



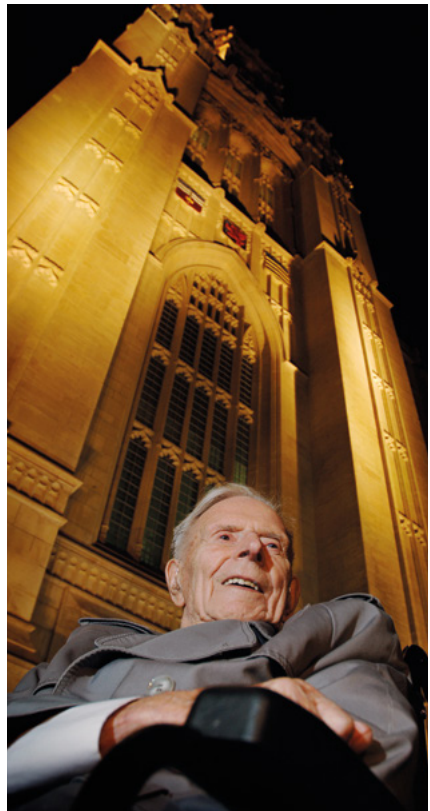
BRISTOL AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR

THE GREAT READING ADVENTURE 2014

WWW.BRISTOL2014.COM



'Will He Come Back?', oil on canvas c 1918, Robert Morley © Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives, K745 purchased from the Royal West of England Academy 1923; 'Dog Tired', oil on canvas c 1916, Christopher Richard Wynne Nevinson © Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives/The Bridgeman Art Library, K2394; Harry Patch – The Last Fighting Tommy – and the tower of the Wills Memorial Building on which he worked after the war © University of Bristol, photographer Dave Pratt.



Cover image by Alys Jones.

BRISTOL AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR

THE GREAT READING ADVENTURE 2014

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Scan the QR code to download the Bristol 2014 map app
from the Apple App Store or Google Play.

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FOREWORD



The First World War had a fundamental impact on the world – and the implications of the war continue to affect us today. Bristol played a full part in the conflict and the repercussions for the city were considerable.

We're honoured to support the publication of *Bristol and the First World War* which marks 100 years since the start of the conflict. The book is being distributed for free across the city as part of the wide-ranging programme of activity marking the centenary.

We hope that this book and the other projects and events taking place in 2014 will help people learn about, debate, discuss and share stories of a war, which, though it started a century ago, left a profound and lasting legacy.

Anthony Brown

Master, The Society of Merchant Venturers

INTRODUCTION



Bristol 2014 is an extensive programme of activity marking the centenary of the start of the First World War and looking at other conflicts that have had an impact on the city over the last century.

The programme includes: exhibitions at M Shed, Royal West of England Academy, Bristol Record Office, Glenside Hospital Museum, University of Bristol Theatre Collection and other sites; an online map and free smartphone app; a wide range of lectures, talks, seminars, debates and guided walks; digital film-making workshops and other arts projects; new local history publications; and concerts, film screenings and other performances at venues across the city.

It also includes the 2014 Great Reading Adventure.

The first Great Reading Adventure took place in 2003 with a mass-read of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*. Since then thousands of local people have been given free books so they can enjoy a shared reading experience linked to learning about the past.

We've worked with other areas across the country for some of the adventures including Glasgow, Edinburgh, Liverpool, Hull, the City of Westminster, Shropshire, Hampshire and the whole of South West England.

The most recent adventure was based upon *The 2010 Book of Aviation Wonder*, a celebration of flight since 1910, the year in which the Bristol Aeroplane Company was founded.

For this year's project we've commissioned a collection of short essays on a range of topics to tell the story of *Bristol and the First World War*. The authors include local historians, academics and writers, some of whom have been involved in the development of the Bristol 2014 programme.

In this book you'll learn about events in the city when war was declared; different branches of the fighting forces with Bristol connections; local industries contributing to the war effort; changes on the home front that resulted from the conflict; Bristol's links to the arts and war; Bristol conscientious objectors; peace day in the city; the commemorations of the dead; and the post-war years.

There's also a preview of some of the objects that will be on display in the *Moved by Conflict* exhibition at M Shed.

The book ends with two contrasting views on the overall significance of a conflict once described as the war to end all war.

Visit the Great Reading Adventure section of the Bristol 2014 website (www.bristol2014.com) for background information including recommendations for further reading, author biographies and additional images.

On the website you can submit your comments about the book and any relevant new information you'd like to share on the topics covered. We'll also be posting photos of readers with the book (email as attachments to bristol2014@btopenworld.com).

We hope you enjoy reading *Bristol and the First World War* and taking part in Bristol 2014.

Bristol and the First World War is being distributed free to 20,000 readers across the city via schools and colleges, the museum and library service, and other partners in Bristol 2014. If you receive a copy and do not wish to keep it, please pass on to friends or family without charge.

For more Bristol First World War stories, scan the QR code to download the Bristol 2014 map app from the Apple App Store or Google Play.



MOVED BY CONFLICT

From 11 October 2014 to 1 March 2015 Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives (BMGA) presents *Moved by Conflict* at M Shed. The exhibition is specially created for the Bristol 2014 programme with the help and support of partners including Bristol Old Vic and several of the contributors to this book.

Moved by Conflict explores the physical, social and personal changes made by war. People's stories take visitors from the Bristol of the 1900s and its position in the British Empire, through the years of the First World War, to present day global conflicts.

A wealth of original objects and documents from BMGA's collections, other organisations and private lenders provides a tangible connection with Bristolians of 1914-18. Curators Sue Giles and Helen McConnell have selected a handful of the hundreds of objects from the exhibition to profile for readers.

For more details of the exhibition and the collections visit www.bristolmuseums.org.uk. Images and contributions courtesy of BMGA.





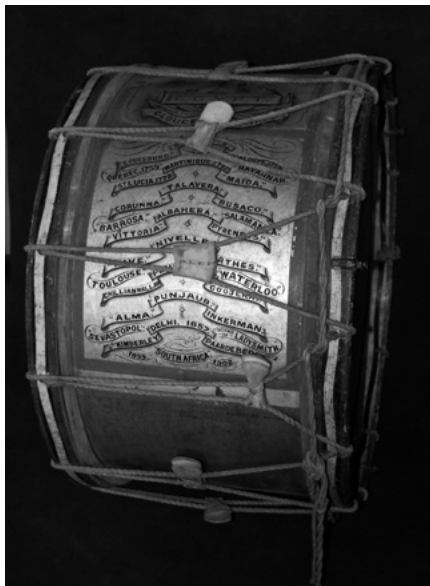
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4

Seaforth Highlanders Regimental uniform kilt of Sergeant Arthur Jarrett (1, 2)

Arthur Jarrett volunteered to fight for King and country in 1914. As a Bristolian, he might have expected to go into the local regiment, the Gloucestershires. But Scottish regiments had suffered severe losses in battles in France, and men were drafted into these to rebuild their numbers. He was sent to the Seaforth Highlanders Regiment, which meant wearing a kilt as part of the uniform. His kilt has many small holes, made by shrapnel from an exploding shell. (kilt BMAG W2012 given by Richard Jarrett, photograph BRO 44197/Ph1/1)

Christmas card (3) In 1914 there was great enthusiasm for the war. Many were motivated by patriotism to join up and fight. There was also great social pressure on men to enlist. Some men not in uniform were handed white feathers in the street, accusing them of cowardice. (ref B1863)

Regimental bass drum (4) In 1915 the newly formed 15th Battalion of the Gloucestershire Regiment took possession of a new bass drum for the regimental band. It was painted with the insignia of the Glosters (the Egyptian sphinx) and the regiment's battle honours, from the eighteenth century French wars to the Boer War. The band was perhaps used to recruit men into the army. The young Eirene Champney saw the band of the 4th Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment parading down Whiteladies Road in November 1914: 'They were playing a glorious tune with the drums & pipes. The drummer with the big drum, however, is quite a sight. He throws his drumsticks to a tremendous height, & catches them most adroitly.' Over 50,000 young men volunteered or were conscripted into the forces from Bristol, of whom some 6,000 never returned. (ref G1450 given by the Bristol Citizens' Recruiting Committee)

Sewing kit (5) This sewing kit was issued to Albert Clark when he joined the Gloucestershire Regiment. It contains safety pins, buttons and thread to allow him to repair his uniform. Albert also carried a photograph of his sweetheart, Elsie Pearce, with him. His will, made out in the back of his Soldier's Pay Book, left everything he owned to Elsie. (ref TD5001)

Silk postcard (6) Perhaps ten million embroidered postcards were produced in France between 1914 and 1918. They were very popular with soldiers, who sent them home to their mothers, sisters, sweethearts, wives and children. This one was a combined birthday and Christmas card from Harry Harris, somewhere in France, to his sister Daisy in St Philips, Bristol. Women in France and Belgium embroidered the pictures, often using the Allies' flags and Regimental badges. The embroideries went to factories in Paris where they were glued into the cards, then the postcards were sold through outlets near the front line. (ref 0329TSH)

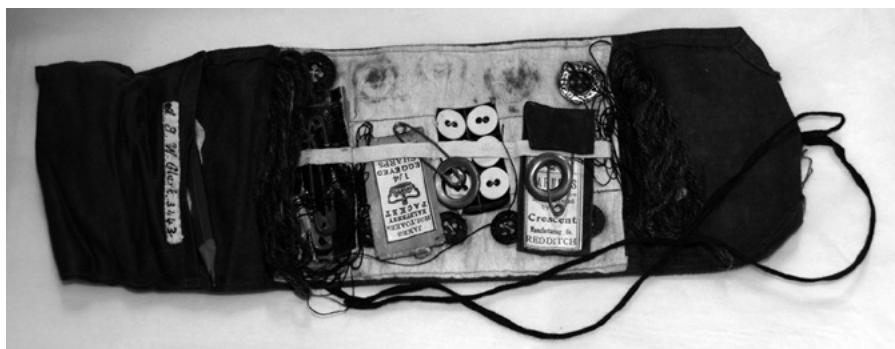
VAD uniform (7) Middle class women, many of whom had never worked before, joined the Voluntary Aid Detachments of the Red Cross. There were 464 women in the Bristol detachments. The VADs, as they were known, helped to organise and care for injured soldiers arriving by train at Temple Meads. They also worked in the various war hospitals set up in Bristol, often filling the places of qualified nurses who were needed at the Front. (ref TB1567.1-9)

Bust of Old Bill (8) Old Bill was a character created by cartoonist Bruce Bairnsfather in 1914-15. He was an elderly, moustachioed pipe-smoking British 'Tommy' and was very popular during the First World War. This bust was reputed to have been made to fix to a car bonnet. (ref TD5398)

Ration book, 1918 (9) German submarines prevented supply ships from reaching Britain with wheat, meat, tea and sugar. By 1917 food shortages had become widespread, prices were high, and queuing for food was a feature of daily life. From January 1918 national rationing of sugar, meat and butter was introduced. This child's ration book belonged to Francis William Beales, who lived with his family in St Andrews. (ref 0316TSH)

Sign, c.1915 (10) This sign was hung in the front window of a house in Bedminster during the First World War. It was a way of telling the neighbours that a man from this family had enlisted to fight, and would have added to the pressure on other men to do the same. This sign was displayed by the family of Albert Henry Room, who joined up in 1915 aged 18. He served with 'Bristol's Own', the 12th Battalion the Gloucestershire Regiment, in Italy. Albert returned home to Bristol after being demobilised in February 1919. (ref TD5401)

Memorial plaque or 'death penny' (11, 12) The British government decided to commemorate the men and women who died in the First World War with a bronze plaque, to be given to the next of kin. Over one million were produced. Each plaque was individually named, and sent out with a covering letter from King George V and a memorial scroll. Lance Corporal Thomas Maggs of the 1st Battalion the Worcestershire Regiment was 26 when he was killed on 14 October 1918. His parents created a personal shrine in his memory at their home in Mina Road, Bristol. (ref O.3370)



5



6



7



8

MINISTRY OF FOOD.
CHILD'S RATION BOOK (A).
INSTRUCTIONS.
Read carefully these instructions and the leaflet which will be sent you with this Book.

1. The parent or guardian of the child named on the reference leaf as the holder of this ration book must sign his own name and write the child's name and address in the space below, and write the child's name and address, and the serial number (printed upside down on the back cover) in the space provided to the left of each page of coupons.

Food Office of } BRISTOL Date
Issue }
Signature of Child's } W. Harold Beales
Parent or Guardian }
Name of Child Francis William Beales
Address 82 Chesterfield Rd Bristol

2. For convenience of writing at the Food Office the Reference Leaf has been put opposite the back cover, and has purposely been printed upside down. It should be carefully examined. If there is any mistake in the entries on the Reference Leaf, the Food Office should be asked to correct it.
3. The book must be registered at once by the child's parent or guardian, who must take the book to the retailers with whom the child was previously registered for butcher's meat, bacon, butter and margarine, sugar and tea respectively, or, if the child has not previously held a book, to any retailers chosen. These retailers must write their names and the addresses of their shops in the proper space on the back of the cover. The books of children staying in hotels, boarding houses, hostels, schools and similar establishments should not be registered until they leave the establishment.
4. The ration book may be used only by or on behalf of the holder, to buy rationed food for him, or members of the same household, or guests sharing common meals. It may not be used to buy rationed food for any other persons.

N. 1 (Nov.) (Continued on next page.)

IF FOUND, RETURN TO ANY FOOD OFFICE.

9





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12

BRISTOL 1914

The White City Exhibition

by Clive Burlton

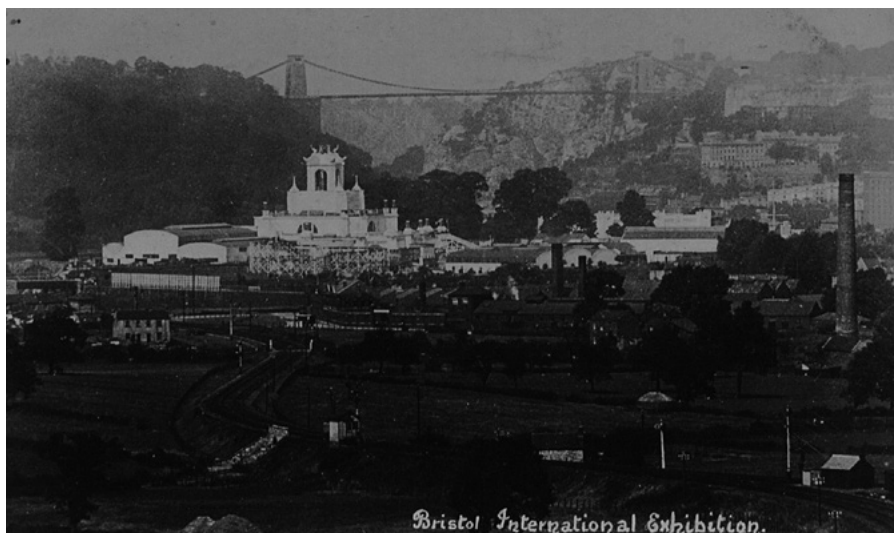
In the spring of 1914 Bristolians were looking forward to one of the biggest attractions ever seen in the West Country. Based on the grand exhibitions in London – particularly the 1908 Franco-British exhibition and the 1911 Festival of Empire – the Bristol International Exhibition sought to celebrate Britain's Empire, and highlight the trading, commercial and social links with its Dominions.

Known as 'The White City', it was also a theme park and attractions included replicas of Bristol Castle, Drake's ship *Revenge* and 'Shakespeare's England'. Along with a figure-8 roller coaster, the Eastern Tea Gardens, Bostock's Arena and Jungle, The Crazy Kitchen, and the House of Nonsense, the attraction made an incredible sight up close and from vantage points like Bedminster Down and the Clifton Suspension Bridge.

Set on land opposite 'B' Bond Warehouse at Ashton Gate between Brunel Way and the Cumberland Basin, the site covered about 30 acres. Around 2,000 workers were employed on the site in the ten weeks before it opened. All available Bristol carpenters, plasterers, bricklayers and general labourers were employed and additional workers arrived from South Wales and other parts of the West Country – lodging throughout the city. The weekly wage bill was £4,200 and by the time the exhibition opened, more than £100,000 had been spent on its construction.

The exhibition was opened by Lord Mayor Swaish on 28 May 1914. However, before he could say a word he was interrupted by a suffragette who wanted to draw attention to the force-feeding of women imprisoned for their role in the suffrage campaign.

The exhibition was due to run until 14 October 1914, but struggled to attract enough visitors to pay its way. Winding-up proceedings started in early June. The Receiver was keen to keep the site open as long as possible, in an attempt to pay off creditors and to ensure that 'The Pageant of Bristol' went ahead as planned. Six months in the making, the pageant was performed by 1,200 Bristolians who took part in a series of scenes depicting Bristol's history across the centuries. It took place nightly over a three-week period ending on 18 July 1914.



1914 Bristol International Exhibition – 'White City'. Bristol Record Office, Vaughan Collection 43207/22/3/8.

The Receiver appointed new management, attracted additional funding and made improvements to the grounds and buildings. However, visitor numbers continued to fall short of those needed to improve the finances, and on 20 July 1914 a winding-up petition was heard at Bristol County Court. In the judge's view, 'The Exhibition was insolvent from the start...'

Although the intention was for the exhibition to continue for a little while longer, the declaration of war finished it off prematurely. The railway network was requisitioned by the War Office and visitors to the site dried up. The exhibition closed on 15 August 1914.

Bristol's attention switched from the troubles of the exhibition to the needs of the war. The call for a 'New Army' of 100,000 volunteers was made by Lord Kitchener, and the Bristol Citizens Recruiting Committee (BCRC) was established. It made its headquarters at the Colston Hall and on the day the exhibition closed, the first batch of recruits to the New Army started to arrive. Within weeks several hundred volunteers came forward and were medically examined and joined the new Bristol Battalion.

Fred Weatherly, a local barrister and songwriter, wrote 'Bravo, Bristol!' a rousing recruitment song to help raise funds for the new battalion. The battalion was nicknamed 'Bristol's Own' – the 12th (Service) Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment. The battalion needed a barracks and with a vacant exhibition site on its doorstep, the War Office



'Bristol's Own' at the White City site, November 1914. Bristol Record Office, Vaughan Collection 43207/8/30.

took over the lease of the land and acquired the site. It paid the Receiver £8,100 for the buildings and the Royal Engineers and the Army Service Corps strengthened the structures and converted the site for use as a military facility.

Around 900 recruits to 'Bristol's Own' moved into their new barracks during October 1914 and slept inside the old exhibition buildings. Initially no rifles or uniforms were available to the recruits. The only distinguishing mark which the men carried was a small circular badge worn on the lapel of their civilian clothing, bearing the legend 'New Bristol Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment'. By the end of the year, uniforms, rifles and ammunition for musketry practice had arrived and the training of the men intensified through rifle, bayonet and trench-digging practice, and lots of hard physical drill with plenty of gym work and route marches in and around Ashton Park.

