

OVER THE TOP



News from the Front

September – October - November 1915

BRITISH NURSE EDITH CAVELL EXECUTED



The Foreign Office are informed by the United States Ambassador that Miss Edith Cavell, lately the head of a large training school for nurses at Brussels, who was arrested on August 5 last by the German authorities at that place, was executed on the 13th inst. after sentence of death had been passed on her.

It is understood that the charge against Miss Cavell was that she had harboured fugitive British and French soldiers and Belgians of military age and had assisted them to escape from Belgium in order to join the colours.

So far as the Foreign Office are aware no charge of espionage was brought against her.

16th October 1915, EG

AN UNUSUAL OFFER

Two girls tossed up at Bo'ness, Firth of Forth on Saturday night to decide which of them should be the bride of a soldier.

The soldier is a man who fought at Mons and is now discharged through disablement. He was to have been married at Bo'ness on Saturday night. The feast was prepared and more than a hundred guests assembled, but the bride did not appear.

Two girls, friends, offered to fill the breach, and the soldier agreed to accept either of them. A coin was tossed up to decide which should be the bride, and the choice, curiously enough, fell on one of the girls who was an old sweetheart of the soldier.

25th October 1915, EG

SNAPSHOTS FROM HOME

Mr J.R. Copland, hon. Secretary, Y.M.C.A., Stockton, writes: - *"The Y.M.C.A. has created a 'Snapshots from Home' League, in order to form another link between the soldiers and sailors and their homes, which is the primary object of all the much-appreciated Y.M.C.A. activity at the present time. Briefly this is an organisation of amateur photographers, who undertake to provide the men on active service with snapshots of their own homes, relatives, and friends. The objects of the League have already gained some publicity, and may be familiar to many of your readers. I am anxious to form a branch in this town, and so would be willing to undertake voluntary work in this direction. The whole scheme has been most carefully and systematically worked out, and I am already in possession of requests for snapshots signed by soldiers.*

16th October 1915, EG

SOLDIER'S HUMOROUS EXCUSE

An ingenious excuse for not having a rear light on his bicycle was given at South Bank on Thursday, by John G. Walton, a soldier stationed at Marton Hall.

When apprehended by the constable he said "Well it's the first time you've caught me" and to the Bench today he pleaded, "I'd just been vaccinated and my neck was so stiff that I could not look round to see if the light was out".

He was ordered to pay 5s 6d costs.

11th September 1915, S&T.H.

SOLDIERS' XMAS BOXES

A whist drive and dance was held in the Grey's Rooms, Norton, Stockton, to provide funds for Christmas boxes for soldiers and sailors of Norton and Billingham, who are on active service. It was a huge success in every way, realising £10.

The M.O. for the whist drive was Mr T. Watson, and for the dance Messrs M. Stephenson and F. Lonsdale. If anyone has any relations or friends out on foreign service belonging to Norton or Billingham they are asked to give the name and address to Mr W. White, Fox and Hounds, Norton-on-Tees, as early as possible, as it is the intention of the committee to get into touch with all the local soldiers and sailors.

13th November 1915, EG

WATCH IN A TIN OF SALMON

Private Richard Cockerill, a Hull soldier, recently returned wounded from the Dardanelles says that while in camp he had occasion to open a tin of salmon.

To his surprise he found inside a gentleman's silver watch and in good condition. He wound it up and it started ticking merrily.

14th October 1915, EG

Arts, Culture and Leisure

CURE FOR WAR PESSIMISM LIBRARIES A WAY OF ESCAPE FROM WORRY AND STRAIN

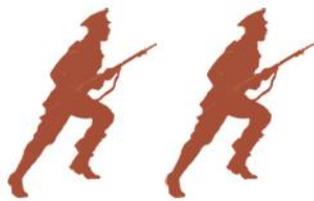
The annual conference of the Library Association opened at Caxton Hall. Mr Stanley Just (Croydon) in an address on "What Public Libraries Can Do During and After the War" said that one of the directions in which public libraries could be of very great assistance at this time was in providing avenues of escape from too much thinking about the war.

The intense and worried pre-occupation with the war was a sign of weakness, not of strength.

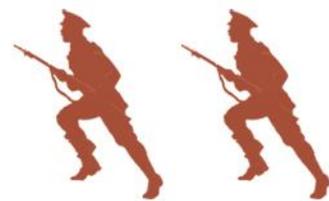
The months of war, with the tide of German success rising as the days went by, had increased the strain on the nation, and one saw many examples of people whose capacities for clear thinking and seeing seemed to have been wholly or partially upset.

