruits were enrolled.

Belper News 14th August 1914

DUFFIELD AND MILFORD

The purchase of horses for the military at the triangular unused roads of the Castle Hill, Duffield, on Sunday afternoon was watched by a large crowd of interested spectators. Owners in the district are to be commended on the patriotic manner in which they came forward and offered bread-winning animals or pets for the service of their country.

The Rev. F. W. Eddison, Vicar of Duffield, has curtailed his holiday with the object of being in the village on Sunday to address parting words to the Duffield Territorials.

Belper News 14th August 1914

A large crowd of interested spectators assembled at the Belper Goods Station on Sunday afternoon, when horses brought from owners in the district during the latter part of last week were dispatched by train for military purposes.

Before the War, Little Chester in Derby had a horse-drawn bus but after the requisitioning of horses, this form of transport ceased in 1915. It was replaced by a battery-powered vehicle, nicknamed "The Tank" but it only went at a little more than walking pace and needed frequent battery charging.

Commandeering Horses, First World War, Duffield, August 1914.
Source: Bromby Collection supplied by Picture the Past



As well as finding places for soldiers in transition, preparations were made for receiving wounded soldiers from the Front. Spaces were made to accommodate men at The Workhouse, The Gables and Green Hall. The latter two were also initially prepared as Voluntary Aid Detachment Hospitals. Later on, only Green Hall was used for this purpose. There is more about VAD Hospitals in another section.

People thought to be of German birth were interned: a chief dyer at Milford Mills was arrested within the first week of the War, taken to Derby but released soon after. Although he was French he had served in the German army under the conscription laws which was the reason for his detention. When released, he said he had been treated with the "utmost courtesy" but had been forced to wear convicts apparel.

Over the next few weeks, all manner of provisions were made and put into action. DORA, Defence of the Realm Act, was passed on the 28th August. This was originally brought in to prevent sensitive military information being passed on to the enemy and to allow the Government to rapidly bring in new legislation if a quick response was needed to a war-related event. There were a number of amendments made during the War, to develop various controls,

**Crich CE School Log –
26th Aug 1914**

Mrs J. T. Lee (wife of one of the Managers), has presented a "Daily Telegraph War Map" with a box of flags, to the school, this afternoon.

**Darley Abbey Infants School Log
24th Aug 1914**

School reopened this morning. Several children are still away from home [on holiday].

including: censorship and dissent, economic, social and labour management including alcohol consumption, food production, rationing and aspects of health such as the containment of venereal disease. Through DORA, licensing hours were restricted to 2 hours at lunchtime and 3 hours in the evening and beer was diluted to make sure workers were clear-headed for factory work. The government controlled what people read by censoring newspapers and the mines and railways were brought under government control to ensure the movement of trains. British Summer Time (Summer Time Act, 1916) was introduced to maximise working hours.

On the 12th August 1914, a meeting of the Red Cross Society was hosted by the Duchess of Devonshire with representatives from across the county. They were asked to collect all promised donations and other gifts, in readiness for making garments for the sick and wounded, and for the wives and children of soldiers. Articles appeared in the newspapers headed “Queen Mary’s Needlework Guild,” appealing to all the Presidents of the Needlework Guilds to organise a large collection of garments for those who “will suffer on account of the war”. It was expected that garments would be needed for soldiers, sailors, territorials and their families, in the Military and Naval Hospitals and as needed, “among the poorer classes”.

Belgian refugees

Many Belgian people fled after the German invasion with a good proportion coming to Britain. Most went to the Netherlands and France with some going to other European countries and safe havens in the U.S., Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The migration to Britain started in August 1914 and it continued for months with people arriving at ports such as Tilbury, Margate, Harwich, Dover, Folkestone, Hull and Grimsby. On the 14th October 1914, 16,000 refugees arrived in Folkestone in that single day. It was estimated that, in total, 250,000 Belgian refugees came to Britain during WW1.

A central Belgian Relief Committee was formed in London to look after the settlement of refugees. In early September, eight refugees arrived in Derby. Arrangements had been made to accommodate them but the party, who were better off than the hosts had realised, took up residence in a local hotel to avoid separation. By Christmas 1914, there were ten such families being housed and supported by local people in Matlock Bath and Cromford. Some, traumatised by their experiences, dived and hid under tables when they heard explosions and blasting from the local quarries. They found work in the local hotels and reinforced the war effort by talking about the atrocities they had suffered back home at the hands of the Germans.

At a Derbyshire County Council meeting, in early October, it was reported that around 1,000 refugees were expected in the County. There were refugees in Derby, Duffield, Holbrook, Belper, Lea Bridge, Crich, Wirksworth, Cromford, Matlock Bath and Matlock. They were accommodated in private homes, available houses, hostels and other institutions such as The Gables, Belper and Willersley Castle, Cromford. Committees

Belper News

11th September 1914

We understand that several families have arranged to assist the Belgian refugees by engaging some of the younger women as domestic servants. Some are expected to arrive this week.

Belper News

18th September 1914

WORKING FOR THE BELGIANS

Mrs Eddison of Duffield, has instituted a working party in aid of the Belgian refugees and the first meeting will be held at the Church Hall on Tuesday next. Ladies are asked to take with them needles, thimbles, scissors, and cotton. In addition to work done for the refugees, garments will be made for our soldiers at the Front.

Darley Abbey Infant School Log

16th Oct 1914 – The attendance has not been quite so good several children having gone away with parents whose holidays were cancelled at the beginning of the war.

sprang up in the whole of the area to support their arrival in towns and villages, pledging that they would do their utmost to provide them with a “hearty welcome”.

Their plight was understood and Derbyshire people responded to appeals for such things as furniture, bedding, clothing and food. It appears that there was no resentment towards the influx of refugees into communities and locals offered warm welcomes and support. Generous gestures, both great and small, were made by people whether rich or poor. Sensitive and practical measures were adopted. Some of the less obvious ones included the Derby Daily Telegraph printing information for the refugees in French. In Belper, they flew the Belgian flag in the town to help the guests feel more at home. The Tramway Company in Derby issued free passes for their transport and proprietors, of various places of amusement and entertainment, gave free admission. A Derby optician’s, Leadbeater & Peters, offered free spectacles to Belgian Refugees and included within their advertisements in Dutch: “Brillen voor de Belgische vluchtelingen Gratis” (Free Glasses for the Belgian refugees). A newspaper was published in Derby for the refugees, entitled “Le Courier Belge”. The paper contained lists of Belgian wounded, names and addresses of refugees in the country and a “Lost Friend” column. It was edited for some time by Mr F. W. Hampshire who owned a company housed in the Silk Mill in Derby.

Some of the refugees arrived with only the clothes they stood up in but this was not always the case. It seemed to come as a surprise that some of the early arrivals were quite well off. Those with money would have found it easier to have arranged transport out of their home country. Whilst all Belgians were welcomed, there were some interesting views as to how they should be treated. In addressing his congregation, the Vicar of St Peter’s Belper cautioned against spoiling the guests and warned “against inviting the Belgians into public houses”. A similar note of warning was given by the Vicar in Duffield ‘reminding’ his parishioners that Belgians are unaccustomed to heavy alcoholic beverages such as those drunk in England. More sensitively, there were requests that the refugees should not be invited to any other church than that of their own religion.

In June 1918, Gertrude Marsden-Smedley from Lea Bridge, along with other women in the county, was recognised for her work with refugees by the Belgian King and awarded the Belgian Queen Elizabeth Medal.

It was “all going to be over by Christmas”! In just a few months, significant change had taken place but there was, of course, much more to come.

Derby Daily Telegraph

22nd October 1914

BELGIAN REFUGEES MEETING AT DUFFIELD

Mrs. W. B. Worthington, in a spirited address, spoke of the admirable manner in which a large number of people had helped to make habitable the Mill House, as on Thursday last it was very forlorn, and by Saturday it was finished and ready to receive the Belgians when they arrived. Even the charwoman and the sweep would not receive any payment for their services.

Matlock Bath Holy Trinity Log

13th Nov 1914 - Have admitted two Belgian Refugees this week. They cannot speak English.

Holbrook CE School Log

30th Nov 1914 – Admitted two Belgian boys this morning. They are children of refugees.

Darley Abbey Boys School Log

15th Mar 1915 – a Belgian boy, Arthur Allaert, member of a family of refugees residing in the village was admitted this morning.

Darley Abbey Infant School Log

24th Dec 1914 – A large Christmas tree has been decorated for the children and the toys are to be distributed this morning. The children brought ingredients for plum puddings last week. The puddings were eaten at 11.45 yesterday. Mrs. Evans and the vicar, the Archdeacon were present. Closed for Christmas holidays.

3. 1915: Picking up the threads

There is no doubt that the War turned many aspects of daily life upside down. The absence of so many men from their families and work, the support of troops at the Front and the wounded at home, the changes in the roles of women, the focus of managing the economics of the country and the hardships experienced, all added to an altering view of the world. Change continued with attempts to raise an army of 100,000 men.

Recruitment

The frenzy of activity in August 1914 was, of course, to get troops onto the front line and ready for hostilities. The state was able to draw on the Regular Army and Territorials but they needed to implement a recruiting strategy immediately. Everywhere, meetings were set up in parish and public rooms and halls in towns and villages to recruit enthusiastic young men who took up the immediate demand. Appeals soon followed for National Reservists to join up with the promise of a railway warrant and a certificate for a £10 bounty. Recruitment continued with vigour and patriotic fervour. Meetings were held throughout the year, often with shaming tones directed to those who did not take up the call. The pressures to enlist were immense coming from every conceivable direction.

Propaganda came from the 'great and the good', from advertisements, through the press and even the pulpit. There were regular articles in the papers giving favourable accounts of how good army life could be: it was hard work, which they did not mind, and with very good wholesome food including bacon, salmon, tinned herrings, sausage, cheese, meat, potatoes and vegetables. Advantage was taken of social events too: the Harry Lauder Band toured the country for recruiting purposes. They appeared at Derby's Grand Theatre in May 1915 where the Mayor of Derby took to the stage to deliver a speech including a few words to "the ladies" to get young men to "don khaki".

Recruiting events were often preceded by a parade with marching soldiers and local bands in attendance. Recruitment marches were not uncommon, trekking around several villages and towns in a day. Larger and grander enlistment rallies were conducted in such places as market squares, parks and other large open-air public spaces in which local dignitaries, war heroes and serving men would speak. For example, a "great" patriotic demonstration was held in Derby, on the 2nd August 1915, to recruit into the 18th and 5th Battalion Sherwood Foresters, the 18th Battalion of the King's Royal Rifles, Derbyshire Yeomanry, 4th North Midland Howitzer Brigade and Royal Army Medical Corps. Likewise, a series of similar events took place on the 4th August, 1915 including at Belper and Duffield, in which the local Home Guards and Church Lads' Brigade were present. Milford, Crich, Heage, Turnditch, Alderwasley, Holbrook, Kilburn and Hazelwood held gatherings. A further meeting took place at Ambergate on the 5th August.

Belper News

28th August, 1914

OUR NEW ARMY. MORE RECRUITS WANTED. DANGER OF DELAY.

Although the manhood of the nation has responded splendidly to Lord Kitchener's appeal for a new army, there are still many eligible young men who do not sufficiently grasp the urgency of the necessity. Procrastination is in this matter an acute danger, and for reasons which are self-evident.

The purpose of the authorities is to raise volunteers to a state of efficiency which will qualify them to be thrown into the field at the earliest possible date. A day's delay is, therefore, dangerous, and those who intend to enlist are urged to do so immediately.

The fulfilment of the aim of raising the new army of 100,000 will not cause any diminution in recruiting activity. The necessity for more men daily becomes more apparent, and the authorities appeal confidently to the patriotism of the recruitable population.

It was the practice to take photographs of family members before they went off to fight in case they did not return. Possibly taken in or around the Matlock area. 1914 – 1918. Image: Watford Museum, supplied by Picture the Past



To aid the recruitment drive, on 15th August 1915, a Sherwood Forester's Battalion marched through Mackworth, Kirk Langley and Brailsford to Ashbourne; on the 17th they went on to Kniveton, Wirksworth and Cromford to Matlock; on the 18th Darley Dale and Rowsley to bivouac at Bakewell and then Ashford and Taddington to Buxton. They then went eastwards to other parts of Derbyshire before moving into Nottinghamshire for a similar tour.

Wealthy landowners and industrialists played a significant role in the First World War by recruiting and supporting the men who went to fight and the families left at home, fundraising and working on various committees connected to the War. Frederic Charles Arkwright, the great grandson of Sir Richard Arkwright and the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Derbyshire, lived with his family at Willersley Castle but they no longer owned either Cromford or Masson Mills. A former soldier himself and in his sixties at the time, he was keen to support the war effort.

Fleet School Log, Belper

1914

31st Aug– School reopens. Mr. Gardiner is absent having been called up consequent upon the mobilisation of the Territorials. Mrs Kirk is now engaged on the permanent staff. Mrs Wilson comes in as temporary certificated teacher in place of Mr. Gardiner.

1915

25th Nov – Master [D. Wilson] will be absent this morning to visit Derby for enlistment in the Army Reserve under Lord Derby's scheme.

26th Nov – Master present this morning. He was accepted as a recruit yesterday.

29th Nov – Master absent from 11am this morning, ill.

1st Dec – Master absent for examination at Derby.

1916

9th May– Master will be absent this afternoon and tomorrow morning to visit London to be interviewed in connection with forthcoming military service. A holiday for circus will be given on Wednesday afternoon.

17th Mar – Master absent from 9.10am to 9.45 visiting Recruiting Office. Master absent from 2.30pm to visit County Offices at Derby.

26th May– Master relinquishes control of the school temporarily, Mr. J.W. Davis takes charge.

29th May – Mr. Davis took charge

1917

16th Oct – Having received notice from the Military Authorities to present myself for Re-examination on the 11th at 2pm, I [Mr. Davis] was away for this purpose during the afternoon. Mrs Wilson in charge.

Frederic Arkwright wrote to every family in Scarthin and Cromford, encouraging fit young men to volunteer to fight and the older men to join the Home Guard. Arkwright led many meetings in 'the Matlocks', Cromford and Darley Dale areas, urgently calling on the young men to enlist with the offer of paying the rail fare of new recruits, to enable them to get to the Derby barracks. Arkwright organised a competition for all Derbyshire villages, offering to erect a special memorial cross in the village with the highest proportion of its men signing up to fight. The 'winner' was Barrow-Upon-Trent and its memorial cross was duly erected in 1916.

Arkwright was also active in the creation of the Derbyshire Home Guards, convening the original meeting of the Cromford branch and joining as a private. Before conscription was introduced in 1916, many young working class men wanted to join the army but were concerned that by leaving their jobs their families left at home would experience financial hardship. It was for this reason that many employers and landowners, including Arkwright and J.B. Marsden-Smedley of Lea Mills, agreed to continue to pay part of the men's wages while they were away and rents on cottages were remitted. Jobs were kept open until the men returned from the war.

Frederic was involved in all manner of meetings and committees to support the war effort, including the Belgian Refugees Committee and the British and Foreign Bible Society. He made his own land available for the training of soldiers billeted in Matlock Bath and cultivated large areas of it to grow different crops. He volunteered 2 days a week at the munitions factory in Derby and, like the king, announced that he had given up alcohol for the duration of the war. In amongst all this happening, daily life continued. People went to work and children went to school. School life was affected by the War as many of the school log entries demonstrate: they could be sites of normality but the effects of hostilities crept in from time to time. The following is one such instance, which is the most poignant:

Crich Church of England School Log, 22nd Jun 1915

"Private Byard of the 3rd Sherwood Foresters, visited the school this morning to visit and say "Good-bye" to his children, as he has been ordered to proceed at once to the Dardenelles. As the whole school had just assembled in the large room, the whole school sang "God of our Fathers" for him, and gave him a cheery send off."

Although there is a mismatch of information the soldier appears to be James Byard (1883–1968) who lived at Park Head, Crich at the time of the war. He worked as a stone mason and was married to Ellen Jones in 1905. His children were George William and Martha Mary (respectively about 8 and 5 years old in 1915) who would have attended the school at the time.

He served with the 9th and then 12th Foresters and was posted to the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force in December 1915 and served in Gallipoli. He was demobbed on 23rd July, 1919.

Biographical information courtesy of Crich Parish available at: <http://www.crichparish.co.uk/>

Home Guard

Concerned about the possibility of a German invasion, the formation of volunteer defence associations occurred throughout the nation. The Volunteer Training Corps (VTC) was already in existence before the war but became a centralised association by November 1914. Nominations for Commissions for the new 5th Notts and Derby Home Service Battalion were reported on in the Derby Daily Telegraph (DDT) on the 7th October, 1914.

Volunteer forces of this nature, sometimes referred to as a Home Guard or Home Service, started up not long after the commencement of hostilities. The Home Guard was for men outside the fighting age of 19 to 38 and they trained each week so as to support the military authorities in the event of a raid or invasion. The Duke of Devonshire with Colonel Brooke-Taylor were speakers at a meeting to initiate the Derby Battalion of the Derbyshire Regiment of Home Guards at the Drill Hall, Derby on 25th January, 1915. It was attended by the Mayor and council members as well as many other dignitaries some of whom gave subscriptions on the night totalling £260. Money was needed as some units had to provide their own uniforms, which initially could not emulate the khaki of the regular army so they wore a red armband bearing the letters 'GR' for Georgius Rex. Some groups even had to purchase, beg or borrow, their own weapons. By May 1915, there were 4,368 men enrolled in Derbyshire.

The Royal Defence Corps was formed in March 1916 (and disbanded in 1936) by converting the Home Service Garrison battalions, composed of soldiers either too old or medically unfit for active front-line service. The role of the Corps was to provide troops for security and guard duties at important locations such as ports or bridges and at prisoner-of-war camps. They were allowed to wear khaki, after their formal recognition, and rifles, other official equipment and weaponry were issued during 1917.

There were rifle ranges and clubs around before the War such as the one at the Drill Hall in Belper. In addition "miniature" rifle ranges opened such as the one in Duffield in November, 1914 and the one in Milford, gifted by Mr G. H. Strutt, who had selected the site himself at an old quarry off the Chevin Road. It opened in April 1915. Mrs Evans provided the Darley Abbey Company of the South Derbyshire Battalion with a building next to the Mill for a headquarters along with a miniature rifle range which opened in June, 1915. There was an adjacent enclosed space that village children were permitted to use as a playground and where boys and men could be drilled.

The rifle ranges and Home Guard were seen as training grounds to 'skill-up' young men waiting to join the regulars as well as for men, who could not join up to fight overseas. Lieut.-Col. H. Brooke Taylor of the Derbyshire Volunteer Regiment of Home Guards called for men to join this service. He said, in a letter published in several local newspapers in mid-January 1915 that "There are in many places in Derbyshire rifle clubs, civic guards, and similar training corps already in existence. These should all be affiliated to the regiment and the members become "Home Guards" as soon as possible". Home Guard Units around the Derwent Valley were in most towns and villages including those at Crich, Belper, Duffield, Holbrook, Darley Abbey and Derby. They had several drill centres in

Belper News **28th August 1914**

It is pointed out that Belper provides excellent facilities for the training of volunteers possessed as it is of its Drill Hall and rifle range. There are ample local men of military experience willing to give drill instruction and teach the art of shooting ... Quite a formidable corps might be thus formed of young workmen and shop assistants who are otherwise unable to volunteer and who are tied to town and home by various circumstances.

Derby Daily Telegraph **2nd February, 1915**

**THE HOME GUARDS:
MEETING AT DARLEY ABBEY**
A meeting in connection with the formation of the Home Guards was held on Monday Night ... The Chairman explained the reason for the meeting and the procedure being adopted throughout the county for the formation of regiments of Home Guards and answered questions on the subject. ... It was unanimously resolved to form a unit at Darley Abbey. Resolutions to apply for registration, prepare rules, and so form a fund, were also passed.

Derby Daily Telegraph **5th August, 1915;**

WAR ANNIVERSARY AT DARLEY ABBEY
.... Britain's entry into the war was commemorated in fitting fashion at Darley Abbey.... A procession was arranged from the church through the village, and this was headed by the local Home Guards and a detachment of boy scouts, the choir singing the metrical litany en route.

council schools and a Cyclists' Company. By July 1915, 800 men had joined the Borough Battalion and in September a motor transport and motor cycle section was formed supported by the private owners of such vehicles.

Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) Hospitals

There was quick action to provide hospitals to receive casualties of war. There were nearly 40 VADs in Derbyshire including Red Cross Hospitals at Willersley Castle, Cromford, Green Hall, Belper and 'The Pastures', King Street, Duffield. In Derby, there were also two at Haye Leigh, Duffield Road and Osmaston Manor as well as two St John's Hospitals at the County Cricket Pavilion and Mill Hill Lane.

VAD Hospital personnel often consisted of a commandant, quartermaster, matron and usually local volunteer staff trained in nursing and first aid. The local doctors provided the medical care, often voluntarily, and the VADs were supervised by one or more registered nurses. There were other roles such as those of two women from Darley Abbey who served at the VAD hospital in Spondon: May Osbourne who was a Cook and Martha Pratley who worked as a Clerk.

Volunteering for the Red Cross was considered respectable for women whatever their social status and two daughters of the Duke of Devonshire worked at the county clearing house in Derbyshire, allocating wounded servicemen to the appropriate hospitals or nursing homes in the county.

Matlock Bath

The Canadian Officers Convalescent Hospital, housed at the Royal Hotel in Matlock Bath, not a VAD but nonetheless a war response, existed for 18 months between 1917 and 1918. The nurses, known as 'The Matlock Bath Bluebirds' were mostly Canadian by birth except for one each from Dublin, Michigan and Belfast and two each from Scotland and England who between them looked after 210 patients. Not all patients were victims of battle or war service, it is known that some were recovering from Venereal Disease, which was very common to all the armies and forces.

Derby Daily Telegraph

Tuesday, 4th August, 1914

ST. JOHN NURSING DIVISION AND
V.A.D.'s.

An important meeting will be held at No. 1 Peet-st, this Tuesday evening, at 8 o'clock. All members are requested to attend.

