

9. The end of August and the last cricket match, another week of life in Neston during the Great War...

A fairly quiet week in the town; the first meeting of the Relief Committee agreed that as yet there was no poverty to relieve, beyond that which was normal in the district. Mr Ward of the Colliery Company said he did not anticipate any problems with the business on account of the war, nor did Mr Smith of the Laundry Company, both these being big employers in the area.

A steady stream of men were still heading off to enlist in various Regiments, whilst in Liverpool (Wednesday 26th August) an idea had been put forward and met with resounding success - a battalion of Liverpool 'Pals'. A week later the MP for Wirral, Gershom Stewart, thought of raising a Wirral Battalion, and so the 13th Battalion of the Cheshires was launched. As we will see next week, this appealed to a good few Nestonians.

Meanwhile, casualties were beginning to arrive in English hospitals from the Mons debacle; as military hospitals filled up, preparations were being made for a couple of large houses in Chester to take the wounded. On Parkgate Parade the Royal Infirmary's convalescent home was being prepared under the charge of Mrs Gladstone from Burton Manor and was awaiting the call. By 2nd September a long list of Cheshire Regiment officers who were 'missing' was published, followed two days later by a list of casualties from the ranks. Lieutenant John Roland Beazley from the Lydiate in Willaston was one of the few local men involved at Mons; he was badly injured when shot through the thigh.

Saturday 29th August saw the last match that Neston Cricket Club played for several years, against Oxton, at Parkgate. Several of the team were not Neston residents, such as the Gilling brothers from Heswall, and Chenevix Samuels from West Kirby (a notable cricketer, who had already joined the Royal Irish Rifles). Other players included a Rock Ferry vicar, M.E.Alban, and A. Barrett, brother-in-law of Dr Speechley who had founded the cricket club. Francis Kirby, a Parkgate resident, whose father was the well-known architect Edmund Kirby, was captain in 1914. Neston actually won this match, the first for several weeks.