'Bristol's Own' did not have the White City barracks to themselves for long. Early in 1915 the BCRC raised two more units – the 127th and 129th Bristol Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery. Each unit included 91 gunners, 64 drivers, two smiths, three wheelwrights, three saddlers, and three shoeing smiths. Many recruits were policemen from Bristol and Gloucester. Large tents were erected to provide additional sleeping quarters and stables were built for the increasing number of horses.



Pageant of Bristol 'Cromwellian Soldiers'. Bristol Record Office, Vaughan Collection 43207/9/4/55.

In April 1915, the BCRC also raised the 14th (West of England) Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment. This was a 'bantam' unit made up of men who were under the standard acceptable height of 5' 3" (1.60m), but above five feet (1.52m). The 'bantams' moved into the barracks as plans were being made for 'Bristol's Own' to move out.

'Bristol's Own' left the barracks at the end of June 1915 for further training in England before landing at Le Havre in France on 21 November 1915. The two artillery batteries and the bantams battalion left Bristol in August 1915 for further training and they travelled to France between January and May 1916.

None of the units raised by the BCRC returned to the White City barracks and around 500 of the men who responded to the committee's call for volunteers and did their rudimentary training around Bostock's Jungle, Bristol Castle and Drake's *Revenge* were killed.

Today, the White City Allotments, administered by the Hotwells & District Allotments Association, is the only remaining link with the site's past.

An exhibition about the White City will be on display at Bristol Record Office from 11 October 2014 to 27 February 2015. For more details, see www.bristolmuseums.org.uk/bristol-record-office.

From **WHITE CITY**
To **WAR**
By *Alys Jones*





BRISTOL,
2 YEARS EARLIER

Hey, Alf! your
Mum know you're
out!?



Mr Cooper!

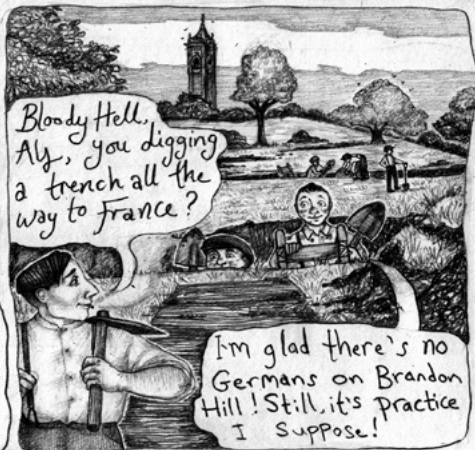
Private Cooper now! We'll
have to call you Old Alfred.
So rapidly you've aged of late!



Quite a place this, eh, Old Alf? Me and Ben Steers
here did part of the roof! Cross your fingers you'll
be sleeping under one of my bits of work, not his if it
rains in the night! Hah!



Look, Old Alf
"Shakespeare's England"
in Bristol!
Officers quarters now. I bet
they love that!



Bloody Hell,
Alf, you digging
a trench all the
way to France?

I'm glad there's no
Germans on Brandon
Hill! Still, it's practice
I suppose!



Well, Alf, right over there, in "Bastock's Jungle" resided a troupe of ferocious beasts, giving off the most powerful stench you can imagine!



Maybe we should have kept the lions on, Mr Cooper. Fritz won't be expecting that!

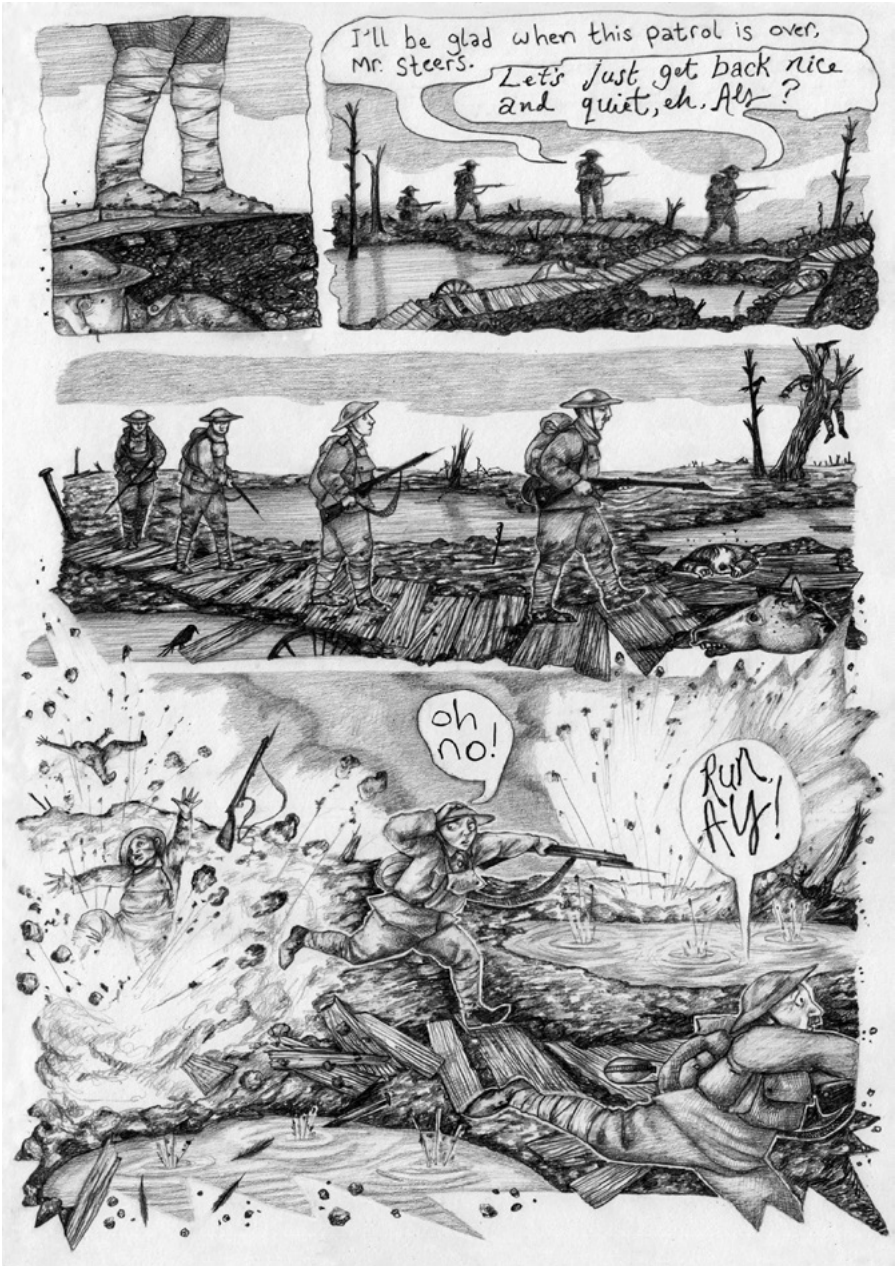


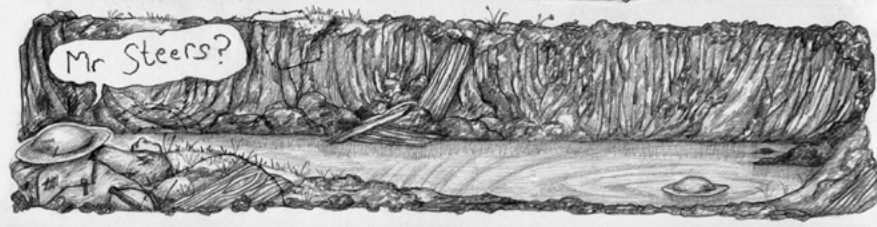
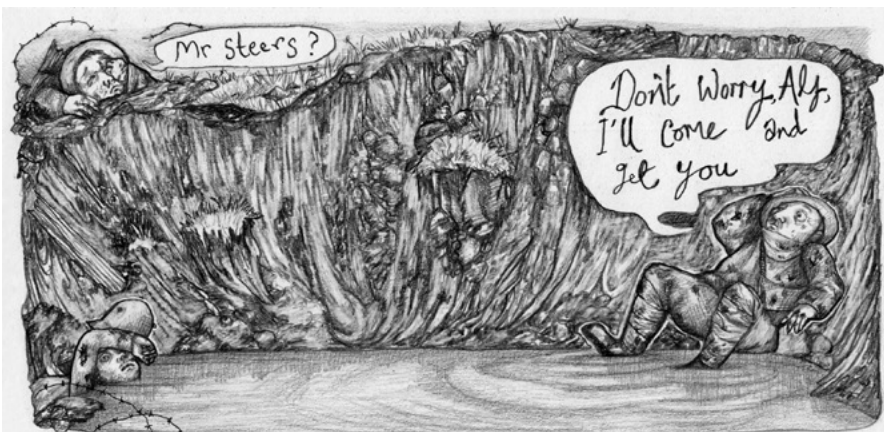
That, Alfred, is a faultless strategy! It's only a matter of time before you're running this whole outfit.

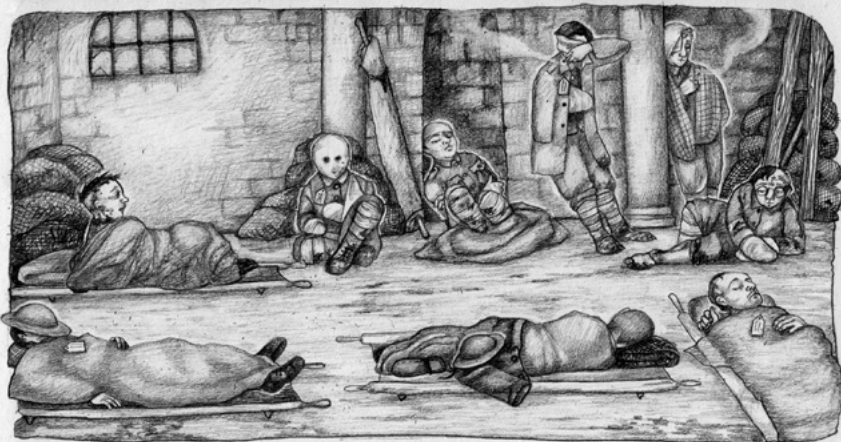
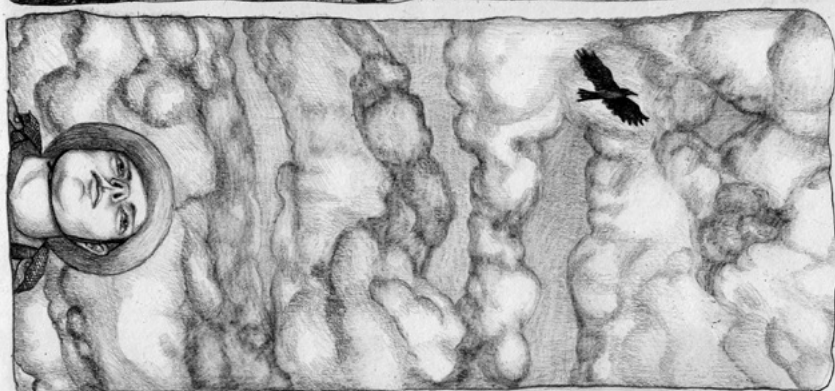


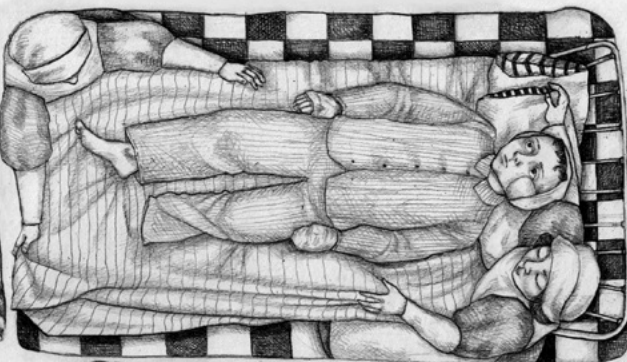
In any case, we won't be needing any lions, we've got the terrible BEN STEERS!











BRISTOL AT WAR



Section of the Paive Front (Montello Ridge) held by the Bristol troops in March 1918.

Somme Battle 25 Sept 1916, Bristol Troops (12th Gloucesters) moving up in support.

Both images reproduced from Bristol and the Great War: 1914-1919 (1920), editors George F Stone and Charles Wells: Bristol Record Office Bk/765.



Those Who Fought

by Clive Burlton

Around 60,000 Bristol men fought in the First World War. Some were already serving with regular and territorial forces and others were reservists or recruits to new 'service' battalions formed for the duration of the conflict. The men served with local and distant units across all aspects of the military including infantry, artillery, navy, engineering and various units like the medical and the flying corps.

Across hundreds of Bristol families, it was not uncommon for entire households of brothers to fight in the war. The four Pine brothers of 16 Charles Street, Easton (now Greenbank Avenue East) were in one such family.

When war was declared, Fred (26) and Tom (21) were already full-time soldiers in the regular army – serving with the South Wales Borderers and the Border Regiment respectively. Working at Packers Chocolate Factory in Easton, Harry (25) was a reservist with the Gloucestershire Regiment at Horfield Barracks. George (23) who was working in the boot and shoe trade at St George, was a part-time 'territorial' with the 6th Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment at St Michael's Hill.

Harry went across to France with 1st Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment on 11 September 1914. He was wounded near Le Preol on 1 February 1915. After he recovered, he joined the Royal Engineers and in October 1918 received the French bravery award, the Croix de Guerre, for apparently fighting off some Germans, armed only with a shovel. Harry survived the war but in 1920 emigrated to Australia where he became a 'soldier drifter' – moving from farm to farm, digging up potatoes, clearing scrub and making a living doing odd jobs in New South Wales.

Although in different regiments, Fred and Tom were on the same ship that left Avonmouth for Gallipoli in March 1915 to take part in the ill-fated battles against the Turks on the Helles Peninsula. Fred wrote to his sister Mabel (reproduced in *Bristol & the War*, 1 September 1915) to say that he had met Tom on board and how frustrating it was for both of them to be at Avonmouth, but not able to pop home for a few hours.

After six weeks fighting on Turkish soil, Fred saw Tom being taken by stretcher to a waiting hospital ship. Tom had been shot in the mouth and was transferred to a war hospital in Birmingham for treatment. He returned to Gallipoli, but was killed on 20 November 1915. He was buried at sea during the evacuation of the peninsula and his personal effects were returned to the family. He is remembered on the Helles Memorial, Turkey.

Following the Gallipoli disaster, Fred and his battalion were sent to France. He was in action on 1 July 1916 when he fought on the first day of the Battle of the Somme. On that day his battalion lost 246 men, killed or missing, and 153 were wounded.

On 9 July 1917 the *London Gazette* noted that Fred had been awarded the Military Medal for bravery. The reason for the award is unknown. During the autumn of 1917 Fred fought at Passchendaele in Belgium during the 3rd Battle of Ypres but had some relief from the war when he returned home to Bristol to marry Amy Andrews on 15 December 1917.

On 9 April 1918 Fred's battalion was rushed to the Merville area in France to help stem the German Spring Offensive during the Battle of the Lys. On 11 April 1918 the battalion was completely over-run by the advancing German troops and three-quarters of the battalion, including Fred, were killed or were missing. Fred Pine has no known grave and is remembered on the Ploegsteert Memorial, Belgium. He never knew that his wife was pregnant with their only child – Nora was born six months after his death.

George Pine and the 6th Gloucesters left England for France on 31 March 1915 and went into the trenches for the first time on 20 April 1915 at Ploegsteert Wood. George fought in Belgium and France for just over a year and returned home on leave in June 1916 and married Violet Winterson. He went back to the trenches a few weeks later only to be injured immediately by an exploding shell during the Battle of the Somme at Serre in July 1916.

George was treated for shrapnel injuries at the Lady Forester hospital in Much Wenlock and when recovered, joined the 12th Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment ('Bristol's Own') in France. Here he saw action at Fresnoy in France in May 1917 and at Passchendaele in Belgium in October 1917.

George's battalion was transferred to the Italian Front for three months but rushed back to France, to help stem the German Offensive in April 1918 – the same task that Fred Pine and the South Wales Borderers were given. George arrived in the front line just a few miles away from where Fred was killed the previous day.

Later in the month, George's actions in helping to capture 'Gloucester Farm' at Le Vert Bois near Merville resulted in the award of the Distinguished Conduct Medal. In August 1918 he was promoted to Company Sergeant Major.

On 29 September 1918, 'Bristol's Own' helped to break through the German Hindenburg Line near Cambrai in France and George received gunshot wounds to his head and shoulder.



George Pine in the back yard of 16 Charles Street, Easton in November 1915. He is posing in front of his brother Harry's hen-house (a picture of Harry is pinned to the shack). It was during this visit while home on leave that George learnt that his brother Tom had been killed at Gallipoli. Robin Pine.

Unconscious in a shell hole for around 18 hours, he managed to stumble back to British Lines. 'Bristol's Own' had been withdrawn and was disbanded a few days later. George was one of the last members of 'Bristol's Own' to emerge alive from the battlefield. The bullet in George's shoulder was removed at the Australian Military Hospital in Rouen.

He continued his recovery at the Beaufort War Hospital in Fishponds, Bristol but was assessed as 50 per cent disabled owing to his head injury. He was honourably discharged in January 1919. He was not able to return to the boot and shoe trade, but managed to get a job as a Bristol Tram Conductor in May 1920.

Clifton College

by Eugene Byrne

Like the lettering in Blackpool rock, Clifton College appears again and again both in the history and mythology of Britain's role in the First World War.

Then, as now, it was one of Britain's most prestigious public schools, though at that point it only took male pupils. Founded in the 1860s, it ranked alongside Eton and Harrow and the other famous schools in turning out men who would fill the ranks of the military, administrative and political elite not just of Britain, but of Britain's empire, too.

Several Old Cliftonians (OCs) were in the top ranks of the armies and navies of Britain, Canada, New Zealand and Australia during the war.

Field Marshal Douglas Haig, who commanded the British forces on the Western Front from 1915 to the war's end, was himself an OC, as was Field Marshal William Birdwood, who led the Australian and New Zealand forces at Gallipoli. Sir Francis Younghusband, an imperial administrator and adventurer whose biography is incredibly colourful, was another. During the war he led the 'Fight for Right' campaign, which looked to a spiritually and morally better country afterwards.

Virtually all the OCs who fought in the war served as officers because of their education and their social class, though at least one man rejected his background and served in the ranks.

A public school education did not automatically entitle a soldier to an officer's commission, although it was no hindrance. For some years before the war many public schoolboys had undergone military training as part of the Officers' Training Corps (OTC) which gave them a fast-track to a commission. At Clifton, as in many other schools, membership of the OTC became more or less compulsory during the war years.

Junior officers were killed in alarming numbers at the Front. Around 12 per cent of privates and non-commissioned officers who served in the Army were killed, but among commissioned officers the death rate was around 17 per cent. The casualty rate among OCs was slightly higher – 18.5 per cent. Of the 3,063 OCs who served in the war, 578 were killed.

This was where old-fashioned ideas of soldiering clashed with the ghastly realities of modern industrialised warfare. Junior officers – subalterns, lieutenants and captains – were expected to lead by example. They had to show coolness under fire and take the greatest risks. In attack, they were in the front rank, and soldiers on all sides were trained to look out for enemy officers and to try and pick them off first.

