

### **39. Weeks 37 and 38 of the Great War, and a Neston family is bereaved.**

News arrived in Neston of the death in action on 10<sup>th</sup> April of a former Neston postman, who had recently transferred to Chester, where he left a widow and children. Thomas Bell, 27, was the son of a family from Golden Lion Yard (the area to the rear of the shops where Concept Interiors stands in High Street). He was serving in the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Cheshires and had been at the Front for about seven weeks when he was shot by a German sniper. The Dead March was played in the Parish Church on Sunday.

On Monday 19<sup>th</sup> the first meeting of the council year was held, though there were no new faces, as all those standing for re-election had been unopposed. Joseph Pemberton from Hinderton Mount was once again nominated for Chairman, with no opposition, and it was agreed that all eleven councillors would serve on various committees. The Health Committee were still trying to clean up the town, and ordered William Millington to get rid of his pigs from the rear of his premises on High Street- maybe these were the nine pork pigs that Ellis Millington from the colliery was advertising for sale in the Liverpool Echo. The owner of an old house at the end of Chester Road was being instructed to convert his tenant's privy and ash-pit to a water-closet.

On Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> another of the popular Whist Drives was held in the Town Hall, organised by fishmonger Sam Mealor of High Street for the Red Cross and Blue Cross (an animal welfare charity). Mrs Pemberton (wife of the Council Chairman) explained the purpose of the charities, and distributed the prizes. Mrs Youds (of the café at the present Shand) did the catering, and prizes donated included a rose-bowl, a Wedgwood vase, a sliver cigarette case, a war-badge, a trinket box and chocolates.

Two days later a Variety Concert in aid of the British and Serbian Red Cross Societies was organised in the Institute by Miss Ritchie who lived at Prospect House, Parkgate Parade. The hall, decorated as usual by flags of many nations, was full to overflowing. There were, of course, recitations, including favourites such as Kipling's 'If', orchestral selections, demonstrations of the Highland Fling, Irish Dancing, Sailors Hornpipe, and a Russian Mazurka. A whistling solo gained much acclaim, and the most popular turn of the evening was Miss Ritchie and Edward Martin collaborating in the popular sketch 'A Marriage has been Arranged'.

The exodus of men to the forces was being felt; William Fleming the builder was advertising for painters ('good brush hands'). A single-handed gardener who would also look after a pony, pigs and poultry was needed immediately at a house in Windle Hill, and a 'horse-man' was wanted for Newhall, on the High Road. A 'superior person' was required as a general cook at Park View, the large grey pebble-dashed house at the town end of Leighton Road.

Attendance figures were low at the 'Top' School on Liverpool Road, where children were suffering from various infectious diseases. Whooping cough was rife, there was chickenpox in a family in Tozers Yard (Pennington's Weint), and measles in a house on Raby Road.

H.N.Gladstone from Burton Manor was one of the magistrates at Neston Petty Sessions to hear a case of a drunken ice-cream man from Birkenhead; the accused was in his cart with three other men and two women and when accosted by Sergeant Bee near Liverpool Road bridge, immediately set off at a gallop up Liverpool Road, pursued by the Sergeant on his bicycle. The officer overtook them and ordered them to the lock-up on Park Street. Explanations in court involved a restive horse, the accused falling over because of after-effects of influenza, and 'not being proper drunk'. Others in the cart including a blind man, and a soldier from the 4<sup>th</sup> Cheshires who was in uniform, who ended up fighting with Sergeant Bee and a couple of his constables, resulting in black eyes, damage to a cell-door at the police station and a prison sentence for the man in khaki.

A sparse crowd watched the Nomads at Prenton Park on the 17<sup>th</sup> achieve a 3-3 draw with Tranmere, in what was reported as an uninteresting match. The Nomads' team included Ridyard, Colthard, Townsend, Brereton, Mullen and Pyatt ...still no indication of local players.

This article covers approximately 15<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> April 1915.

