



# OVER THE TOP



News from the Front

January 1915

## A THORNABY MAN'S VIEW

### H Umpleby of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Liege Battery:

Writing to his parents at 4 Chelmsford Street, Thornaby, he tells of the Christmas he spent at the front. "We have given the enemy something to think about, and I think that before long there will be such a shock for the Germans that they will wonder what has struck them, and before long too! I can see it coming off along the line, and I don't think they will be long in France, for they cannot keep losing men at the rate they are doing. They behave like savages. I have seen beautiful churches, houses, and even hospitals where the wounded lay, destroyed by them out of revenge. In some places there is scarcely a house left whole and the road is simply covered with big shell holes. The poor people suffer the most, for they have no bread and no homes, and they go about in a most aimless fashion. The Germans will have a heavy debt to pay when it is finished. The fighting spirit of our men in such trying conditions is simply marvellous. We have had very bad weather. Some of the prisoners we take say the Germans are tired of the war. They are now playing a losing game."

1st January 1915

North Eastern Daily Gazette

## What's on Stage and Song

**Grand Theatre Stockton-**  
"A Fallen Idol" play by Miss Edith E Hinter

### **Hippodrome-**

"Gentleman the King" A thrilling military episode by Mr Henry Bedford and Company

### **Empire Theatre-**

Showing a patriotic war drama "A son of France".

### **The Red Cross Excellent work of the Stockton detachment.**

Although only in its first year the Stockton detachment of the British Red Cross Society has become thoroughly established, having already received recognition from the war office.



Private H Barwick of 4<sup>th</sup> York's Reserves, with Nance the dog who has been trained to carry messages. Stockton and Thornaby Herald. 2.1.1915

## STOCKTON'S FALLEN

**Private John Wilson Blackburn, 2<sup>nd</sup> Btn Kings Own Scottish Borders.** Killed in action 10<sup>th</sup>

January 1915 and is commemorated on the Ypres Menin Gate Memorial Belgium.

**Stoker Alexander Chantrell, Royal Naval Reserve of the HMS Formidable** killed in action on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 1915, and is buried in Durham Road Cemetery Stockton.

**Stoker Matthew Cook, Royal Naval Reserve of the HMS Pembroke** drowned on 16<sup>th</sup> January 1915 aged 41. He is buried in Gillingham Woodlands Cemetery Kent.

**Petty Officer William Denham, Royal Naval Reserve of the HMS Formidable.** Killed in action on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1915. He is commemorated on the Chatham Naval Memorial.

**Private Patrick Hearty, 2<sup>nd</sup> Btn Alexandra Princess of Wales Own (Yorkshire Regiment).** He was killed in action on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1915. He is buried in Rue-David Military Cemetery, Fleurbaix France.

### **D.L.I. at St Peters Stockton**

Last evening a party of 250 people assembled in the parish hall at Stockton, including 150 members of the D.L.I. The hall presented a most animated appearance. Refreshments were provided by the Sunday school teachers and during the evening Colonel Johnson in a short address said he wanted to take that opportunity of expressing to Mr Pennington the united thanks of all the officers and men of The Durham Light Infantry for the excellent entertainments he had so ably organised for them. The entertainments which had been provided there were exactly what were wanted for the soldier on duty. In the daytime he was full up with his routine duty and at night he wanted some healthy entertainment.

19<sup>th</sup> January-North Eastern Daily Gazette

### **A Stockton Fund**

The mayoress of Stockton wishes to thank those ladies and children who have sent to her comforts for the brave soldiers and sailors, including Mrs A Watson, 14 West End Terrace, who sent a helmet and 2 pairs of mittens. Also Master R. Watson (8 years old) who knit by himself, two mufflers.



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## H. M. S. FORMIDABLE



H M S Formidable was sunk by two torpedoes fired from a German submarine on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1915, whilst on exercises. She sank in 180 feet of water about 37 miles off the Devon coast. She was the first British battleship to be sunk during the First World War. Only 199 men were saved out of a complement of about 750.

### The Captains last Words

*A survivor from the Formidable states that he saw Captain Loxley on the bridge coolly smoking a cigarette and heard him say to Lieutenant Simonds, who was superintending the launch of the boats "You have done very well Simonds" The final words he said were "steady men, it's all right, no panic men, keep cool and be British. There is tons of life left in the old ship yet. The Captain's terrier, Bruce, was standing by his side as the ship disappeared.*

4<sup>th</sup> January 1915, North Eastern Daily Gazette

## H.M.S. FORMIDABLE VICTIM

An inquest was held at Brixham, Yesterday, on Stoker Alexander Chantrell of Stockton, one of the victims of the Formidable disaster. Evidence of identification was given by the deceased's father, who wore a Royal Naval Reserve uniform. He said Alexander's mother received a letter from him on January 2<sup>nd</sup>, the day after the Formidable was lost. Evidence of Chief Stoker Snowden showed that the majority of the ship's crew sank with the ship, owing to the bad weather. The jury found that the deceased met his death by drowning as a result of the sinking of H M S Formidable on January 1<sup>st</sup> during operations of war.

### BIG FIRE AT STOCKTON

Between £1,400 and 1,500 worth of damage was done by the fire at engineering works of Messrs Ashmore, Benson, Pease and Co. The outbreak occurred in the motor shop. Although the fire brigade worked hard for 3 hours the place was gutted before the fire was subdued. The machinery was completely destroyed. The cause of the fire remains unknown.

*Evening Gazette. 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1915*

## SECONDARY EDUCATION

### IMPORTANT MOVE EFFECTED AT STOCKTON

The separation of the girls department from that of the boys at the Stockton Secondary School was formerly effected on Tuesday afternoon by the chairman of the governors, Councillor F.T. Nattrass. The chairman at the outset said that the day marked an exceedingly important juncture in the school's history. The girls present constituted the first "girls" section of the institution, and he wished them on behalf of the Governors, continued success under the new regime. Those who were acquainted with the school's history hitherto were aware that it had been conducted on dual lines, with Mr.J.J. Peat as headmaster. The governors had decided upon this scheme, and that day Miss Nelson took charge over a separate girls department for the first time. *Stockton and Thornaby Herald 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1915.*



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