Clifton College's part in the First World War was not limited to producing officers. It also featured in some of the most profound national myths of the time.

Nothing, for example, encapsulated the myth of the long, idyllic Edwardian summers just before the war than the stunning achievement of young Arthur Edward Collins. In a school cricket match played in June 1899, the 13-year-old Collins notched up the highest score ever recorded – 628 not out.

Collins went on to join the Army and was killed in November 1914 at the First Battle of Ypres. His death came as a great blow to the school and its pupils, with whom he had already attained legendary status. His death also symbolised the way the war was destroying an innocent world of old.

A E J Collins, along with two of the five OCs who would go on to win the Victoria Cross, was an officer in the Royal Engineers. This is noteworthy insofar as Clifton by 1914 was already building a reputation for its scientific education. Doubtless some of the men Clifton turned out were the sports-mad upper class twits of popular cliché, but the great majority were not.

Clifton cricket also inspired former pupil Henry Newbolt's great poem of the imperial governing class. 'Vitaï Lampada' – the torch of life, something that gets passed from one generation to the next – was written in 1897 and drew direct comparisons between public school sportsmanship and the supposed spirit of the men fighting on the frontiers of empire.

There's a breathless hush in the Close to-night –
Ten to make and the match to win –
A bumping pitch and a blinding light,
An hour to play and the last man in.
And it's not for the sake of a ribboned coat,
Or the selfish hope of a season's fame,
But his captain's hand on his shoulder smote
'Play up! Play up! And play the game!'

Many found the poem an inspiration early in the war, but by 1918 many who had served and seen the squalid reality of death in the trenches despised the poem and its fine-sounding sentiments as upper-class humbug.

Newbolt himself was a patriot, but hated jingoism and the way his poem had been used. He later called it 'a Frankenstein's Monster that I created'.

The Clifton College gatehouse on College Road was unveiled by Field Marshal Haig in July

1922. It was inscribed with the names of 578 Old Cliftonians who had been killed in the War. It now serves as a memorial for those killed in the Second World War as well.

The ceremony attracted the Bristol establishment, including the Lord Mayor, the Master of the Society of Merchant Venturers and several other prominent citizens. Also present were several other Old Cliftonians, including Sir Henry Newbolt.

The gatehouse was designed by Charles Holden, whose other architectural achievements in Bristol include part of the BRI and the Central Library.

It featured verse by Newbolt, inscribed by Eric Gill:

From the great marshal to the last recruit,
These, Clifton, were thy Self, thy Spirit in Deed,
The flower of Chivalry, thy fallen fruit,
And thine immortal Seed.

The gatehouse is a Grade II listed building. Pupils passing under it are supposed to do so bareheaded and not put their hands in their pockets.

Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig. ©Imperial War Museum Q3255.



The Remount Depot

by Nick Nourse with Pete Insole

When war was declared in August 1914, the world's armies were powered by horse: officers and the cavalry rode horses, and guns, ammunition and supplies were all carried on or towed behind a horse. At the time the British army held 25,000 horses, but the first fighting force sent to France in 1914, the British Expeditionary Force, needed 165,000 horses for the first three months of the war alone. The task of acquiring the extra numbers was achieved in just 12 days: 25,000 horses were called from the Army's reserve, and a further 115,000 were 'impressed' – paid for, but obliged to allow the horses to be taken by the Army – from farms and businesses across the country.

But even this was not enough. To continue the fight in France and Belgium, Lord Kitchener's New Armies needed a further 245,000 horses. Having taken so many animals from British farms, the only solution was to buy horses from abroad. By the end of the war in 1918, the War Office had bought over half a million horses and mules from Canada, the United States, Spain and South America. £67.5 million (over £2.5 billion today) had been spent on buying, transporting and feeding the Army's horses.

The first new four-legged recruits were purchased in Canada in October 1914, placed on ships and brought to Britain. The Shirehampton Remount Depot was built especially for the new horses and mules, and was one of three new remount depots – enormous stables – that were built across the country in late 1914 and early 1915.

The Shirehampton Remount Depot was constructed on open land surrounding the village of the same name, to the west of Bristol. The site was chosen because it was close to the Avonmouth Docks where the horses and mules arrived on board the ships, up to 1,000 animals at a time. The other remount depots built at the start of the war were also constructed near major harbours: Romsey Remount Depot was near Southampton Docks, and Lathom Park Remount Depot was built near Liverpool Docks. At Shirehampton, a map of the depot as drawn up by the Royal Engineers in September 1914 shows the old farmland divided into 35 paddocks, each with two stable blocks and each set out to accommodate 100 horses. The purpose of the depot was to quarantine the horses for two or three weeks so that they could be tested for disease, and so that the animals could be rested and fed back to healthy weight after the long sea voyage.

Many of the new arrivals at the Shirehampton Remount Depot also needed new horse shoes, and the broncos – wild horses unused to saddles and harnesses – had to be 'broken' and trained. The depot was set out so that 100 horses made a troop, and five troops made a squadron. Each squadron had a blacksmith's forge and a shoeing shed, and the animals were fed from the three forage (feed) barns. Once Shirehampton's horses

had been declared fit for purpose by the army veterinary surgeons, they were sent to 'conditioning units' where they were trained to join the army as military horses.

When the Shirehampton Remount Depot opened in September or October 1914 it was run by officers from the Army Remount Service, but the men under their command were civilians. The non-military manpower was provided by the Legion of Frontiersmen, a volunteer paramilitary unit that specialised in recruiting men who could ride horses and shoot straight. The legion wore their own uniform of polished leather riding boots, breeches, blue tunics and brown Stetson hats like today's Canadian Mounties, and they were the main workforce for the first six months of the war. In February 1915 the depot was made into a regular military camp and the civilian Legion men were replaced by regulars from the Army Remount Service. 150 army men were needed to staff a squadron and at its peak there were at least ten squadrons. But the depot was also staffed by men and women from the Forage Corps who managed the animals' feed, and WAACS – Women's Auxiliary Army Corps – who worked as cooks, housekeepers and office clerks at the camp.

William Patrick McCarthy, the Batman (an officer's personal servant) for Colonel Dalby at the Remount Depot 1914-18. Image courtesy of William's grandson, Robert Coleman.



We only have the one map of the Shirehampton Remount Depot and this shows the camp at the very start of the war. Research into the history of the depot now shows that over the five years the depot was operational it was extended, perhaps to be as much as twice its original size. The evidence comes largely from newspaper reports at the end of the war when, for instance, it is recorded that at its busiest the depot held 7,244 animals; twice the number originally intended. And as the camp was sold off after the war, the number of shoeing sheds is stated as being 13, when the depot had only opened with seven. The likely position of the enlarged camp, at Penpole Point to the north of Shirehampton, is also revealed in the newspaper reports in 1919.

The Shirehampton Remount Depot officially closed on 1 October 1919, by which time 347,045 horses and mules had passed through the camp. After the camp closed, buildings that could be dismantled were sold, but the 70 men's barrack huts were bought by the City Council and converted into 140 temporary houses. The residents of these properties moved in to the timber and corrugated iron, single storey structures in 1920. By late

Squadron G, one of ten squadrons at the depot in June 1915. Courtesy of David Martyn.



1926 all these properties had been cleared to make way for the permanent, brick semis and terraces along roads like Grove Leaze and Barrow Hill Crescent. The converted huts appear in one of the only images we have of the depot, by the local artist, Samuel Loxton and held at Bristol Central Reference Library. A small number of photographs also exist that appear to show soldiers and horses that may have been taken at Shirehampton, but the surviving evidence of the presence of the camp is almost non-existent.

Today, nothing remains, except perhaps for the occasional horseshoe dug up in a garden. But in 2013 and 2014 two archaeological geophysics surveys were carried out: one at Avonmouth Primary School and the other at a site known as The Daisy Field in Shirehampton. In both cases the surveys showed traces of what may be the remains of buildings that were once a part of the Shirehampton Remount Depot. There have also been anecdotal references to concrete foundations beneath residents' gardens. The depot lives on in the memories of some of the community who recall a parent or grandparent recounting stories of the horses at Shirehampton.



Bristol and the War at Sea

by Eugene Byrne

The Port of Bristol played a major, but often overlooked, part in Britain's war effort.

In 1914 much of the city's economy still revolved, as it always had done, around the Port, which consisted of the City Docks (the Floating Harbour) as well as Avonmouth, and included the modern new facilities at the Royal Edward Dock. Both the City Docks and Avonmouth Docks were owned and run by Bristol's Council, which also controlled docks at Portishead.

In the days before the war started, the War Office had requisitioned sheds at Avonmouth. Soldiers camped out in dockside sheds before going off to fight in France, and for years afterwards there were arguments over who should pay for the food in the sheds that the soldiers had helped themselves to – especially the tinned peaches.

The government had also taken lorries, buses and cars from their owners for use by the military. Most of these went to France from Avonmouth. For the rest of the war, Avonmouth was frequently used for sending vehicles to the Front including, probably, some of the first tanks used in warfare.

Portishead Docks, meanwhile, became one of the main points of supply for petrol for the Army at the Front. Portishead worked around the clock to ship fuel in four-gallon tin cans for the military's growing numbers of vehicles and, increasingly, aeroplanes.

After the first movement of men to France, few soldiers departed for the Western Front from Avonmouth. The Channel Ports were used as they were far closer. Avonmouth did, though, play an important role in the Dardanelles campaign, the landings at Gallipoli which failed in their objective of knocking Turkey, Germany's ally, out of the war. Several thousand soldiers and their equipment sailed from here in early 1915.

Horses and mules were also shipped in in huge numbers for the Remount Depot (see previous article), while troops arrived from Canada and India.

While the Port played a part in the military effort, its real importance was less about what was sent out, and more about what was brought in.

The workload at all the Port's docks dramatically increased in the war's early stages. In the war's first year almost four million tons of cargo came into Avonmouth, Portishead and the City Docks, an increase of almost a third on the previous year.



The Royal Edward berthing at Avonmouth in 1910. Before the war she ran passengers from Bristol to Canada. She was sunk in 1915 with the loss of several Bristolian crewmen when being used as a troopship. Bristol Post.

Probably the most important contribution the Port made was in the import of food. In 1914 almost half of the total imports handled by all the docks consisted of grain and seeds. Most of this came in on relatively small vessels, and most of it came into the City Docks.

Grain was not only needed for feeding people (particularly wheat for making bread); it was also needed for feeding farm animals and the horses, mules and donkeys which were still used in huge numbers for transport (both at home and at the Front) and in agriculture.

Avonmouth also had extensive cold storage facilities for meat imports which were used to feed both the Army and the civilian population. (Although there are reports that many Bristolians did not trust this new-fangled technology, and refused to eat meat that had been frozen.)

As the war went on, increasing numbers of merchant ships were sunk by German U-Boats which, as in the Second World War, were used to try and starve Britain into surrender.

This led to food shortages across the country. The situation began to improve in late 1917 when the convoy system was adopted, and merchant ships would travel in groups, escorted by Royal Navy warships.

Convoys created problems for the Docks as they could go for days with little work, and then be frantically busy when a number of ships arrived at once. It also led to storage problems; once, even schools were taken over as temporary grain stores. On another occasion, a huge consignment of bacon from the United States arrived; much of it was released for sale to the public just as it was going off. Apparently nobody suffered any ill-effects.

While we remember the thousands of Bristol men killed fighting with the Army, we should remember those who died at sea, serving on warships and in merchant vessels sunk by U-Boats. We do not know the exact number, but it certainly ran to several hundred.

While many seamen died on merchant ships travelling to and from Bristol, others were killed serving elsewhere. The biggest single loss of life at sea to affect Bristol was probably when the liner *Royal Edward*, acting as a troopship in the Dardanelles Campaign, was torpedoed in August 1915. She had sailed from Avonmouth carrying 1,367 soldiers, along with 220 ship's officers and crewmen who had all signed up in Bristol.

She sank in five or six minutes; many of her passengers and crew were still below decks stowing gear as they had just held a lifeboat drill. The exact number of dead remains unclear, but it was probably about 1,000, of whom 132 were from Bristol.

Another notorious case was that of the hospital ship *Llandovery Castle*. Heading for Liverpool from Canada, she was torpedoed on 27 June 1918, even though hospital ships were not meant to be targeted. About 100 of the seamen in her crew had signed on in Bristol.

Various Bristol ships were requisitioned for the war effort, most famously all 13 of P&A Campbell's pleasure steamers. The little ships of the 'White Funnel Fleet', which in peacetime had taken day-trippers on summer excursions around the Bristol Channel, were painted grey and armed for duty as minesweepers with the Royal Navy.

Minesweeping – seeking out and destroying explosive mines laid by the enemy to blow up unsuspecting ships – was extremely dangerous work. The Campbell steamers were mostly manned by their peacetime crews; only two ships were lost, and not one Bristolian had died. It was one of the very few happy outcomes in Bristol's war.

Bristol and the War in the Air

by Patrick Hassell

When the RFC – the Royal Flying Corps - went to war in August 1914 it was two years old and comprised just four squadrons with a variety of rather flimsy aircraft. The Wright brothers had made their first brief flights back in 1903 but the public did not recognise that flying had become a practical reality until Bleriot crossed the Channel in 1909. 'Britain No Longer an Island!' screamed the headlines.

It was another three years before the RFC was formed but Bristol's premier businessman Sir George White responded rather more quickly. He realised that Britain would need both aircraft and trained pilots. So in 1910 he set up a factory at Filton and flying schools at Brooklands and at Larkhill on Salisbury Plain, where much of the Army was based. Many of their trainees were cavalry officers. They had to pay their own fees but if they got their 'ticket' (Royal Aero Club licence) the Army would reimburse them. When war came almost half of the country's 664 licensed pilots had learnt to fly at the Bristol schools and they were the backbone of the RFC.

Filton's first successful product was a simple biplane, the Bristol Boxkite, followed by many different experimental designs. Some of them were bought for the RFC but their leaders preferred an aircraft from the government's own Royal Aircraft Factory at Farnborough, the BE.2. This two-seat biplane was pleasant to fly and very stable, which made observation easy, but it was slow and not very manoeuvrable. It was selected as the standard machine for reconnaissance and many were ordered from private firms to supplement production from Farnborough. More than 1,100 would be built at Filton for £1,072 each, excluding engine.

Sir George's firm traded as the British & Colonial Aeroplane Company but everyone called its designs 'Bristols'. Early in 1914 the Chief Designer, Frank Barnwell, produced a nimble little single-seater, the Bristol Scout. With a top speed of over 95 mph it was then considered very fast, and it climbed well. The RFC's priority was the BE.2 and they insisted that Filton concentrate on building them but the Scout was so good they ordered a few, giving one or two to each squadron in France. The Royal Naval Air Service also flew Bristol Scouts. The first of their aircraft to take off from a carrier deck was a Scout. They fitted them with explosive 'Rankine Darts' to be dropped on Zeppelin airships, though it's not clear how successful these were. In all, 371 Scouts were delivered from Filton.

Both sides in the war had realised how important aerial reconnaissance could be. So pilots tried to scare off enemy machines, at first by firing pistols and rifles but soon with light machine guns which gave a real chance of shooting down the enemy. In 1915 Captain Lanoe Hawker fitted a Lewis gun to his Bristol Scout, fixed at an angle to miss his propeller, and



Scout C, c 1915. Airbus.



Portrait of Captain Greere, of the Australian Flying Corps, in the pilot's seat of a Bristol Scout aeroplane, at Heliopolis Aerodrome, in Egypt, c 1916. Australian War Memorial C03741.

with this he shot down three German aircraft in one flight. He became the RFC's first 'ace' and was awarded the Victoria Cross but in turn he became the 11th victim of von Richtofen, 'the Red Baron', whose new Albatross had an interrupter gear allowing his machine gun to fire through the propeller disc. Aerial warfare had become a deadly business.

Frank Barnwell had volunteered to join the RFC where he flew the BE.2 and soon realised how inadequate it was as a warplane when faced with the enemy's new Fokker fighters. Fortunately the RFC released him to return to Filton where he began the design of a reconnaissance aircraft to replace the BE. Before this was built he was told the new Rolls-Royce Falcon engine would soon be available. With 190 shaft horsepower (shp) it could transform his new aircraft and he completely redesigned it. It would be a two-seater with the performance and armament of a single-seater fighter. Carrying an observer/gunner it could fly reconnaissance missions but if intercepted the pilot could dog-fight with the enemy on even terms. Barnwell called it Type F2.B but the world would know it as the Bristol Fighter.

The first F2.B Fighters arrived on the Western Front in April 1917 at a time when the RFC was suffering terrible losses. By the end of the summer the situation was transformed; the new Bristols, the Sopwith Camels and SE.5s were winning control of the air. The F2.B Fighters were built at the Tramways factory in Brislington as well as at the expanded Filton site but they still could not meet the demand from the RFC for more and more of them so orders were placed with outside firms such as Armstrong Whitworth, Gloucestershire Aircraft and even the Cunard Steamship workshops.

By the end of the war Bristol Fighters equipped 12 squadrons in France and five more in the UK for home defence. Others were fighting in Italy and in the Middle East, including two squadrons of the new Australian Air Force. Filton built 2,081 of them, Brislington 1,045 and over 1,600 came from other contractors.



Close-up of Bristol Fighter fitted with Falcon engine. Bristol Aero Collection.



Observer, pilot, and Bristol Fighter F2.B aircraft, Serial B1146, of No. 1 Squadron, Australian Flying Corps, 1918. Australian War Memorial B01633.

Most of their Rolls-Royce Falcon engines came not from the Rolls-Royce factory in Derby but from a Bristol firm, Brazil Straker. Their works in Fishponds, run by young Roy Fedden, was the only one trusted by Rolls-Royce to work to their own exacting standards. Fedden also made Rolls-Royce Hawk engines for the Navy's airships and Renault engines for training aircraft. Just before the Armistice a 450 shp engine of his own design, the Jupiter, ran at Fishponds. In 1920 Fedden and his Jupiter would be taken on by the Bristol Aeroplane Company to start their engine business at Filton, itself now part of Rolls-Royce.

There was one other aircraft firm in Bristol during the war. Parnalls were well-known shopfitters who soon adapted their woodworking skills to aircraft production. Their main works were in St Phillips but they took over workshops in Quakers Friars, Brislington and Mivart Street, Easton. Components built there were assembled in the Coliseum skating rink on Park Row (now part of the University of Bristol). They built Shorts seaplanes and Avro trainers and in 1918 came up with a successful naval fighter of their own, the Parnall Panther. With the Armistice however, their parent firm, Avery, decided to abandon aviation. Production of the Panther was transferred to Filton where, for a century, the reputation for excellence established by the Bristol Scout and Fighter has been maintained right down to Concorde and today's Airbus family of airliners.

T E Lawrence and the Bristol Fighter

by Eugene Byrne

It is part of an airman's profession to be knowing with engines: and a thoroughbred engine is our undying satisfaction. The camp wore the virtue of my Brough like a flower in its cap. Tonight Tug and Dusty came to the step of our hut to see me off. 'Running down to Smoke, perhaps?' jeered Dusty; hitting at my regular game of London and back for tea on fine Wednesday afternoons.