Well Dressing portraying convalescing soldiers and their nurses using a park for aiding recovery in WW1.

Image: Jenny Anthony, 2016



A small section of the Fact & Fabrication Textile Installation reminiscent of the Derwent and Mills



Cromford

Frederic Arkwright placed his home, Willersley Castle, at the disposal of the military authorities for use as a hospital, keeping only two rooms for the family's use. By November 1914 there were 11 soldiers being cared for at Willersley.

Cromford School Log

27th Aug, 1915

Miss W. Spencer, (teacher), had leave of absence on Wednesday afternoon to see her brother, (home on a short leave).

Belper

Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Strutt fully equipped a Voluntary Aid Detachment Hospital housed at 'The Gables': they had the walls stripped and the whole place cleaned and provided such things as complete nurse's uniforms. The preparations at Green Hall, set up as a convalescent home at the expense of Mr and Mrs G. Strutt, started during the second week of the war providing 40 hospital beds. The Church Hall at Duffield was converted into a Red Cross Hospital: women from Duffield attended training in Derby to gain practical knowledge of nursing. The first wounded soldiers arrived in Belper on the 1st December 1914.

In some regards, VADs were convalescent homes as the servicemen placed in them were generally less seriously wounded than at other general hospitals. They were less crowded and more homely and amenable than military hospitals so were a much preferred option. Those patients who were able were permitted to get out and about. From Green Hall they would wander into the town: at least on one occasion some patients returned less than sober after their promenade. In August 1916, two women, one each from Belper and Whatstandwell, were fined £1 for "procuring liquor" from a local hostelry on behalf of soldiers from the hospital. Wounded soldiers were often looked after more 'respectably' with a variety of entertainments, in and outside of the hospitals, such as concerts, dances and teas.

Duffield

The Red Cross Hospital in Duffield was converted from the Church Hall in early 1915 containing 18 beds. In an article in the DDT, 4th February 1916, it was noted that the refurbishment was borne by voluntary subscriptions. During its first year, £350 was spent on drugs, food and stores and a further £200 on other expenses and upkeep. Local volunteer women often did double duties on the ward and in the kitchen to give care to the patients. The paper reported that the Commandant, Miss Morrison had worked solidly for the past year and needed to take three months rest and Mrs. H. A. Mason temporarily took over. During the year, over 100 patients had been given care and some had returned to the Front. Several of the nurses were called up for special service. Village residents showed kindnesses to the patients including gifting money, fruit, vegetables and rabbits and providing entertainments and motor-car drives.

The War Hospital Supply Depot was moved to Duffield from Derby opening on 22nd August, 1917 and housed at the Club House of the Chevin Golf Club. Mrs G. H. Strutt personally financed the removal of working plant from Derby to its new headquarters. The organisers immediately put out appeals for donations and more members; when they opened they had five members enrolled but by August 1918 there were 58 members. Some members were awarded 'badges of the Red Cross for conscientious and consistent work' which included Lady Onslow and Mesdames Worthington, Barwise, Morgan, Dewsbury and Crossley amongst others. A year later, the DDT reported on supplies that had gone through the Depot onto various hospitals including 13,525 sphagnum moss swabs; 2,790 folded gauze dressings; 2,655 roller bandages; 130 pants and vests; 68 operation stockings; 1,455 face washers; 60 slings; 2420 tail bandages and 12 limb pillows. The Red Cross

Committee said that although it appeared that a great deal of work had occurred they might have accomplished more if all the members had worked energetically.

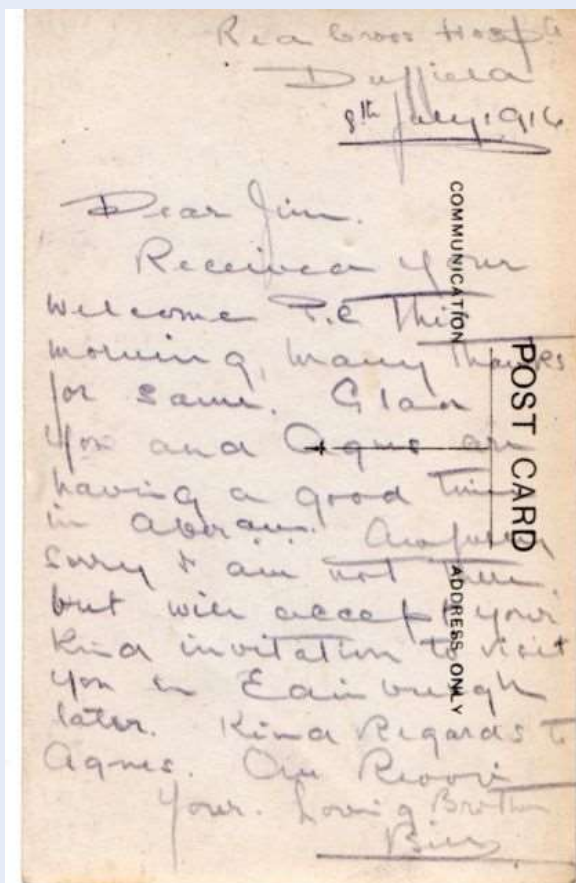
VAD Red Cross Hospital, King Street, Duffield. Image: Bromby Collection, Picture the Past.



Postcard picturing a group of soldiers and nurses outside the VAD Red Cross Hospital, King Street, Duffield, (now a private residence) dated 8th July, 1916. The soldiers are in their hospital blues. A written note was on the back as below. Image: courtesy of Martyn Harling.



Reverse of postcard from above. The transcription is adjacent. Image: courtesy of Martyn Harling



Red Cross Hospital

Duffield

8th July, 1916

Dear Jim

Received your welcome Pie this morning, many thanks for same. Glad you and Agnes are having a good time in Aberavon. Awfully sorry I am not there but will accept your kind invitation to visit you in Edinburgh later. Kind Regards to Agnes. Au Revoir

Your Loving Brother

Bill

Haye Leigh VAD Hospital, Duffield Road, Derby

Mrs. Hilda Hulse, the Commandant of Haye Leigh and the Mayoress (1917-1918), had clearly used her influence to provide a raft of entertainments and comforts for the men in her care during Christmas, 1917. On Christmas Eve, by invitation of the Mayor, they had a visit to the dress rehearsal of the pantomime at the Hippodrome and in the evening children from a local church sang carols and presented each man with a pipe and shaving stick. On Christmas morning, they received in their socks two khaki handkerchiefs, a box of cigarettes, a cake of soap, a tin trumpet, a packet of sweets, an orange, an apple and a Christmas card. Men who could go attended church parade and returned to an excellent dinner with the Mayor carving the turkeys. In the afternoon "Father Christmas" gave them safety razors, cigarette cases, tobacco pouches, leather cases containing brushes and combs and leather pocket books. A special tea was provided and the day's programme ended with a "sing-song" until about ten o'clock. In the evening, on Boxing Day, they had further entertainments with a whist drive and dance the day after. Mrs Hulse's son and daughters also helped in the proceedings.

So the War ploughed on but with the hopeful expectation that the following year would bring peace celebrations.

Dethick, Lea and Holloway Board School Log, 30th Sept 1915

During the month School Collections have been made for wounded soldiers.

Eggs:	102
Potatoes:	1 Box from Garden Boys
	1 Box from Scholars.

Long Row School Log, Belper 23rd Dec 1915

Closed school for the Christmas holidays. A party of wounded soldiers from Green Hall Hospital visited school this afternoon.

4. Schooling in the Derwent Valley during WW1

Schooling in England and Wales was radically overhauled in 1902 with the introduction of The Education Act 1902. School boards were abolished and local education authorities established under the control of county and county borough councils. This ensured some standardisation of education within an area. Compulsory education remained between the ages of 5 and 12, as set by the 1870 Education Act: the leaving age was raised to 14 in 1918. For a child to leave school, they had to pass a labour exam. The Darley Abbey Boys School Log Book notes two girls passed the labour exam, namely Amy Brown on the 1st April 1915 and Ninnie Bailey on the 1st April 1916.

Secondary education after the age of 12 had, until 1902, only been available to those children whose families could afford to fund it. Now, councils, who were also encouraged to provide free places for working class children, could provide secondary and technical education. This was slow to develop but within the Derwent Valley George Herbert Strutt commissioned a school to be built in Belper in 1909. On its completion the school was presented to the County Council as a Higher Grade Elementary School and Pupil Teacher Centre. From its opening in 1909 until 1936, the school had one head, Mr W. W. Tunncliffe

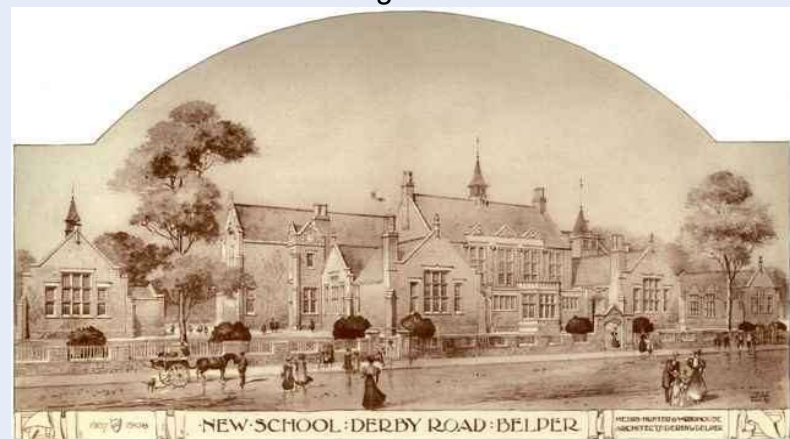
Pupil-Teacher System

The pupil-teacher system had existed in its early 20th Century form since the mid-1800s. In this system, pupils between the ages of 13 and 18 who demonstrated academic ability taught in elementary schools whilst being taught secondary education by the head of the school. The establishment of the pupil-teacher centre in Belper in 1909 would have provided some standardisation of the education of these promising young people.

The Labour Certificate was required to work from the age of 13 years. Source: Victoria and Albert Museum

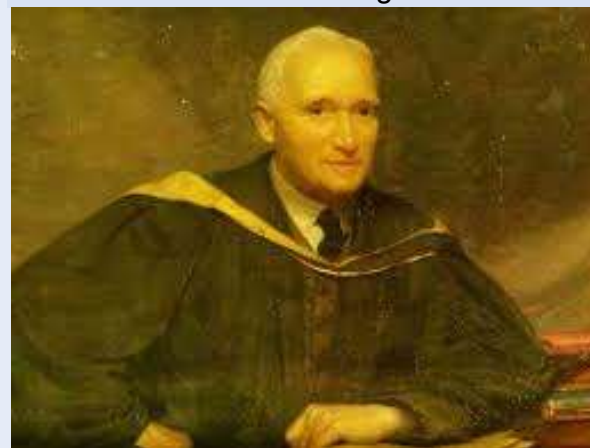
The "New School, Derby Road, Belper"

Source: Strutts at strutts.org.uk



W. W. Tunncliffe, Head Teacher, Herbert Strutt School

Source: Strutts at strutts.org.uk



In 1906 a further development that would affect education during WW1 was the passing of the Education (Provision of Meals) Act 1906. With this Act, local education committees were required to provide meals for children in any public elementary school. Parents were to be charged for any meal the child had but free meals were to be provided to children whose parents could not afford the meals.

Many of the schools in the Derwent Valley had a local benefactor who would visit the school regularly, address the children, provide finance for the running of the school and give gifts. These people were generally connected with the local textile industries. Mrs Evans, widow of Walter Evans who had owned the cotton mills in Darley Abbey, presented to Darley Abbey Infant School in October 1914, a quantity of pears and to Darley Abbey Boys School, in 1917, 8 bound volumes of "The Times History of the Great War". She presented prizes in both schools on many occasions.

Effect of the War on Teaching Staff

During the First World War the use of teachers without qualifications increased as more men joined the military. Schools employed certificated, supply and unqualified teachers. Unqualified teachers included the pupil-teachers. Fleet School log book notes that on July 27th 1914 Mr Gardener was absent for the week to attend Territorial Training. A supply teacher, Mrs Kirk, was brought in to cover. War was declared during the summer holidays and in late August when the school returned, a temporary certificated teacher, Mrs Wilson, was employed in place of Mr Gardiner as he had been called up consequent to the mobilisation of the Territorials

It was not only being called up to fight that impacted on the teaching staff at Fleet School. In December 1915 the work of the school was disrupted by the absence of teachers on recruiting business. On 26th May the 'Master' (Head Teacher) relinquished control of the school to Mr J. W. Davis, in preparation for his military service. In February 1915, the Military Duties of the Head also affected Holbrook School. This resulted in the lower class of 30 children being transferred to the Infant School. The Head, Mr Standish, commenced military service and M.A. Wood took temporary charge.

Teaching staff were sometimes given permission to be absent when loved ones came home. In August 1917, Miss Wright of Holbrook School was absent on two afternoons and one whole day as her fiancé was home from France.

William Gilbert Endowed School Log, Duffield, 9th Mar 1915

The military authorities have been and measured the school, but they did not use it after all.

Fleet School Log, Belper 19th Mar 1915

This afternoon with a brief ceremony a record of past and present teachers and old boys at present soldiers was hung in the school.

Bonsall School Log,

22nd Oct 1915 - Lessons were given on Trafalgar Day and Red Cross Day. They read to the boys the Diary of a Sergeant of his experiences at the Front and in the Battle of Loos Hill where he was wounded and sent home to hospital.

Bonsall School Log, 22nd Nov 1915

Sergeant Swindell who has been wounded at the front called today and gave the boys a long interesting account of his career as a soldier and his adventures.

Dethick, Lea and Holloway Board School Log, 29th Nov 1915

Derbyshire Ed Com - Letter of Nov 20th re Enrolment and Military Service of Head Teachers received from Mr. Lowe to-day.

The School Week

The elementary school year consisted of around 400 half day sessions, a half day being 9.00 to 11.50 or 1.10 to 3.15 with 10 minutes for 'Recreation in the Playground' during each half day. However, in October of 1916, the County Education Committee authorised the alteration of the school hours during the months of November, December and January as long as the lighting restrictions remained in force. Infant school hours changed to 9 to 11.45 am and 1 to 3pm.

Attendance at school was affected by the seasons. In the summer of 1915, Bonsall School Log Book noted that the hay harvest was late, resulting in the "Lowest percentage attendance from a very long time". In September 1917 William Gilbert Endowed School found attendance to be irregular "there being so many adverse circumstances – harvest work, holidays, shortage of labour and so on. It is impossible to do satisfactory work under the circumstances." The following month found that fruit picking and potato gathering affected attendance "and under the exceptional circumstances of the times we must accept them".

The food shortages also affected the school curriculum. Many of the schools already incorporated gardening into the curriculum but this took on greater significance. In April 1918, William Gilbert Endowed School took delivery of 14 spades and 7 forks from Dronfield. These were put to good use on May 1st when an hour of gardening was carried out because of the urgency of planting potatoes and again on July 19th when winter greens were planted. A Board of Education Circular on the 30th July 1918 had called for school children to go blackberry picking to increase the supply of jam at home and overseas. William Gilbert School complied with this and noted in the log book that in September the boys were sent out blackberrying, after which 400lbs were sent in for the army. Dethick, Lea and Holloway School dispatched 426lb.

At Dethick, Lea and Holloway school the pea and bean crops in the school gardens were practically destroyed by pheasants. However justice, may have been said to be done in January 1918 when Mrs Marsden-Smedley presented a pheasant to each of the 19 scholars who had cultivated a garden-plot in the previous year and who were still at the school. Gardening was also part of the curriculum of Milford School and was therefore subject to inspection.

Long Row School Log, Belper
28th Sept 1917– Another letter from County Council re school hours to meet lighting restrictions.

Form 7s.s,
Indicative No. 15 E.B 4172/16

Milford School
Gardening

Copy of Report made by
H.M.I. Mr W. Hands
after visit of 20th June, 1916

Owing to a period of epidemic closure of the school and to sickness during the past two years, the Master has not previously had an opportunity of bringing the Garden into a first rate condition, but this year has succeeded in doing so. All arrears have now been met, the first plot has been thoroughly cleared of weeds and the general appearance of the garden does the Master and the boys much credit.

The instruction is intelligently given and seeks to establish useful knowledge and to cultivate reason through well planned experience.

In a discussion on the educational purposes of the subject an excellent proposal was put forward by the master for the training of his second year boys in self-reliance and application of their knowledge. It is hoped that he will be able to carry out his ideas fully.

CES

Fleet School Log, Belper
14th Jul 1916

Letter received from Mr Ferry re list of boys prepared to do farming work, thanking for list same placed in portfolio.

The war impacted on schooling in other ways too. Cookery classes had been introduced from April to June 1915 for girls at Crich School. However, by December 1917, food shortages were starting to have an impact and the Head Master addressed the whole school on “The Urgent Need to Avoid Waste”. This was followed by a weekly lesson to the whole school on Food Economy. With the advent of food rationing looming, Darley Abbey Infant School closed on February 27th 1918 for two days to finish the Ration Cards allocation and a further two days in the following week to allow for the Meat Rationing Cards to be distributed.

Shortages impacted on the schools in many ways: In April 1915 Bonsall School noted that “supplies of stationery were reduced, children had to do arithmetic on slates or scraps of paper”. Crich School requested a bin of ink powder in September 1917 but it had still not arrived 4 months later: as a result ink powder had to be borrowed from Fritchley C.E. School.

In January 1918 Crich School had been so cold that writing was almost impossible, the highest temperature registering at 47^o F [8^oC]. Coal had been rationed by this time too.

Fund raising for the war and its effects became a part of school life, particularly with the launch of the National War Savings Association in June, 1916. Crich School was quick to get the scheme going noting in its log book on the 3rd July 1916 that a branch had been opened in the school. Fleet Girls and Infants School, Belper established theirs in the October of the same year and immediately had 52 members. Darley Abbey Infants School’s opened in March 1917 and noted in January 1918 “The War: savings did well today – 103 coupons (stamps) were bought in this department”.

The other main form of collecting noted in school logs was for hospitals. In December 1915, Darley Abbey Boys School appealed for funds for the Derbyshire Royal Infirmary. In March 1916, Dethick, Lea and Holloway Board School collected £1.1.3 for the care of wounded horses that was forwarded to the RSPCA. Darley Abbey Infants School distributed leaflets in relation to a collection for the Children’s Hospital in October 1917 and the same school collected for ‘the hospitals’ in the following month, noting in early December that they had collected 5/8½. In November 1917, Holbrook Church of England School dispatched 14/- to the Royal Infirmary and 4/- to the Surgical Appliance Fund.

William Gilbert Endowed School Log, Duffield, 9th Feb 1917

Received the last consignment of stationery ordered last October so much are things disorganised by the war.

Dethick, Lea and Holloway Board School Log

5th Feb 1917 – The afternoon session is now being commenced at the usual time 1.30 p.m. ... a School War Savings Association has been formed this week. Subscriptions amount to £4.13.6.

21st Dec 1917 – Total War Savings Subscriptions for year ending Dec 22nd = £111.11.0.

Matlock Bath Holy Trinity School Log

24th May 1916 - Empire Day. Lesson on Empire + Patriotic Songs from 11 to 12 + holiday given in the afternoon. The children have collected 14/- for the Overseas Club presents to our Soldiers in France.

Fleet School Log, Belper

25th May 1917– Empire Day Celebrations. Boys marched to the Coppice where a mass demonstration was held and addresses given in “Food Economy”. School closed at noon.

Fleet School Log, Belper

9th May 1916 – Master will be absent this afternoon and tomorrow morning to visit London to be interviewed in connection with forthcoming military service. A holiday for circus will be given on Wednesday afternoon.

Empire Day was officially celebrated on 24th May, Queen Victoria's birthday, to remind children of what it meant to be part of such a glorious Empire. It became an important event in schools and a useful patriotic tool during the days of conflict. Darley Abbey Boys School celebrated it on the 21st May in 1915. On the 24th May 1916, at the end of morning school, Crich Church of England School had a 30 minute address by the headmaster on "The Meaning of Empire Day" and the duties of citizenship within the British Empire. Children usually went to school in the morning of Empire Day and after patriotic songs had been sung, the school closed for the rest of the day. Schools also gave their pupils half-day holidays for a number of other reasons such as overall good attendance, Wakes, Fairs and for Shrove Tuesday.

Crich Church of England School Log

10th Oct 1917 - The school closed at 4 PM today on account of Crich Fair, twill reassemble on Monday October 15th at 9 am.

Physical Health

Medical inspection of children had been incorporated in the Education (Administrative Provisions) Act 1907. Regular medical inspections were then carried out at the expense of the Education Authority. The Long Row Log Book notes that Dr Archibald held her medical inspection on September 17th 1914. However, illness was a cause of a significant number of lost school days throughout the period of the war.

Diphtheria, an infection of the upper respiratory tract, was a common childhood illness that could result in death. Diphtheria outbreaks resulted in problems for a number of schools in the Derwent Valley:

November 1914	Kedleston Road Girls School 2 week closure due to diphtheria
March 1915	Fleet School reopened after being closed for a day to allow for disinfection after cases of diphtheria.
May 1915	Dr Allen visited Long Row School and reported another case of diphtheria. The following day the sanitary inspector came and took swabs of the throats of 25 children.
July 1915	Dr Allen closed the school because of several cases of diphtheria at Long Row School. Three more cases were reported in September.
January 1916	Wirksworth Infant School received notice that Nora Staples had died during the holidays through diphtheria

A Whooping cough epidemic affected Wirksworth Infant School, which reopened in August 1914 after 2 weeks closure by order of the school doctor. Attendance on reopening was 41 out of 61. Long Row noted that 67 children were absent for the whole week with whooping cough in January 1918. Dethick, Lea and Holloway School had a fall in attendance in July 1915 due to a measles epidemic. Fleet School and Long Row School noted their outbreaks of measles in January 1917.

Holbrook School reported an epidemic of influenza in November 1914, resulting in poor attendance. The outbreak of Spanish Influenza was reported in 1918 at a number of schools including Crich, Matlock Bath Holy Trinity School and Wirksworth, Crich School reported 24 cases in July 1918 and 27 in November 1918. Sadly, one of the scholars there, George A Whiteleader, died of it.

