

32. Week 27 of the War, and the Problems Can Only Get Worse.

Little progress was being made by either side in the trench warfare in France and Belgium, so more effort was going towards using the sea blockades and submarines that would soon affect the supplies of raw materials for industry, and food for the general populations, here and in Germany. Manpower shortages, as the men left the mines to join the forces, meant less coal for industry and the home fires, and consumers were being warned about restricted supplies.

Neston Council was making sure that it chose its coal supplier with care, having received two tenders for the fuel for the boilers at the waterworks, including one from the Neston colliery. A trial wagon-load from each tenderer was to be burned and a record of the number of hours' pumping, plus the amount of water evaporated from the boiler were to be noted.

A long discussion once again ensued on Mr Grenfell's rights regarding his footpath from Manorial Road to Parkgate Road and a gas lamp; Mr Whineray from Leighton Court was offering a piece of land so that the council could install kerbing and improve safety on Leighton Road in the dark.

The farmers were having meetings to thrash out their problems and Sam Mealor from White House Farm, Little Neston admitted he was very much in favour of keeping boys off school when necessary and getting them to set potatoes - they could earn a few shillings which would be useful to their mothers now food prices were beginning to rise. Wirral farmers were needing to raise milk prices, even the men they already had were unwilling to turn out early to do the milking, and wanted more for Sunday work. Animal feed prices had increased, and the manpower problem could only get worse.

Not a lot happened in town this week, entertainment consisted of a troop of 'children' (13 and 14 year-olds in fact) performing 'The Forty Robbers' at the Institute, an innovation organised by Mr Beamer for the benefit of the Sunday Schools. The artists included Alf Rostance from Liverpool Road, Vera Chrimes from Gladstone Road and James Rutter from Eldon Terrace.

As mentioned in previous weeks, local football fixtures were not to be relied on, as many teams could no longer muster enough men. The reporter from Birkenhead News set off on Saturday and settled on the 2.13pm as it steamed out of Woodside station towards Neston, for the

match against Dominion, sun streaming down. The train would have pulled into Hooton, then out again onto the West Kirby line (Wirral Way), through the rocky gorge and into the 'cockling centre' - but no sign of any of the 'boys', and a solitary notice in a shop window with the match details and **MATCH CANCELLED** stuck across it.

The disappointed reporter decided on a tour of the town instead, which took him all of ten minutes, so he headed back to the station, (Neston South on Station Road) where he had a solitary wait for the train that did not arrive, and he was entertained only by watching some shunting, and finally left on the train that he would normally have taken after the match.

And while we're on football, here's a nice coincidence - Liverpool played Everton on Saturday afternoon at Goodison Park (but beat them 3-1). Surely there must have been some Neston people amongst the 30,000 spectators. (The same match was played this Saturday for the information of those that don't know).

(February 3rd - 10th 1915, give or take a couple of days)