T E – Thomas Edward – Lawrence remains one of the most complex and enigmatic figures from the war. Born in 1888 to Sir Thomas Chapman and the family governess Sarah Junner at a time when illegitimacy carried a huge stigma, he was brought up in Oxford where the family assumed the name Lawrence.

After Oxford University, Lawrence went to the Middle East as an archaeologist. Here he would lead, with British government backing, a revolt of the Arab peoples against rule by the Turks, Germany's allies.

At the war's end, though, Britain's promises of Arab independence were broken and much of the Middle East was carved up between the British and French empires.

Lawrence was now a celebrity, but fled his fame to enlist in the Royal Air Force as an ordinary aircraftman under an assumed name, although at the same time he published *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, an account of his wartime exploits.

The Bristol F.2 Fighter is a little thread which keeps cropping up in Lawrence's life. It was used by the British to assist his warriors in the Middle East, and it is also there in the background in his later writings.

The most remarkable appearance of what Lawrence called a 'Bif' is in *The Mint*, a collection of his writings about RAF life published 20 years after his death.

Lawrence was a fanatical motorcyclist, and in a chapter titled 'The Road' he describes how one evening he left RAF Cranwell on his Brough Superior SS100. He named it 'Boanerges', the name Jesus gave his disciples James and John and meaning 'Sons of Thunder'.

Some motorcycle enthusiasts will tell you it is the best ever description of the sheer exhilaration of riding a powerful bike on the open road.

He was riding along what is now the A15 towards Lincoln when he got into a race with an F.2B, which he won. And then again a second time.



*T E Lawrence took this action photograph of the Arabs capturing Aqaba on 6 July 1917.
© Imperial War Museum ref Q59193.*

I slowed to ninety: signalled with my hand for him to overtake. Slowed ten more: sat up. Over he rattled. His passenger, a helmeted and goggled grin, hung out of the cock-pit to pass me the 'Up yer' Raf randy greeting.

They were hoping I was a flash in the pan, giving them best. Open went my throttle again. Boa crept level, fifty feet below: held them: sailed ahead into the clean and lonely country. An approaching car pulled nearly into its ditch at the sight of our race. The Bif was zooming among the trees and telegraph poles, with my scurrying spot only eighty yards ahead. I gained though, gained steadily: was perhaps five miles an hour the faster. Down went my left hand to give the engine two extra dollops of oil, for fear that something was running hot: but an overhead Jap twin, super-tuned like this one, would carry on to the moon and back, unfaltering.

We drew near the settlement. A long mile before the first houses I closed down and coasted to the cross-roads by the hospital. Bif caught up, banked, climbed and turned for home, waving to me as long as he was in sight. Fourteen miles from camp, we are, here: and fifteen minutes since I left Tug and Dusty at the hut door.

Lawrence's death in 1935 at the age of 46 in a motorcycle accident led indirectly to the introduction of crash helmets for military motorcyclists, and ultimately, laws requiring their use by civilians as well.

Mustard Gas Production at Avonmouth

by Clive Burlton

In the autumn of 1917, the War Office decided that Britain needed mustard gas. It seemed to be an effective weapon in attack, and it could also be used to deny territory to the enemy. Contaminating an area with mustard gas made soldiers extremely unwilling to enter it.

The Ministry of Munitions of War delegated the work to the Department of Explosives Supply (DES) for gas manufacture and to the Trench Warfare Department (TWD) for charging the gas into shells. The two departments collaborated and work on factory design started in around November 1917. The contract for designing and running the factory was awarded to Nobel's Explosives Company Ltd from North Ayrshire in Scotland. Such was the secrecy of the operation that Nobel's was not told what the factory was for. The company only knew that it would be producing a very dangerous gas, and that the slightest leakage during the charging operation would be dangerous to operatives – both on contact with the material and its vapour.

In official circles, mustard gas was now referred to as 'HS'. The term would soon be used by the military and on the factory floor as well. The letters were commonly thought to stand for 'Hun Stuff'.

A site at Chittening, near Avonmouth was selected for factory and construction work started in about January 1918. The site was originally designed in two parts – one to produce mustard gas, the other to charge and fill shells with the gas and explosive. Construction progressed well, but in the spring of 1918 it was decided that more HS would be needed than the Chittening plant could produce. Responsibility transferred to the DES which already had an explosives factory at Avonmouth. This had been built next to the National Smelter Company site to produce picric acid (used in explosive manufacture) but was now no longer needed. Some of this plant was converted to the manufacture of HS.

The factory at Chittening became solely responsible for putting the HS and explosives into shells. The gas was transferred from Avonmouth by road transport initially, with a plan to construct a pipeline in due course. The first shipment arrived on 15 August 1918.

Production was never going to be straightforward. Nobody in Britain had any experience of putting this horribly toxic chemical into shells. Moreover, the Ministry of Munitions was exerting great pressure to get the job done. The factory was being urged to increase production and to fill shells with 580 tons of gas during September 1918.

The human cost of the plants at Avonmouth and Chittening was considerable. Physical contact caused blisters over all of the body, the gas seeping through all clothing, protective or otherwise. Inhalation caused bronchitis, tracheitis, gastritis and broncopneumonia. Conjunctivitis was common among all workers.

In the six months of operation, there were 1,100 people employed at Avonmouth, of whom some 710 were affected by HS gas poisoning, some of them with several distinct illnesses. Altogether there were 1,400 illnesses, including fatal cases. The total attendance at the factory hospital was 5,600 – around 40 or 50 cases each day.

At Chittening, things were just as bad, if not worse, with all workers taking the most horrifying risks in a factory where HS was leaking from every pipe, and accidents were a daily occurrence. Weekly casualties ranged from 57 to 100 per cent of the workforce. The total number of days lost through illness amounted to 4,626 for females and 1,364 for males.

Britain used its new mustard gas on the battlefield in the final months of the war. The first occasion was during the artillery preparation for the Fourth Army attack on the Hindenburg Line on 30 September 1918.

The following month, one of the German casualties of another British gas attack was Corporal Adolf Hitler. It is quite possible that the HS which failed to kill Hitler was made at Avonmouth.



Maud Beatrice Isaacs, one of Avonmouth's Gas Girls. She sustained an injury from leaking mustard gas, which dripped onto her feet. For the rest of her life she found walking for distances difficult and fortnightly had to have the bright yellow suppuration cut from her feet by a chiropodist. Photograph provided by her grandson Richard Burley.

The Bristol Holders of the Victoria Cross

by Melanie Kelly

The Victoria Cross (VC) is the highest military decoration awarded for valour 'in the face of the enemy' to members of the British armed forces. It is also awarded in many Commonwealth countries and territories of what was once the British Empire.

As part of the national centenary programme 2014-2018, the Department for Communities and Local Government has commissioned specially designed paving stones to commemorate the VC holders of the First World War. These will be installed in locations associated with each individual on the centenary of the action for which they received the honour. There are eight First World War VC holders with a Bristol connection.

Douglas Reynolds was a career soldier born in Clifton in 1881. He was serving as a captain in the 37th Battery, Royal Field Artillery at the time he was awarded the VC. He had recaptured a British gun under heavy enemy fire with the support of two volunteer drivers. The action took place at Le Cateau in France on 26 August 1914, making Reynolds one of the first VC recipients of the war. He was later promoted to Major. He died of septicaemia on 23 February 1916 after being gassed and is buried in Etaples Military Cemetery in Northern France.

Thomas Rendle was born in Bedminster in 1884. He was a sergeant with the 1st Battalion, The Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry. He served as a bandsman who also acted as a stretcher-bearer. On 20 November 1914 near Wulverghem in Belgium he crawled to a collapsed trench under heavy fire, attended to the wounds of Second Lt R M Colebrooke, who had been buried in the trench, and then carried him on his back to safety. Rendle emigrated to South Africa after the war and died in 1961.

Frederick Room was born in Horfield in 1895. He was awarded the VC when he was an acting lance corporal with the 2nd Battalion, Royal Irish Regiment. On 16 August 1917 he was in charge of a company of stretcher-bearers, working under intense fire, tending to injuries and helping in the evacuation of the wounded. In October 1917 he was among 126 men presented to King George V at a ceremony on Durdham Down in Bristol. He died on 19 January 1932 and is buried at Greenbank Cemetery.



Hardy Parsons. Nonesuch, in University of Bristol Library, Special Collections.

Hardy Parsons was born near Blackburn in 1897 but later moved to Redland and was educated at the University of Bristol. He joined the Officers' Training Corps in 1916 and became a second lieutenant in the 14th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment. On 21 August 1917 he held his position while his colleagues retreated during fierce fighting near the village of Vendhuile. He died of his wounds having been severely burnt by a flame thrower.

Manley James was born in Odiham in Hampshire in 1896. He was educated at Bristol Grammar School, later worked for the Bristol Aeroplane Company and was Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire and Bristol. He joined the 8th Gloucesters soon after the war began with the rank of lieutenant. In March 1918 he led the capture of 27 German prisoners and two machine guns. He was wounded and captured, spending the rest of the war as a POW. He returned to Bristol on Christmas Day 1918. He died in 1975 and is buried at Canford Cemetery.

Daniel Burges was born in London in 1873 but was part of the Burges family dynasty of Bristol and was educated at Clifton College. At the start of the war he was serving with the Gloucestershire Regiment. In September 1918 he was with the South Wales Borderers when he was awarded the VC for his action during an attempt to capture a series of hills under heavy machine-gun fire. He was shot several times and his leg was amputated. He died in 1946 and was cremated at Arnos Vale Cemetery.

Harry Wood was born in North Yorkshire but was living in Horfield by the end of the war and may have moved to Bristol before then. From October 1914 he served with the 2nd Battalion Scots Guards. He was awarded the VC for his bravery in securing a ruined bridge over the River Selle at the village of St Python on 13 October 1918. He died in 1924 and is buried at Arnos Vale.

Claude Dobson was awarded his VC for action which took place after the Treaty of Versailles was signed in June 1919 but the conflict in which he was engaged had its origins in the First World War so it seems appropriate to include him here. Dobson was born in 1885 in Clifton. He became a naval cadet in 1899 and served in the Royal Navy until 1935. On 18 August 1919 he was in charge of a coastal motor-boat flotilla at Kronstadt Harbour in the Gulf of Finland. At that time British forces were supporting the White Army against the Bolsheviks in the Russian Civil War. Dobson led his officers and men in blowing up nearly all of the Bolshevik fleet and capturing five boats. He died in 1940.

THE HOME FRONT

'A Splendid Record of War Work': The University of Bristol and the First World War

by Sarah Whittingham

In 1914 the University of Bristol was only five years old. It had started out as University College, Bristol, in 1876 and, thanks to generous financial support from the Wills and Fry families among others, had been granted its Charter in May 1909. In this short period of time it had already experienced its share of troubles, and within months of war breaking out it lost half its staff, three-quarters of its male students, and a large part of its income.

Some academic staff were requisitioned by the government, while the efforts of those that remained were re-directed towards practical, national needs. In the Chemistry Department materials were analysed for their suitability in the manufacture of explosives. In Physics and Mathematics research was carried out to solve mechanical problems in aeroplanes and submarines. Engineers trained hundreds of men and women for munitions work, while employment conditions in the factories were studied by researchers, and the results used to try and ensure the highest possible output of armaments.

At the request of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, Dr Darbishire, Head of Botany, produced seeds of medicinal plants to be grown at the Front. And the University's Agricultural and Horticultural Research Station at Long Ashton investigated new methods of food production and preservation, including a jelly made from plentiful and cheap cider apples and a little sugar.

The Bristol University Officers' Training Corps (BUOTC) was founded in 1910, and by 1913 comprised only about 55 men. On 4 August 1914 they were on their annual camp, and returned to Bristol early when war was declared. In 1916 Officer Cadet Schools were inaugurated at Oxford, Cambridge and Bristol Universities, where OTC cadets, together with men in the army recommended for promotion, were sent for advanced training. About 1,000 men of the 3rd Officer Cadet Battalion were housed and trained in University of Bristol buildings.



Bristol University's Officers' Training Corps, 1913. Nonesuch, in University of Bristol Library, Special Collections.

The OTC had been formally established in 1908 with the aim of selecting and training cadets of good education for commissions, and these young men filled the most dangerous positions in the army. The average length of time a British junior officer survived during the worst months on the Western Front was six weeks. Just over 1,000 men passed through the BUOTC after August 1914, of whom 719 obtained commissions, while many others enlisted.

Of these, 105 lost their lives, and 121 won honours, including: a Distinguished Service Order; two Distinguished Conduct Medals; 42 Military Crosses; five bars to a Military Cross; one Distinguished Flying Cross; six Croix de Guerre; one Companion of the Order of the Bath; one OBE; three MBEs; one Croix de Chevalier of the Legion of Honour; one Order of the White Eagle, 5th Class with Swords, and 17 mentions in despatches.

By September 1914 the University was also advertising evening classes in military drill for men who were debarred from enlisting but who wanted to be able to defend their country if it was invaded. From this grew the 1st (University) Battalion of the Bristol Volunteer Regiment, which was formed of about 400 professional and business men over military age who nicknamed themselves 'The Drop Deads' and 'The Frosty Tops'.

On the outbreak of war, the University Women's War Relief Fund was established. They held first-aid classes in University buildings during the vacation, and those who successfully completed them could join a Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD). Another VAD was formed of University students and both units, among other duties, nursed the wounded soldiers arriving at Bristol Temple Meads railway station. The Fund also set up and ran a home for an extended family of 16 refugees, including eight children, who had fled Antwerp with virtually nothing. About 2,000 Belgian refugees arrived in Bristol altogether, and the Fund ran English classes for them through the winter and spring of 1914–15.



The official photograph for the annual degree ceremony of 1918, which was held on 18 October in the Merchant Venturers' Hall. Nonesuch, in University of Bristol Library, Special Collections.

On 4 December 1917 a service was held at Bristol Cathedral in memory of all members of the University who had been killed during the war. The Bishop of Bristol picked out just one name – Second Lieutenant Hardy Falconer Parsons – who had been killed that August and posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross. King George V had presented the medal to Parsons' father at an investiture on the Downs the previous month.

But before the war was over, there was to be another significant loss to the University. Arthur Rowland Skemp, Winterstoke Professor of English, was a brilliant and much-loved academic. He joined the BUOTC on the outbreak of war and found a new calling as an excellent instructor. As such, his repeated requests for active service were refused, although he was allowed a French tour in August 1916.

Finally, he was given permission to join the Gloucestershire Regiment. It cost him his life; he was killed in action ten days before Armistice Day, aged 36. Skemp's widow Jessie was just one of the many women who kept the University running during and immediately after the war. She became Warden of Belgrave Hall from 1919–32, and was the first Warden of Manor Hall of Residence for Women from 1932–45.

The official 1918 degree photograph depicts 23 women and just two men, although the names of 24 women and 14 men (five *in absentia*) are listed as receiving awards in the students' magazine, *Nonesuch*. The ceremony only lasted about 30 minutes, but *Nonesuch* reported that 'a pre-war – or, if you will, after-the-war – spirit prevailed.' Until demobilisation really got going, women students still far outnumbered men. But after the war the University welcomed back male students whose studies had been interrupted, and others who had decided to go into higher education.



Arthur Rowland Skemp (1882–1918), Winterstoke Professor of English, who was killed in action on 1 November 1918. Nonesuch in University of Bristol Library, Special Collections.

Figures vary, but it seems that by the end of the war at least 1,000 members of the University had joined the Forces; 13 members of staff, 106 graduates and ex-students, and 221 students had departed for the Front; and 43 members of the University served the War Office in a medical capacity either abroad or at home. The names of 173 men appear on the University war memorial, many of them members of the BUOTC.

In 1915 the University had published a list of the medical, research, training, lecturing, or military service being carried out by staff – from porters to professors – in every faculty, laboratory, library and administrative department. It was indeed ‘a Splendid Record of War Work’.

Unions and the Path to War in Bristol

by Nigel Costley

The period before the outbreak of the First World War has been called 'The Great Unrest'. A wave of industrial action swept through Britain. Militant unions such as the Workers' Union grew rapidly through campaigns to raise pay, improve working conditions and gain representation rights. By 1914, attention had turned to international affairs and the potential for imperialist conflict. The build-up of armaments, especially in Germany had boosted European economies.

Unions had strong international bodies to unite workers across the continent and the world. They expressed alarm at the rise of nationalism and argued that British workers had more in common with German workers than they had with their bosses.

John Burns was a leading figure in the Engineers' Union and became well known as an independent radical, but while fellow socialist Keir Hardie argued for the formation of the Labour Party, Burns remained aligned with the Liberals. In 1914 Burns was appointed President of the Board of Trade, but on 2 August 1914, just two days before Britain declared war on Germany, he resigned from the government in protest.

Ernest Bevin, who had established himself as a trade union leader in Bristol, called a mass meeting of the city's dockers to consider the unfolding conflict. It passed a resolution urging British neutrality and called on the Trades Union Congress (TUC) and Labour Party to convene a national conference to prevent the country going to war.

Fellow union leader Keir Hardie was appalled by the First World War and along with socialists in other countries called for an international general strike to stop the war. He made passionate speeches to large anti-war demonstrations across the country. On 2 August, in Trafalgar Square, Hardie spoke at the Peace Demonstration organised by the socialist Second International. 'Down with the Imperialist War,' he cried, 'Long live the Class War!' A resolution was passed demanding 'Britain should rigidly decline to engage in war.' Two days later the German army invaded Belgium knowing it was protected by a defence treaty with Britain.

The mood quickly turned. Patriotic fervour swept the nation. Hardie's spirited anti-war speeches were met with heckling and jeers. The Second International collapsed in the face of the rising tide of nationalism. Keir Hardie's spirit was broken. He dropped out of political life and died the following year.

Trade unions and the Labour Party believed that with war declared all efforts must focus on Britain winning it. Workers enrolled to fight in massive numbers and unions

concentrated on organising industry that had to rapidly transform into a war machine. A Bristol Trades Council representative commented: 'whatever their views might be about the war, their only business now was to look after the people and avoid all unnecessary suffering.'

The government realised it needed to bring unions into the national effort to win the war. Union leaders were appointed into the war government, with John Hodge, Secretary of the Steel Smelters, becoming Minister of Labour.

Appeals to workers to sign up to fight were remarkably successful. Recruitment stations were often accompanied by much fanfare, grand speeches and marching bands. 175,000 men enlisted in the single week ending 5 September. Leaders of the Suffragette movement called off their fight for votes for women to support the war effort. Instead they took to issuing white feathers to men who did not enroll.

The militant Workers' Union President turned up to meetings in uniform to demonstrate his support for the war effort. Its membership grew dramatically as it recruited the women in munition factories.

Anti-war union leaders such as Ernest Bevin realised they had failed to win public opinion and the opposition campaign would leave unions isolated from the workers they needed to organise.