Darley Abbey Infant School Log

19th Oct 1917– The attendance has been rather poor among the older children, two have been away from home, another has lost a father in France + another two are poorly.

Darley Abbey Boys School Log

15th Jul 17 – One boy, A. Russell, has left school this week to work at the Cotton Mill.

As shown, the pressures on schools in the 1914 to 1918 period were numerous. Resources such as paper, ink and heating were difficult to obtain at times. Teaching staff changed frequently to cover for men who joined the forces. This led to fewer trained staff being available. Older children, of 13 or over, left at any point in the year to join the workforce and other children missed school to help with agricultural work. Illness was far more prevalent than it is today and spread more easily, for many possible reasons, one of which was that vaccines were not yet available. However, the support for the war effort is clear with the celebration of Empire Day, teachers helping with the administration of rationing and the children doing what they could in collecting money and harvesting crops to support the war effort.

5. Changes to Working Life

The absence of men on the Home Front, the changes in manufacture to focus on resources to support the conflict and the maintenance of the workforce, had significant consequences for the people keeping 'the home fires burning'. The general attitude was that anyone and everyone should make their contribution in some form to support the war effort. Men who were too young or too old to join-up were expected to join the Home Guard, women were recruited into war work and ways were found to get children to do their bit.

There was no welfare state and fundraising committees were set up for health and welfare purposes both at home and abroad. Due to their social standing, most were headed by local dignitaries or their wives who had the time, resources, skills and status to readily make this type of contribution. The charitable works they performed were invaluable which was enthusiastically recognised in local newspapers. However, much good work was not given column space where it came from working class people, women doing 'women's work' or young people and children.

Filling the gaps

To counteract disruptions, the Belper Union Board of Guardians Minute Book (Belper Workhouse), May 1915, recorded that whenever employment vacancies occurred they should try not to engage people eligible for the army or the special occupations that were of paramount importance to the country.

There was concern, in many areas of industry, to keep production going and employees employed. The Belper News named a local firm, Messrs. Holden and Sons, making an appeal to support furniture manufacturers by asking members of the public to think about whether they needed any renovating, French polishing or reupholstering work to be done. It was suggested that the proprietors of clubs, hotels and other public institutions could help employers in the trade by placing orders.

The consequences of hostilities soon had an effect on industry, production and agriculture. On mainland Europe, stoppages of the cotton mills had a knock-on effect on the cotton producing factories in the Derwent Valley such as those in Belper and Darley Abbey. Pre-war Britain was at the peak of its cotton industries but during the war cotton could not be exported to foreign markets and as a result those countries started producing their own cloth and at a cheaper cost. Cotton mills mostly stayed open during 1914 to 1918. Cotton textiles were still needed for a wide range of purposes including in the construction of aeroplanes, army tents, gas masks, underwear and bandages. The mills did not always work at full capacity.

'Smedley's'

The mills of John Smedley Ltd, at Lea Mills near Holloway, have been in continuous production since the original company was founded in 1784. Initially cotton thread was produced, as with other mills in the Valley, before expanding production to knitted woollen garments such as underwear and vests.

Darley Abbey Infant School Log

17th Sept 1914 – The optional lesson on Thursday has been raveling or cutting up small pieces of cloth to be used for filling cushions for the soldiers.

Belper News

25th September 1914

Many of our factories and workshops are now on short time. The cotton industry has been hard hit by the war owing to the stoppage of the cotton mills on the Continent. Mr. C. W. McCara, president of the International Federation of Master Cotton Spinners, writes to the Press advocating once more the establishment of cotton reserves, a matter which the Government ought to take up. Belper operatives are fortunately better off for the most part than those in larger towns.

Industries producing woollen yarn or garments fared much better in WW1 than cotton producers because the British government secured the supply of wool by buying Australia's entire wool stocks. This must have given some relief to the management and workforce of Smedley's, who also secured the contract to supply undergarments to the military. They were very successful in this mission and awarded the workforce with War Bonuses, of varying amounts, during the period of the War.

The first bonus was awarded in June 1915. In October 1916, another bonus was awarded by the Board in an effort to keep up with the bonuses and wages in Leicester and of the Railway Workmen. In early 1917 there was a further increase of "three half-pence" in the shilling (12½%) effective from Friday, 31st January 1917." Although wool was guaranteed from Australia, they still had some concerns about supplying the mill. In March 1917 they were concerned about stocks. Although they had enough to keep the French Spinning Plant running for six months and other areas of Plant for nine months, they decided to buy "a few more bales" due to the concern of an uncertain market.

In the autumn of 1916 J. B. Marsden-Smedley ('JB' as he became affectionately known), the factory owner at the time, started writing to the serving men who had previously worked in the factory because of concerns about their welfare. From October of that year, the men received twice-yearly parcels of groceries and knitwear. The groceries went from Austin & Co., a highly reputable grocers shop in the Market Place, Derby. The parcels often contained tinned salmon or sardines, chocolate, biscuits and sweets, fruit and cake. As the Company was producing garments for the military, in large quantities, the men requested knitted waistcoats, vests, drawers and socks to combat the cold and support the lack of laundry facilities. So that the men could write to their families, they also asked for notepaper, pencils and envelopes.

Young men and women operating warping machines in the hosiery works of the Milanese Hosiery and Textile Co. Ltd at Ilkeston, Derbyshire WW1. The machinery and conditions are not dissimilar to those in Derwent Valley mills and factories at the time.

Source: Imperial War Museum © IWM (Q 110006)



**John Smedley Limited, Directors' Minute Book
7th November 1916**

"WAR BONUS"

All persons employed at Lea Mills between the hours of 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. will be paid as a bonus of One Penny in the Shilling (about 8½%) on his or her weekly wage, with a maximum of Three Shillings and Fourpence, and everyone who in the ordinary course is paid for overtime will receive an extra penny per hour for overtime.

Men working from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. (other than Watchmen, Carpenters and Masons, and those employed on Engines and Boilers, as well as those whose regular duty it is to work at night) will be paid an additional Halfpenny per hour for overtime.

These rates are in substitution of the rates which have been in force since June 16th, 1915, and will be paid to all (including foremen) on their wages as paid weekly.

The first payment of the increased bonus will be made on Friday, November 10th, and will continue in force during the war.

Lea Mills,
November 7th 1916

Absent men from the Lea Bridge Mill, who left for the services, caused considerable problems for maintaining production throughout the War. A key role in the manufacturing process was the Knitter: operating knitting machines was extremely heavy work so men had always been used for that process. It also took two years to train a framework knitter and so it was not easy to slot women into this previously men-held skilled work. Women employed in the Mill tended to be engaged in assembling garments rather than in the operation of machinery. To keep the men in the factory, exemptions were sought, through tribunals. It was noted in the Director's Minutes in March 1916 that 11 men were granted Certificates of Temporary Exemption but with an expiry date of 1st September that year. The conscripts were not easy to replace but men were brought out of retirement while women, who had not served apprenticeships, developed the right skills. Smedley's had about 1,000 employees during the War: 144 went to fight with 10 being lost.

Belgian refugees were welcomed into the area and some were employed at the Lea Mills factory. Annie Gunst worked in the Mechanics Shop at 10/- per week. François Coppens was employed as an assistant to Aaron Wigley in the factory, at 21/- per week.

Other Government contracts

It was reported in the Belper News in April 1915 that there was a good deal of dissatisfaction amongst local blacksmiths at the decision by the Government to terminate contracts for horseshoes and place orders with America. They thought that all War orders should go to blacksmiths in England. After working hard to achieve an initial order, in October Mr. A. Wigley, a Belper blacksmith, secured a second Government order for 80,000 horseshoes which also had ensured that all the forges in the district would be busy for some months to come. In March 1917 Mr. Wigley, who was also secretary of the Midland Derbyshire Branch of the National Master Farriers' Association, was presented with a "handsome timepeace" in recognition of his work in connection with Army contracts. It was noted that he had given invaluable service to the district and that his "wife had taken a cheerful and active part": she had helped with making the horseshoes.

In 1914, the Silk Mill in Derby supported two businesses, one grinding corn and a chemists F.W. Hampshire. Hampshire's were "wholesale, retail, manufacturing, and dispensing chemists, druggists, drysalters, merchants in oils, paints, etc. Also confectioners, nurserymen, jam manufacturers, etc." They obtained government contracts for goods they produced. In February 1915, and already at the

A Smedley's worker

Albert Dockerill was a Factory Worker and a bandsman and had military experience earlier in his life. When he re-joined on 22nd September 1914 he was a middle-aged man but offered his services as a Drill Instructor and served in various depots in the UK. It was whilst he was at the Royal Field Artillery Depot in Woolwich that he wrote in a letter to J.B. that "I was very pleased to see a Bale of Pants unpacked in our store for issue to the Troops going to France that had been made at your firm Sir, Lea Mills".

Belper News, 15th October 1915

There would seem to be no further cause for our local farriers to complain of the Government placing their orders for horse-shoes in America. We learn that our local smith Mr. A. Wigley, who has forges in Field Head and Wellington Court, has received a second Government order for horse-shoes, this time for 80,000. Such an order will mean that all the forges within the district will be kept busy for some months to come.

Belper News, 12th November 1915

Wanted, at once-Two Boys for Drilling; good wages. – Apply A. Wigley, Blacksmith, Field Lane, Belper

Belper News, 19th April 1918

We understand that Mr. S. Wigley, our well-known local farrier and blacksmith, has left the town with his workmen to take up Government employment in a shipyard "somewhere in England". For a couple of years past Mr Wigley has been busy turning out horse shoes for the Government by the thousand.

Riverside Works (within the Silk Mill premises) they advertised for a small factory to “accommodate 100 girls”. In May the same year they started advertising for girls, initially for 50 and then for 100 in December. This periodically continued to the end of the War, placing advertisements for between 10 to 25 girls. It was reported in the Derbyshire Advertiser and Journal on 1st October, 1915 that they had become a Limited Company and that shares were available.

At the start of hostilities local bottle users found that their supplies had been cut-off due to necessary imports no longer being available. In response Mr Hampshire started manufacturing bottles at Kilburn “in a small way” but soon found that there was a steady and increasing demand for such goods. As a result he developed a new works at Chester Green, Derby Crown Glass. Derby Education Committee had also helped by establishing classes at the Technical College for the study of glass technology.

Two significant products were made by Hampshire's: ‘Egrol’, a powdered custard famed for its “realistic, egg-like taste” and Snowfire’, an antiseptic ointment for burns and chapped skin, as well as medicinal cough mixtures. The Company became an important supplier for the war effort, later acknowledged as ‘Contractors to the War Office’. As with many other employers, labour shortages led to them employing women in senior positions including the factory superintendent.

Tourist Industry

As is the case today, Matlock Bath was a tourist resort at the beginning of the twentieth century relying hugely on visitors to bring in much needed income to the area. With the

outbreak of war, visitor numbers were often considerably lower than usual. In tune with the general mood of the country people felt less inclined to just go out and enjoy themselves. Special excursion rates on the trains had also been cancelled and since this was how most people travelled to the resort they were now unable to afford to do so. Only the very wealthy, with their cars, were still coming to Matlock Bath to stay at the few top class hotels and enjoy the special events laid on to “give respite from the sad circumstances of today”. The town council was naturally extremely concerned at this loss of income for the area and so made every effort to persuade the military authorities to billet soldiers in the locality. The problem for the authorities was the lack of suitable training facilities in the area and so the numbers who were billeted there were limited. They still brought a welcome financial boost to the town's businesses which secured contracts for supplying meat, catering and local employment. The soldiers were housed in the local hotels and thoroughly enjoyed amenities like electric lights and central heating!

Derby Daily Telegraph 31st October 1917

RESPECTABLE Girls Wanted, age 14 to 18, for light, clean, permanent work, under good conditions, packing food specialties and Snowfire; good wages. – F.W. Hampshire and Co Ltd., Riverside Works, Derby.

Derby Daily Telegraph 23rd July, 1915

WANTED, SECOND-HAND CORRUGATED IRON BUILDING. – Send size and other particulars and price to F.W. Hampshire and Co., Derby.

Derbyshire Advertiser and Journal 6th April, 1917

GLASS – WANTED, GIRLS, experienced in BLOW-PIPE LAMP WORK. Apply Derby Crown Glass Co., Ltd., Little Chester, Derby

A more austere view of the Silk Mill at Derby than usually seen. Image: James Thomson 2018



Women

The War became a great opportunity for women's advancement. They entered new worlds of work that had not previously been open to them in factories, public transport and the postal service and eventually to support the military as clerks, cooks and shorthand-typists. War work had the appeal that it was better paid than most of the semi-skilled and unskilled work they could get elsewhere. They were employed at Belper as railway porters and in Derby as bus conductors. Nursing employment increased, both paid and voluntary, and some women managed to work in medicine, if under sufferance by the male establishment. They showed themselves as hard working, reliable, capable and 'patriotic' in taking up the challenge of being part of the war effort. Women took the place of male teachers as they were enlisted and conscripted into the armed services.

Middle-class women served on and sometimes headed committees, providing sources of support for servicemen, wounded soldiers, Belgian refugees, soldiers wives and families and a variety of charities for health, welfare and employment. An interesting charity that was set up was 'The Queen's Work for Women Fund' which was concerned with helping women and girls (young women) who had been thrown out of employment due to the War to find work. It was mainly funded by selling copies of "Princess Mary's Gift Book" for 2s 6d which contained stories, articles and poems from various contributors. Nationally the Fund reached its first £100,000 by December, 1914.

In 1914 the Mayoress, Mrs Johnson, set up a committee in Derby organising events for the Fund and encouraging private donations. In November 1914 the Salvation Army advertised in Derbyshire for young women to go into domestic service in Nova Scotia with help from assisted passages. The Fund opened up new areas of work to women through training. The next Mayoress, Mrs Hill, oversaw the setting up of a branch of the Women's Volunteer Reserve who were trained to undertake a range of duties including carrying out patrols.

In an article in the Derbyshire Advertiser and Journal, 10th April 1915, it said that although it was recognised that women in industry were already working "all the hours God sends" there was a need for women, not already in necessary war work to "carry a share of the Empire's burden". It noted that the Government wanted all women, whatever their class, to register themselves at the local Labour Exchange: "every woman who undertakes a post hitherto filled by a man, and thus releases him ... is serving her country". Two months later in June, 1915, the Temperance Hall in Derby was filled by women and girls with speakers including Mrs Hill the Mayoress, Dr Helen Greene and Mrs Boden. A key speaker, Mrs Lyall from London and the 'League of Honour' gave a rallying address to the audience to show a "readiness capacity for sacrifice" and to show such "qualities equally with men". The Mayoress remarked that "she was proud of Derby, which stood at the top in the whole of the land for the mobilisation of women who had volunteered for war service. They now had 1,300 women and girls ready to work for the State".

Belper News

16th October 1914

When the matter came before the Executive Committee of the Relief Fund [Derbyshire County Council] it was suggested that the lady members should take the work over and that they should be empowered to add to their number any ladies who wished to serve throughout the county.

Derby Daily Telegraph

25th June 1915

PATRIOTIC DERBY WOMEN.
HEAD OF LIST FOR WAR WORKERS.
ORGANISING HELP FOR FARMERS.
... Mrs. Boden mentioned that the women of Derby were trying to organise workers to help on the farm and the fruit lands in the district.

Belper News

28th January 1916

.... Mr. Arkwright stated that he could not have believed that women would have the strength and nerve to engage on heavy lathes such as were used at the factory but now had to admit, and gladly too, that he was mistaken.

Women trimming hose in the hosiery works of Moore, Eady & Murcott Goode Ltd at Markeaton Street in Derby during WW1.

Source: Imperial War Museum. © IWM (Q 110003)



Even with this impetus there was a lack of enthusiasm to employ women in jobs previously held by men. In Derby there was much discussion about women becoming conductors on tramcars. They were paid the same hourly rate as men but they were limited to working eight hours per day, so the work would not be too tiring, and they were not given war bonuses. Women in industry were regularly working twelve hour shifts.

By April 1916, Derby Corporation Tramway Department was depleted by 52 men who had 'joined the colours' through enlistment and conscription. Some jobs such as conductors could be filled by women but the Department asserted that the Derby cars, which did not have magnetic brakes, were too hard for women to drive. At a sitting of a Military Tribunal at the Town Clerk's Office, Tenant Street on 12th April, 40 cases involving Tramway employees were heard. The Department thought that if any more 'motormen' were conscripted services would seriously be disrupted. At a further hearing on the 19th the recommendation was that there "should only be one man on any car, and the other position filled by a woman".

Work previously occupied by men was often better paid than women's previous employment but, where money was not an issue, others 'did their duty' by volunteering their services. Women were not slow in coming forward to help out in all areas of work but they were consistently up against prejudice in obtaining employment. This was prevalent in agriculture and as the war continued there were constant appeals to farmers to take on women to work on the land as concerns of harvesting crops and food shortages increased.

Children and Young People

It is difficult to know what ages were being referred to when the terms “girls” and “boys” appeared in the newspapers. In working class situations “girls” was used to describe younger women working in the factories including munitions, working on the land and also those who joined up for the Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps. Young men in such situations could be referred to as “lads” but once they were of recruitment age they were “men” or indeed soldiers.

Girls were mentioned in newspapers as performing at concerts, school achievements, helping out with event teas, fund raising for soldiers’ comforts or for knitting socks and mufflers for soldiers and sailors. A rare exception of physical work achieved by “girls” was in a report in March, 1918 when the Milford Girls’ Friendly Society (whose members could have been up to 21 years old) undertook to cultivate two garden allotments, being held up as a good example.

Boys were targeted, for agricultural and labouring work, from quite young ages by today’s standards and also expected to emulate the physical work of their fathers. The War Agricultural Committee had already trained women and girls (‘girls’ in this context probably referred to young women of employment age) for farm work, but that was not sufficient to bring in harvests. In June, 1916 Derbyshire Education Committee considered the problem of the shortage of labour on farms during the coming hay harvest. A resolution was passed that if there was insufficient women’s labour a farmer could approach the head teacher of any elementary school to request that boys of the age of twelve be released for labour purposes. Boys had to be placed on a list previously sanctioned by the school managers and the boys’ wages (around a shilling a day) were paid through them.

Boy Scouts were founded on militaristic lines so it was not a big step to use them for such Home Front activities as assisting billeted soldiers, signalling, guarding railway lines and tunnels, ‘look-outs’ and messengers. They were also used for farm work and fundraising efforts. In the

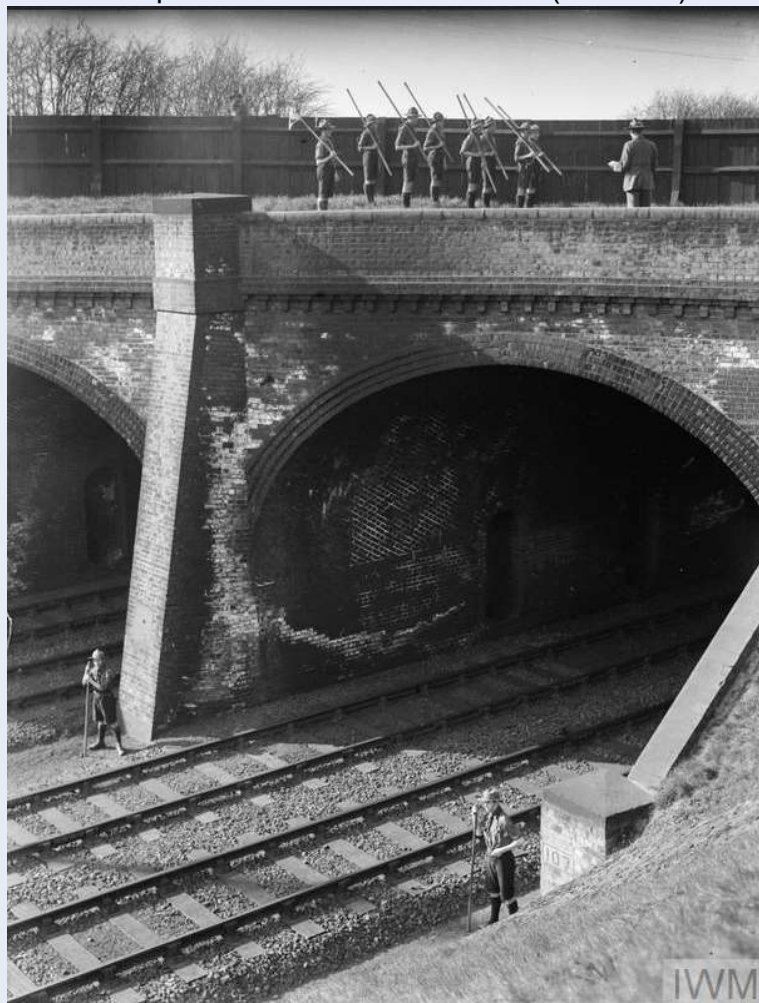
Belper News

Friday 14th August, 1914

The Belper Boy Scouts have rendered much valuable service to the officers stationed at Belper, and the Scoutmaster Ryde and his boys have received commendation for their usefulness.

Boy scouts on guard by a railway bridge and train tracks in the United Kingdom during the First World War.

Source: Imperial War Museum. © IWM (Q 30604)



**William Gilbert Endowed School Log, Duffield,
14th Jan 1915**

Am constantly having applications for boys for work. I have now not a single boy at the register over 14, a most unusual thing here and very few indeed over 13.

Matlock area they raised money through the collection of bottles which contributed towards ambulances being purchased for use at the Front.

School children were used to gather horse chestnuts in the autumn of 1917. Horse chestnuts contain acetone which is a component of cordite. The cordite was used as a propellant for shells and other arms. Before the war maize or potatoes, as good sources of starch, were used to extract cordite but when supply routes were cut-off new sources had to be found. As a replacement, children were encouraged to gather conkers with Scout Leaders helping to organise collections which were sent by train to top-secret factories at Holton Heath in Dorset and King's Lynn in Norfolk. Around 3,000 tons of chestnuts were collected by Britain's children in 1917 but they were not a good source of the chemical and piles of them were left, often on stations, to rot.

