

16. The eleventh week of the war and life in Neston

Fishing was still one of the foremost occupations in Neston and Parkgate, and the fishermen were occasionally involved in differences of opinion with the local magistrates (who included Henry Neville Gladstone of Burton, son of the late PM, and Joseph Pemberton of Hinderton Mount, chairman of the council). Several members of (still)* well-known local families had been taking under-sized mussels from the estuary and were fined a few shillings. One fisherman was fined for using a stake net, which was fixed in a narrow channel and caught a lot of young fish, a repeat of a recent prosecution.

Mrs Maud Gladstone had supervised the works on Parkgate Convalescent Home, and this week it finally received some patients, twelve wounded Belgian soldiers who had been in Charing Cross Hospital in London for a few days, then conveyed to Hooton by train. None had been seriously injured and did not need the Red Cross stretcher bearers. Thirty-seven Neston candidates had recently taken the Red Cross examination and all had passed. The Bishop of Khartoum, brother of Neston's vicar Charles Brooke Gwynne, was acting as a chaplain at a hospital near the Front and at his request warm clothes and 'comforts' were being sent from the Neston Red Cross depot. The Misses Richardson ran knitting classes on Wednesdays and Saturdays down Moorside Lane, and passed their work to the Red Cross for distribution; this week they had a treat in the form of some entertainment by a conjurer and illusionist, which was said to 'savour of the wonderful illusions of the East'.

The Pembertons (Mrs P. was Red Cross Commandant) were featuring in news of Neston a lot at this time; they had three sons in uniform, and Major J A Pemberton of the 4th Cheshires was appealing for gloves for his men, stationed in Northampton. The commanding officer of the 13th (Wirral) Battalion let it be known that tobacco and briar pipes would be very welcome for his men who were now in camp at Codford St Marys in Wiltshire, awaiting the erection of huts. He said they would also welcome blackboards and chalk, and a thousand copies of Field Service Pocket Book.

One of the many organizations in the town was the Young Women's Guild which met at the Presbyterian Church schoolroom (URC on Parkgate Road). They had another in their series of talks this week, 'Legends and true stories of the sea', with sea tales interspersed with sea songs. A local favourite, Norah Coventry, was one of the performers.

An accident at the colliery a couple of weeks before resulted in the death of Thomas Hughes, who left a widow and six young children. He had severe head injuries having been struck by one of the trucks or 'tubs' in a low-roofed part of

the mine. Before the funeral at the parish church, a service was held in the Baptist church at the colliery, Christ Church.