

45. Weeks 49-51 of the Great War in Neston, and another death at the Front is reported

Neston had escaped lightly regarding casualties of war so far. However one of several local men in the Liverpool Scottish who had been at the June 16th Battle of Hooze near Bellewaarde Ridge in Flanders, was this week being officially reported as killed in action. This was Private James “Jim” Anderson who had lived at Fiveways. As we reported on 23rd June, George Butcher from Hinderton Road, another of the Liverpool Scottish, had been injured on the same day.

Corporal Albert Littler, awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal for his work in the Canadian Field Ambulance section, had just been home for a week and was of course greeted around Neston with many congratulations.

On Saturday 24th July the wounded men at the Military Hospital on the Parade put on a concert of their own making as a thanks to the locals; a small band armed with a couple of melodeons, tin whistles, hand-bells and triangles led by Lance-Corporal Toon, a wounded band-master, managed the ever popular ‘Tipperary’ and ‘Swanee’. A few residents joined in, with a recital of Gunga Din, a whistling solo, ...and a repeat of ‘Tipperary’. Mrs J.R.Hughes, a nurse at the hospital and wife of the Neston grocer (where HSBC stands) provided piano accompaniment.

A.G. Grenfell, the Head of Mostyn House, had been involved in an incident a couple of weeks ago when he ended up in the water in Parkgate (see weeks 47/48). Not happy with the newspapers’ reporting of the accident, he asked them to make it clear that he was NOT in an exhausted state, nor was he feeling the effects of the current in the channel.

The Council discussed Parkgate residents’ suggestions that various works be carried out on the shore near the channel (again see 47/48) but concluded that the channel might silt up or move further in-shore, and also that unnecessary expenditure should be avoided during the War.

The Wirral Farmers’ Club, under the chairmanship of Joseph Mealor from Whitehouse Farm in Little Neston, discussed the rights of the public on footpaths; it was agreed that the public had no right to loiter or hang around on a footpath - and if they did, the farmer could move them on. Mr Houghton of Westwood (“The Red Fox” now) claimed that he often had trespassers on his fields, and that in Germany they would be shot for that. After much discussion the Club agreed to hold its annual show, without

trimmings, and purely for horses, dairy cattle and agricultural produce. As the Bantams Battalions were still at the Bebington show ground (the Oval), they decided on a site near Hooton Station.

Wirral Football Association were also making some tough decisions for the forthcoming season, for example – no Cup contests, no remuneration, no players of military age who were not engaged in work of importance etc etc. But the bowling season was still proceeding and Neston played Liscard at Central Park, Wallasey. The team included W. Oxton, F.Bell, R.Handley, W.A.Hough, J.Wilde and team captain Thomas Jennion, a well-known county player, who lived on Liverpool Road on the far side of the railway bridge.

The Birkenhead-based 4th Battalion of the Cheshires, which a number of Neston lads had joined in early November, were on their way to war, having left Devonport on 17th July and were currently steaming for Gallipoli via Alexandria. The ‘Wirral’ Battalion was still in Aldershot, and the Bantams, with some Neston men, were also still training. The 3rd Cheshire Field Company of the Royal Engineers had several sappers from Neston, and they were also still training in the south of England.

This article covers approximately July 9th to 29th 1915.