

25. Week Twenty of the War, and plenty to do in Neston

The war seemed suddenly nearer to home on Wednesday (16th) when over a hundred people were killed in Hartlepool as a result of German shelling from warships, the first casualties on home soil. In France very little progress was being made and our soldiers were wading knee-deep in muddy trenches.

The Cheshire Regiment was really appreciating the 'comforts' that were being sent out now that winter was really biting. Weekly supplies were going out to the Front via Chester Castle, knitted goods galore - scarves, helmets, socks and more socks, cases of Oxo, chocolate, and peppermints. Miss Lacy, of the house we now call Springvale (then Moorholm, on the corner of Old Quay Lane and Moorside Lane) was the Secretary of the Neston and Parkgate branch of the Red Cross Society.

Across the road, where Moorside Avenue now joins Moorside Lane, Miss Richardson's house/private school, then known as Moorside Cottage, was still holding knitting sessions and passing the goods to the Red Cross for sending to Chester. This was one of Neston's oldest houses, built in the late 17th century, and called Shalimar when it was demolished in 1960. Miss Richardson's mother entertained some of the Parkgate Hospital patients at the house on Thursday and the pupils sang carols. Anyone wishing to take advantage of their offer to perform a few carols needed to contact the vicar's daughter, Miss Jean Brooke Gwynne, and takings would go towards purchasing more wool.

A few cases were heard by the local Bench this week, H.N. Gladstone chairing the magistrates. John Coventry, slater, from Poplar Weint was fined for allowing an unsupervised dog out at night - 2/6 (12p), and Joseph Hughes from the colliery had to pay up for creating a disturbance, after being ejected from a public house. Sergeant Bee, who has featured in this column before, when encouraging young men to join-up, explained that Hughes was too fond of drink, and had these occasional bouts - 5s (25p). A woman recently moved from Liverpool, Mary Kelly, was fined for using obscene language in Woodward's Yard last week.

Some topics seem to be forever under debate: A re-arranging of fire services in this part of Cheshire was being proposed by Chester Council after two recent disastrous fires in the city, and the city Town Clerk suggested that local authorities within nine miles of Chester might like to contribute towards a proper motorised fire engine. During discussions of this by Wirral Rural Council, (the area surrounding Neston), it was

agreed that it would only affect a very section of its area, and that there was already a decent engine at Port Sunlight and manual machines at Little Sutton and Neston that would suffice.

On Wednesday the latest lecture at the Presbyterian schoolroom was a lantern slide talk on 'The Cornish Riviera', with the slides loaned by the Great Western Railway Company (presumably encouraging a trip by train!) Mrs Pakenham-Walsh, who ran the school at the old vicarage on the Cross did the commentary.

Another strong attraction on that same night was the fund-raising concert in the Town Hall, organised by Rose Wulff who lived in one of the large terraced houses on Station Road, then called Cheltenham Place, opposite to the Cricket Club, A varied programme included work of Cesar Franck, a new recruiting song entitled "We're all Plain Civilians", recitations including Kipling, and several instrumental pieces.

The Parish Church held its sale of work in the Town Hall on Friday, many of the goods being bought to send to sailors, soldiers and the Red Cross. A group of the Parkgate patients called in and received lots of gifts; a stall for the 'Officers Families Fund' invited customers to buy goods then hand them back to be sent to the men who were away. There was a rummage sale run by the teachers from Liverpool Road school, a fancy stall, a plain work stall, a sweet stall, refreshments, a Christmas tree, and lots of familiar names of local ladies, including Mrs Price, Mrs Bee, Mrs Pemberton, Mrs Russell, Miss Lyon, Mrs Mealor, Mrs Gill, Mrs Barret..... *might we have heard those ladies bustling round preparing the stalls if we had listened very quietly outside the doors to the main hall last Friday morning?*

Nomads played Ellesmere Port at Neston on Saturday, but against expectations the 'Portites' defeated the 'Cocklers' 2-1.