Although this would have been a disappointing end to considerable exertion it was just one of the collective measures that were employed to keep people and communities together in the face of adversity.

Belper News

7th September 1917

School children are being encouraged to gather all the horse chestnuts possible, and thereby add to the food storage of the country. It has been discovered that the horse-chestnut, though itself unfit for food can be utilised indirectly to increase the national food supply. For every ton of chestnuts half a ton of grain can be saved for human consumption.

Derbyshire Courier

8th September 1917

A sympathetic reception was given to a circular letter from the Board appealing to landowners, farmers and others to afford facilities for the collection by school children of horse chestnuts which would be used in substitution for a quantity of grain now consumed in certain industrial processes essential to the prosecution of the war.

William Gilbert Endowed School Log, Duffield, 19th Sept 1917

Commenced collecting chestnuts in response to circular from Board of Education requesting them for use in the manufacture of munitions.

6. 1916: Keeping the fabric of society together

As the War dragged on further changes were implemented to respond to new demands, not least in keeping the Front supplied with men. In areas of the Derwent Valley 1916 brought hostilities very close to home.

Zeppelins

The first air attacks in January 1915, brought the horrors of war directly to Britain and the prospect of people dying in their own homes. Great Yarmouth and King's Lynn were the first coastal towns to be attacked by bombs from Zeppelins. There were eventually 52 raids on British soil, including that at Derby on 1st February 1916, just after midnight. It was claimed that bombs were dropped on the Borough by mistake due to a German Zeppelin getting lost on its way to Liverpool. The airship dropped bombs and incendiaries on 9 locations in the town. The blasts were heard between 12 and 20 miles away and the incident claimed 5 lives.

Effects of DORA

Some aspects of DORA, Defence of the Realm Act, included not lighting bonfires or fireworks or flying a kite. This was to prevent attracting Zeppelins to populated areas.

Winston Churchill, as First Lord of the Admiralty prepared plans in 1913 to blackout British coastal towns in the event of war: they were implemented on 12th August, 1914 just before DORA was enacted. On 1st October 1914, the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police ordered that bright exterior lights were to be extinguished or dimmed in the London area and street lamps be partially painted out with black paint. Elsewhere, the matter was left to local authorities. The German's bombing campaign started early in 1915, and people in towns without blackouts, and worried about the consequences, sometimes took the law into their own hands smashing street lamps which they thought might attract an air raid. It was not until February 1916 that blackout restrictions extended to the whole of England.

As a result people were expected to shade their lights and there were many people who were fined for breaching the law. Fines varied tremendously between 5 and 18 shillings or even more for contravening the order: it could be significantly more for persistent offenders.

William Gilbert Endowed School, Duffield 1st Feb 1916

Many boys late this morning as everything has been thrown out of order owing to the Zeppelin attacks last night

Long Row School Log, Belper

25th Mar 1916 – Owing to snow and very bad roads, the attendance this morning and afternoon was very low – eighty-four and seventy-one respectively out of two hundred and two on the register.

Bonsall School Log - 21st June 1916

Practice leaving the school for use in case of emergency - time taken, little less than 1 minute.

Bonsall School Log – 29th Sept 1916

Showed boys a piece of the Zeppelin recently brought down – sent by an old scholar.

Belper News, Friday 7th April 1916

LIGHTING PROSECUTION. BELPER INNKEEPER FINED

Albert Milward, of the Market Place, Belper, licensed victualler, was charged at the local Court last week, under the Defence of the Realm Act, with not having his lights properly obscured on March 12th.

It was the first prosecution, Supt. Vardy said, the defendant having been warned previously. The offence arose from stupidity.

The penalty was 30s. The Chairman said it would be the last time they would impose such a small fine and everyone in the district should know it. It was not incumbent on the police to give warning

Long Row School Log, Belper

25th Oct 1916 - The County Committee, on the recommendation of the managers, have authorised the alteration of the school hours during the months of November, December, and January, as long as the present lighting regulations remain in force. Infants 9 to 11.45am and 1 to 3pm. Senior Depts. 9 to 11.45am and 1 to 3.15pm.

In May 1916, another dimension of DORA appeared in the form of the Summer Time Act which moved the clocks forward in summer. This ensured that the factories had maximum daylight hours in which they could operate to keep up production.

Conscription

Conscription came in for single men on the 2nd March 1916 and for married men on 25th May 1916. The school log books that were researched in preparation for this book show a steady stream of headmasters and other male teachers leaving their teaching posts to take up military service. We cannot be certain after the introduction of conscription which men enlisted and which were called up. Whichever way, their departure would have caused disruption to school life and to the teaching and learning of the children.

After Conscription, there were many accounts in the newspapers of men attempting to obtain exemption certificates. Coal miners, doctors and those in iron and steel industries were considered to be in reserved occupations but men who thought they were in poor health, those whose family would experience significant hardship or who were conscientious objectors applied to a tribunal for exemption of military or naval service. Tribunal Boards consisted of, for example, those who held office of some kind or who were from local businesses or industry. Even though there were shortages of labour in agriculture, few farmers were given exemption. We found from school log books that schools were affected by the call-up of male teachers.

Conscientious Objectors

Before the First World War, there had never been compulsory military service in Britain. The first Military Service Bill was passed into law in January 1916 following the failure of recruitment schemes to gain sufficient volunteers in 1914 and 1915. From March 1916, military service was compulsory for all single men in England, Scotland and Wales aged 18 to 41, except those who were in jobs essential to the war effort, the sole support of dependents, medically unfit, or 'those who could show a conscientious objection'.

There were approximately 16,000 British men on record as conscientious objectors (COs) to armed service during the First World War. This figure does not include men who may have had anti-war sentiments but were either unfit, in reserved occupations or had joined the forces anyway. The number of COs may appear small compared with the six million men who served, but the impact of these men on public opinion and on future governments was to be profound.

Dethick, Lea and Holloway Board School Log, 1916

6th Sept – Head teacher absent after opening at 1.30 pm on business connected with Military Service.

25th Sept – Mr. J E Benison, headmaster, left for Military Service.

26th Sept – I (Nellie Child. C.) took temporary charge of the school ... The Head Teacher does not arrive until 9.40 a.m. by permission. The School closes each day at 3.45 pm to allow Head Teacher to catch a convenient train.

9th Oct – Mrs. Child terminated her engagement as temporary Head teacher. ... I take charge of the school pending the appointment of a permanent headmaster. [signed] Henry Ward.

24th Oct – Mrs. Marsden-Smedley, a school manager, visited in the afternoon and spoke to each member of staff.

27th Oct – I finish my duties as temporary headmaster today. [signed] Henry Ward.

30th Oct - Commenced duties to-day as Temporary Head Master. Herbert Pearson

Dethick, Lea and Holloway Board School Log, 1st May 1916

School reopens this morning. Sergt-Major H.J Spacey, a late scholar of this school has gained DCM for an action performed in France, a photograph of him has been obtained, and hung in a prominent position in school.

In practice, having been rejected on appeal a CO was a soldier absent without leave and as such was subject to arrest. COs who entered military service were also arrested for refusing to obey military orders. Over one-third of the 16,000 COs went to prison at least once.

Court-martials were frequently held against COs: religious grounds were often given as the reason for not wanting to take up arms. Councillors, Aldermen, business leaders or military officers would often chair these trials, but some were far from sympathetic in their approach. In early April, 1916 the Derby Branch of the Women's Labour League protesting the need for fairness in such proceedings gave their view that "the tribunals are lacking in consideration: the members of them appear to try to baffle the individual who dares to have an opinion and the courage to express it". A few days later correspondence to the Derby Daily Telegraph complained about the unfairness of tribunals they had witnessed on the 9th April at the Derby Military Tribunal. One letter complained about the suitability of some of the militarist or capitalist Chairs, whilst another said that five COs had their applications refused in the space of three minutes. In the latter item it was noted that one man of 20 years was told that "it was impertinent to set his convictions against the considered judgement of the leaders of thought in the country", and was refused exemption because he was too young to have a conscience. It appears to have been rare to obtain a full exemption with applicants being placed in either non-combatant service, on farms doing agricultural work, in areas of war-work such as munitions or they were handed over to the military authorities as an 'absentee'. Many COs sentences involved imprisonment which was often accompanied by hard labour.

Henry Smith from Fritchley was court-martialled three times. He first appeared before Belper Police Court, Bench of Magistrates on 6th July 1916 and defended his position as a Quaker and Pacifist saying "...I am concerned not so much with the defence of my person as with the defence of my principles, and what happens to me is of secondary importance". He was fined 40s for being an absentee and handed over to the military authorities. A few weeks later, on 25th August, he was court-martialled at Normanton Barracks, Derby and sentenced to 56 days in Derby Prison. He was released in October, returned to 'duty' but arrested again, tried and sentenced to prison with hard labour for two years. On the 19th June, 1918 he was released from Wormwood Scrubs Prison but arrested on the 21st for disobedience, tried by court-martial and again imprisoned with hard labour. He was released from prison in March 1919 on grounds of health.

Another Fritchley man, H. Derbyshire, was initially given exemption as an agriculturalist. This was withdrawn as it was considered that he had sufficient help on his farm to cover his absence for joining the services. After proving that he was a Quaker, along with his ancestors for several generations, a new exemption from military service was allowed as long as he helped neighbouring farms for two days per week.

Fundraising

Many people on the Home Front went to great lengths to support the war effort. Those employed in the mills were working longer hours to meet government orders and others set up committees to raise funds for forms of relief and sailor and soldier comforts. Taking up the baton of 'doing good works,' committees were formed and organised by middle class women, particularly in relation to welfare matters.

Belper News, 24th March, 1916

MATLOCK MAN'S CONSCIENTIOUS SCRUPLES

The first case in the Matlock district of the arrest of a conscientious objector under the Military Service Act was heard at the Matlock Police Court on Friday, when George Alexander Anderson, a farm labourer, of Tansley, was charged with being an absentee under the Military Service Act...

[The magistrates] imposed a fine of £2 and ordered prisoner's remand to await a military escort.

Dethick, Lea and Holloway Board School Log 24th Mar 1916

The sum of £1.1.3 collected in the School for care of wounded horses forwarded to R.S.P.C.A. today.

Holbrook Church of England Primary School Log, 12th Nov 1917

Hospital collection money dispatched. Fourteen shillings to Royal Infirmary and Four Shillings to Surgical Appliance Fund.

There were many local and national organisations who were recipients of people's monetary donations. They were far ranging and included Belgian refugee support, the Serbian Relief Fund and the British, French and Russian Red Cross, Derbyshire Soldiers Comfort Association, Star and Garter Hospital for Limbless Soldiers, the Prince of Wales National Relief Fund (to help families of serving men), Overseas Club and the Prisoners of War Committees. To raise money fundraisers held whist drives, afternoon teas, concerts and dances. Books and magazines were collected and sent out to serving soldiers, free of charge by the Post Office in Matlock Bath as in other areas.

Duffield Red Cross hospital dated 1917, group of soldiers and nurses outside the VAD Red Cross Hospital on King Street/Hazelwood Road Duffield Derbyshire. The soldiers are in their hospital blues. Image: supplied by Martyn Harling.



General social events, important to community morale, continued to be held and ranged from church-based meetings through to bazaars, fetes, concerts in many forms, recitals and exhibitions which provided further opportunities to collect money. Wealthier people in the community gave private donations and on occasions lists of 'subscriptions' appeared in the local press. Fund raising, for such things as missionary work, continued throughout the war years. Donations for relief work and other charities were often taken in schools. Various social occasions were organised for convalescing soldiers in Voluntary Aid Detachment (V.A.D.) hospitals, with bowls tournaments, teas and music events being particularly popular. Local people also took great care to look after the soldiers convalescing at Willersley Castle, and other VAD hospitals nearby.

Amongst the frequent appeals put out for funds for charities a special collection was arranged entitled "Our Day" in Derbyshire' on 21st October 1915 for joint funds for the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St John of Jerusalem. Money collected was used for ambulances, hospital trains, hospitals in France, Malta and Egypt, surgeons, nurses, stretcher

**Matlock Bath Holy Trinity School Log
6th July 1917**

Master went to Derby by 9.48 train to attend a Conference at the County Offices on War Savings. Miss Hartle left in charge.

bearers, food parcels, clothing, stores for hospital comforts and many other items. Across the County £4,589² was collected and Derwent Valley contributions were as follows:-

Derby Borough £630 1s
 Matlock district; £221 17s 5d
 Wirksworth district; £36 10s 6d
 Belper district; £439 2s 2d

A Derbyshire Day event in April, 1918 was held by the local Red Cross Committees in the grounds of Willersley Castle. Handmade items were sold made by local people, wounded soldiers and nurses. These included carved woodwork, well-crafted needlework and beaded necklaces fashioned from the coverings of Woodbine cigarette packets. Music was provided by soldiers from the Canadian Hospital and £189. 0s. 6d was raised.

Dethick, Lea and Holloway Board School Log, 1st Dec 1916

Hospital collection Allocation 10/- to Derbyshire Royal Infirmary and 4/- to Derbyshire Education Committee's Spectacle and Appliances Fund.
 Signed Charles Knowles.

Bonsall School Log – 23rd June 1916

Private Smedley gave an account of army life and more particularly with regard to big guns and their workings.

War Savings

In many schools down the Derwent Valley, War Savings Associations were started to support the war effort after being initiated nationally in June, 1916. War Savings Certificates were designed to be simple, down-to-earth and affordable for ordinary people. A £1 certificate cost 15s 6d but could be acquired gradually by buying 6d stamps over a number of weeks to obtain a certificate. This also

Taken from an advertisement in the Belper News, 31st January 1919

War Savings Certificates

THE sales of War Savings Certificates in December, 1918, reached more than double the total for December, 1917. Here are the official figures, which show how enormous an increase there has been:

December, 1917	5,700,783 War Savings Certificates.
December, 1918	10,516,161 War Savings Certificates.

Every week millions of pounds are being invested by working men and women, who realise the wisdom of saving part their earnings until prices go down and the money can be spent to greater advantage.

War Savings Certificates are the safest of all investments, being guaranteed by the Government. They pay very good interest - more than you could get in any other way without risk. In five years every 15/6 War Savings Certificate will be worth £1. This is equivalent to 5¼ per cent Compound Interest, and there is no Income Tax to pay on the increased value.

Put your spare cash into
 War Savings Certificates

Source: Imperial War Museum
 © IWM (Art.IWM PST 10142)



² £1 in 1915 is worth approximately £102 in 2019 so the Derbyshire total would have been equivalent to £468,078.

brought them within the purchasing power of some children. They could be redeemed, free of income tax, five years later. They were only available to individual buyers or, with special permission, charities and provident societies, and ownership was limited to a maximum of £500. They could be bought from local war savings associations, the post office or banks.

For small investors, the guaranteed £1 for every 15s 6d spent represented a very attractive return of 29% in five years. Lending to the government was the most secure investment anyone could hope for, assuming Britain won the war, and it also had the appeal of being a contribution to the patriotic cause.

For the government, war savings certificates were a way to attract war finance from a previously unreached section of the population; people who weren't used to investing money, and hadn't been drawn into the war loans of 1914 and 1915. Unlike war loans, they also had the benefit of bringing money into government coffers in a constant stream, rather than in sudden peaks.

By the end of the war, £207m war savings certificates had been sold. After the war they continued to be sold, but were renamed national savings certificates, and were used to fund house building and other reconstruction and development projects. National savings products have remained on the market ever since, and are still used today as a way of funding public borrowing requirements. In the various educational and health and welfare institutions they always tried to make Christmas a special time even with the restrictions of war. At Babington House, Belper Workhouse, 1916 they provided decorations and a hearty dinner of "roast pork with accompaniments, two vegetables and plum pudding followed by desert". Mr Strutt provided the men with tobacco, women with tea and sugar and children with sweets. Entertainments were given in the afternoon and evening and one pint of beer was supplied to those who wanted it. There were three Cottage Homes also under the Board of Guardians where children resided and toys were distributed to them in the afternoon.

The festivities perhaps masked for a while the growing impact of hostilities. The year had seen the start of conscription and the Government were wanting more of people's money to keep the war mechanisms going: the strains of the last 2½ years were becoming more evident.

**Dethick, Lea and Holloway Board
School Log, 12th Dec 1917**

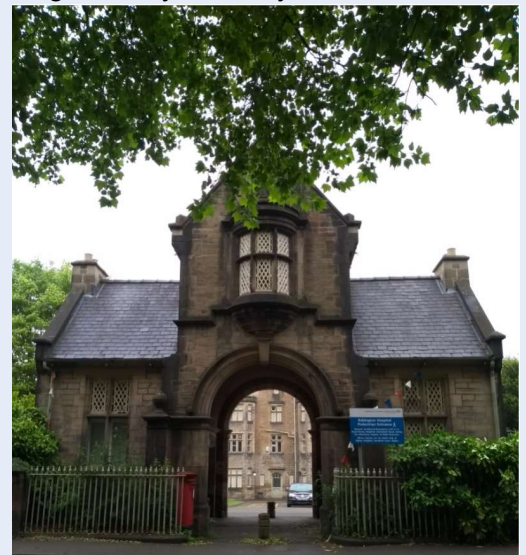
Collection taken in school for 'Overseas Club' which send out Christmas Comforts to Sailors and Soldiers. ...Total 15/-

Darley Abbey School Log

21st March 1918 – The prizes for attendance were distributed this afternoon and instead of books War Savings Coupons were given.

**Babington Hospital formerly Belper
Workhouse**

Image: Jenny Anthony, 2018



7. 1917: Weaving the weft into the warp

Whatever was happening in France, Belgium or other countries involved in the conflict, people on the Home Front were still occupied keeping daily life going as well as supporting war efforts. Women were now expected to help out in all areas of industry and agriculture as well as continuing in their roles as homemakers and rearing children. They took up the call with gusto but their presence was not always welcomed by the men already working in those areas.

Women's Army Auxiliary Corps

From the start of the war there was pressure from women for their own uniformed service. Organisations sprang up such as the Women's Volunteer Reserve, one of the forerunners to the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC), which was established in December 1916. Its formation was largely due to the realisation that non-combatant tasks were being performed by soldiers in France that could be executed by women, potentially freeing up men for the front line. Women were deployed as nurses from early in the conflict often not far from battle. WAACs were eventually mobilised into the near Continent in other roles with the first group arriving at the Western Front on 31st March 1917 to serve in support roles such as cooks, waitresses and bakers.

On 11th April 1917 the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps held a recruiting rally at Matlock Town Hall: it was well attended, mainly by young women. The Corps urgently needed cooks, domestic workers and clerks abroad as well as at home. Under the command of women officers the "girls" were organised in detachments. The pay was not very large, but the recruits were always ensured ample army rations. Some of them worked on the land and helped in increasing the potato crop, which was a main concern at the time.

Keeping the country and the armed services fed was a serious endeavour particularly with the tensions between conscripting farm workers for service and leaving the men on the land for essential manual and labouring work. In some cases soldiers were allocated to farms but although they could be desperate for help, some farmers did not want women working on their land as they thought them not strong enough to cope with the work.

Ministry of Labour WW1 poster for the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps
Source: Imperial War Museum © IWM (Q 68242)



Derby Daily Telegraph,
9th June 1917

THE CALL FOR WOMEN CLERKS

An urgent call is being made for women clerks, typists, and shorthand-writers for immediate service in France with the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps. They are required to take the place of men who are wanted for the firing line, and the conditions of service are by no means uninviting

Feeding the population

In early 1917, anxieties thrived about agricultural production and obtaining enough labour to bring in the forthcoming hay harvest. The Derbyshire Women's Agricultural Committee was asked to make an urgent appeal to recruit more women to work on the land. The Government fixed the wages: £1 per week for unskilled women and £1 2s when they had passed an efficiency test. German prisoners of war were available for farm labouring but farmers could be very wary of them and initially reluctant to use them.

Agricultural claims for farmers' sons not to be called up were put before exemption tribunals. During a Tribunal reported on 20th October 1916, it had been suggested that men on farms were not to be called up before 1st January 1917 and those engaged on milking farms from 1st April to temporarily restrict any further losses.

Commandeering horses at the outbreak of war was another detriment to farmers as these animals were used agriculturally for help with ploughing, carting and transport. Although assurances were given in August, 1914 that only just over 1% of heavy draught horses would be taken nationally from agricultural use by the military authorities, commandeering these working animals presented another challenge for food production. As a result tractors began to 'take up the slack' and increase in usage. In 1917 the Government bought 400 British Saunderson Tractors and spent \$3.2million on US models such as the Fordson to be distributed to farms.

The 'Ploughing Up' policy of 1917 saw additional land used for growing grain with the help of the tractors. Arkwright, at Willersley Castle, took the decision to plough up part of Cromford Meadows for this purpose. The Derbyshire Agriculture Committee had scheduled 25,000 acres of grassland to be ploughed up and had sufficient powers to order that a farm in Bakewell and one in Derby should be taken possession of, by farmers selected by them, on the grounds that they were not being properly cultivated. Nationally, by the end of the war, an extra 915,000 tonnes of oats, 1.7million tonnes of potatoes and 830,000 tonnes of wheat were grown each year compared to pre-war levels.

In 1917, measures were adopted to prevent food wastage, encourage vegetable growing and control

Dethick, Lea and Holloway Board School Log, 1917

7th May – The Chairman of the Managers has given permission for five boys to be absent from school which are to be temporarily employed by the Matlock Urban District Council in setting potatoes on land situated near Lea Mills. The Council is to pay the managers at the rate of one shilling per day per boy and the managers to pay the boys.

15th May – The five boys, referred to above, returned to school to-day on account of the work being discontinued for the present.

16th May – I have received instructions from the Assistant Director of Education that the above boys cannot further be excused attendance at the school without permission being obtained from the District Committee.

30th May – School re-opened. Egg collection for wounded soldiers taken in school. 36 eggs and 1/5 (money) collected.