Bristol's unions quickly agreed to a truce in industrial action for the duration of the war. This was to be broken on a number of occasions including in 1915 at Douglas Bros, a Bristol firm making vehicles for the army. Strikes increased towards the end of the war with 51 stoppages in Bristol involving 115,000 working days lost between 1915-1918.

The state was forced to intervene to direct the economy to the war effort. War bonuses were paid to some workers but these struggled to keep up with rising prices. Unionised workers were able to win improvements and membership increased.

The need to replace mobilised workers was met by upgrading less-skilled workers, bringing back retired workers, extending hours and recruiting women workers. These changes needed union support at workplace level. The few full-time officers and branch officials could not cope with such negotiations and so shop stewards and workplace committees became key. The war led to a rapid rise in shop steward power.

Shop stewards led unofficial strikes amongst Bristol engineers and in the local boot and shoe industry. Strikes broke out at Filton and Brislington aircraft factories over a war bonus. 750 tramway workers went on strike in 1917 after a number were sacked for joining a union. The action forced the employer to concede to the union demands. In 1918

Bristol building workers stopped work for 12 days until a bullying foreman was sacked.

Craft unions desperately tried to hold onto their exclusive role in the training and supply of labour, and the war led to tensions between them and the growing industrial or general unions.

The Annual Congress of the TUC came to Bristol in September 1915. 610 delegates were addressed for the first time by a Cabinet Minister, Lloyd George, then the Minister of Munitions. J Widdicombe, President of the Bristol Trades Council, gave the Congress a hearty welcome as did Walter Ayles, President of Bristol Labour Party, who referred to those like himself 'opposed to anything which compels working men to shoot each other down whether at home or abroad.' He was later jailed for his beliefs.

TUC President J A Seddon opened Congress with a welcome to Belgium exiles working in the country. Of women's labour he said: 'The only course to minimise any possible danger is to insist upon equal pay for equal work.' But he declared his view of the conflict: 'Prussian militarism with all its attests cruelty, rapine and murders... must be destroyed.'

A Bristol Trade Union Manifesto warned 'the Empire is in danger from Prussian aggression'. It urged unionists to volunteer and join the war effort. TUC delegates agreed to support the voluntary recruitment scheme. In November 1915 a recruiting rally in Colston Hall was addressed by 'patriotic' trade union leaders and ex-Bristolians Ben Tillett and James O'Grady. Bristol Trades Council was unhappy with the rally. It declared its opposition to the introduction of conscription but this became law in 1916, as the horror of trench warfare took hold, casualties mounted and voluntary recruitment slowed.

Ernest Bevin was the TUC delegate to the American TUC. This was no international 'jolly' but a risky journey across the Atlantic, braving the German U-boats. These joint discussions called for an international peace conference. Bevin recognised that any final settlement had to take in German workers but delegates were enraged at the very idea of a dialogue with Germany.

Union membership grew through the war as union influence and powers increased and the government recognised the value of national agreements for pay, conditions and resolution of disputes. The post-war period saw unions involved in complex negotiations over the re-engagement of demobbed forces at a time when women and upgraded workers were reluctant to step back into their pre-war roles.

ANZAC Soldiers in Bristol

by Charles Booth

During the latter part of the nineteenth century and in the first decade of the twentieth, large numbers of Bristolians left the UK to find work and found new lives in Australia, Canada, South Africa and New Zealand. When the war came many enlisted in dominion armed forces: the Mapping Our ANZACs website (<http://mappingouranzacs.naa.gov.au>) lists almost 700 members of Australian forces born in Bristol, with more from the suburbs and nearby towns and villages. There would also have been a large number of dominion servicemen and women born to earlier emigrants from Bristol. Over 150 Bristolian migrants who died in the service of Australia and New Zealand have been traced, and many of these are listed on war memorials in the city, with a few buried in local cemeteries.

Brothers Edgar and Edwin Howell were born in Bristol, attended Bristol Grammar School, and emigrated to Australia in 1910. They were declared missing in action at Pozieres in the battle of the Somme on 5 August 1916, serving with the 25th Battalion of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF). Their bodies were not discovered and identified until late 1937, and they were then buried in the London Cemetery, Longueval. They are also listed on their parents' gravestone in Arnos Vale cemetery.

Clifford Kossuth Robinson was one of a number of brothers and cousins of an eminent Bristol family who were killed in action. He emigrated to New Zealand to join his uncle there just before the war, enlisted in the Canterbury Mounted Rifles, and died in hospital in Malta in 1915. He is remembered on the Stoke Bishop War Memorial. His cousin, Claude Gladstone Robinson, was born in New Zealand, but came to Bristol in 1912 to take up a position in the family firm. He enlisted in the South Wales Borderers and was killed in action in 1915.

Another 'return migrant' commemorated at Arnos Vale, who survived the war, was Mildred Stephens, who enlisted with the New Zealand Volunteer Sisterhood in 1915 and served in Egypt, Greece, Serbia and France, receiving a decoration from the King of Serbia for her wartime hospital service. She returned to Bristol after the war, died in 1934 and was cremated at Arnos Vale.

A number of prominent figures in the dominion war effort were educated in Bristol, including General William Birdwood, the first commander of the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps; C E W Bean, official Australian War Historian who profoundly shaped the memory of the conflict in Australia; and other figures like Lt Colonel Oswald Watt, the first Australian to qualify for a Royal Aero Club flying certificate and who served in the French Foreign Legion (*Aviation Militaire*) before transferring to the Australian Flying Corps (AFC), ultimately to command the 1st AFC Training Wing.



Maori visit to Bristol, 17 June 1917. Bristol Record Office, 43207/9/49/28.

Bristol was an important centre for the treatment of wounded during the war. Wounded Australians and New Zealanders from the Gallipoli battles started arriving by hospital train at Temple Meads during October and November 1915, and steadily thereafter from the Western Front and other theatres of war. A large number reached the city from hospital ships coming into Avonmouth, mainly from the Middle East theatre, in 1917 and 1918. ANZAC soldiers were treated in all the Bristol War Hospitals, but one in particular was eventually to treat ANZAC wounded exclusively. This was Bishop's Knoll Hospital, part of the 2nd Southern General Hospital group. Before the war, the house and grounds were the property of Robert Edwin Bush, who had made his fortune in wool in Western Australia during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. When war broke out Bush converted his house into a 100-bed war hospital and donated it for the war effort, staying on as commandant. He was very determined that the hospital serve only Australian wounded, and is recorded as touting for business among ANZAC troops arriving at Temple Meads. Eventually, he got his wish and for the last two years of the war the hospital patients were exclusively from Australia and New Zealand. As Bush was a millionaire and well-connected in local society, the wounded troops at Bishop's Knoll enjoyed a very high standard of care, and of entertainment, outings and visits.

Many of the wounded in Bristol enjoyed visits to the Zoo and to local theatres and music halls. These venues were also a destination for Australian and New Zealand soldiers on leave from their bases and camps on Salisbury Plain. A favoured destination was the YMCA on Colston Street, nicknamed 'The Dug Out'. The pubs of Bristol also received a fair custom!

Inevitably, the presence of a large number of young men in and around the city led to encounters with the law, arising from offences such as drunkenness, theft, bigamy, deception and murder. Many of these offences took place in or near the camps and bases outside Bristol, but the Bristol courts did witness some proceedings, including the trial in 1917 of Sapper Henry Louis Hart of the Australian Engineers, described in the Bristol police court by the Australian Provost Marshal as 'the very worst man in the Australian Force'. During the trial, Hart absconded from military hospital in Bristol before being recaptured in Eastbourne and tried in a Sussex court.

The most serious case heard in Bristol (named 'the Bristol Tragedy' in the local newspapers) was the trial of Gunner Frederick Hauraki Maning of the Australian Field Artillery who was accused of murdering Arthur Tankins, a former soldier with the Gloucester Regiment, in April 1919. The inquest jury had earlier returned a verdict of 'accidental death'; and the charge being reduced to that of manslaughter, it caused little surprise when Maning was acquitted at the Bristol Assizes in June, before returning to Australia in September 1919.

The city also witnessed other tragedies, such as the accidental drowning in the Floating Harbour of Private William Walker of the 6th Battalion AIF on 11 December 1918. However, for most of the Australian visitors, Bristol was a city of entertainment, relief from the war effort and the monotony of camp, or a safe place in which to recover their health and strength.

Patients and staff at Bishop's Knoll. Bristol Record Office, 43207/9/49/34.



The role of the city and citizens of Bristol in entertaining the troops was not just one way, however. As well as large numbers of troops, wounded or on leave, attending concerts and other events in the theatres and hospitals of the city, the wounded and convalescent soldiers would also sometimes entertain the people of Bristol. *The Western Daily Press* of 2 December 1915 reports a soldiers' musical comedy performance at Bishop's Knoll Hospital, with several of the soldiers performing in drag (with moustaches shaved off for the occasion), and notes that 'the star comedian of the company unfortunately had to scratch his event owing to his wound being troublesome'.

Visiting bands and military entertainers also visited the city, a particular example being a troop of Maori soldiers who performed the haka for wounded and nurses at several hospitals, as well as at a civic reception, where the *Press* reported, 'the weirdness of the dancing, by the leader, the rhythm of their fantastic movements, and the fierceness of their facial expression, reminding one very forcibly that though these fine fellows were now British Soldiers, the customs of their forbears came very naturally to them.'

Bristol entertainers visited the Australian and New Zealand camps on Salisbury Plain, and played a number of concerts at the YMCA there. They were occasionally accompanied by the Lord Mayor and other dignitaries, keen to establish good relations between Bristol and the Dominions. Senior dominion politicians and high ranking soldiers also visited Bristol on several occasions, receiving the freedom of the city and addressing the City Council.

Bristol, or rather Avonmouth, was the last sight of England that some Australians and New Zealanders would have. The local press reported in early January 1919 that 1,000 Australian veterans embarked on the P&O liner *SS Karmala*, some accompanied by their new wives, 'who were leaving their old homes for the sunny land of their men folk beneath the Southern Cross'. One soldier, leaving on the *SS Miltiades* a week or so earlier, is reported as saying:

... we shall remember how good your people were to our boys. The welcome we had in your homes, and the tenderness of the VADs [Voluntary Aid Detachment – civilian nurses and orderlies] in hospital. See that chap over there? He's taking home the girl who nursed him for seven months. They were married three days ago and I reckon his people will just go mad with joy when he takes her ashore at Sydney.

Troopships carrying the veterans and their families home continued to embark throughout 1919, with the first contingent of New Zealanders to leave Bristol departing in September 1919, at the end of 'the great adventure'.

Canadian Soldiers in Bristol

by Kent Fedorowich

On 31 October 1914 a picture appeared in a newly launched wartime publication of a detachment of Canadian soldiers marching through Shirehampton Park. In a column four abreast, men of the 11th Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) are seen smiling and waving to the camera. Wearing their distinctive roughrider hats, this 'fine body' of men from the Canadian prairies had arrived in Avonmouth on the Royal Line passenger ship-cum-troopship HMT *Royal Edward*, which had quietly slipped into its home port on Sunday 18 October.

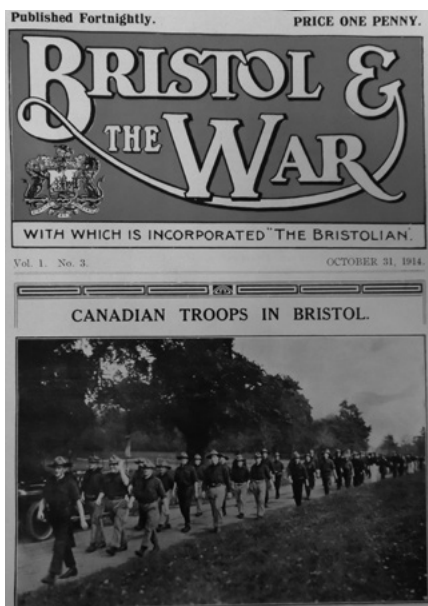
Owing to the *Royal Edward's* early morning arrival local residents had been taken unawares; but as *Bristol and the War* enthusiastically reported, those that did witness the event gave their colonial cousins a warm and hearty welcome. As 'the great liner swept majestically into the entrance harbour', the journal recorded, 'there came from her decks and port holes cheer after cheer. Clad in Khaki, these bronze-featured soldiers from the Dominion shouted enthusiastically their greetings to Britain's shores'. As disembarkation proceeded, an impromptu welcome was organised 'which the bugles and drum and fife bands announced to the people of Avonmouth the fact of their arrival. The inhabitants speedily turned out of their houses and gave the Canadians a rousing reception' before these men departed in special trains to Salisbury Plain where they joined the rest of the 31,000-strong First Canadian Contingent, which had arrived in Plymouth four days previously.

This event marked the beginning of a long wartime association between Bristol and soldiers from the senior dominion. In fact, there is a good chance that some of those recruits in that picture were Bristolians who had emigrated to Canada and were now returning 'home' to help defend King, Country and Empire. This is supported by documentation showing nearly 70 percent of the men in the First Contingent who arrived in the United Kingdom in October 1914 were British-born migrants.

For the next four months, in one of the wettest winters in living memory, the men of what became the 1st Canadian Division drilled and trained on the exposed and windswept landscape of southern Wiltshire. In mid-February 1915, after a royal visit by King George V earlier that month, the Canadians returned to Avonmouth where they boarded small coastal vessels for their voyage to the French Atlantic port of St Nazaire. It was a miserable three-day crossing in cramped conditions over rough seas, but the convoy arrived safely and disembarked its cargo, which was then transported by rail to the fighting front. On 3 March the Canadians replaced the 7th British Division south of Armentières.

In late March, after the division had acclimatised to life in the trenches, it transferred to the Ypres sector in Belgium. It was here between 22 and 26 April 1915 during the Second Battle of Ypres the Canadians first encountered chlorine gas. They distinguished themselves by holding the line while under ferocious German attack, but the price exacted on the men was heavy. On 1 May 1915, *Bristol and the War* announced the arrival of 'wounded Canadian heroes' at Temple Meads station, many of whom were still suffering from the effects of asphyxiation. From that day forward until the end of the war, scores of Canadians would be transported to Bristol to recuperate at the extensive facilities of the 2nd Southern General Hospital, which was headquartered at the Bristol Royal Infirmary.

The record of these Canadians – and indeed those Bristolians who fought with the CEF as return migrants – makes interesting reading. A casual glance around some of the city's war memorials, school honour rolls and commemorative plaques reveal a strong wartime bond between Canada and Bristol. For instance, engraved in bronze on the handsome war memorial in Fishponds (the only memorial in Bristol to have a statue) is a Bristol migrant Private A E Bracey of the 58th Battalion CEF. He had migrated to Canada and took up farm labouring in central Ontario, near Niagara-on-the-Lake. Initially deemed as unfit for service he passed the medical examination one month later and finally enlisted in July 1915. The 20-year-old, originally from Montpelier in Bristol, was killed in action during the Battle of Mount Sorrel in June 1916. He is one of 54,000 British and Empire soldiers inscribed on the Menin Gate in Ypres who have no known grave.



Canadian troops in Bristol from the cover of Bristol and the War, October 31 1914.

In a connecting walkway that links the parish hall with the church of St Mary Magdalene in Stoke Bishop is a wonderful bronze shield mounted on the wall in memory of former pupils from the Braidlea prep school. Among those honoured is Private F G Hardingham, 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles, who, although born in London, was raised in the leafy suburbs of north Bristol.

Another migrant who had worshipped in one of Bristol's most prominent religious landmarks, St Mary Redcliffe Church, was also remembered on a memorial dedicated exclusively to the choristers. The Dublin-born Cedric Collisson, whose parents resided in Bristol prior to the war, was one of the many British migrants to rush to the Colours at Valcartier, Quebec, in September 1914. Educated at Warminster Grammar School and Bristol University, Cedric was the second son of the late Reverend Sydney Collisson, former vicar of Bradford-on-Avon, and Sophy, his wife, of Westfield Park, Bristol. Entering the teaching profession he joined the Devon Territorials before migrating to Canada in 1910, where he became a member of staff at University College in Victoria, British Columbia. When war was declared he joined as a private in the 7th Battalion CEF. He died of wounds on 28 April 1915 inflicted at the Second Battle of Ypres.

Scores of Canadian troops also convalesced within the city, particularly at the Beaufort War Hospital. While others on furlough visited family and friends, some like the men from the 6th Reserve Battalion billeted at Seaford in Hampshire, were invited to play a series of exhibition baseball games against an American team in July 1918. One of the games was played at the Bristol City football ground at Ashton Gate. A long-forgotten link that received a great deal of press coverage at the time was the installation of the regimental colours of the 128th Battalion; a unit recruited largely from Moosejaw, Saskatchewan, which included several old boys from Colston's School. In March 1917, a 150-strong troop deposited the battalion colours into the custody of the Lord Mayor, who entrusted them to Bristol Cathedral for safe keeping. When the unit was repatriated home in early 1919 complete with its Colours the wartime story of the Canadians in Bristol had come full circle.

Bristol's Hospitals and the Treatment of the Wounded

by Eugene Byrne

From the war's outset, it was fully understood that modern warfare was going to create large numbers of casualties. Machine guns, grenades, quick-firing and accurate artillery and modern rifles were going to kill large numbers of men, and wound even more.

In the event, the numbers of maimed and injured men exceeded the worst nightmares of the military planners. Yet what the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC), the Red Cross and various nursing and voluntary medical organisations achieved was remarkable, and a battlefield casualty who survived to make it to a hospital back home stood an excellent chance of survival.

To take just one example: between 1914 and 1918, some 37,397 soldiers, sailors and airmen were admitted to Bristol's Southmead Hospital. Just 192 died.

Given that antibiotics to prevent infection did not yet exist, it is testimony to the proficiency and hard work of the medical services.

It is also a reminder that for all the images people had – and still have – of nurses as ministering angels, their most important contribution was to maintain hygiene through the unending drudgery of cleaning and washing.

Bristol was a major centre for the treatment of war casualties, with numerous hospitals in and around the city by 1918; some were civilian hospitals taken over for the duration, while others had been mansions, private homes and even schools in peacetime. In 1914 the RAMC's Second Southern General Hospital (2SGH) took over much of the Bristol Royal Infirmary. A few days later, the new Workhouse Infirmary, recently built at Southmead, was also offered as a military hospital, a proposal that 2SGH quickly accepted.

The very first wounded men to arrive in Bristol came in by a special train from Southampton less than a month later. They were greeted by local dignitaries and a large crowd of onlookers who cheered them as they were ferried to the BRI in an assortment of vehicles.

Hospital trains would soon stop arriving by day, and came in late at night instead. The sight of huge numbers of injured men, some of them horribly maimed, would, the authorities believed, undermine support for the war effort.

Southmead and the BRI soon proved inadequate to cope with the huge numbers, and Bristol soon acquired a major new hospital with the conversion of the asylum at Fishponds to become the Beaufort War Hospital.

In the meantime, 2SGH (which did not control the Beaufort) expanded to take in a bewildering number of other sites – Bishop's Knoll (whose owner, Robert Bush, was the brother of the 2SGH commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Paul Bush), Cleve Hill House (Downend), the Almondsbury Cottage Hospital, the Eye Hospital, Ashton Court (which became a hospital specifically for officers), the General Hospital, Red Maids School and more. The Beaufort and 2SGH also took over a number of other sites outside Bristol as auxiliary hospitals.