Colonel Sir Edward Ward stated that the daily receipt of books from the public for the Camps Library averaged 20,000. Since the system was commenced, over a million books and magazines had been sent to the soldiers.

1st September 1915, EG



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News from the Front

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A NORTON RECORD

So many residents have joined the colours out of Beaconsfield Street, Norton, Stockton, that those remaining have formed a Soldiers' and Sailors' Welcome Association with Mr J.H. William as chairman.

Entertainments are given to each soldier and sailor when he returns home on leave.

It is estimated that 48 of the inhabitants of the street are in the forces, and last evening Stoker Norman Fletcher of HMS Falmouth, was the recipient of the Association's welcome, and was presented on their behalf by Councillor R.M. Elliott with an enlarged photo of himself, a cigarette holder, case of pipes, boxes of cigarettes and tobacco and a tobacco pouch.

29th October 1915, EG

A SOLDIER'S PUDDING

Corporal Fred Anderson, Maxim Gun Section 1st/4th Yorkshire Regiment, writing to his father, Mr J.B. Anderson, house agent, Dunning Road, Middlesbrough, gives the following:- "I received your letter and parcel and am just enjoying the contents. My pal, Victor, got his cooked tongue, which came in very handy as we are now in the trenches two weeks. We get an issue of rum each morning; I have just had mine and am going to turn in my little 'dug-out' for a nap. We have been given warm bodyshirts. We seem to have made our own home up here. Now I must explain that on the third and last week of our trench duty, being rather longer

than usual, we attempted one day the making of a bread pudding by steeping biscuits and bread, then mixed into a dough, adding some currants – about 25 (you have to be careful during wartime) – then put it into a handkerchief and boiled for nearly two hours. But alas the handkerchief burst and some of the contents got mixed in the hot water. However, we strained it, added condensed milk and sugar. It went down all right out here. Of course it would not have done on a restaurant menu".

26th October 1915, S&T.H.

VEGETABLE DAY

Yesterday was 'Vegetable Day' instead of "Guy Fawkes" day at Coatham CE schools. The children from the babies to the eldest brought "something" for their wounded soldiers at Kirkleatham, the result being over 50 stones of vegetables, 60 cabbages, 18 cauliflowers and various other produce. Messrs Bentley Brewery Co. kindly conveyed this wonderful collection to Kirkleatham.

6th November 1915, EG

A FAVOUR PLEASE

Driver J.H. Cook, 916424 of B Battery R.F.A., 51st Brigade, 9th Division, B.E.F, France writes begging from Stockton readers on behalf of himself and other Stockton boys at the front a melodian "with which to pass away the long nights which are now coming on".

18th September 1915, EG

WAR ITEMS

Time to obscure window lights tonight: 6.53

'TELL HIM TO STICK IN'

Private Percy Lough, of the 5th DLI, writing from France to his mother at 55 Atterby Terrace, Stockton, gives a piece of cheerful news.

After expressing thanks for parcels received and more particularly for candles and matches which he says are worth their weight in gold, he sends a message to a friend who is engaged at home on munitions.

"Tell him to stick in", he says "because we are blowing the Germans to bits with the shells we are now getting. We are going great now, so the more the lads at home make the sooner we will be back.

I have nothing to complain of here. I am alright and quite safe. We have plenty of warm clothing and can have anything for asking; so you can see we are all well looked after.

Every time we come out of the trenches we have to get a hot bath, and we are provided with a clean change, even to socks; so you see the conditions are not so bad as a lot would have you believe.

20th October 1915, EG

WOMEN TRAM DRIVERS

The experiment is in operation at Darlington of training women to become drivers of the electric tramcars, and is creating mixed feelings amongst the populace. The idea is that they will be ready to meet any emergency such as lack of male

drivers, as a result of these lessons. The experiment has been much commented upon, and the opinion has been expressed that the work is not suited to the sex at all, because it requires a steady nerve and a keen eye. The answer that has been given to this is that a large number of ladies are to be seen daily driving all manner of motor vehicles. The only point that can be raised against the adoption of such labour is one raised by a pupil who is being taught. She did not think that women would have the necessary strength to keep a heavy tram car under control upon a gradient or in wet weather. That is a difficulty which it may be possible to overcome mechanically, and there seems no apparent reason left why their introduction should not prove successful.

26th October 1915, S&T.H.



Arts, Culture and Leisure