6th Jun - ... I regret to report that the pea and bean crops in the school gardens have practically been destroyed by pheasants. This week's egg collection – 44 eggs and 6d collected.

16th Jul - Two boys have been granted exemption from school while assisting in hay-making, Robert Lee and Joseph Wragg.

21st Jan, 1918 – Mrs Marsden-Smedley visited and presented a pheasant to each of the 19 scholars who cultivated a garden-plot last year who are still in attendance at school.

Long Row School Log, Belper, 25th May 1917

All the classes, except the babies, went to "The Coppice" at 10am. Hymns were sung by all the school children in the town and speeches were made showing the necessity for "economy in food". The holiday celebrating "Empire Day" was given this afternoon. School will be closed on Monday for the Whitsuntide holiday.

consumption. The Matlock Bath Food Committee opened a milk depot where residents could purchase surplus milk at a set price. In February the Committee announced that families of service men, and of those that had fallen in the war, would be able to obtain milk at the price of 4d per quart. In the same month Matlock butchers issued notices stating that they could no longer give credit for meat.

Some school logs showed that girls attended cookery classes in 1915 and 1916 but it appears that these ceased until after the war in the light of food shortages and the need for food economy. On 23rd January, schoolchildren started their own scheme to grow potatoes and other vegetables in a $\frac{3}{4}$ acre site behind the New Bath Hotel in Matlock Bath. Gardening was a popular pre-war subject taught in schools which eagerly continued as it became a necessity. It was also introduced as an element of the curriculum in other schools such as at The Holy Trinity School, Matlock Bath in March where it was recorded that "14 boys will be taken to the garden for instruction on Tuesdays and Fridays each week from 2.15-4pm".

Also in March the Matlock Central Food Production Society was set up to encourage the rearing of pigs and rabbits and growing fruit and vegetables, particularly potatoes. The area of the society's activities included Matlock Bath, Cromford, Darley Dale and Winstar.

In the middle of May 1917, the 'Food Economy Campaign' printed half a million copies of 'Win the War Cookery Book', which was sold in newsagents for 2d. Later that month a war cookery demonstration was held by Miss Clegg of Derby at Matlock Town Hall, presenting recipes to reduce the use of scarce foods such as sugar and meat, flour and other cereals. Recipes used various flour substitutes and showed how economising on foodstuffs would 'Help Win the War'.

To overcome shortages of standard foodstuffs, newspapers offered recipes for substitute ingredients. One manufacturer of suet came up with an original method of preserving fruit without sugar: "Sound dry fruit should be cooked in bottles for fifteen minutes, topped up with water and half an inch of melted Atora suet. Once set, cover bottle with paper"

Belper News **15th June 1917**

FRUIT PRESERVING

It was reported that the horticultural section of the Board of Agriculture were sending down an expert to advise farmers, etc., as to scientific fruit bottling and the art of preserving fruit without sugar. It was decided to ask the women's organisation to arrange demonstrations and generally take the matter up.

Source: Imperial War Museum
© IWM (Art.IWM PST 10825)



William Gilbert Endowed School, Duffield **10th Sept 1917**

The attendance is irregular there being so many adverse circumstances – harvest work, holidays, shortage of labour and so on. It is impossible to do satisfactory work under the circumstances.

Crich Church of England School Log **12th Jul 1917**

Two boys have been granted permission by the Head Master to be absent from school to help in Agricultural Work. A separate record is being kept for this purpose.

The shortage of sugar caused consternation in September 1917 when a promise of an extra supply turned out to be less than expected. In Belper alone about 250 applications had been submitted to receive a share but with only 30 tons available for the whole county not all applications could be honoured. Chemist shops took the opportunity to advertise saccharine tablets.

The Women's Institute (WI) had been formed in 1915 to regenerate rural communities and support food production during WW1. A Canadian woman, Mrs [Madge] Watt, had brought the idea to the UK and, during a tour of the nation, spoke at a meeting in Derbyshire in November, 1916 as a guest of the Derbyshire Women's Agricultural Committee. Several WIs had formed in the locality by the time peace was declared in 1919 including Bolehill, Lea and Duffield. Along with WIs in other parts of the County they invited speakers to lecture on the keeping of small stock, fruit pruning, cultivation of vegetables and fruit, bottling, drying and canning, cheese-making and economic cookery. Some WIs, with other village members, organised the growing of fruit and vegetables for their local communities. These activities were important in stretching out food supplies during difficult times.

Women's Land Army

As discussed in an earlier section, women were employed on the land to fill the spaces left by men from quite early in the war. The Board of Agriculture and Fisheries formally started the organisation of the 'Land Army' in 1915 although the Women's Land Army was not formalised until 1917 and it was disbanded after the War. From 1915 women had been coming forward in significant numbers to volunteer for land work. Despite the lack of skilled labour even struggling farmers were reluctant to take on women to assist. There were jokes about farmers' wives not wanting young women doing work on the fields where they could not keep their eyes on them or their husbands but this hid great discrimination. In a meeting in March 1916, women speaking on the issue had effectively been barracked when good examples of women's farming and labouring capabilities were given. At the meeting one man thought that women's labour on farms in Derbyshire would be a "failure" but he also had the belief that miners received so much money that their wives refused to work and generally kept a servant.

In early 1916 in the Derwent Valley significant encouragements had been made to farmers to take on women: some of the excuses were largely around the assertion that women were not able to cope with the physical demands. In some circumstances soldiers were deployed to help on farms and women representatives of the Board of Agriculture in 1916 were brought to Derbyshire to appeal to

Belper News

Friday 17 November 1916

Mrs Watt averred that the immediate object of establishing women's institutes in War times was to stimulate food productions ... they would find that the Women's Institutes were peculiarly suitable to do the work ... to educate members on certain lines, such as domestic economy, agriculture and to awaken interest in ... country life. There was no reason why steps should not be taken to educate women in cheese and butter-making, fruit bottling, bee keeping, cookery: in fact, all the subsidiary lines of food production.

Belper News, 6th April 1917

Included in an advertisement to recruit to the Women's Land Army.

Women who enrol today will secure:-

1. A free outfit, high boots, breeches, overall and hat.
2. Maintenance during training
3. Travelling expenses in connection with the work
4. Wages 18/- per week, or the district rate, whichever is the higher.
5. Maintenance during term of unemployment
6. Housing personally inspected and approved by the Women's County Committees of the Board of Agriculture.
7. Work on carefully selected farms
8. Promotion – good work rewarded by promotion and higher pay.
9. After the War, special facilities for settlement at home or overseas.

William Gilbert Endowed School, Duffield,

12th Oct 1917 - Fruit picking and potato gathering are pleaded as excuses and under the exceptional circumstances of the times we must accept them.

farmers to use women's labour, warning that people would starve unless more were taken on to help with food production. Training was given to women including working with threshing and hay-baling machines and in forestry and hedge-trimming and they were involved in potato gathering and mangold pulling along with many other aspects of farm labouring.

There was a steady stream of appeals by individuals and organisations until the end of the war to try and get farmers to rethink their prejudice. More ardent entreaties from the National Service in the form of advertisements which appeared in the press in April 1917 said that 10,000 women were wanted to "Grow and Harvest the Victory Crops". Advertisements asked for 5,000 Milkers, 4,000 Field Workers and 1,000 Carters and urged with the call "DON'T DELAY! ENROL AT ONCE IN THE WOMEN'S LAND ARMY".

In addition an appeal was put out for "strong, healthy young women" to work as assistants for the hay-baling or trussing machines touring Derbyshire to cut hay for the stacks commandeered by the Government. With each trussing machine there was "a complement of a sergeant and eight soldiers, with two women assistants".

Agricultural concerns remained for some time to come and another drive to enlist for the Women's Land Army was organised in May, 1918 by Derby Recruiting Committee and chaired by Mrs Armistead, from Chevin Bank, Duffield. The claim was that 30,000 agricultural workers were still needed and a land army would be crucial to help with reconstruction post-war. Nonetheless, it was officially disbanded at the end of November in 1919.

During the autumn of 1917 food shortages were more evident from the queues seen outside shops. Requests were forthcoming from the authorities to consider moderation with certain foods and warned that rationing would have to be brought in if people did not observe some self-control. Some, of course, tried to adopt some form of limitation but unsurprisingly others carried on their existing lifestyle. Inevitably rationing came into force fully the following year.

Well dressing depicting a WW1 allotment.
Image: Jenny Anthony, 2016



Derby Daily Telegraph **29th May 1918**

WOMEN'S INSPECTION AT DERBY

An inspection of the Women's Land Army, under the auspices of the Derbyshire Women's Agricultural Committee, will take place at Derby on Friday. A parade of the Q.M.A.A.C. and W.L.A. will start from the Drill Hall, and about noon at the Corn Exchange ...

Crich Church of England School **6th Dec 1917**

During the last lesson this afternoon (2-50 to 3-30) the Head Master addressed the whole school on "The Urgent Need for avoiding Waste" A similar lesson, also lessons on Food Economy, will be given each week for the future – one lesson per week to the whole school – by the Head Master.

Darley Abbey Infant School Log, 21st Dec 1917

The Christmas tree and presents arrived early on Monday morning. The candles were lighted every afternoon about 3.15 and parents + friends were present. Mrs Evans and the Rev A.J.S. Hart [Curate] were present on Wed afternoon. The School broke up at noon today.

8. Infant, Child and Maternal Welfare

There was no welfare state until after WWII, so health provision was negligible for those without money. What was available to the most vulnerable was dependent upon voluntary work, subscriptions, donations, fundraising or such things as annual bazaars, fetes, flag days or concerts.

Before the outbreak of the Great War in 1914, there was widespread national concern regarding infant mortality. The poor physical condition of many of the British soldiers, enlisting for the Boer War, which ended in 1902, prompted a drive to safeguard the next generation. When war broke out more women, some of them mothers, were employed in mills and factories, often in risky environments like munitions work generating further anxieties about maternal and foetal welfare. The mills and factories along the Derwent brought prosperity to the owners and provided employment but posed health risks and many workers, on meagre wages, lived in insanitary, cramped living conditions unable to afford better housing.

In a speech in 1920 by Dr Laurie, as he was elected Mayor of Derby, he recalled the pre-1900 slum conditions in streets around Bridge Gate which were narrow, damp, and ill-paved, with channels down the middle carrying a stream of filth. The densely crowded court dwellings had cess-pools and were often infested with creeping insects in summer. He acknowledged that the Borough Council had made some progress regarding sanitation, limited slum clearance and tighter controls to supply purer milk. There had also been some effort to reduce the spread of tuberculosis and provide accommodation for tuberculosis patients, away from the polluted factories and open sewers.

The dreadful living conditions of people in poverty were of concern, particularly mother and child health, to Dr Albert Brindley and Dr Sidney Barwise, who were Medical Officers for Health in Derby and Derbyshire between 1908 and 1920. Dr Barwise, from Duffield, helped to improve sanitation and water supplies and brought in district maternity nursing and a school medical visits service. Dr Brindley helped to introduce maternity and child welfare services in Derby.

Notification of Births Act 1908

The introduction of the 1908 Notification of Births Act placed responsibility for the welfare of infants with borough councils. The recorded details of mother and child were used to help the newly appointed health visitors to monitor the early weeks of infancy and assess the health of the nursing mother, offering advice in the first few weeks after birth. The system of visiting mothers to offer advice was being developed following the work and data gathering of a former Medical Officer for Derby, Dr William Howarth. His

Wirksworth Infant School Log

24th Aug 1914 - School has been closed two weeks by order of Dr. Barwise owing to an epidemic of whooping cough. Reopened this morning with an attendance of 41 out of 61. Admitted 2 new scholars.

Long Row School Log, Belper

14th Sept 1914 - Nurse weighed and measured about one hundred children this afternoon.

Fleet School Log, Belper

6th Nov 1914 - A number of boys have been suffering sore throats. One has been sent home. The matter has been reported to Dr Allen the Medical Officer of Health who visited immediately and examined certain boys.

Long Row School Log, Belper

17th Sept 1914 – Dr Archibald held her medical inspection today.

Holbrook C of E Primary School Log

23rd Dec 1914– Forwarded today the Hospital collection made here and at Infants School: 17/- in all. 25% (4/3) sent to County for Spectacle Fund. The rest to Derbyshire Royal Infirmary.

Darley Abbey Infant School Log

29th Jan 1915 - A case of Scarlet Fever has kept out two children. The attendance is poor.

Long Row School Log, Belper

19th May 1915 - W. Statham, the Sanitary Inspector, took “swabs” from the throats of twenty-five children this morning.

research, published in the Lancet in 1905, into feeding methods for infants, concluded that successful feeding, together with advice, had a positive impact on sustaining life.

One very proactive organisation, meeting regularly in Derbyshire from 1895 was the National Union of Women Workers (NUWW), still in existence as the National Council of Women. It developed into a nationwide network with representation from a myriad of affiliated church groups, guilds, societies, co-operatives and associations linked to the International Council of Women. It held national and regional conferences, invited expert speakers and engaged in campaign actions relating to welfare, employment and suffrage but it was not politically affiliated. They had an excellent network of active members seeking to be well informed, share information and look for solutions to alleviate suffering and drive initiatives forward.

In 1909, the Derbyshire Branch of the National Union of Women Workers held their quarterly meeting in Derby. A Mrs MacDonald had been invited to explain how she set up a Mothers' and Babies' 'Welcome' modelled on an idea rooted in Paris in 1904. She realised that destitute mothers needed feeding as well as their infants and appealed for donations to support the cost of hiring a room to offer cheap meals for nursing mothers. The money only lasted for two days but other donations followed. On the small sum of £200 she set up in 1908 a Welcome Centre supported by medical staff and volunteers serving a large number of mothers and babies.

Other women in the area could see the need to establish such facilities such as Mrs Worthington, from Duffield who had been supporting her own group through Mothers' Union meetings and the Hon Mrs Gell from Wirksworth who thought that councils should be responsible for their provision.

The NUWW with the support of Dr Brindley and Dr Barwise along with the Derby Branch of the British Women's Temperance Association (BWTA) worked with great determination to promote the idea of Welcome Centres and put out appeals for support. In 1910 they were given a small room at the Friends Meeting House in St Helen's Street, near Bridge Gate in Derby to welcome the first five mothers and their babies followed soon by three more Welcomes.

Central Tipperary Room, 36 Full Street, Derby

At the outbreak of war, Dr Brindley thought that another Welcome was needed to prevent premature deaths of infants and their mothers. This was supported by Mrs Ada Evans from Darley Abbey who was part of the family who ran Darley Abbey Mills, a generous benefactor to many and long serving member of the trustees managing the Derbyshire Hospital for Sick Children, North Street close to Bridge Gate and relying solely on donations for its existence. Mrs Evans was also a key member of the Derbyshire NUWW together with Helen Parry who lived at 4 Full Street and shared a strong desire to be

Long Row School Log, Belper 1915

18th May – Dr Allen visited this morning and reported another case of diphtheria.

19th May – W. Statham, the Sanitary Inspector, took "swabs" from the throats of twenty-five children this morning.

[Three new cases reported on 15th July.]

16th Jul – By order of Dr Allen, school closed this afternoon owing to several cases of diphtheria amongst the scholars.

[Swabs taken on the 6th, 13th and 27th of September]

29th Sept – Dr Allen reported three more cases of diphtheria.

Darley Abbey Boys School Log 26th Jan 1916

Medical inspection by Dr Ward.

Fleet School Log, Belper

27th Jan 1916 – Master absent for a time this afternoon to visit a home whence the boys came to school in a destitute condition.

Darley Abbey Infant School Log 23rd Oct 1916– Pamphlets relating to the collection for the Children's Hospital were distributed.

Darley Abbey Infant School Log 12th Oct 1917 – Nurse Simpson came and examined the 1st Class on Wednesday morning as one of the mothers had complained about the cleanliness. All were clean.

pro-active in promoting Mothercraft sessions through exhibitions, Baby Weeks and invitations to attend the Mothers and Babies' Welcomes.

In December 1914, Full Street Hostel was set up. Initially, the local BWTA were responsible for part of the new venture providing a room for the wives and mothers of the men who were by now absent from the town, serving their country. In January 1915 there was an informal event to promote its purpose as a gathering place for refreshments, concerts, help in reading and writing letters to and from the Front and concerts and talks on the War.

The hostel also helped women to manage the bureaucratic process to access their separation allowance, paid to dependents of serving soldiers. The system was new and not straightforward and claimants needed to show status and how many dependent children there were. If there were delays in receiving this benefit it could put mothers and their children in a state not far from destitution. Helen Parry took on responsibility for setting up the welfare rooms for nursing mothers. Volunteers made them friendly, welcoming places and lifted the fear of 'sanitary inspections' or punitive approaches. Reports stated that some babies died due to parental ignorance or perished in the desperate slum conditions in which they lived.

Opening on a daily basis volunteer doctors, nurses and health visitors came in at lunch time to weigh the babies, give them a check-up and assess the health of the mother. They gave out information about hygiene, ways to avoid sickness and diarrhoea and other infections that caused infant death. Often the mothers were in desperate need of nourishment so a hot dinner was available for 1d. Appeals were made for cots, wool and baby clothes and a piano was donated for recreation. The hostel was formally opened on 13th January, 1915 by the Mayoress Mrs. Hill and Sir Thomas Roe, M.P and many others who gathered to promote the centre.

Derby Mothers' and Babies' 'Welcome': '*Saving the Babies*'

In October 1916 an ambitious Mothercraft Exhibition was held at Full Street Hostel. It was opened by Mrs Green the Mayoress with Ada Evans, Gertrude Marsden-Smedley and Helen Parry present together with Hilda Hulse, the Commandant of Haye Leigh VAD on Duffield Road. By this time the hostel had expanded and housed a nursery for children aged 2 to 5 years so that mothers could attend daily war work. The children were, for a small charge, "fed, trained and amused and medically inspected once a week".

The number of children who had places at the hostel had steadily increased. Munitions workers and other mothers, whose work began early and ended late could leave their infants at the hostel as

Scales of the time used to weigh babies.
Image: supplied by Anna Bourke



Banana box used for improvising a baby's cot
Image: supplied by Anna Bourke



Women's Hostel, Full Street, Derby (adjacent to the Silk Mill)

Image: supplied by Picture the Past



weekly boarders from Monday morning till Saturday evening for a payment of six shillings a week but additional donations for the cost of food, heating and light were needed. Caring for babies at night necessitated extra staff, and the lighting, firing, and food were heavy expenses particularly in cold weather. In the winter of February 1917, Helen Parry-Jones made an appeal for urgently needed help and supplies including childcare from 9 pm to midnight; cots and bedding; blankets and warm coverings suitable for nursery use; pinafores and overalls; vests; warm nightdresses and under-clothing or material for making them.

A national initiative and opportunity to educate the public and celebrate achievements in the midst of the growing death toll and hardships at the home front took the form of 'Baby Week' in Derbyshire in July, 1917. A series of meetings and lectures took place in the Derby Market Place or indoors when wet with a range of speakers including the Right Hon. J.H Thomas M.P. and Sir W Collins M.P. Full Street Hostel opened its door and gave special invitations to husbands and fathers to accompany their wives to learn about the beneficial work of the crèche and nursery school. The Education Committee provided daily demonstrations on washing and dressing babies given by the senior girls

Derby Daily Telegraph

5th January 1917

THE FULL STREET HOSTEL

... On Jan. 1st the members of the Hostel girls' club were entertained at the Hostel. Several friends kindly contributed to the enjoyment of the evening and songs were given by Miss Surman and Mrs Imney. The girls sang carols and played games. Refreshments were handed round, and before leaving each girl received a small gift. On the following afternoon the members of the mothers' sewing class were entertained to tea, and the children of the nursery school had their Christmas tree, kindly sent from the Children's Hospital. All present were delighted with the way in which the children marched into the room, each carrying a small flag, and afterwards sang their nursery rhymes. Each member of the nursery school received a present, and the afternoon passed happily in playing games and singing. Tea was served in the long room

from the elementary and secondary schools. Stalls were set up illustrating ways to sterilise infant feeding bottles and cheap ways to make baby clothing and cots improvised from banana boxes. Prizes were awarded and War teas served for a nominal fee.

In October, 1917 a Mothercraft Exhibition in the Temperance Hall was opened by Miss Longdon, who had provided the first room in Ford Street back in 1910. The room could only accommodate three mothers and babies at a time. In her opening she said that hostels were needed all over the town.

In May 1918 Councillor Raynes, addressing the local National Union of Women Workers, made the case for pressing on with slum clearances which had been delayed by the ongoing war as by this time the link between housing and health had been recognised. He said that Derby was not badly housed but whereas some areas like Osmaston had only a few people per acre, in the slum areas around the Silk Mill there were 71 persons per acre who were herded together in squalid conditions. He said that "we are killing 70 to 80 babies a year by dirt, squalor and neglect".

1918 Maternity and Child Welfare Bill

Early in 1918 The Maternity and Child Welfare Act forced Local Authorities to make provision for child welfare systems such as ante-natal care and health visitors. The flourishing Full Street Hostel was adopted by the local authority and given funding. As a result a grant was awarded to purchase some furniture and move from 36 Full Street to 56 St Helen's Street. Health visitors and nurses salaries were increased and medical staff were formally appointed.

From the inspirational efforts of key individuals living and working in the area babies' survived birth and mothers were supplied with the ways and means to care for them and raise them in healthier conditions. Voluntary donations from townspeople supported the efforts and town councillors and MPs were drawn in to ensure the work continued as forerunners to the National Health Service care we recognise today.

The growing success of the hostel is shown in this extract below from Dr Brindley's 1918 Annual Report as Medical Officer for Derby (page 49).

- b) *The Nursery School*. This has also done excellent work in 1917. The numbers have steadily increased, and 131 children have passed through the school.
- c) *Crèche*. The Crèche has been in greater request during 1917, especially in the last six months of the year. Early and late hours and night work for mothers have made it necessary to keep the babies in at night, and as many as 15 babies have been sleeping at the Hostel at one time.
- d) *Infant Consultations*. These have been held on Friday in each week by Dr. Annie Jackson. Forty-nine consultations were held by her during the year.
- e) *Addresses to the Mothers*. Addresses to mothers have been given by the Medical Officer of Health on the ailments of pregnancy, the care of the newly-born infant, etc.