Different hospitals eventually took on more specialised roles. In 1916 the Beaufort became the first specialist orthopaedic hospital in the area because of the growing need to help men with lost or injured limbs to recover and recuperate, or at least regain some degree of independence.

The Beaufort gained such an excellent reputation medically that by 1917 doctors and surgeons were coming from all over the world to gain experience.



*Receiving wounded at Temple Meads station.
From Bristol and the Great War: 1914-1919.*

The BRI had an ophthalmic centre as well as surgeons specialising in chest wounds. Southmead, meanwhile, built and developed workshops to provide craft and work training for men who had lost arms and legs so they would be able to earn a living when discharged. Southmead's pioneering work in rehabilitation was considered by many the best in the country.

The medical profession was still dealing with casualties long after the war ended. In 1920, Ashton Court mansion was leased by the Ministry of Pensions as a specialist unit for long-term cases of shell shock. Here men would work in a healthy but tranquil environment. Dr Robert Norgate, who by then was medical superintendent of Southmead Hospital, was of the view that the best treatment for shell shock was fresh air, tranquillity, and hard work. They should not, he said, 'remain in hospital, attended to by sympathetic nurses, until all inclination for work had disappeared from their minds.'

The term 'shell shock' originated in the First World War; while we nowadays associate it with post-traumatic stress disorder, it was less well-defined medically, at this time, covering a range of mental and physical breakdowns. The term was coined because it was believed at first that bursting artillery shells might cause some hidden brain or neurological damage, possibly by the way in which the shock of the explosion displaced the air around it.

How successful Bristol's war hospitals were in treating shell shock cases is difficult to judge. Certainly there were few outcomes as rapidly successful as the case of Corporal Stevens of the King's Royal Rifles. He had been in a dug-out which was hit by a German 15cm shell which killed two of his comrades and left him buried for eight hours before he would be rescued.

While physically uninjured, he became deaf and unable to speak, walked around as if in a daze, and was sent to Southmead Hospital.

One day, a concert was arranged for the patients, and one of the turns was Fred Wilshire, a popular local amateur musician (he was also a barrister).

Wilshire's act included a comical song in which he accompanied himself on the piano. This amused the soldiers so much that they were soon all in fits of laughter. Laughter being contagious, Corporal Stevens, too, was soon laughing along. When the mirth had died down, the corporal yelled out: 'I can speak!'

‘Three Cheers for our Fairy Godmother!’ – Bristolians and Voluntary Work

by Eugene Byrne

One of the great hidden stories of Britain during the First World War was the explosion in voluntary work that it generated.

You would have found it hard to walk through Bristol during the war without encountering a street collection or a flag day raising money for everything from Belgian refugees through to tobacco for the troops.

People also gave their time to help entertain serving soldiers or the wounded, while others helped with collections of clothing or food, or helped out in hospitals.

With the onset of war, many men who were unable to serve in the forces because of age or work in vital industries, welcomed the opportunity to make a contribution.

Bristol also had a significant number of energetic and enterprising women who before the war had been trade union organisers, or who had carried out charity work or campaigned for social reform or votes for women. They knew how to run committees, organise events and co-ordinate the work of others.

Most of the voluntary effort was run by men and women, but there were some specifically female initiatives. The most notable were the ‘Women’s Patrols’, started in response to moral panic over young women supposedly throwing themselves at men in uniform. ‘Khaki Fever’ alarmed traditionalists who feared ‘moral pollution’ of the young, though the Patrols saw their role as protecting the girls. Volunteers walked around in pairs and intervened when they spotted situations in which young women might be in peril; this could be anything from a friendly suggestion that it was time to go home, through to assisting girls who were drunk.

A committee of local women – many had been active in the suffrage movement – set up the Bristol Training School for Women Patrols and Police in 1915. It trained women volunteers and, soon, women police officers as well, from all over the country.

More traditionally male organisations made use of women volunteers, too. The Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) opened canteens at factories and barracks across the city for factory workers and soldiers, both wounded and able-bodied.

The YMCA sites, often known as 'Red Triangle Clubs' because of the YMCA's distinctive logo, provided light refreshments, cigarettes, books and magazines, games and occasionally entertainment. There was also free notepaper for soldiers to write letters home. The biggest and best-known facility was on Colston Street; 'The Dug Out' included a canteen, recreation room, reading room, kitchens and baths and dormitories which could accommodate 140, later increased to 250 people.

Another voluntary organisation, the Church of England Men's Society (CEMS) provided similar facilities to the YMCA at a few sites. Its Sailors' and Soldiers' Recreation Rooms on Baldwin Street had a popular 'ha'penny canteen' which had served over two million meals by 1919.

The Bristol branch of the Red Cross, under the leadership of Georgina Budgett, raised money and collected items for a wide range of medical causes. By 1918 Mrs Budgett and her helpers were also raising £40,000 per year to send food parcels to Bristol men in German prisoner-of-war camps. The famed 'Red Cross Parcels' appear to have been a First World War Bristolian innovation.

At the war's end, a reception was held for the 1,100 local men who had been captives. Mrs Budgett was about to make a speech but was interrupted by a captain demanding 'three cheers for our fairy godmother!' Men who might well have starved to death had it not been for her efforts cheered themselves hoarse.

At the same time, Mrs Annie Mardon was doing the same for Bristol sailors in German prison camps. There were about 100 of these and she and her 'Ladies' Committee' raised money to send them food, clothing, books and medicines.

The most interesting, and uniquely Bristolian, organisation was the Inquiry Bureau, formed by businessman Harry Townsend and solicitor Frederick Lazenby.

Large numbers of wounded soldiers from home-towns all over the country were arriving in Bristol hospitals, and naturally wanted to contact families who were desperate for news of them. The Inquiry Bureau was set up to help, and by 1918 it had a card index recording names and details of 90,000 men.

Bureau volunteers were very soon being asked to deal with other queries from soldiers and their families; finding accommodation for visiting relatives, sorting out pay and pensions, changing French currency. It quickly ballooned into an organisation with an office in every major hospital, and hundreds of volunteers looking after all aspects of wounded soldiers' welfare. It helped men who had been discharged as unfit for further military service, assisting with war pensions and pay and helping them find work. It organised outings and entertainment for the troops as well; everything from trips to the

theatre and teas at the Zoo, to lectures at the museum and sporting events. These social occasions generated a number of romances between soldiers and the women volunteers helping out at them. The joke current in Bristol was that the Bureau should change its name to the Inquiry and Matrimonial Bureau.

It is often said that the case for votes for women became unanswerable by 1918 on account of their work in factories and offices during the War. Yet they had also proved themselves as competent as men as managers of the voluntary effort. How could you justify giving the vote to a male shop assistant or factory worker and deny it to someone like Mrs Budgett?

THE ARTS AND THE WAR

Four Artists

by Paul Gough

Christopher Richard Wynne Nevinson

[I] got shelled, had to stick glued against a bank for an hour wondering when Fritz would leave off. I wondered why on earth I had not devoted myself to painting 'nice nudes' in a warm studio, instead of risking so much for a picture which will probably not sell, be accused of being faked and certainly be abused by the inevitable arm-chair journalist.

Letter from C R W Nevinson to C F G Masterman, 30 July 1917 (Imperial War Museum)

A painter, printmaker, polemicist and publicist-*extraordinaire*, Christopher Richard Wynne Nevinson left a memorable impression on all who encountered him. Charles F G Masterman, head of the British War Propaganda Bureau, thought he was 'a desperate fellow and without fear ... only anxious to crawl into the front line and draw things full of violence and terror.' To others he was an arrogant self-publicist, who stole the headlines and laced his work with a veneer of modernism but understood little of its intellectual substance.

In 1908 he had enrolled at the Slade School of Art in one of the most outstanding student classes ever to emerge from a British art school. Among his fellow students were David Bomberg, Mark Gertler, Paul Nash, Ben Nicholson, William Roberts, Stanley Spencer and Edward Wadsworth. One of the lesser talents but certainly its most colourful presence, Nevinson never secured the approval of Professor Henry Tonks, and in 1910 he left the Slade condemned as a failure. He travelled abroad, met Lenin, Modigliani and Gertrude Stein, and on his return to London promptly and noisily aligned himself with the Italian Futurist Marinetti, making strident calls for 'an English art that is strong, virile and anti-sentimental'. In so doing, he alienated most of his fellow artists, most notoriously Wyndham Lewis who was busily progressing his ambitious plans for the Rebel Art Centre and his Vorticist manifesto. Unabashed, Nevinson revelled in the role of an outsider.

At the outbreak of war in August 1914 he was 25 years old. His poor health prevented him from joining the army, but nevertheless he took a course in motor engineering and joined a Friends Ambulance Unit (established by the Quakers) as a driver. He struggled to master the complicated gearing of the vehicles but he did work in France for nearly ten weeks, mostly helping out in temporary field hospitals.

Worn out by the horror, he returned to London in early 1915 where he produced a body of searing paintings recalling the terrible scenes witnessed at St Pierre Hospital and on the roads behind the front line. When exhibited, they appealed instantly to the public imagination. Images such as 'Returning to the Trenches' – showing a column of French troops on the march – combined figurative realism with simple geometric abstraction. To a public eager to know more about the war they seemed to represent both the industrial vitality and human frailty of modern warfare. And despite its outward modernism the work remained intelligible, especially to soldiers home on leave.

As usual Nevinson closely courted the press, cultivating an impression that his work of an ambulance driver had been hazardous, but also 'exciting, dynamic and mobile as befitted an English Futurist'.

But his greatest triumph came in spring 1916, when having been invalided out of the medical corps he exhibited 'La Mitrailleuse' in London. In this small canvas he created an image that fused the abstract qualities of armour plating and mechanical form with the figurative idiosyncrasies of the vulnerable soldier. It caused a sensation. Guards had to be placed either side to keep spectators moving past. Critical and popular acclaim was unanimous: 'the best and the most ruthless illustration of the menace of this deadly machine war ... produced to date' wrote one critic as he saluted the 'self-sacrificing automota' depicted by Nevinson. No lesser a figure than Walter Sickert described 'La Mitrailleuse' as the 'most authoritative and concentrated utterance on the war in the history of painting'.

'Dog Tired' (in the collection of Bristol Museum and Art Gallery: see inside front cover for image) is in a similar painterly idiom. It depicts a unit of British soldiers, resting amongst a great pile of provisions. Nevinson manages to capture both their individual weariness but also the unyielding intensity of modern warfare. He does this by a clever play of diagonals and small faceted triangular forms that dance across the composition. So although the subject is one of exhaustion, the pictorial language is dynamic and busy, and – despite the lassitude – capable of erupting into bouts of terrible violence.

Sir Stanley Spencer RA

There are very few drawings left from the ten months that Stanley Spencer spent in Bristol in the early years of the war, but his time as a lowly medical orderly was to prove a deeply important part of the development of one of the country's greatest twentieth-century painters.

Spencer became famous for a rich visionary imagination that was realised through many hundreds of paintings, drawings and thousands of letters, written both to the living and to the deceased. They revealed a quite unique ability to transform the menial and the ordinary into intense images of joyous delight. Through his celebratory paintings Spencer re-imagined his home village of Cookham in rural Berkshire as a visionary paradise where his family and neighbours would daily rub shoulders with Old Testament figures; and where it seemed entirely appropriate that Christ might wander in the garden behind the local schoolyard.

But possibly Spencer's greatest single creation is not of Cookham, but of the Beaufort War Hospital in Bristol (now Glenside Hospital Museum) and a battlefield in the Balkans. After the war he translated his war experience into an extraordinary series of murals for the Sandham Memorial Chapel in Hampshire (now owned by the National Trust: see inside back cover for image). It is perhaps the most complete memorial to peace and redemption ever completed in the aftermath of the First World War. There is nothing like it anywhere in Europe. It is rich with images remembered from Spencer's time as an orderly in the teeming metropolis in Blackberry Hill, the former Victorian Lunatic Asylum in Fishponds.

There, he did little more than scrub floors, bandage convalescent soldiers, and cart supplies around the vast building. On his few leave days he befriended the young Desmond Chute, of the MacReady-Chute theatre dynasty, who introduced him to the Clifton arts scene, to drawing classes at the Royal West of England Academy, and offered him intellectual solace from the carbolic grimness of the Beaufort. By mid-June 1916 Spencer had volunteered for overseas service; a demanding war lay ahead, but he never forgot Bristol, nor could he ever forget the Beaufort.

Henri Gaudier

Henri Gaudier was born in 1891 near Orléans in France. A solitary child immersed in books and drawing he won a travelling scholarship to England in 1908 where he studied commerce and English at Merchant Venturer's College in Bristol, boarding with the Smith family and forming a close friendship with their young daughter, Kitty.

During his months in Bristol Gaudier kept a sketchbook which he filled with detailed studies of birds seen in Bristol Zoo, of highly wrought architectural views of St Peter's Hospice, the city's cathedral and the Bristol Cross, and in July he made a rigorous sketch of the Roman baths drawn in Bath Spa. There is also a fine self-portrait, its faceted

facial planes indicating the direction his art would take as he matured into a serious and respected young modernist.

By 1910, back in France, he had started sculpting and had also met Sophie Brzeska, 20 years his senior, with whom he moved to London. There, he met many radical writers and artists, falling under the influence of T E Hulme, Ezra Pound and Jacob Epstein, but was also deeply moved by the tribal arts of Africa and Oceania he encountered in the British Museum.

Pound had first met Gaudier while gazing in admiration at 'The Wrestler', a figurative sculpture (now in the collection of Bristol Museum and Art Gallery). Working alongside fellow Vorticists, Gaudier's sculptures became increasingly taut, bare, geometrically simplified. Yet, by the eve of the war he had quickly matured, he was moving away from a fascination with mechanised rigidity and convoluted quasi-armoured creatures into more organic, rounded and sensuous forms.

Despite his anarchist leanings Gaudier volunteered for service with the French infantry and served on the front line, where he made time to create small carvings, some hewn from the wooden stocks of abandoned rifles.

Twice promoted, recognised for courage, and just 25 years old, he was killed in an infantry charge at Neuville St Vaast, near Arras in northern France on 5 June 1915.



'The Wrestler' by Henri Gaudier at Bristol Museum and Art Gallery. © Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives K5164.

Robert Morley

Robert Morley (1857-1941) was a well-known painter of animal subjects, landscape and genre scenes who lived for a time in Stroud in Gloucestershire. He had been a successful student, working under the eminent Edward Poynter and Alphonse Legros at the Slade School of Art in London where he won several medals and scholarships.

Having studied overseas at Munich and Rome, Morley exhibited large figure paintings at the Royal Academy in London, but in his early thirties he turned increasingly to animal paintings earning a reputation for his endearing narratives of cats, dogs, horses and the occasional lion.

His large canvas at Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, 'Will He Come Back?' (see inside front cover for image) is typical of his skill in conjuring a powerful narrative from a few figurative elements; the faithful dog staring forlornly towards the closed window; the certificate spelling out his master's tragic death in battle carefully placed a few inches from the dog's unflinching and sorrowful gaze.

Narrative paintings of the period conveyed their pathos through the title, but also through the combination of a few bare but telling pictorial components which the viewer had to unravel: the knitting and the book representing domestic virtues; the greatcoat suggesting a former life of outdoor leisure; the dog playing its traditional role as an emblem of fidelity and, dominating the diagonal composition, half in shadow, half in sunlight, the certificate of service – and death – for Sapper Alexander Murray.

Morley's later work was heavily mannered by anecdote and whimsy, but in this simple canvas painted in the final months of the First World War he captured the essence of loss and yearning.

The Real Winslow Boy

by Melanie Kelly

Terence Rattigan's hit play *The Winslow Boy* (1946) is based on the story of Bristol-born George Archer-Shee, whose name is listed on the war memorial at St Mary-on-the-Quay in Bristol city centre. George was born at the Bank of England in Broad Street, Bristol in 1895 and came from one of the few middle-class Roman Catholic families in the city at the time. He was an altar boy at the church.

In 1908, when he was a cadet at the Royal Naval College at Osborne, George was accused of stealing a postal order from fellow cadet Terence Black and cashing it at the Post Office, having forged Black's signature. He was dismissed from the service with no chance to defend himself.

George's father believed in his son's innocence and through his half-brother, the Conservative MP for Finchley, hired leading barrister Sir Edward Carson to take on the case. After two years of legal arguments, the case eventually reached the House of Lords where George faced two days of questioning. Thanks to Carson throwing doubt on the testimony of the post-mistress, George was cleared of all charges and his family began a fight for compensation, believing that anti-Catholic prejudice had contributed to the accusations.

George completed his studies before leaving Britain to work for a banking firm in New York. He returned to this country on the outbreak of the First World War and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the South Staffordshire Regiment. He was just 19 years old when he was killed in action at Ypres on 31 October 1914. He has no known grave.

Rattigan's play, inspired by the story of a father determined to clear his son's name and protect family honour, has been adapted for film and television.



The Winslow Boy performed by Bristol Old Vic at the Little Theatre, Bristol, 1977. Photographer: Derek Balmer. Courtesy University of Bristol Theatre Collection.

War, Women and Song: The Lena Ashwell YMCA Concert Parties

by Anna Farthing

If we ever think about women serving near the battlefields of the First World War, we imagine them in the uniforms of nurses or military auxiliaries. However, there were many women in civilian clothes, and some wore evening dress.

War, Women and Song is a new play about the Lena Ashwell YMCA Concert Parties who took music, drama and dance to the Front, not only providing much needed distraction, but also helping battle-scarred men to express themselves. The performance builds on Harvest's projects for the National Museum of the Royal Navy and my own doctoral research.

Lena Ashwell was a leading Edwardian actor-manager and suffragette who believed the arts could defend troops against the dehumanising effects of combat. At first the War Office ridiculed her ideas, fearing that music would 'feminise' the men and render them victim to their emotions. But with backing from members of the Royal Family, and after much negotiation, Lena gained the tentative support of the YMCA. Their network of recreation huts and billets provided an infrastructure within which the concert parties could operate.

The first Lena Ashwell YMCA Concert Party embarked for France in February 1915 and there were immediate demands for more. At first, Lena Ashwell insisted on hiring seasoned professionals with the experience to respond in any situation. After conscription was introduced, many young women joined the troupes, recommended by the Royal Academies of Music and local music festivals. By 1919, more than 600 performers had undertaken this tour of duty.

The new recruits of Kitchener's Army demanded a diverse and varied repertoire. Although initially tasked with delivering 'good music', 'The Lenas' played everything from classics to popular folk songs, music hall numbers, extracts from Shakespeare, West End hits and animal noises. And they learned how to perform in a transit station or on the ward of a hospital ship, to 4000 anxious men on a French hillside or to a battle-scarred battalion in the desert, or quietly to a lone man dying in his bed.

A typical contract was for nine months and although they were not paid a salary, many of the troupe returned repeatedly. Lena Ashwell struggled constantly to raise the money to cover their expenses and wrote letters to benefactors. She was often frustrated that when she asked the performers to share stories that would help win financial support they could only tell her what they ate, where they slept, and what they performed.

