

34. Week 30 of the War, and some good news: pay-rises for certain Neston workers.

Dockers were going on strike, the cost of living was rising, many troops at the Front were suffering from disease and frost-bite, and PoWs who were not fit to fight were being exchanged for prisoners held by the allies. The men of the 5th Battalion of the Cheshires (formerly Territorials based in Chester) had now gone to France, though the 4th Battalion (the Birkenhead based Territorials which included a lot of Neston colliery men) were still in Cambridge, training, and the Wirral Battalion was in Bournemouth. There were Neston men with all these units.

Like many other workers, Neston Council employees were getting a pay rise. George Wilde got a 16% increase to 17s 6d per week, and William Weaver was appointed horseman at 24 shillings per week, with a 2 shilling bonus each week for the duration of the war, and the carters, who moved the refuse, received the same rate.

At the Liverpool Road schools, which had a total of 225 children on the books, numbers were again very low on Monday because of the stormy weather. Two cases of measles were reported, in Eldon Terrace and Raby Road.

School children featured in the discussions at the county's Chamber of Agriculture, where the shortage of farm hands was still being addressed; there was a strong feeling that schools should allow 13 year-olds to take time off when necessary to help on the land. The School Attendance Committee was not obliged to prosecute if there was a reasonable excuse for non-attendance. It was agreed that 'boys and girls' rather than just 'boys' must be considered. The Chamber was reminded that there were also some hale and hearty pensioners who might be useful. Local farms were already advertising for staff, such as a farm-hand (able to milk) wanted in Puddington, cottage available, a teamsman (for a team of horses) in Burton, accommodation available.

A wide variety of evening entertainments were available, regular dance nights were now being held in the Institute on Thursday evenings, and a Waltzing Competition was included last Thursday; the following evening there was a talk on the Mersey Mission to Seamen, with slides, in the Town Hall. In the Methodist schoolroom on Monday there was yet another concert entirely performed by children, this time from Charles Thompson's Mission in Birkenhead (the Mission still functions today).

To complete our account of the Presbyterian Sunday school concert, held last week, we list some more of the performances, which must have taken a lot of dedicated work on the part of the organizers: in the interval Mrs Hughes from the grocery store where HSBC now stands entertained with 'Patriotic Memories' on the piano. This was followed by 'Sons of a Mighty Empire' with Bob Coventry, Jack Jellicoe, Cyril Nevitt, Tom Jellicoe and Bob Hughes. A kilt-clad quartet of Nora Hughes, Bertha Scott, Frank Coventry and Eric Palfreyman gave a singing and dancing performance of 'The Bonnets of Bonny Dundee'. Four of the girls gave a rendering of the Russian National Anthem, then Mrs Hughes took the part of a Red Cross nurse and gave a touching reading. Two magnificent tableaux, 'The Rally to the Flag', and 'The Allies', with Miss English, from Parkgate Square as Britannia completed the evening, with Norah Coventry from Brook Street on the piano.

It was a convention that weddings did not take place in Lent, but the current circumstances of the exigencies of war caused many exceptions this year, and a wedding was held at the Parish Church on Tuesday, when Winifred Dayas, daughter of the manager of Neston Laundry, from Deeside Cottage along Old Quay Lane., married a trooper from Belfast. The scholars from Mostyn House provided the choral music.

At the Petty Sessions this week, George Fewtrell, fisherman, from Dover Cottage in Parkgate was fined 2s 6d (with 8s 6d costs) for poaching on the lands of William Allen of Leighton Hall Farm. A son of the family, Herbert Fewtrell was in the Kings Liverpool Regiment and had been missing, then reported wounded in early December.

The Nomads were on top form on Saturday, beating Prescott Wireworks at Prescott, 5-1.

This account covers roughly 24th February to 3rd March 1915.