Dethick, Lea and Holloway Board School Log 10th June 1918

Albert Byard, Upper Holloway, reported by parents to be suffering from Scarlet Fever.

Darley Abbey Infant School Log 7th Dec 1917

5/8½ was collected for the hospital fund.

9. The Darley Strikers

The War had taken skilled and semi-skilled men from industrial jobs at the mill at Darley Abbey. As elsewhere, there was a constant stream of vacancies needing to be filled due to enlistment and conscription. Women filled vacancies and showed themselves capable and hardworking, with the war allowing them to slot into jobs traditionally performed by men. Nonetheless, they had long worked in high numbers in Derwent Valley mills such as John Smedley's in Matlock, Strutt's in Belper and Darley Mills in Derby doing "women's work". Such work was considered to be less taxing than the work of men, and used as a justification for giving them smaller amounts of pay. Given the hardships of three years of war the mill workers must have been desperate to take the drastic step of going on strike in August 1917.

Darley Abbey Mills – a little history

Throughout the 17th and 18th Centuries, a series of water-powered mills were developed between Darley Street and the west bank of the river Derwent for grain, flint, leather and paper. Darley Abbey is known as the 'factory village', created by the Evans family from the 1780s, to house a workforce for the mills built for cotton spinning: they were known later as the 'Boar's Head Mills'. Walter Evans Co. Ltd., produced cotton thread, and the company stayed in the family until they were taken over by John Peacock and Sons after the death of Walter Evans, in 1903. John Peacock, who lived on Duffield Road, had worked as a manager at the Mills for a number of years. He died in 1930 aged 80 and is buried in the graveyard of St Matthew's Church, Darley Abbey, facing the mill, but his sons ran the business until 1943 when it was sold to J&P Coats. It was John who saw through the strike which started in August 1917 and lasted for over four months.

Sir Richard Arkwright had his first successful water powered cotton spinning mill built at Cromford in 1771 complete with tied housing for his workers. Thomas Evans developed his cotton mills between 1792 and 1826 along with over 130 houses, effectively creating a new village which included St Matthew's School and Church built in 1819. The Evans family followed in the footsteps of other Derwent Valley industrialists as benefactors for the village and beyond.

Walter Evans widow, Ada Evans, was a well-known benefactor, a generous supporter of many local institutions and interested in women's issues. There are frequent accounts of her good works and generosity in the local press, at all times as well as through the WW1 years. She was involved in health and welfare matters, concerned with children, raised funds for various charities, was a school manager and served on a number of committees. The family lived right next to the Derwent just a few hundred yards downstream from their mills at Darley House, a large Georgian building, with gardens and plantations on the same ground in what is now Darley Park.

Darley Abbey School Log

15th Mar 1915 – One child, Jennie Lawson, has left school to work at the Mill

Derby Daily Telegraph

23rd April, 1915

Girls, 13-15 years old, WANTED for cotton mill; no previous experience needed - Apply Walter Evans and Co. Ltd., Darley Abbey.

Derby Daily Telegraph

10th May, 1915

WANTED, competent LADY TYPIST-SHORTHAND WRITER; knowledge book-keeping, quick at figures. – Apply, stating experience and wages required, Walter Evans and Co. Ltd., Darley Abbey.

Derby Daily Telegraph

16th October, 1915

WANTED, LADY CLERK, for order department. – Reply, stating particulars, experience, wages required. Walter Evans and Co. Ltd., Darley Abbey.

Derby Daily Telegraph

20th October, 1915

PRINTER WANTED, over military age; used to litho and letterpress work - Walter Evans and Co. Ltd., Darley Abbey.

August 1917 was unseasonably wet, spoiling harvests and dampening spirits somewhat for a nation facing loss and hardship as well as rising costs and food shortages. Ada had placed Darley Park at the disposal of the organisers of a 'Military Sports and Regatta' event in August, 1917 and with the river Derwent flowing past, it was an ideal spot for "... a varied programme of events on land and water". They had flat, sack and 'four-legged' races, a land boat race, blind boxing, tilting the bucket and a tug-of-war. Various swimming and rowing challenges, including a coracle race, were managed by 'recognised officials'.

Darley Mills Strike

On the other side of the river, at Darley Mills, a dispute developed between the manager and employees. A group of women sought recognition to belong to the Workers Union. In April, over 130 women workers had joined the local branch. They also wanted their hours to be reduced from 55½ (a typical working week for most) to 54 hours a week and a wage rise of 5/- for those over 18 and 2s 6d for those under that age: the management declined all three requests. Women, with years of experience, as well as the "girls" and "lads" at Darley Mills were paid significantly less than average for other comparable work. Their low pay was also exacerbated by high levels of inflation as the value of a pound dropped by about 40% between 1914 and 1917. Individual attempts had been made by the women in July, 1917 to meet with their employers and to negotiate better terms and conditions but they failed to produce a satisfactory outcome which triggered strike action in what turned out to be a lengthy dispute.

The women received backing from many people in the town and beyond. Their Union membership entitled them to support from officials who were R.E Stokes, H.A. Hinds and W.H. Salisbury. Derby had successfully developed local branches of the Workers' Union as part of a national initiative to negotiate improved pay and conditions, through collective bargaining. The Derby Branch had 3000 members, part of a 200,000 strong national membership. They had a good reputation for working with the aligned local Trades Council, to resolve issues in the workplace. The Trades Council met every month to discuss welfare and employment issues and was made up of representatives of affiliated branches of trade unions, council officials and other working class bodies. They spoke on behalf of local movements on wages and social conditions and their role became accepted more fully during WW1. In September delegates from the women's branch of the Workers' Union joined the Derby Trade Council and were warmly welcomed.

Saturday 15th September was the deadline given by the Mill for the workers to leave the Union or leave their employment. To offer support, the Union representatives turned up at the mill at noon to address the workers. A demonstration was held on the 23rd in Derby Market Place where Miss Weaver, Women's Organiser of the Workers' Union, from Birmingham played a key role in advising and accompanying the women throughout their struggle. She acquainted the public of the facts of the case and presented the issues from the workers' point of view, whilst other trade unions promised

Derby Daily Telegraph

24th November, 1915

REELERS, Winders, and Doublers
REQUIRED. - Walter Evans and Co.
Ltd., Darley Abbey.

Derby Daily Telegraph

20th April, 1916

WANTED, GIRL WINDERS, and
Doublers: good wages paid: also a few
young Girls (14 and upwards) for
learning: Apply Walter Evans and Co.
Ltd., Darley Abbey.

	2019 equivalent of £1
1914	£114.43
1915	£101.95
1916	£86.26
1917	£68.80
1918	£56.35
1919	£51.21

Table showing inflation over the
period of the War.

'Walter Evans and Co Ltd' Reel
of Cotton belonging to Darley
Abbey Historical Group.
Photo: Hazel Thomson



moral and financial support. On Sundays the striking women gathered in Darley Abbey, with instruments and such things as pans to bang, to make as much noise as possible and march down to Derby for mass meetings. The assembled crowd would fill the Market Place or pack halls: these gatherings were important for helping those concerned to keep up-to-date with proceedings. In addition speeches were made, resolutions passed and actions decided upon. In the progress report at such a meeting on 23rd September it was reported that the managers had offered workers 3s 6d and had said that strikers could return to work if they severed all links with the unions or they could "collect their insurance cards, go starve and ... soon be glad to return to the mill".

Over the ensuing months the Derby Daily Telegraph (DDT) reported on the dispute publishing correspondence from various parties involved to clarify positions or rally support. A letter was published, on behalf of Walter Evans and Co Ltd., on the 20th October to make the case for what they saw as being reasonable increases. The Company offered between 2s 6d and 3s 6d per week, depending on age which would have meant the average earnings for female workers per week were: under 16, 14s 9d and for over 16, 18s. In their opinion, there was no case to answer as they claimed that "There is no longer a strike at the mill as the malcontents have left our employ. They were paid off and insurance cards returned". The management expressed the view that "All discipline and control of the workers would be forfeited if the methods of this particular union were to obtain". They claimed that the recent increased output of their machines placed additional wages within reach of all employees if they negotiated as individuals and not via their union. It was signed by F. W. Cotton, Secretary and M. B. Morton, Cashier.

Darley Mills Strikers Band which marched down to Derby Market Place on Sundays during the Strike.
Image: Courtesy of Adrian Farmer



A response from Mr Stokes was printed on the 23rd October making the point that some long serving, skilled and experienced female workers had only had a 10% increase, when the cost of living had gone up more than 100% during the war which was “Insufficient to keep girls in decency and comfort...and they can no longer work under such conditions”. Further, since individual bargaining had failed, striking remained the last resort and “[the strikers] would never return to work ...until victory had been won”.

With no cushion of a welfare state, living without a wage quickly created great hardship but donations came in from all parts of Great Britain to help with the cause and gave some relief.



Cotton weaving machinery at Masson Mill Museum
Photo: Christopher Bourne, 2018.

Mr Charles Duncan, Labour MP for Bowness and General Secretary of the Workers Union offered his support by speaking at the New Central Hall, Exchange Street, on Sunday 28th October: Mr Stokes chaired the meeting. He remarked that in the seventh week of the strike the women were as determined to win union recognition although some “middle-class women have gone in to the mill, to help defeat their poorer sisters”. Mr Hinds, secretary of the Women’s Branch, moved a resolution: “That this mass meeting of Trade Unionists congratulates the women and girls of Darley Mills upon the plucky manner in which they are fighting for the right of organisation and better conditions”. The strikers held the view that they would, “rather return [to work] for a shilling more, with union rights, than accept more money with union membership denied”. Mr Duncan commented that “At this grave period an employer should not adopt and persist with such an attitude especially since women had done so much at the call of their country and that 108 skilled women should find themselves unemployed”. He could not see why women should be less well paid for the same work as men and hoped they would persevere. The resolution was carried unanimously.

The striking women sustained their picket lines even as winter approached: they took the opportunity to knit socks for soldiers whilst on picket duty. A few mill hands returned to work but the majority continued to hold their strike position. On 2nd November, eight former mill hands were summoned to appear in court for an incident that happened on 29th October. The defendants were Lily Ward, Dorothy Bailey, Selina Chalkley, Ethel Burns, Doris Hurst, Martha Williamson, Nellie Maddocks from Darley Abbey and Clarice Farmer who lived on City Road: they were aged between 15 and 37 years. The allegation was that they tried to compel a worker, Florence Luff, a clerk at the mill, to abstain from crossing the picket line. Bail was granted and it went to trial.

Bobbins at Masson Mill Museum
Photo: Christopher Bourne, 2018.



The trial was held on 9th November and all the defendants pleaded “not guilty”. Their defence was that they were demonstrating against Mr Peacock, the Managing Director, who was said to have used insulting language towards the strikers; the incident happened a few hundred yards away from Mr Peacock’s house on Duffield Road. Florence Luff appeared and Daisy Christian and Violet Smith were witnesses: Miss Weaver, Workers’ Union supported the strikers in court. The jury decided the girls had been rather indiscreet but that no violence was used and they gave the accused the benefit of the doubt, finding them not guilty. The judge, Mr Justice McCardie, had other ideas and declined to accept this as a verdict saying that if mercy was to be given that was a matter for him: he declared the defendants guilty and they were bound over.



Women operating patent cotton underwear machines in a hosiery works of the Milanese Hosiery and Textile Company Limited at Ilkeston, Derby. Taken during WW1.
Source: Imperial War Museum, © IWM (Q 110008)

On Thursday, 15th November the suffragette, Mrs Emmeline Pankhurst, came to Derby for a meeting at the Cooperative Society’s new hall on a recruitment drive for her new Women’s Party (more in ‘Votes for Women’). She told the audience about her Party’s main aims which included women obtaining the vote, equal pay for equal work and equal opportunity of employment: grist to the mill for the striking women of Darley Abbey.

On 2nd December, the weekly gathering, in connection with the strike, was held at the Gospel Hall chaired by the District Organiser of the Workers’ Union. Mr Sturgess, from the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, (A.S.E.) talked about their involvement in the dispute and noted the great courage and determination shown by the women workers fighting for better conditions of employment. He wanted the public to know that every effort had been made to resolve the strike and they “were not desirous of prolonging the dispute” but advised members that “they should remain continuously loyal to the end”.

Christmas was approaching and on 22nd December union representatives gathered again in the Gospel Hall with the sole purpose of seeking a solution. After 14 long weeks of action Mr Stokes indicated that if defeated there would be implications for how other trade unionists might be treated and Mr Sturgess reported that the A.S.E had withdrawn their men from Darley Mills in sympathy. Importantly, a resolution was carried unanimously to demand that the Government intervene to bring pressure to bear on the employers at Darley Mills to bring the dispute to a successful conclusion, “failing which all Trade Unionists in Derby leave work at the expiration of 14 days” from the date of the meeting.

On 11 January 1918, in the depths of winter, as the influenza pandemic spread across the world, the DDT printed a rather unassuming item with the news that the mill strike was settled and employees were to return to work. There was no mention of the amount or conditions that were finally agreed.

On Saturday 19th January a concert in aid of the Darley Abbey Dispute Fund was held. Vocalists, who were all Trade Unionists, gave their services to a crowded and appreciative audience at the Gospel Hall. Miss Weaver took the Chair and in the interval, Mr Stokes gave a brief report on the settlement of the dispute and praised the women for “their pluck and tenacity in sticking it out for 17 long, weary weeks” in winter. He was pleased that they had their reward and he ventured to say that the “records of their fight will be one of the brightest in the Trade Union history of Derby”.

Derby Daily Telegraph

11th January, 1918

**DARLEY MILLS STRIKE
SETTLED.**

EMPLOYEES TO RETURN TO WORK.

We have received the following statement signed by Mr. J. Peacock, Jr, on behalf of W. Evans and Co., Ltd., proprietors of Darley Cotton Mills, Mr John Beard representing the Workers' Union and Mr Arthur Sturgess the A.S.E:-

As a result of a conference, a mutually satisfactory settlement of the dispute has been reached and workpeople will return to the mill as soon as practicable.

10. “Votes for Women!”

There was significant suffragist activity in the Derwent Valley leading up to the War with various prominent women taking the lead to gain ‘Votes for Women’. By the end of 1909 Lady Madeleine Onslow, who lived at Duffield, formed a branch of the non-militant National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) with other local women such as the Secretary, Mrs G S Sowter, Mrs Worthington and Dr Flora Morrison, holding meetings in the Parish Room. The women joined with suffragists across Derby including Mary Boden (Mrs Henry Boden), Mrs and Miss Vaudrey, Selina Smith (Mrs Alfred Smith) and her daughter Marguerite Smith. Mary Boden hosted meetings at her home, ‘The Friary’ and chaired meetings at other venues: she had stood for election to the Town Council in 1910 but did not win the seat. In February 1912, Mrs Onslow formed part of a deputation from the Derby area going to London to lobby Sir Herbert Raphael. He was the MP for South Derbyshire who was anti-suffrage. ‘Votes for

Madeleine Emma Onslow (1851 -1926) was born in Ireland but because of her father’s work grew up in Italy where she studied music: she was a fluent speaker of Italian and French. She moved to Western Australia in 1880 with her husband, Sir Alexander Onslow, who served as Chief Justice. In 1894 she became vice-president of the Karrakatta Club for Women, in Perth and as President of the Woman’s Suffrage Society was instrumental in the formation of the Woman’s Franchise League helping Western Australian women gain the vote in 1899.

Lady Onslow returned to England with her husband in 1901 and lived in Duffield but was widowed in 1908. She continued to campaign for “Votes for Women” and formed a branch of the non-militant National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) with other Duffield women. She went on to be involved with various women’s issues and organisations.



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The **Karrakatta Club Western Australia** group of members who campaigned for Votes for Women. Third from left, front row and third from the left, back row is **Madeleine Onslow** and her daughter Elsie Onslow. From around 1908, they joined the local suffragist movement in Derbyshire and Elsie was the first president of Derby Women’s Citizens organisation from 1918-19 after Women had been granted the right to vote. Photo: courtesy of State Library of Western Australia Ref: 1998B

Women's meetings and debates took place in the area including one in November 1913, at the Albert Hall, Derby in which Helena Swanwick presented the case for 'Votes for Women' and Gladys Pott, Secretary of the National League for Opposing Women's Suffrage put differing arguments.

Jessie Laing who lived in Normanton, Derby was a known suffragette who spent two months in Holloway Goal for smashing windows. She spoke of her experiences as an invited guest of the Derby branch of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), on 11th May, 1912 and told of being arrested by six huge constables and when convicted placed in a small, cold cell. She had been on hunger strike and narrated some harrowing details of the methods employed to forcibly feed those who refused to eat.

It was reported in Belper News that a NUWSS meeting had taken place on 17th March 1913, chaired by the Rev. A. Leslie Smith but it is unclear which branch called the meeting. A Mrs Manners gave an address and Mrs Cowmeadow, from the audience, remarked that Belper women were eager to obtain the vote.

Hylde Cross, from Belper was an active supporter of 'Votes for Women' and a member of the WSPU, an elocution teacher and a concert pianist. She played at concerts to fundraise and campaign for women's causes. Hylde gave a speech in the Albert Hall Derby on the 26th February, 1914 to speak in defence of militancy. Hylde was critical of the government saying that "instead of meeting the supporters fairly, squarely and justly, they were met with insults, broken pledges and intolerable injustices." She also used the platform to condemn the torture of suffragettes whilst in prison and called for action to gain women the vote. She is listed in The Roll of Honour of Suffragette Prisoners 1905-1914. In June, 1914 it was alleged, by Rev. Whitaker, that suffragettes were responsible for setting light to the village church in Breadsall, near Derby. Hylde was named as one of the arsonists: no substantive evidence was ever put forward to support the claim.

Some meetings were held at the Temperance Hall, Derby with leading pioneers of suffrage such as Emmeline Pethick Lawrence and Mary Neal who spoke there in March 1914. That event was chaired by Mrs Boden, Vice-Chair of the local NUWSS. There was almost unanimous support for a resolution deploring the fact that Votes for Women had been left out of the recent King's Speech. In the same month, the local NUWSS invited members to an 'at home' for the opening of their new club room and small lending library at 1, Green Lane, in the town centre. The intention was to hold weekly meetings; starting with a talk on 'The Child and the State' by Mrs Worthington from Duffield.

There were already divisions within the suffrage movements nationally. At the outbreak of war the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), which was closely controlled by Mrs Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughters Christabel and Sylvia, called for a halt to activities and rallied behind the war effort. The national body of the NUWSS, presided over locally by Madeleine Onslow, also suspended their marches but decided not to be part of war-recruiting strategies. They gave their energies to providing women's hospital units in France and work for unemployed women in Britain. They supported women's participation in the war effort as an opportunity for women to show they were worthy of the vote.



National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies 1908-1918 Badge. Image: LSE Library. TWL.2004.585.2



Hylde Cross. DDT. 15th October 1928

In the Derwent Valley, as in other areas, suffragist organisations and their members offered whatever practical assistance was needed for the welfare of vulnerable women, infants, Belgian refugees, wounded soldiers and prisoners of war. In this regard, prominent women worked on or headed committees and under the auspices of the Derbyshire National Union of Women Workers a plethora of organisations were mobilised to do welfare work. Mrs Marsden-Smedley, from Lea Mills devoted her time and energy to welfare work and fundraising, along with other women mentioned here and in other parts of this book. Madeleine Onslow called for helpers to join her in the NUWSS Green Lane Club Room which was opened daily as a sewing room and appealed for contributions for necessary materials to help with making items for soldiers and sailors.

The press were often detrimental to the women's movement and used incidents to damage and discredit the women's cause. The allegations in June, 1914 about suffragettes setting light to Breadsall Church is a good example of the discrimination. Alice Wheeldon was arrested with her daughters and son-in-law in January, 1917 for conspiracy to murder the then Prime Minister, Lloyd George and the Leader of the Labour Party, Arthur Henderson. Alice had a second-hand clothes shop on Pear Tree Road, Derby. Much was made of her being a suffragette and that she was "strongly in favour of 'Votes for Women'" but the report in the Derby Daily Telegraph (DDT) said it was not known "whether she had any connections with any of the extreme organisations furthering those views". Nonetheless, the notion was implied that that suffragettes were considered dangerous militants, capable of despicable acts including murder. Alice was sentenced to ten years' penal servitude, one daughter, Winnie, to five years and her son-in-law to seven: her other daughter was acquitted. Even at the time, the convictions were considered unjust by many. In recent years, her descendants and others have campaigned to clear her name.

There were a few reports in the DDT about women's attempts to gain the vote during 1917, under the heading "Our London Letter" mostly in the context of Parliamentary proceedings. This was not surprising given the suspension of activity by most suffragist organisations. Asquith was Prime Minister in 1914 and against women's enfranchisement and was followed by Lloyd George in 1916.

Derby Daily Telegraph

19th August, 1914

NATIONAL UNION OF WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETIES

Sir,-May I be allowed to state, through the medium of your columns, that the Derby Branch of Women's Suffrage Societies is having a sewing meeting every afternoon from 3 to 5.30 in its clubroom (No. 1, Green-lane for the purpose of making articles for the wounded and other sufferers by the war. All members and any of their friends who would like to give help will be very welcome... – Yours faithfully,

M. Onslow,
President

Derby Daily Telegraph

21st August, 1914

The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies is doing admirable work at the offices opened in the Metropolis for organising voluntary workers who wish to be of service in this time of stress. All sorts of offers are being received ... so many women, more or less trained, want to be nurses ... At least one London hospital is providing a three months course, and Bedford College and a host of other institutional places are arranging classes.

Derby Daily Telegraph

26th December, 1914

.... Many women have been thrown idle, but the leaders of the women's political and suffrage societies have, at the request of the Queen, thrown themselves with ardour and capacity into the provision of relief measures. ...