In our production of *War, Women and Song* we have accepted this storytelling conundrum and have created a drama in which the music does what music did then, provide structure, harmony and counterpoint to the cacophony and confusion of individual wartime experiences.

Private papers have also provided a unique insight into the lives of these extraordinarily brave and generous young performers. Two very different real life stories with strong West Country connections have inspired us.

Elsie Griffin (1895-1990) was a chocolate packer who began at Fry's in Bristol aged 14. As she said in a 1926 interview, 'my parents were not in a position to keep me.' Her singing in the workers choir during the Quaker factory's morning prayer meeting led to a scholarship for music lessons, and to her winning a cup in the 1914 Bristol Eisteddfod. On the outbreak of war she joined the Lena Ashwell Concert Party on a tour of France. Aged only 19, she and the other girls were locked in a caravan overnight 'for protection'.

Elsie was sent two songs to sing to the troops by the prolific West Country songwriter Fred Weatherly. Despite one of the conditions imposed on the Lenas by the YMCA being, 'no making use of the war to aggrandise one's professional popularity,' the songs that Elsie introduced became the anthems of the era. 'Danny Boy' and 'Roses of Picardy' still evoke a nostalgic reaction in listeners today.

From a Stroud family of Department Store owners, Daisy Godfrey was an educated modern young woman who abandoned her plans to be a doctor on winning a scholarship to study piano and cello at Reading University College. Only five feet tall, and carrying her own luggage and cello case, she became the leader of a troupe and kept accurate notes and diaries as well as numerous letters through more than four years of her wartime experience. These documents were only recently discovered by her family in Newton Abbott. In a note made when she was 87, she says.

Lena Ashwell more than once called me her "Pioneer". When she wanted to open up a new base I am proud to think she asked for me – not because I was a better 'performer' or anything like that – but because so they said I managed to get on to happy terms with a big audience of men – anything up to 2,000 sometimes – from the platform where we always sat.

After the Armistice, Daisy Godfrey stayed on to play to the gravediggers, who were told they had 25 years work reburying the dead. She eventually married a former YMCA officer, became a vicar's wife, and disappeared into polite society.

In 1919, Elsie Griffin became a leading soprano with the D'Oyley Carte opera company. She later married fellow performer and former soldier Ivan Menzies. Thanks to the efforts of her remaining Bristol family, a Blue Plaque commemorates her schooldays at St Michael's Primary, and her Bristol Eisteddfod cup is displayed at Frenchay Village Museum.



Elsie Griffin. Bristol Post.

In his poem 'Concert Party' Siegfried Sassoon recorded the impression that a Lena Ashwell YMCA Concert Party made on war weary homesick men in the Egyptian desert.

O, sing us the songs, the songs of our own land,

You warbling ladies in white.

We hope that *War, Women and Song* helps to identify and characterise some of these 'warbling ladies' so that their contribution can receive its rightful place in the historical narrative of the First World War.

PACIFISM, PEACE AND COMMEMORATION

Conscription and Conscientious Objectors

by Melanie Kelly

By January 1915 over a million men had volunteered to enlist in the British army since the outbreak of war. However, this was not enough to keep pace with the growing number of casualties and the government needed to introduce compulsory recruitment. In March 1916 the Military Service Act was passed which imposed conscription on all single men aged between 18 and 41. In May this was extended to cover married men and in the final months of the war the age limit was raised to 51. Conscription led to the compulsory recruitment of around 2.5 million men.

Exempted from the call-up were the medically unfit, clergymen, teachers and those working in industries which supported the war effort. Those who objected to fighting on moral grounds – known as conscientious objectors – could also be exempted. In most cases they either undertook civilian ‘national service’, for example by working in factories or on farms, or were appointed to non-fighting roles at the Front, such as ambulance drivers and stretcher-bearers. In Bristol exemptions were assessed by the Military Service Tribunal which usually met in the Council House on Corn Street. By the end of the war the tribunal had assessed 41,000 cases involving 22,000 men of whom 5,000 were granted exemptions.

Bristol Record Office holds the letters, papers and pamphlets of Bristol’s Society of Friends which includes correspondence about how Quakers should respond to the 1915 National Registration Act (a measure introduced to stimulate recruitment prior to conscription), as well as on the support of conscientious objectors and opportunities for peacework. A letter in May 1916 circulated to the Clerks of Preparative Meeting Committees includes the following:

Attention is drawn to the appointment by the Meeting for Sufferings on May 5th of a Committee to be responsible for the visiting of Friends and other conscientious objectors in the hands of military authorities. No delay should occur in informing the Committee not only of all arrests, but of the subsequent movements of men in custody, as far as knowledge is obtained, so they might be visited whenever possible.

Absolutists were conscientious objectors who refused to take on any role that would support the war, including taking on jobs which would free others to fight. Most were sent to prison where they endured harsh treatment including a near-starvation bread-and-water diet and solitary confinement in a narrow cell. In some cases they were forced to undertake hard labour. Once their initial sentence was served they were usually sent back to their assigned military unit where they would be court-martialled and imprisoned again.

The leaflet 'What Every Bristol Man Should Know' issued in 1916 by the Joint Advisory Council for Conscientious Objectors (honorary secretary Mabel Tothill) states that hundreds of men were then in prison across the country because they held 'a conscientious conviction that war is an evil against which they must protest by every means in their power, and in which they cannot voluntarily take any part'. Many of these were on their third or fourth sentence.

The 30 names of imprisoned Bristolians listed in the leaflet included that of Walter Ayles. Ayles was a councillor for Easton and a member of Bristol's Docks Committee. Having refused to fight, he was ordered by the Bristol Tribunal 'to undertake work of national importance' but he again refused and continued to travel the country on behalf of the No Conscription Fellowship. He was arrested at a rally in Glasgow in November 1916 and handed over to the military authorities.

Ayles first served 112 days hard labour at Wormwood Scrubs and Wandsworth Civil Prisons. He was returned to his military unit where he was court-martialled again and sent for a year's hard labour in Dorchester Prison. He was finally released in 1919 and went on to be elected Labour MP for Bristol North in 1923 and 1931.

Walter Ayles (far left) with fellow conscientious objectors.



Peace Day July 1919

by Melanie Kelly

Remembrance Day commemorates the signing of the agreement to end fighting on the Western Front on 11 November 1918. The armistice prompted a day of spontaneous rejoicing at home as well as of quiet reflection on the tragedy that had left its mark on so many people. Indeed, it is recorded that 863 Commonwealth soldiers died on that date; some from wounds sustained in earlier action, some in continuing fighting. The total number of wounded, missing or killed that day was around 10,000.

The armistice was followed by months of peace negotiations and the formal treaty was not officially signed until 28 June 1919. In Britain initial plans for a four-day nationwide peace celebration to be held in August were set aside in favour of a one-day event to be held on 19 July 1919. In London around 15,000 servicemen took part in a Victory Parade, led by the Allied commanders. There were entertainments laid on in the city's central parks during the day and a spectacular evening firework display in Hyde Park. Throughout the country, street parties and other informal celebrations were held alongside the patriotic pageantry.

In Bristol people gathered to cheer a parade of thousands of war veterans. These included veterans of the Crimea War and Indian Mutiny (travelling in motor cars), men and women of the Royal Air Force, the Motor Machine Corps and a small group of Australian soldiers

The Lord Mayor (Alderman H W Twiggs) reading the Proclamation of Peace on the steps of the Council House, July 5 1919.





Peace Day Celebration, July 19th 1919: Bristol Police passing the saluting point. Both images reproduced from Bristol and the Great War: 1914-1919.

on horseback. The procession was led by the mounted police and followed a route from Queen Square to Durdham Down. The Lord Mayor took the salute from a stand erected by the Victoria Rooms and was later among those who gave speeches to the crowds on the Down. The speeches were followed by sports competitions and refreshments.

Elsewhere in the city, tea and entertainments were provided for the elderly, and bands played in the parks (special events for children were held on 24 July). It rained all afternoon and most of the evening, but the naval flares lit that night on Observatory Hill, Horfield Common, at Stoke Park, Kingswood, St George and on Bedminster Down were said to have 'burned for a long time and gave a brilliant illumination'.

The War Dead of Arnos Vale and Other Cemeteries

by Charles Booth

There are 858 Great War casualties buried in Bristol cemeteries and churchyards. The Imperial (now Commonwealth) War Graves Commission (IWGC/CWGC) early adopted a policy of non-repatriation of bodies from overseas, so almost all of these casualties died in the United Kingdom or en route to the UK. The numbers of dead in the various cemeteries and churchyards of the city is shown below, with all sites with ten or more casualties listed.

Cemetery	Dead
Arnos Vale	362
Greenbank	182
Avon View	84
Canford	74
Holy Souls	54
Horfield	19
Mangotsfield	16
Ridgeway Park	12
Other	55

Except in the case of Arnos Vale and Holy Souls cemeteries, where the Bristol branch of the British Red Cross Society purchased land for the burial of men and women who died in Bristol hospitals, almost all the other casualties are buried in family plots and are therefore not concentrated in one area but scattered through the cemetery or churchyard. This may not be immediately apparent to the passer-by; in Greenbank cemetery there is an area where it appears that the bodies of some 60 casualties have been buried in neat rows. However, these headstones are to men buried in family plots elsewhere in the cemetery which could not be maintained, and the headstones have been grouped together for ease of maintenance.

While some graves are marked by official IWGC/CWGC headstones, many have family headstones, and these make the graves more difficult to spot. The situation is complicated by the practice of some bereaved families listing casualties on the family stone or memorial, when they are not actually buried in the grave. The Imperial War Museums' War Memorials Archive consider these 'additions to gravestones' (to use the technical term) to be formally designated as war memorials, whereas graves which contain casualties are officially war graves. In some cases a grave may be both, as in the case of the Parsons brothers at Canford cemetery, where Lt Ewart Moulton Parsons, RAF,

is buried having been killed in a flying accident in July 1918. The memorial also lists his brother Hardy Falconer Parsons, VC, who died of wounds in France in August 1917 and is buried in an IWGC/CWGC cemetery on the Somme.

Burial in a family plot indicates that the casualty was connected to Bristol in some way, so we can see that the majority of war dead buried in Bristol had some connection to the city in their lifetimes. This means that they may be commemorated on a war memorial somewhere in the city, as well as on their grave marker. Parishes, schools, workplaces and other groups and communities all developed war memorials and rolls of honour, in a number of different forms, and the dead could be memorialised in multiple places. For example, the brothers Edward Colston Robinson and Geoffrey Wathen Robinson, who were killed one day apart at the Battle of Loos in September 1915, are listed on their father's headstone in the churchyard of All Saints, Compton Greenfield. They are also named on the Stoke Bishop War Memorial, and on the Roll of Honour in St Mary Magdalene in Stoke Bishop, as well as on the memorial to the old boys of Braidlea School. There is also a memorial window dedicated to them in Tyndale Baptist Church on Whiteladies Road. The whereabouts of the brothers' remains are uncertain. Geoffrey is believed to be buried in St Mary's Advanced Dressing Station Cemetery, Haisnes, whereas Edward's name is listed on the Loos Memorial, along with 20,000 other casualties of the battle who have no known grave.

Unfortunately, the records available for the war dead in Bristol cemeteries are rather diverse in their availability and depth. The survival of casualties' (especially of British service personnel) military service records is partial: over half the War Office service records were destroyed in a Luftwaffe bombing raid on London in September 1940, with many more left badly burnt and barely legible. As these records often contain copies of correspondence with family members, details of the circumstances of death and burial, material from the IWGC concerning the casualty, and other matters, their absence is sorely felt.

The main resource available for initial further research on the war dead in Bristol cemeteries is the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website (www.cwgc.org). This can be searched by name of casualty or name of cemetery, and search results downloaded as a spreadsheet. This will list, for the typical casualty: service number (other ranks only), surname, initials or forenames, rank, military unit, date of death. In some cases the cause of death may be listed, or details of previous military service, or next of kin details. A very few records also contain extra information provided by the family. An example of this is Corporal Walter Court of the Royal Army Ordnance Corps, who died of influenza in February 1919 and was buried at Arnos Vale. His IWGC/CWGC record notes that he was a professional musician, and that he was born in Somerset. Where a family suffered multiple casualties, that fact is also sometimes noted, as in the case of the Robinson brothers, above. In a recent addition to their records, the CWGC have now attached extra documentation to each First World War casualty, such as scans of the original grave schedules.



Arnos Vale Cemetery's war memorial, c 1921. Author's collection.

Very often there is no substitute for visiting the cemeteries and finding the graves oneself. One immediate issue that arises is the variety of epitaphs that some families had inscribed on the stone or memorial. At Arnos Vale the gravestone of Sub-Lt Angus Porter RN is inscribed, 'MY GOD, MY KING, MY COUNTRY'. Nearby, the bronze plaque to another naval casualty reads 'PRO PATRIA MORI'. Other inscriptions quote the Bible (for example, 1 Corinthians 15:54: 'DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY'), or implicitly link the dead serviceman with the figure of Christ: 'HE DIED THAT WE MIGHT LIVE'. Also utilised are popular hymns and poems (such as Rupert Brooke's 'The Soldier', quoted on the family gravestone of Lt Alec Hill of the Gloucestershire Regiment: 'THERE'S SOME CORNER OF/A FOREIGN FIELD/THAT IS FOREVER ENGLAND'. Hill's epitaph has added ironic poignancy given his body was never recovered after his death). Other valedictory inscriptions, however, have a more demotic flavour. On the grave of Lt Noel Atkinson of the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) it is simply noted that he has 'GONE WEST' (RFC slang for being killed). The monument to Chief Petty Officer William Humpage concludes, 'WE HAVE WHACKED THE HUNS'.

Where military casualties are listed on a family, rather than IWGC/CWGC, headstone, and the military casualty is one of a number of family members memorialised, epitaphs might serve to remember a brother and sister together, for example; or explicitly relate one member of a family to another, as in the case of Fred Jordan, killed (and buried) in France in December 1917, and his daughter Barbara May, who 'JOINED HER DADDIE NOVEMBER 8TH 1918 AGED 4 1/2 YEARS'. Searching for the war dead in Bristol's cemeteries helps us to realise the human costs of the conflict to the city and to the families and communities within it, and to begin to understand how the citizens of Bristol sought to express their loss and longing through remembering their dead.

A Great War Tour of Arnos Vale Cemetery

by Charles Booth

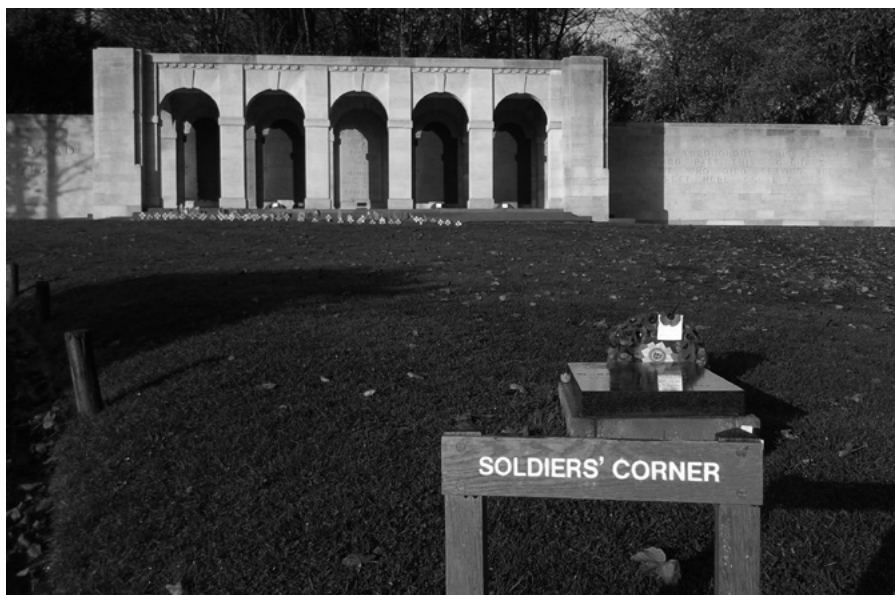
Arnos Vale is a working cemetery and a site of historic and scientific interest. All visitors are requested to respect other uses and users of the site. It is not recommended that you leave the paths, as the landscape can be overgrown and dangerous. The designer of this tour, Bristol 2014 and the Arnos Vale Cemetery Trust can take no responsibility for any loss, injury or damage resulting from your visit. It is recommended that you obtain a site map from the cemetery reception before starting your tour.

The address of the cemetery is: Arnos Vale Cemetery, Bath Road, Bristol, BS4 3EW. More information about the site can be found here: www.arnosvale.org.uk/site-info.

It is suggested that you start the tour, which should take about an hour, facing the War Memorial at 'Soldiers Corner', which is clearly visible to your right as you enter the cemetery. The GREAT WAR MEMORIAL was unveiled in October 1921. The main inscription on the memorial ('PROCLAIM THROUGHOUT THIS REALM...') is a translation of Simonides's epitaph to the 300 Spartans killed at the Battle of Thermopylae in 480 BC. In front of the memorial are buried 239 allied servicemen who died during or shortly after the First World War, mostly in Bristol War Hospitals. Although many suffered from wounds received in the fighting, others died of illnesses such as influenza or meningitis. Most are buried in shared plots (the exceptions being the Canadian and Australian soldiers – whose governments required separate burials – the one British officer buried here, and HARRY BLANCHARD WOOD, VC, MM, whose grave is the only one marked).

You might wish to see if you can find Harry Wood's name on the memorial – because he was buried after the memorial was completed, he is listed out of sequence. Other things to look for are the two members of the South African Native (listed as 'Natal') Labour Corps, the one woman (a nursing sister) on the monument, and the names of some individual soldiers – SYDNEY JACKA, the first casualty buried at Soldiers' Corner; DOSIN LIMBACHE, a Belgian soldier buried the same day but subsequently moved to the Catholic cemetery next door; SILAS STUCKLESS, mortally wounded on 1 July 1916, the first day of the Somme; FREDERICK MANSFIELD, whose real name was Hubert Estey and who enlisted under an alias (his enlistment name reflects his birthplace of Mansfield, Massachusetts, USA); WILLIAM WALKER, who accidentally drowned in the Floating Harbour a month after the end of the war, while recovering from wounds in a Bristol hospital; ARTHUR BAILEY, a Bristolian who emigrated to Canada before the war and fought in the Canadian Infantry; and ALFRED BARLOW, who died of wounds on Armistice Day 1918.

You should now return down the hill towards the lodges. Walk right along the circular ceremonial way until you pass the non-Conformist chapel (which looks like a Greek



Soldiers' Corner, Arnos Vale Cemetery.

Temple). You will see a low white wall enclosing a small rectangular area, with plaques attached to the far wall. One of these plaques is to the second Great War Victoria Cross-holder commemorated here, LT COLONEL DANIEL BURGESS, VC, DSO. Col Burgess served in the Gloucestershire Regiment and was wounded commanding a battalion of the South Wales Borderers in Macedonia when he won his VC. He later became Resident Governor of the Tower of London, and was cremated at Arnos Vale in 1946.

