

### **38. Weeks 35 and 36 of Neston at War, and recruits are needed.**

Private Joseph Jones of the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Cheshire Regiment had once again written to his parents in Lees Lane; he had been in hospital with a bad cold but was fine now. He hope that they had not thought that a Jones of Heswall who was reported killed was actually him. They had been in a trench only 30 yards from the Germans whom they mowed down like rabbits when they charged. Now they were 600 yards away, and did four days on and four days off, and could get anything they needed from the nearby town. He reported that Harold Bell, Gladstone Road, (known as Blue Boy), was in hospital with a knee injury.

On the Wednesday after Easter there was a big recruiting meeting in the Town Hall, chaired by Joseph Pemberton from Hinderton Mount, leader of the council. A Lieutenant Colonel who had just returned from the Front gave them up-to-date news, and encouraging addresses were made by A.G. Grenfell of Mostyn House, W.E. Whineray of Leighton Court, Father Ryan from St Winefrides (who had been in the Boer War), and Sir Percy Bates from Hinderton Hall. Fourteen volunteers came forward. William Jones of Park Cottage, Park Street, an employee of builder Albert Fleming, enlisted in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Cheshires that week; they had been in France since the very start of the war and he would have been topping up the numbers.

Two days later the Town Hall was again the venue for a recruiting drive, this time for a Wirral Battalion of the Cheshire Volunteer Regiment for home defence, a movement which was making only little progress. Joseph Pemberton again presided, with contributions from the Vicar, the Presbyterian minister John Towert, Major Grundy of Haddon Hall in Ness (who together with Mr Coventry of Mill Street was in command of the Neston Volunteers) and several other notables. Gershom Stewart, our MP, sent his apologies as he was in the Isle of Man reporting on German prisoner camps. The Neston contingent embarked on an eight mile march to Burton and back on Sunday. The week before, on Easter Monday, they had taken part in a tactical exhibition on land at the Marfords, a large house in Bromborough, with the Heswall detachment. There was still a problem of financing the Volunteers, and they were having to raise their own funds.

On Monday 12<sup>th</sup> schools re-opened after the Easter holidays, but lots of the children were off with whooping-cough.

Burton, Puddington, Willaston and Ness Horticultural Society decided to abandon the annual show this year, but to give prizes for local gardens.

Browns of Chester, then a popular high-class store, had just had a new extension, which was opened on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup>, and half of the takings were being given to local war relief charities. Some ladies of the local gentry had agreed to work in the shop for the day to aid the cause, including the Mayoress, the Duchess of Westminster, the Marchioness of Cholmondeley, and the Hon. Mrs H.N. Gladstone from Burton Manor, who was doing a lot for the war effort, including running the Parkgate Hospital. Her nephew, the 'young squire' of Hawarden, Lieutenant William Glynne Charles Gladstone was serving with the Royal Welch Fusiliers in France for the past three weeks and was killed by a sniper on the day that Mrs Gladstone was helping in Brown's. His was one of the last bodies to be repatriated in the war. His uncle, Henry Neville Gladstone meanwhile was still trying to fight the War Office proposals for a munitions plant at Queensferry, fearing it would damage the value of land for the better class of residential house.

This article covers roughly April 1<sup>st</sup> -14<sup>th</sup> 1915.