Derby Daily Telegraph

1st February 1917

W.S.P.U. DISCLAIMER*

... "The officials of the Women's Social and Political Union have no knowledge of the persons referred to in the conspiracy charge. Since the war began the Women's Social and Political Union has devoted all its energy to national and patriotic work. All the members who did not at once agree to this policy were called up to resign or were expelled from the Union... (*In a number of newspapers after Alice's arrest)

The latter's views were initially the same as Asquith's but he was eventually persuaded by campaigners, during his time as Minister of Munitions, to change his policy. By early 1917 Asquith too altered his opinions and spoke in the House of Commons as a supporter of women's suffrage. This was said to be due to the contributions made by women to the war effort in their various forms.

Although campaigning had formally paused, the issues were debated inconspicuously amongst women in Derbyshire and arrangements were made for a visit of Emmeline Pankhurst to an 800 strong meeting at the Co-operative Society's Central Hall, in Derby on 15th November 1917, chaired by Ald. Bonas, Deputy Mayor. Mrs Pankhurst had set aside campaigning, concentrating on methods to win the war. Consequentially the WSPU gradually faded from the public's attention and formally disbanded also in November.

A purpose of her visit was to recruit support for the Women's Party which she initiated, in the same month, with her daughter Christabel, using the mechanisms of the WSPU and in readiness for fighting the next elections. It was reported that she spoke of being in favour of food rationing and the setting up of communal kitchens to help provide nutritious meals at low prices for everyone. She supported the idea of encouraging the reduction of non-essential industry and the direction of workers, particularly women, into crucial agricultural and war work to help free-up men so they could serve at the front. She informed the meeting that her new Party was to campaign for votes for women, equal marriage laws and conditions of divorce, equality of parental rights, the raising of the age of consent, equality of rights and responsibilities in regard to the social and political service of the nation, equal pay for equal work and equal opportunity of employment.

Derby Daily Telegraph

23rd January, 1915

**ENTERTAINMENT FOR
SOLDIERS' WIVES**

On Wednesday, in the clubroom of the National Union of Women's Suffrage, a most successful happy hour meeting was held for the wives of soldiers and sailors and the committee are to be congratulated on the success of the opening meeting. Upwards of 100 wives and children of our soldiers were present.

Derby Daily Telegraph

29th May, 1915

**THE NATIONAL UNION
SUFFRAGE SOCIETY, 1 Green-lane.**

– Urgent! Members are requested to meet at the Club Room on Monday evening, 7 o'clock, sewing, etc., for soldiers.

In February 1918, Royal Assent was finally given to the Representation of the People Act, under which women over the age of thirty and who owned property could vote. The Derwent Valley was still in the thick of winter and war work, living with deep grief at the loss of loved ones and in the grip of a flu epidemic which was claiming lives. It is understood that there was much in the news at the time to be reported but this important Act of Parliament was hardly mentioned in the local papers.

On 6 May 1918, the Derby Women's Citizens' Association, a newly formed organisation with a key objective being the education of women in the use of the vote, met at the Full Street Hostel in Derby. They discussed issues such as the representation of women on the town council, concern about childcare, primarily for widowed mothers working long hours and ways to campaign for improved housing. Also that month, it was decided that the Derby branch of the NUWSS, believing they had attained their objectives alongside other suffrage societies, should cease to exist. They planned to merge activities with those of the Women's Citizens' Association. The remaining funds of £5 were sent to the national office of the NUWSS.

Mrs Pethick Lawrence returned to Derby, in June 1918, and made a heartfelt speech at the Central Hall, at the Women's Peace Crusade meeting to talk about the ways in which international peace could be restored. During the speech she said that "in every woman there was the mother instinct, and this, when interpreted collectively, showed itself in a desire to become the guardians, not only of individuals, but of the whole human race". She called for a just peace upon which to build a better world and to bring an end to the conflict and loss of life.

In August, Mrs Boden hosted an event for the Derby Branch of the National Women's Citizens' Association. Mrs Marsden-Smedley presided and explained what the new responsibilities of the Representation of the People Act meant and welcomed the opportunity to use their influence in matters relating to child welfare and housing. Lord Roe, a loyal supporter, saw it as common justice. He said he thought that those who wanted to deny women the vote must, by now, have changed their view during the last four years of the war as "It would be difficult to imagine what England would have done without the loyal and ungrudging assistance of the women". Mrs Boden said that the vote was "not the whole of the objective" meaning that not all women had the vote on the same basis as men but the "political power was but a means to [an] end". Miss Meynell said she had been nursing in France for four years and had "lost touch somewhat with affairs at home" but "she could not express the joy that she felt when she read that women had at last been given the vote" and that "women had done magnificent work in every direction throughout the war".

In November Hilda Hulse, Commandant at Duffield Road V.A.D. and Mayoress from 1917 to 1918, became the first woman to serve as a councillor in Derwent Ward. She retired before the local elections in 1921. She also stood as the Derby Conservative candidate for Parliament in 1924 taking fourth place. She was awarded an MBE in the 1919 New Year Honours by George V for her work during the war.

Nationally the campaign continued calling for legislation to remove the political, civil and economic inequalities in the law and in 1928 the voting age was lowered to 21 years for all women, bringing it in line with that of men, under the Equal Franchise Act.



Hilda Hulse, Commandant, VAD Hospital, Duffield Road, Derby.
Photo: Imperial War Museum,
Catalogue number WWC D8-6-525

11. 1918: Patching the Holes

The hills around the Derwent could easily get blocked with snow in winter. Schools were sometimes closed when attendance was very low. The year started off very cold and there were difficulties for the war-weary nation with the introduction of rationing.

In a well-attended meeting organised by Labour Party members and the Derby Trades Council in January 1918, unease was expressed about the distribution of food. As Commissioner for the North Midlands area, Ald. J. B. Smedley (Lea Mills) was the main speaker. Coun. Raynes explained in the meeting that while the “workers were willing to tighten their belts and go short of food if necessary, they were not prepared to take less than that their share of the commodities”. Some assurances were given although the meeting was told they would have to prepare for rationing.

Rationing

Running alongside the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, a Derbyshire War Agricultural Committee had been set up in late 1915 through the County Council. There had been all manner of initiatives to curb needless consumption of food nationally, regionally and locally. In December 1916 the Board of Trade had made an Order under DORA to regulate meals in hotels, restaurants and other places of public eating. No more than three courses could be served if the meal began between 6 pm and 9.30pm or two courses at other times unless authority was gained from the Board of Trade.

As concerns about supplies increased, in 1917 Food Control Committees had developed, often with a paid executive officer. These committees, formed and administered locally, organised food supplies whether home produced or imported and controlled prices of provisions including tea, milk, sugar, dried fruit, bread, meat, cereals, beer and butter in addition to coal. They had undertaken to prosecute shopkeepers if it was found they were overcharging for provisions: a councillor from Matlock Bath had been fined £15 together with £1 3s 6d costs for selling condensed milk, bran and sharps over the maximum prices in October 1917.

During 1917 the government had published recommended allowances for certain foodstuffs in the hope that people would voluntarily restrict their intake but later in the year it had become inescapable that rationing would have to be introduced.

Crich Church of England School Log 8th Jan 1918

The school has been very cold indeed the whole of the day, the highest temperature registered 47°. The children + teachers have been so cold that writing has been almost impossible. [The radiators and pipes were warmed with little effect]

Dethick, Lea and Holloway Board School Log

28th Nov 1917 – Harold Bunting absent, attending Medical Examination in connection with Military Service.

29th Jan 1918 – Harold Bunting has to-day received notice that he must report for service in the Navy, Feb 4th.

1st Feb 1918 – Harold Bunting left to-day.

4th Feb 1918 – Harold Bunting returned to school this morning having received a telegram Saturday notifying him that he was not to report for service until he received further instructions.

25th Feb 1918 – Harold Bunting has received notice to report for service March 11th.

11th Mar 1918 – Harold Bunting left, Friday March 8th and joined the Navy to-day.

Derbyshire Advertiser and Journal 8th February 1918

DERBY LADIES' COLUMN

Really a meatless menu does not involve starvation, as will appear from the large choice offered at the quaint little Jacobean Café in the Wardwick. There was a Scotch broth ... lentil soup, fried whiting, filleted plaice, vegetarian sausages, egg and tomato fritters, poached eggs and spinach, savoury omelette, damson tart, apple pudding, prune pudding, lemon pudding, tapioca pudding ... one is always sure here of a delicious cup of coffee.

Belper News, Friday 29th March 1918

DANCING

In the Large Pavilion from 7 to 10.

Admission 6d. each.

REFRESHMENTS provided at the Swiss Tea House and Large Pavilion at Reasonable Charges, under the conditions of the Food Control. ...

With the hope of the general public that queues would be reduced in shops, sugar card registration had occurred in September 1917 under strict rules of application. Local chemist shops advertised saccharine tablets and sales of the sweetener soared. There had been promotions of the idea of a voluntary meatless day each week in autumn 1916 but it was formally introduced on 1st January, 1918 and after 13th January butchers had to reduce their sales of meat by 25%.

G. Austin & Co, a grocers with shops on the Market Place, Derby and King Street, Duffield recommend a selection of foodstuffs for meatless days at the following prices per pound: - Butter beans – 8d, White Haricot Beans – 6d, Small Lentils – 7d, Green Peas – 9d, Oatmeal – 4d, Rolled Oats – 4d and Neapolitan Spaghetti, Macaroni and Tomato Puree all at 1s 2d.

Between mid-February and the first week in March 1918, schools all the way down the Derwent Valley area were closed for three to five days as each locality introduced ration cards. The closures enabled teachers to administer the scheme. Even so, some areas found it difficult to gain the help to manage the issuing of ration cards despite advertising for volunteers. The cards were issued for meat, tea, flour, butter and margarine at this point.

Ration cards could only be used at certain shops and people had to register with their preferred butcher, baker and grocer. Household needs were taken into account for lodgers and domestic servants along with discharged soldiers or sailors. It was warned that “any person attempting to register at more than one address will be liable to a fine of £100 and six months imprisonment”.

1918

Fleet School Log, 15th Feb – Report of letter requesting attendance at the National School, Belper at 9am on Monday 18th February 1918 to receive forms and to house visit in Rationing Scheme. School to close for 3 days for the purpose.

William Gilbert Endowed School, Duffield, Log 15th Feb - By instructions from the correspondent I have today closed the school for a week to allow the teachers helping the Local Food Control Committee in bringing in a scheme of control.

Matlock Bath Holy Trinity School Log, 1st Mar ... The school has been closed for three days 4th, 5th + 6th with the consent of the C.Ed.C. so that staff can assist the Food Control Committee to get out the Meal Rationing Cards – each member of the staff being agreeable to do this work.

Darley Abbey Infant School Log, 5th Mar– The School is to be closed for two days, three if necessary, to allow for the Meat Rationing Cards to be filled in and distributed.

Extracts from the William Gilbert Endowed School, Duffield, Log Book, 1918

17th Apr - Received from Dronfield, 14 Spades and 7 forks.

1st May - Took gardening from 11-12 pm as the necessity for pushing on with the planting of “potatoes is urgent”. Headmaster absent in the afternoon attending a sub-committee meeting in connection with horticultural work in the county.

19th Jul - Lecture given on patriotism and value of certain foods. Finished planting winter greens

10th Sept - Boys out blackberrying

Crich Church of England School Log 18th Jul 1918

Miss Woodiwiss (C) is absent from duty this afternoon, by permission of the Head Master, as her brother is home on leave.

In March, Belper Urban Council considered introducing Communal Kitchens. These had been successfully introduced in various towns, to save on fuel and economise on labour. The Park Foundry Co., Belper submitted designs of cooking stoves to the Food Control Committee. In their deliberations the following month the Council decided that Belper could only afford to develop the idea if the government paid for the kitchen: without such funds it would be too expensive for consideration. The scheme did not materialise. On 8th April, one did open on St Peter's Street, Derby that could accommodate 200 customers. The idea was to save on food, coal and labour and help to feed the populace of Derby, offering nutritious, couponless meals. On the first day of opening it served: onion or pea soup, 2d each; fish pie, 6d; fish cake, tomato sauce, 3d; potatoes 1d; beans 1d; bread 1d; suet pudding, with golden syrup, 2d; blanc-mange, 2d; stewed rhubarb, 2d; coffee 1d per cup.

At Belper Petty Sessions on 11th April, 1918 a farmer was fined £5 and £3 18s costs for adulterating milk the previous month: he had added 13.5% of water. It was pointed out that "practically 4lbs of water was added to three gallons of milk ... this case was most serious with milk at 6d per quart". At the same Sessions a man was fined £10 with the option of two months' hard labour for Horse Cruelty.

People found ways to supplement their food supplies. It was reported in June that people had started to rear rabbits for home consumption. Encouragements were given to growing fruit and vegetables on allotments in the Matlock area. In addition to the 275 allotments in existence, the local authority provided 140 more. A Food Production Committee was also formed in the Matlock area to enable people to co-operatively purchase foodstuffs for pigs and poultry and seeds for vegetables and advice on ways to obtain better cultivation and use of fruit. Furthermore, they promoted people keeping a pig and finding ways to obtain patches of land temporarily for potato growing.

Blackberry picking by school children as a national initiative came from the Ministry of Food in conjunction with the Board of Education and sanctioned by the County Education and War Agricultural Committees.

Time was given to children within the School Day and 3d a pound for blackberries was given to the pickers. Pickers had to be authorised and schools became depots for the fruit which was moved on as quickly as possible to licensed jam-making factories to prevent the blackberries from spoiling.

Matlock Bath Holy Trinity School Log Book

27th Sept 1918 - Master away in afternoon. Went to see Director of Education at Derby re being called up for military service.

4th Oct 1918 - Master away from school this afternoon to attend a War Services Committee at the County Offices, Derby.

10th Oct 1918 - Master away from school today to undergo medical Examination in Derby for under the Military Service Act.

Derby Daily Telegraph

27th May 1918

MILK LICENSES.

The Food Controller has issued an Order, the Use of Milk (Licensing) Order, which prohibits any person after June 17th using any milk – skimmed, separated, dried or condensed – buttermilk or milk preparation, in the manufacture for sale of any chocolate, sugar, confectionery, or other sweets, or for any other manufacturing purposes except the manufacture of articles intended for human consumption, unless he shall have previously obtained a license from the Ministry of Food.

Shuttles in Masson Mill.

Image: Christopher Bourne 2018



The food controllers did not finish their work until well after Peace was declared in 1919 with butter being the last item to come off ration in 1920.

A further detriment!

Another deprivation and a most telling impact of WW1 was on the social life of the village of Milford Chours' annual holiday as reported in the Parish Magazines. On 28th June 1913 the choir men and older lads had gone to London by train whilst, on the 7th July the younger lads had gone to Blackpool. Contributions for this came to £12 19s 6d of which £3 3s 0d was donated by Mr Strutt. In July 1915 the outings had been curtailed with the men going to Chester and the lads to Buxton and Bakewell. Mr Strutt had again given £3 3s 0d. In July 1916, although Mr Strutt's donation continued at the same level, the outing was to Dovedale and in June 1918 there was a 'very unpretentious' trip to Matlock Bath: no mention was made of Mr Strutt's donation. The delights of the latter trip were noted and included the switchback (hills and wooded dales with many ups and downs), boating lake and the Heights of Abraham with a visit to the cavern. Whether the curtailment of the trips was from lack of funding, transport problems or some other reason is not made clear.

The Armistice

In September 1918, reports of towns being recaptured in France and Belgium and the German military situation weakening appeared in the local press along with news of Bulgaria's surrender. In early October, Germany and Austria-Hungary appealed to the US President to restore peace. There followed various negotiations through the rest of the month to draw up a settlement. A Turkish Armistice was signed at the end of the month. A string of reports and bulletins continued, along with much speculation as to when there would be a cessation of hostilities.

At 5 am on Monday 11th November 1918 in a railway carriage in the Forest of Compiègne, the Armistice was signed by representatives of Great Britain, France and Germany. It came into force on the same day at 11am, Paris time. Since War had broken out the Derby Daily Telegraph (DDT) had been placing Sunday bulletins in their office window. They reported that, in the hope of receiving the much awaited news, on Sunday 10th November "enormous crowds" had gathered patiently in the Corn Market and outside their premises anticipating an announcement. At nearly midnight the DDT received a message that there was a delay. This

Fleet School Log

10th Sept 1918 – Classes 1 and 2 were sent out to collect blackberries under the scheme as per circulars from Mr Widdows from Ministry of Food and County Education Office.

Fleet School Log

13th Sept 1918 – Sergeant Bennett and Sergeant Buxton called to make enquiries and to see the authority for boys blackberrying.

Dethick, Lea and Holloway Board School

Log 29th Sept 1918 - ... net weight of blackberries dispatched 426 lbs.

Holbrook Church of England Primary School Log, 11th Nov 1918

Half-holiday granted by permission from the vicar to celebrate signing of Armistice and cessation of fighting on all fronts.

Darley Abbey Infant School Log

15th Nov 1918 – A whole day's holiday has been granted to all Schools in the county to commemorate the splendid work of the 46th Division (Derby Regiment) at the St Quentin Canal.

[Beginning on 29th September, 1918 the Battle of St Quentin Canal was pivotal in bringing the War to an end]

Derby Daily Telegraph

Monday 11 Nov 1918

FIREWORKS, BONFIRES AND CHURCH BELLS

The Chief Constable has received a telegram from the Commander-in-Chief Northern Command, that permission is granted for fireworks or bonfires, and church bells to be rung at all times for a period of one week.

Derby Daily Telegraph

Wednesday 13 November 1918

DANCING.-Grand times at Central Hall. Peace Celebrations continued Wednesday and Saturday evenings, 9d. Fridays, fancy dress, 7.30 to 12, 2s each, five prizes.

WHIST Drive, Unity Hall, Wednesday, Nov.13, 7.45. Tickets 9d. Proceeds for wounded soldiers.

was relayed to a disappointed crowd who rapidly dispersed. Further, the report in the DDT said that when morning came “people’s hopes were raised still further” and then “a few minutes before 11, came the fateful message over the telephone that the Germans had surrendered. Within two or three minutes the ‘Telegraph’ was on sale in the streets, and the newsboys did an enormous trade”.

Kept in readiness for the occasion, flags were hoisted on public buildings and businesses as well as on private houses in all areas of the town: joyous peals of bells were heard from church towers. On hearing the news most works and factories were closed for the day and people thronged the streets waving flags and tri-coloured ribbons, formed small processions and sang popular songs. Schools were closed up and down the Derwent Valley, and everywhere else, and thanksgiving services were held in the evening. There were some months to go before Peace would finally be declared.

German Prisoners of War

German prisoners had been held on British soil from April 1915 and in Derbyshire, initially at Donnington Park, by April 1916. They were put to doing hard labouring work such as on the land, mending roads and ditching and hedging. Initially, farmers did not want them on their land but agricultural needs made their efforts a necessity and local councils found themselves applying for prisoner camps to be set up locally to get easier access to this workforce. They worked in quarries at Wirksworth and also at Crich where they were accommodated in tents in summer and in Victoria House (possibly a candle makers at the time and now a bakery) in winter. Some men were kept at the Malt House, Bull Bridge where they may have helped with cleaning khaki suits. By 1918 German prisoners were used extensively and in July fifty men arrived at Ambergate station en route for the Crich camp, observed by “a good number of sightseers”. After their arrival crowds visited the camp over a number of days to have a look. It was reported in November 1918 that 10 German prisoners from the Kilburn camp worked at Lodge Farm, Belper: they lifted a field of mangolds in seven hours and their conduct was reported by the farmer as exemplary.

It is hard to glean precisely what their living conditions were like but there were a number of deaths starting with Lance-Cpl Otto Gerhardt, 23 years of age, in early December. Two more of his comrades followed, Lance Corporal Franz Kamanski, 4th German Grenadiers, aged 28 and Private Franz Koyub, 51st German Regiment, aged 29. There is confusion about the cause of death but it was either pneumonia or influenza and they were buried in the local churchyard. The Derbyshire Courier noted “At the conclusion of the service the deceased soldiers’ comrades each cast a sprinkling of earth on the coffins and uttered a farewell sentence before lining up under the armed escort”. In early March 1919 a cross was erected on each of the graves made by Mr Norman Smith, of Messrs. Smith and Son, who had been himself a prisoner of war in Germany. The remains were returned to Germany after the war. With hostilities halted, about 10 guards were removed from Victoria House for duties elsewhere in January 1919. The remaining prisoners returned to Germany in May 1919. Christmas in 1918 must have been celebrated with greater joy than it had been for some time. People were giving attention to peace celebrations which had already formally got underway in most places ready for the Declaration to be announced.

Derby Express Front Page 11th November, 1918
Darley Abbey Historical Group.

Image: Hazel Thomson



Crich Church of England School Log 16th Dec 1918

.... One of our scholars, George A. Whiteleader, has died through Influenza.

12. 1919: Casting-off

After the Armistice people could start to ease, wind up their war responsibilities and look forward to returning to some sense of order without the strains of war and to give attention to areas that had fallen into disrepair. There was an understandable eagerness to restore the balance of trade and provide employment for demobilised men. Desperate for appropriately skilled men, immediately after the Armistice the Coal Controller asked for the demobilisation of 100,000 miners. The County Councils' Association decided to urge immediate demobilisation of road officials so that restoration of roads could be given overdue attention. At the same time stories were beginning to emerge as to what life had really been like for British prisoners of war in Germany and for soldiers at the Front.

People wanted to provide suitable homecomings and traders were quick to make the most of it. An article appeared in the Derby Daily Telegraph (DDT) on 16th November, 1918 effectively advertising the immense stock of all types of furniture and bedding available from a particular supplier. Appealing to "fathers, mothers, sweethearts and wives" wanting to be in readiness the article said that "Edward Davies will supply all that is required to make the home comfortable for the warrior's return on payment of a deposit only" with smaller payments after the arrival of their loved ones.

The start of 1919 brought no let-up with food rationing and people were reminded that there would be no relaxation of food control for some time to come and all other rumours should be ignored. However, by March the Food Controller reduced the price of Government cheese and prices of bacon, ham and lard were relaxed after the 31st March.

Demobilisation

Although people knew that demobilisation would happen there were few indications as to when the menfolk would actually return and it turned out to be a long and wearisome process. Men were still needed over the winter to help with the withdrawal from hostilities bringing machinery, equipment and horses back to Britain. Some were sent to help with agriculture although in January the soldiers who did not intend to work in that area after demobilisation were sent back to their Units. Nonetheless, the Derbyshire Agricultural Executive Committee issued a notice to farmers telling them of rates of pay for soldiers. Soldiers employed as cowmen, horsemen or shepherds were to be paid 17s per week with board and lodging, and 9d per hour overtime if over 65 hours in winter or 63 hours in summer, Sundays included. Interestingly, the rates for German Prisoners were not more than 1d per hour below the Derbyshire Agricultural Wages Board rate for civilians. Civilian rates were not given.

New committees were set up to assist wounded and disabled soldiers and sailors. Derbyshire County and Derby Borough worked together to make provision for returning men from war service. They were keen to avoid the possibility of men, who had been "broken" by the atrocities they had witnessed whilst serving in the Army, spending their last days in the workhouse. The Councils thought that by having a national statutory flat rate payment (pension) that could be enhanced by voluntary

Derbyshire Advertiser and Journal 23rd November, 1918

DERBY LADIES' COLUMN PEACE PROBLEMS

....so will women and their power in the work of restoration be incalculable ... The war has not created their capabilities; it has merely proved their existence. If a woman can manage a house and bring up a family satisfactorily there is perhaps nothing else in the world she cannot do.

Machinery at Masson Mill, 2018
Image: Christopher Bourne



contributions, it would help ex-service personnel to have a better financial start post demobilisation. The YMCA expected that their support of ex-soldiers and sailors was likely to last for 18 months whilst they found themselves work and accommodation. Labour Exchanges braced themselves for the influx of men needing employment.

Announcements were made in the local press about demobilised men returning home. Corporal Albert Wren who was captured on 31st January, 1916 by the German Army was the first prisoner of war to return home to Darley Abbey. Belper's Mr Bedford, the former postmaster, who joined up in October 1914 was demobilised at Portsmouth in January, 1919 after 4½ years. Returning troops were given heroes' welcomes and events were specially laid on to greet them back. They were often singled out for special attention if attending public events. Social events were still arranged by charitable organisations to continue their support of wounded soldiers and those still in military or naval service.

By February 1919 nationally 1.5 million men had been either discharged or demobilised but even so there were concerns about staff shortages in many areas of trade and industry. In the same month it was reported that Belper Urban District Council was having difficulties removing house refuse due to a shortage of labour. In March 1919 a Belper Dentist, E. Perry, reopened his Dental Surgery after being released from the army. In May, Isaac Lees of Belper advertised that now that he had been demobilised he was carrying on his trade as a Chimney Sweep. Bands could practice again for future performances now that their absent members were back from war service. Derbyshire's Board of Education suggested that a number of the most suitable of disabled men should be encouraged to train as teachers.

Although families wanted their menfolk back, caution had to be taken for them not to return unless employment was guaranteed. Leaving the Services payroll and not having a job could make a family worse off financially. There had been many promises by employers of holding open jobs for serving men but as the war went on longer than expected new workers had been taken on. There were comments in the Belper News on the 14th March that "the assumption that the old posts would be kept open indefinitely is proving pretty largely a fiction". On the other hand, some employers made it known that they were willing to train discharged soldiers who although partly incapacitated, were still capable of learning a trade: H Twyford, Managing Director of George Brettle Co Ltd Belper, was keen to promote this notion.

In April the shortage of agricultural workers was still a problem and there were appeals urging the War Office to release all farm labourers from the ranks with some urgency. Despite this, some men had difficulty in gaining new employment although government schemes were initiated to encourage the employment of returning soldiers, particularly those who were disabled through their injuries.

Belper News

27th June, 1919

The Volunteers of Belper are not particularly struck with the magnanimity of the Government to offering the new military boots to members for 25s. The offer does not strike one as nearly so generous as that of the military overcoat for £1 on disbandment which however, does not eventuate until April next year.

Machinery at Masson Mill Museum

Image: C Bourne, 2018



Many women who had been placed in senior positions, trained for skilled work or were temporarily employed had to vacate their employment to make way for the incoming men and they lost their work with the Women's Land Army when it was disbanded in late 1919.

Some returning men were resentful of the lack of housing and other amenities. On Christmas Eve 1918 a letter from a Private in the Sherwood Foresters was printed in the DDT wanting houses, currently occupied by Belgians, to be released for returning soldiers due to the severe shortage of housing. Another letter printed in April said that during the writer's 3½ years serving in the war he had lost his home and now lived in furnished rooms with his wife and child. He called for the speedy building of houses.

Repatriation of Belgian refugees started soon after the Armistice with many leaving Derbyshire in batches between January and March. The Derbyshire Belgian Refugees Committee, headed by Mrs Violet Markham, had officially formed in October 1914 and, having carried on its work until the last contingent of refugees left Derbyshire for Belgium, it was disbanded on the 23rd May, 1919. Although many refugees had found employment and became self-supporting, the Committee had aided, in some form, 2,229 Belgians with the help of 34 local village and town committees who had assisted with housing and maintenance of the refugees.

The Mayor of Derby formally started the planning of the Peace Celebrations at a Derby Town Council meeting at the beginning of December, 1918 with ideas being outlined. At the same meeting housing shortages were acknowledged and the meeting was informed of the proposal that 220 houses on 22 acres near Osmaston Park Road were planned. Purchase of further land in Chaddesden was also being considered.

Peace Celebrations

The plans for the celebrations courted some controversy. Some people thought that the money needed for the celebrations, estimated at £6,000 in Derby, should be spent on supporting disabled and wounded soldiers and sailors and their dependents. Others thought the money should be spent helping "heroes" into work. Other suggestions for the money included housing, employment, families with or without their fathers and convalescent homes.

The Armistice was not the end of the war, it was only a ceasefire and it had to be renewed three times before peace finally came with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles on 28th June, 1919. Final preparations for celebrations could now be made and the date set for Saturday, 19th July. Many celebrations were held over three or four days, and

Belper News

28th February, 1919

BELPER BELGIANS DEPARTURE.

The Belgians who were refugees more than four years ago and came to Belper are taking their departure. Three of them left on Thursday last week, Mrs De Knock and two daughters, from Albert Street, and on Wednesday Madame De Heu, who lived in Mill Street, entrained for her own land. The De Knocks proceed to Ostend, and the latter to Antwerp. They each paid their own passage, and are able to leave prior to their compatriots, who will follow in due course.

William Gilbert Endowed School Log, Duffield,

28th Jun 1919, - Peace after the Great War was signed with Germany at Versailles today.

Dethick, Lea and Holloway Board School Log

30th Jun 1919 – Half Day Holiday this afternoon for Peace Celebration. I understand the other schools in the district are having all day holiday.

Darley Abbey Infant School Log

30th Jun ¹⁹¹⁹ – Children assembled but were sent home & a day's holiday given to celebrate the signing of the Peace.

Derby Daily Telegraph

12th July 1919

LITTLE EATON Peace Celebrations – Wanted Brass Band for 19th. - Letters, W. H. Grocock

some places held events much later. The biggest events in the area were, unsurprisingly, in Derby but everywhere, in large and small towns and in villages there was a hive of activity in preparing for this most special occasion.

In May, 1919 the Derby Mayor opened a 'Shilling Fund' supported by the DDT to raise funds for holding the Peace Celebrations; lists of donations, with names and amounts, were printed each week. Also in preparation were announcements in the local press to widows or mothers of those who had fallen asking them to submit their names to the Town Clerk if they wanted to participate in the Celebrations.

In mid-July, leading up to the celebrations, advertisements were placed requesting money to enable Derby Children to go to the Seaside Home, Skegness as many of them were soldiers' orphans. The ads said "During the Peace Celebrations don't forget the poor, weak and ailing Derby Children who would be benefitted by healthy holiday in the Seaside Home".

In anticipation of celebratory meals and eating expectations the Food Control Committee announced to caterers and institutions in Derby to apply for extra supplies of meat by first post on 14th July: late applications were not entertained.

How the Derwent Valley area celebrated Peace

In Derby the streets were festooned and public buildings, shops and private houses were decorated across the town. On Friday 18th July in Derby the Mayor handed out 25,000 medals to school children by visiting 32 schools to mark their endurance during the war. At four o'clock the children then assembled at six centres in the town as follows: 6,200 scholars on Normanton Recreation Ground; 5,700 Arboretum playground; Little Chester 4,100; Markeaton 2,900; Rowditch, 2,100; London Road Ground 1,700. The children then marched through various parts of town waving flags accompanied by bands. They were then treated to a generous tea in their respective schools.

The DDT was not published on Saturday 19th July so reports of the events of the day did not appear until Monday. Everyone who could be was on holiday for the great celebration! Although it was not the best of weather and there

Derby Daily Telegraph

12th July 1919

PEACE CELEBRATIONS

DERBY MASTER BUTCHERS' ASSOCIATION

ALL BUTCHERS' SHOPS WILL CLOSE ON
SATURDAY, JULY 19TH.

S.A. ELEY, Asst Secretary

Derby Daily Telegraph

12th July 1919

DERBY PEACE CELEBRATIONS SPORTS COMMITTEE

Tenders are invited from TRADESMEN for the SUPPLY to the Public of REFRESHMENTS, FRUIT, ICES, Etc., for Normanton Recreation Ground and Darley Park on Saturday 19th inst. – address Sports Committee, Central Office, White Hall, Derby

Derby Daily Telegraph

12th July 1919

1/1st NORTH MIDLAND FIELD AMBULANCE.

PEACE CELEBRATIONS, JULY 19TH, 1919

The Field Ambulance will parade as a unit. It is hoped that the majority will parade in Drill Order.

Fall in 1.30pm, the Holmes, Cattle Market.

T. A. Barbon, Lieut-col.

The tower of the Silk Mill, Derby
Image: James Thomson



was some rain in the evening in places, it far from dampened spirits.

The day began with a parade of decorated cars and other vehicles including floats, prams and bicycles belonging to individuals and businesses and people were in fancy dress with prizes awarded for the best. There were detachments of land workers, girl guides and boy scouts. There was a Battle of the Flowers with the mayor, his wife and daughters throwing roses into the crowd and in turn the mayor was bombarded with confetti.

Well Dressing illustrating the Peace Celebrations in 1919, Spiral Arts

Image: Jenny Anthony, 2016



At 2 pm a big parade was held of discharged and demobbed soldiers and sailors. A few thousand marched through the centre of the town with the procession taking nearly two hours to reach its destination. Amusements were held on the County Cricket Ground and Racecourse throughout the day, mainly for soldiers, sailors and their families although others attended, up 15,000 in all. Serving men were given 10s in 3d vouchers to spend at the event. There were various races, running, sack and potato race, boot race, egg and spoon and tug-of-war with prizes for men and women: no children's prizes were mentioned in the report. There were fair rides and an open-air boxing tournament. Catering facilities barely managed but there was, apparently, plenty of beer available.

Profiteering was in evidence as, for example, rides on the merry-go-round were put up to sixpence. Letters by unhappy ex- soldiers who were not impressed by the proceedings appeared in the DDT, one commenting that the event on the Racecourse was "one of the most pitifully poor shows" it had been his lot to witness and that the "vouchers had been a waste of good public money". There were other events in the town including those at Normanton Recreation ground with sports and races for boys and girls, a football contest and a band and fireworks in the evening. A number of bonfires were lit around the town after dark and flares lit up the sky.

Darley Abbey

Mrs Evans, at Darley Abbey, opened her park to the Derby public for sports and a regatta with rowing and swimming events for men and women, including diving and a life-saving competition, along with a range of other field sports. A brass band was also in attendance. Even with this grand event in their neighbourhood the village held their own occasion with decorated houses and a garlanded West Row under which neighbours took high tea. There was a separate tea for the children followed by sports for adults and young people.

The mills at Darley Abbey 2019

Image: Hazel Thomson



Duffield

Children between the ages of 5 and 14 in the village were provided with a tea costing 1s each (paid for by the organisers) and given a mug to mark the occasion. Sports were held for them in Eyes Meadow. The Parish Council decided to delay doing anything for the soldiers until they had all returned home.

Milford

Similarly to Darley Abbey, Milford was garlanded with evergreens and flags. Demobilised soldiers and sailors paraded through Milford to the recreation ground where there was a short thanksgiving service and hymns by the massed village choirs. Soldiers, sailors and widows and mothers of those who had fallen had dinner in the schoolrooms: the tables were decorated with hot house plants and evergreens. In the afternoon Milford House grounds were thrown open for sports followed by a substantial tea for 500 children under 16 years of age who also received medals. At 10pm the surrounding hills and woods were illuminated with fireworks and flares and there was dancing until 11 pm. They did not conclude their celebrations until 16th August when they held a very similar full-day's programme.

Belper

Funds were raised for the Celebrations in Belper by donations from Mr Strutt, the Sewing Cotton Company, Brettle's and Mr Hanson and other subscriptions totalling £270 and also from house collections estimated at around £650. There were not many houses carrying decorations but flags were put around the town and tradespeople made their premises bright and festive. At 11 am a service was held in the Market Place with an address by Rev Cooper, Vicar of St Peters, in which he spoke of the sorrow caused by the war. In referring to the task of reconstruction he alluded to the housing problem and the necessity for people to be living in decent and healthy homes.

Duffield Road Sign 2018

Image Jenny Anthony



Belper Road Sign 2018

Image Jenny Anthony



A marquee was erected at the River Gardens where those over 60 years of age were given a meal. The tent was decorated and flowers were placed on each table. The food tables were loaded with roast beef, tongue, ham, pastries, puddings and other delights: it was estimated that 450 people were seated for that meal. The Meadows Cricket Ground was the venue for ex-service men and their wives to enjoy an afternoon of sports such as obstacle and sack races and at 6 p.m. they were served dinner. In total through the day the organisers catered for 1,800 seated diners, and as reported, were supplied with 2,000 lbs of beef, 250lbs each of ham and tongue "with potatoes and peas, etc., in proportion". Pastry was also a feature of the menu along with "a moderate supply of beer". Due to the rain the intended lamp and lantern illumination of the River Gardens was abandoned but near to midnight "the skies flashed with the reflections of bonfires and flare lights upon the hill sides and squibs, crackers, and rockets were let off galore by boys in every street".

Ambergate

The villagers' procession was made up of a decorated lorry, a string band, members of the public and school aged children from the local churches. The procession stopped at intervals along the decorated streets and sang songs and hymns, accompanied by instruments. The Derbyshire Courier reported that 600 demobbed soldiers and sailors, children and other village residents were treated to a tea at the Messrs. Johnson and Nephew's Wire Works Canteen. The "old-age pensioners" were "conveyed in Mrs. Johnson's motor car" to and from the event. Sports took place on the cricket field.

Whatstandwell

Along with the usual sports and races the local band was a key feature of the procession which also served as a fancy dress competition. A considerable number of the competitors were rewarded with prizes in various categories. A repast was given to all inhabitants and a meal taken to those who could not leave their homes.

Crich

Headed by the Crich United Silver Band it was reported that a record was established for the celebratory procession with regard to numbers and appearance over other years. It included around 100 discharged soldiers and sailors, most in uniform, the Parish Council, Church schools and members of various churches. A good tea was provided for the children and old people of the village and soldiers and sailors or their widows.

Well Dressing representing a band playing in a park during WW1. Image: Jenny Anthony, 2016.



Dethick, Lea and Holloway

The village streets carried garlands and other decorations which the procession, of more than 400 people, passed under including servicemen, the Holloway Bugle Band, Sunday School, Parish Council, Lea School Managers, the Florence Nightingale Lodge, Friendly Society, WI and other villagers. Sports were organised with races, a football match and a Tug of War. Tea was served in Lea Council Schools where children received a souvenir mug and the villagers treated to an evening dance, fireworks and a bonfire.

Wirksworth

Wirksworth streets were bedecked with flags, bunting and garlands. A key feature of the Peace Pageant procession was the decorated drays. One represented 'Victory' by Mr and Mrs Hansen Bay and staff at the Grammar School; another by the Girls' Friendly Society portrayed "Peace and Unity" and a third depicted "Freedom's Champions" by Mrs Buthin and Mrs Wood. The procession also included a number of decorated bassinettes (prams), Derby Cadet Corps with a bugle band, Wirksworth Brass Band, boy scouts, Sunday school children and members of the general public many who were in "grotesque or fancy costumes". The children had tea at various chapels and later there were sports and games on the Recreation Ground.

Cromford

The streets at Cromford were festooned with evergreens, gaily coloured paper flowers, flags and bunting and in places garlands spanned the road. Wirksworth Brass Band was in attendance for some of the time. A supper was held for demobilised men in the Clubroom with a firework display on a nearby hill and flares illuminating the district for many miles.

Matlock Bath

Amongst the events at Matlock Bath was a luncheon for the local demobilised and discharged soldiers in addition to the familiar procession, sports, tea and a regatta. Swanwick Band played from the promenade and in the evening a cinema performance and a dance were held in the Pavilion.

Matlock

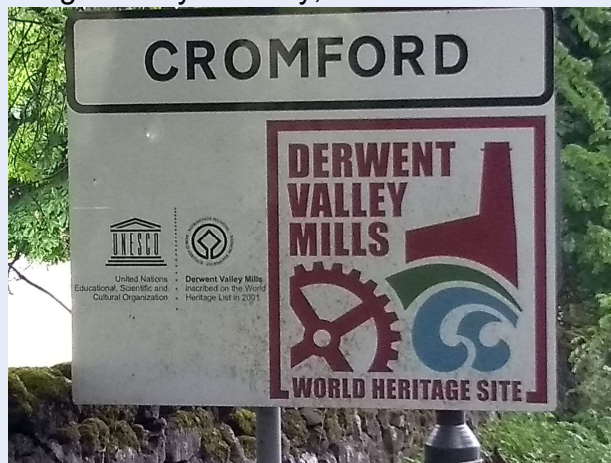
It would appear that Matlock did not have the same extent of decorations as some places but they lavished hospitality on children and old people providing teas for both groups. The Matlock Prize Band gave concerts throughout the day and there were free games for everyone on the Hall Leys.

Both the Belper and Derby Workhouses ran celebrations on Wednesday 23rd July. At Derby "extra fare" was provided for breakfast, dinner and tea with plum pudding, packets of tea and sugar for

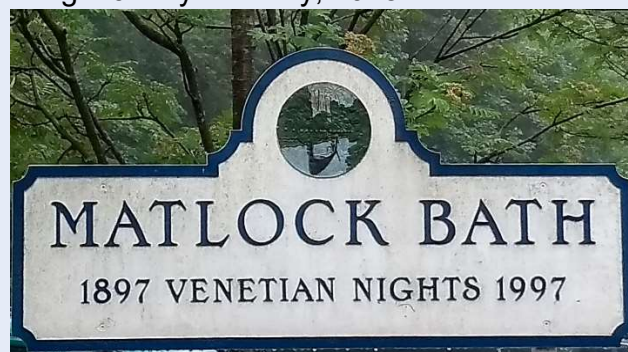
Bridge at John Smedley's Factory,
Image: Jenny Anthony, 2018



Cromford Road Sign
Image: Jenny Anthony, 2018



Matlock Bath Road Sign
Image: Jenny Anthony, 2018



women, sweets and toys for children and extra tobacco for men. There was a distribution of oranges after games and sports and a band was in attendance during the afternoon along with a Punch and Judy show. The budget was limited to £150. A very similar event was held at Belper provided by the Board of Guardians.

A joyous time was had by most throughout the Valley and it is impressive how each town and village lavished such splendid celebrations. According to some accounts at the time there was also some general relief that the Peace Celebrations were over: for some the organisation had been exhausting. The Celebrations were, nonetheless, a marker for life to settle down and to attend to the task of economic and social reconstruction with employment and housing as well as the economy being key issues for post-war Britain.

The damage of war brought about some profound alterations for the population through disability, illness and lives lost both on the battlefield and on the Home Front. People had adapted to new patterns of work as rapid change occurred in industry and manufacture in the Valley in the responses to the War. Some factories went into decline, some had altered manufacture to provide for the war effort and others expanded to meet government contracts or new markets. Physical change of the landscape was hardly dented but closer inspection would have seen fewer horses for transport and agriculture, with tractors and other mechanised machinery being seen more frequently on farms and in fields. Now the War was over, change would again be necessary.

The outbreak of war brought significant social change which was deep and intense. There is much debate over the extent to which women working in non-traditional employment helped them to obtain the 'Vote'. There is, however, the sense that their involvement in war work and their increased visibility in employment helped change collective thinking.

People of wealth moved up and down the Derwent Valley promoting aspects of the War from the recruitment of men for the Army and Navy to fundraising for charities such as those for wounded and disabled soldiers and children in poverty. These people were often thoughtful in spirit and with the financial generosity that their affluence could support they were in a position to relieve other consequences of the war. Whilst these acts were often reported and lauded in the press we shall never get to know the names of many people who kept the 'home fires burning' in very difficult social and financial circumstances. These people often worked tirelessly to make ends meet, looked after others and coped with the hardships that were the effects of the Great War. Whilst we have not been able to name many previously unsung heroes we have uncovered a little of what their lives were like, what they endured and how they celebrated in their daily comings and goings on the Home Front in the Derwent Valley.

Cromford Mill.

Image: Hazel Thomson, 2018



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St Mary's Catholic Church, Derby. Parish Records

Marking the Centenary of the end of First World War this book explores Home Front experiences of individuals and communities along a section of the Derwent Valley and the surrounding area. The focus of the research was on the stretch of the River in the UNESCO World Heritage site, Derwent Valley Mills, which runs from Matlock Bath at the northern point down to the Silk Mill in Derby.

Fact & Fabrication was a community based, National Lottery Heritage Funded project which started in March 2018. Through a combination of research and creative workshops a Touring Exhibition was formed which included Information Panels and a magnificent Textile Installation which was hosted in various venues in the Derwent Valley.

New researchers to local history uncovered stories about how people lived and coped with the hardships of WW1. Some of their findings were used to form the Panels for the Exhibition but the full extent of research has now been realised in this publication.