Now turn right for a few yards and stop when you are facing another war memorial in front of a cloister, with your back to the entrance of the Garden of Rest. This memorial is dedicated to Allied Forces who died in the Second World War and whose bodies were cremated at Arnos Vale. Walk into the second cloister area to your left and find the plaque to RHODA MILDRED STEPHENS. Mildred, as she was known, was born in Bristol but moved to New Zealand. She enlisted in the New Zealand Volunteer Sisterhood in 1915, and was sent first to Egypt and then to Serbia to help at the Scottish Women's Hospital, where she was awarded the Serbian Croix de la Misericorde (a picture of which is engraved on her plaque). After the war Mildred travelled to France to help with civilian aid relief in Villers-Bretonneux, on the Somme. She died in 1934 and was cremated at Arnos Vale.

Walk out of the cloisters and turn right. Bear right for 20 metres or so and stop at an official War Graves Commission headstone to PRIVATE L SAMPSON on your left. Private Leonard Sampson was just 17 when he died of meningitis at Swindon Isolation Hospital

in March 1917. A shipping clerk, he had enlisted in February 1917 and joined the training reserves (hence the 'TR' in his service number). Behind this headstone is a fallen family gravestone which also commemorates Leonard's brother Henry who was killed on the Somme in July 1916.

The next section of the trail involves quite a lot of walking and a steepish climb. Keep on the path and follow it as it curves to the left. The section on your left contains quite a number of war graves – keep your eyes open for the official headstones. The path comes to a T-junction – turn right up the hill until you reach the road just below the Top Lodge. Walk past the lodge and follow the road as it bends to the left. The section to your left here also contains many First World War casualties buried in family plots.

At the first turning circle, take the narrow path to your left. After about 20 metres, you should be able to see an official headstone down another path to your left. This is the grave of GUNNER GEORGE MIDDLETON of the Royal Marines. He is the only First World War casualty buried in the cemetery who was killed in action. He was killed on the Zeebrugge Raid in April 1918 and his body brought back with the survivors and other casualties of the action. He was a career soldier and was paid prize bounty for the sinking of German warships at the battles of Heligoland Bight and Dogger Bank when he was a gunner on HMS *Princess Royal*. It is probable that he also served at the battle of Jutland. Forces at Zeebrugge received 11 Victoria Crosses, two of which were awarded to the Royal Marines, and their recipients elected by ballot among the survivors.

Return to the road and turn left, walking towards the Cross of Sacrifice. To your left as you face the Cross is the area known as Sailors' Corner. These are Second World War graves of naval personnel. Of interest here is CAPTAIN HW SHOVE, DSO, OBE. Herbert Shove joined the submarine service in 1906 and commanded submarines during the First World War on missions in the North Sea, with one unconfirmed kill of a German destroyer. He was involved in the attempted interception of the German battlecruiser squadron which bombarded Yarmouth and Lowestoft in April 1916, and in the so-called 'Battle of the Isle of May', in which 104 British seamen and two submarines were lost in a series of accidental collisions.

This is the end of the trail. Please feel free to make your way back to the start by retracing your steps or by following other paths down through the cemetery. We have only been able to give you an outline of a very few of the stories relating to war graves and memorials in Arnos Vale.

Arnos Vale Cemetery is in the care of the Arnos Vale Cemetery Trust, a UK-registered charity that is dependent on public donations to ensure the cemetery can be enjoyed now and saved for future generations. If you have enjoyed the trail, please support the work of the Trust by making a donation whilst at Arnos Vale or online. If you want to know more, please book a place on one of the official war graves tours that take place from time to time. www.arnosvale.org.uk.

Bristol's Stone of Memories

by Sarah Whittingham

Bristol was one of the last cities in the country to put up a civic memorial to its dead after the First World War. Although various ideas had been suggested since 1919, it was not until 1925 that serious planning began, by which time war memorials were a common sight in villages, towns and cities across the country.

In many places the question of what sort of memorial to erect – symbolic or utilitarian – had engendered much debate. Five years earlier £10,000 had been quickly and easily raised to construct a memorial ground at Horfield in honour of the 300 Bristol rugby football players killed in the war. But by the mid 1920s there were numerous memorials for various districts of the city, as well as in schools, offices, and factories, and it was now thought that not enough money would be donated to build a memorial of practical benefit, such as a hospital.

So the Bristol War Memorial Committee started to look for a site for a monument. A number were suggested, including the Downs, the Horsefair, and Old Market but, for various reasons, these were considered unsuitable. Three were given close consideration: College Green in front of Bristol Cathedral; the Tramways Centre, which was then used for the annual Remembrance Services; and the northern end of Colston Avenue where the River Frome had been covered over in 1893.

Throughout the late 1920s questions of 'what?' and 'where?' continued to be brought up in both the Council House and letters to the press. However, in November 1929 the Committee members concluded that large sums were definitely not going to be forthcoming from Bristolians. In June 1930 they presented their report to the Council, recommending Colston Avenue as the site for a memorial. It fulfilled the requirements of proximity to the city centre, easy access, and having the space to host the annual Remembrance Service. The area was run down at the time, but it was hoped that placing the memorial there would lead to its transformation. The report was approved, and the Council agreed to bear the costs of clearing and preparing the site.

At this point the *Bristol Times and Mirror* and the *Bristol Evening Times and Echo* took up the campaign. They raised just under £1,700 from their readers, and in January 1931 launched a competition for local architects, 'it being the express wish of the Bristol War Memorial Committee and of the people of Bristol themselves that a Bristol architect should design the memorial'. George Lawrence, the architectural partner of Sir George Oatley, best known for his design of the Wills Memorial Building, was appointed assessor.



Heathman & Blacker's winning design for the Bristol war memorial. The Builder, 19 June 1931.

Lawrence short-listed three entries from the 18 received, and at the end of May they were published in the *Bristol Evening Times and Echo* and put on display in the City Art Gallery for the public to vote on. Charles Roy Beecroft was placed third, Adrian E Powell second, and the people of Bristol chose the design of Messrs Heathman & Blacker as the one to honour their 'sons and daughters who gave their lives in the Great War'. In fact, 'Mr Blacker' was Miss Eveline Blacker (1884–1956), one of the earliest female architects in the country, and Bristol's first. She was also the first female architect to win a competition to design a war memorial.

All three short-listed designs emulated Edwin Lutyens' cenotaph, which was unveiled in Whitehall in 1920. Although it symbolises death and mourning, it has no specific religious or other associations, but commemorates all the fallen, irrespective of belief, rank or sex. For these, and other reasons, the form was subsequently used in many towns and cities. Lawrence might also have thought, in view of the amount of time that had passed, that the design should not be controversial. Sculpture could have been too divisive, or even shocking, for a general memorial. A non-figurative design had less potential to be so, but could also be more powerful in that it was a blank canvas that allowed viewers to project their own emotions onto it.

Heathman & Blacker's cenotaph, faced with Portland Stone, is just over six metres high and stands on a single step on a wide base of three steps, with four rectangular blocks at the corners. On each main face is a large stone laurel wreath over a bronze sword, both of which were originally gilded. Just above the base of the monument a frieze, carved with 12 circular reliefs of regimental insignia, runs around all four sides. And on each short side are bronze casts of Bristol's coat of arms. On top is a sarcophagus with consoles at each end, and fasces (a bound bundle of rods symbolising strength through unity) lying on each side.

On the south side a bronze plaque with two downward-pointing torches is inscribed with lines from 'O Valiant Hearts'. This hymn's patriotic and chivalric words were written by John Stanhope Arkwright, and published in a collection called *The Supreme Sacrifice and Other Poems in Time of War* in 1919. The Reverend Charles Harris set them to music, and his setting remains the favourite for Remembrance Services around the country every November. When the Bristol cenotaph was finally unveiled in front of 50,000 people on 26 June 1932, the ceremony commenced with the singing of this hymn.

But by this date the words on the north side were rather more relevant. When defending memorials against the accusation that they glorified war, Alderman Robert Lyne of the Council's War Memorial Committee had written that 'the men who died and who were remembered by the Memorial had died that mankind might learn to live at peace.' The British Legion asked to use Lyne's words on the cenotaph, and in Roman capitals on a bronze plaque is: 'SACRED TO THE MEMORY/OF BRISTOL'S SONS AND/DAUGHTERS, WHO MADE/THE SUPREME SACRIFICE.' And below, in smaller caps: 'THEY DIED THAT MANKIND MAY LEARN TO LIVE IN PEACE.' As we know, this lesson was not learned. Seven years later world conflict erupted again and the cenotaph, or 'Bristol's Stone of Memories', as the *Bristol Evening Post* dubbed it, also became a memorial to those thousands of Bristolians killed in the Second World War.

The cenotaph was unveiled by Field-Marshal Sir William Birdwood on Sunday 26 June 1932.
Bristol Evening Post, 27 June 1932.



WHEN THE WAR WAS OVER

Tramgirls, Tommies and the Vote

by Lucienne Boyce

When the First World War began, suffrage campaigners quickly identified a link between women's war work and women's suffrage. Christabel Pankhurst of the militant Women's Social and Political Union declared in September 1914 that after the war 'women who are paying their share of the price... will insist on being brought into equal partnership as enfranchised citizens of the country'. When Millicent Fawcett, President of the non-militant National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS), visited Bristol in November 1915, her co-speaker, Canon Talbot of Bristol, expressed the NUWSS's confidence that women's war work 'would not go politically unrewarded'.

Women of Bristol rose to the challenge. 'It would not have been possible to carry on', said George F Stone and Charles Wells in *Bristol and the Great War*, if they had not managed the 'duties hitherto carried out by the other sex.' It seemed the suffragists' optimism was well-founded when, in 1918, a grateful nation gave women the vote.

But how grateful was the nation? If the 1918 Representation of the People Act is anything to go by, not very. Far from offering women equality with men, it enfranchised all men but only some women over 30 who met a property qualification, thus excluding many of the women workers. Nor was this grudging franchise the only sign that gratitude did not run very deep. Women in men's jobs were not offered equal pay and conditions, and when the war ended there was a bitter backlash against them which in Bristol took a dramatic and violent turn.

In 1917 women were welcomed onto Bristol's trams to replace men at the Front. The first recruits were featured on the front cover of *Bristol and the War (BATW)* and praised for their 'courtesy and untiring energy'. At the end of the war, in line with agreements between employers, unions and government guaranteeing the restoration of pre-war practices, the Bristol Tramways and Carriage Company and other local employers took back male employees who had served in the forces. In March 1920 Bristol's Employment Exchange confirmed, 'Employers have been very good in engaging ex-servicemen and in re-engaging their old men. They have really overdone themselves in this connection.'



Female tram conductors at Horfield Depot, 1917. Bristol Record Office, 39735/Bri/IM/Ph/18/15a.

By 1920, however, there was widespread unemployment. In Bristol, 6,000 out of 7,000 unemployed men were ex-servicemen and nationally ex-servicemen constituted three quarters of the unemployed. In desperation, they looked for someone to blame. Suddenly the *Daily Mail*'s 'splendid girls' were, as Irene Clephane put it, 'degraded in the public press to the position of ruthless self-seekers depriving men and their dependants of a livelihood.' The *Daily News* observed that there had not been such contempt and bitterness towards women since the suffragette campaign.

Women the Bristol press had once begged to do 'their share' (*BATW*, 1 June 1915) were now asked 'as a point of honour' to stay at home (*Western Daily Press*, 8 May 1920). Bristol women were told to go into nursing or teaching, and Bristol's factory girls to 'go back' to domestic work, although there was no evidence that the majority of them had been in domestic service before the war. They were also reminded that women's proper job was looking after their families, a message reinforced by the practice of dismissing women when they married.

In April 1920 persuasion turned to coercion. Bristol's ex-servicemen issued an eight-day ultimatum to local banks, offices and factories: dismiss women workers or else 'only serious reprisals could be expected'. Over the next few days they made good their threat to the Tramways Company with riots in the Centre. They damaged trams, stoned women conductors and broke office windows.



The message that women's proper job was looking after the family is reinforced by this war-time postcard. Collection of Lucienne Boyce.

Disturbances and window breaking in the Centre were tactics familiar to Bristol from the city's suffragette years – though now they met with much more sympathy. The Tramways Company gave in and dismissed female conductors, despite admitting that the women depended on their wages. Other employers, such as the War Pensions Committee, also acceded to the men's demands and dismissed women they knew relied on their wages. Many of these women did not qualify for unemployment benefit, and even if they did, women received less than men.

Yet there was no evidence that they were taking men's jobs. When the Tramways Company capitulated they had already reinstated all but 69 of the 1,416 pre-war employees who had returned. 'It is therefore incorrect to say,' they pointed out, 'that the women have taken the place of men.' As at 30 April 1920, only four men on the unemployment register were tram workers, and it was clear that the women would be replaced by new men.

Asked to produce figures showing how many women were keeping Bristol men out of work, the Labour Exchange was unable to do so and could only say 'there must be a proportion of places at present held by women to their [men's] exclusion'. In May the manager admitted, 'Having regard to the occupations of the majority of the unemployed, he did not think it was correct to say that they were kept out of their old jobs by women.'

Dismissing the women was only a distraction from the underlying problem of soaring unemployment. In Bristol on May Day 1920, Chas Gill of the Miners' Union commented: 'To put one person out of employment in order to give another work was not going to solve the unemployment question. Women had done their duty during the war, and it was no solution to the problem to turn them out for somebody else to go in.' By the end of 1920, 3,800 Bristol ex-servicemen were still unemployed. In 1923, 11,000 men and 3,000 women were out of work, and the total unemployed was 15,600. In 1924 and 1925, the total reached 17,000, around 11,000 of whom were men.

The dismissed women were forced back into low paid, low skilled jobs and sweated trades. Government training schemes in traditional female trades and domestic skills reinforced their narrow options. Bristol classes included tailoring, domestic work and boot trade machining. Women who refused domestic service and other 'women's' work had their benefit stopped. Many of the women affected – young and propertyless – also remained voteless. For the ousted working women of Bristol, the 1918 Representation of the People Act must have seemed poor thanks indeed.

‘Homes Fit for Heroes’ – Bristol’s New Housing Estates

by Eugene Byrne

In the centre of the Sea Mills estate in Bristol, in a corner of the open green space bounded by Shirehampton Road and The Crescent, an area known as Sea Mills Square, is an oak tree.

It was planted on Wednesday 4 June 1919 by Bristol’s Lady Mayoress and has grown slowly, quietly and undisturbed ever since.

There are no plaques or inscriptions on it, but in its way is it one of Bristol’s most important monuments. It marks the spot where work started to transform the lives of tens of thousands of Bristolians for the better.

It became known as Addison’s Oak because at the ceremony that day was Dr Christopher Addison, President of the Local Government Board and the architect of the 1919 Housing and Town Planning Act. He cut the first sod on the new Sea Mills housing development.

During the 1918 General Election campaign, Lloyd George had spoken of ‘a country fit for heroes to live in’. The phrase was soon being misquoted as ‘homes fit for heroes’.

The Prime Minister was talking about all manner of changes, but everyone fully understood that one of the most important jobs after the war was to build decent housing on an unprecedented scale.

With a few exceptions, most housing until now had been built by private enterprise, and most people rented, rather than bought, their homes.

The old private system had created slums in every major town and city – cramped, insanitary and poor-quality housing. Now, after the sacrifices that people had made in the war, things had to improve. The growing power of the working class, strong trade unions and votes for all meant there could be no return to the old ways.

Before the war had even ended, Bristol’s council had acquired 700 acres of land across the city’s outskirts for house-building.

The Sea Mills estate was the first to be started, on land bought from Philip Napier Miles, owner of the Kings Weston estate. Sea Mills would be built on ‘garden suburb’ lines, with no more than 12 houses per acre of land; there would be plenty of green space, and no industry.



Sea Mills, seen from the shade of Addison's Oak. Photographed by Eugene Byrne.

Building was soon under way at other garden suburbs – Knowle, Hillfields and Shirehampton. The very first tenants to move into Bristol's new council houses moved into Beechen Drive, Hillfields in 1919.

The houses were of high quality, with three or four bedrooms. Most had parlours – front rooms – and most of the funding for construction came from central government.

The rents were correspondingly high. Subsequent schemes in the later 1920s and 30s were usually of smaller homes with lower rents.

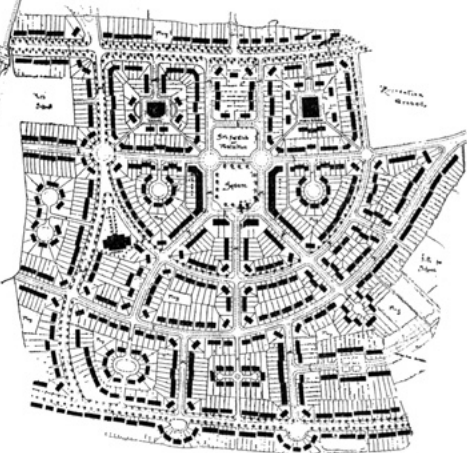
Between 1919 and 1939, 15,000 new council homes were built in Bristol, mostly on new estates: Sea Mills, Shirehampton, Fishponds, Bedminster, Speedwell, Hillfields, Knowle and, later, Southmead.

Over the same period almost 20,000 homes were built privately, many of them the ubiquitous suburban semis to be found in almost every British town.

All these homes radically changed the character of the city. They also transformed lives, as thousands of families moved from damp, overcrowded and grimy accommodation to houses with gardens, large windows to let in sunlight, bathrooms and inside toilets, set in neighbourhoods with plenty of green spaces for the children to play on.

No less a figure than poet John Betjeman wrote of the 'surprising beauty' of Sea Mills. 'Showing off in the evening sunlight; and vistas of trees and fields and pleasant cottages that that magic estate has managed to create.'

In 1981 Sea Mills became one of the first council estates in Britain to be designated a conservation area because of its historic and architectural significance.



'Bristol Corporation's Proposed Housing Schemes' from The Architects' Journal, 16 June 1920.

Political and Social Change

by Eugene Byrne

Between 1910 and 1920, Bristol changed very little physically. There was no enemy bombing or shelling, and there were few large building schemes.

Over that time, though, there were enormous changes in people's habits and assumptions.

These were not always apparent at first. Politics, for instance, had all the appearance of 'business as usual' at the end of the war. Lloyd George's wartime coalition comfortably won the 1918 general election, and he remained Prime Minister, although his Liberal Party was now in the minority.

All four of Bristol's Parliamentary seats returned Coalition Liberal or Tory supporters, but in all four seats the Labour Party came second. This was new; in 1914 everyone realised that Labour, affiliated to the trade union movement, was a growing force, but the war, involving the sacrifices of working class men in uniform, and the increasing power of unions to negotiate better pay and conditions for their members, turned Labour into a major political party.

Municipal elections were suspended during the war, and Labour remained a minority on Bristol's council. But the city fathers saw the way things were going, and in 1917 appointed Frank Sheppard (1863-1956) as Bristol's first Labour Lord Mayor.

While nowadays the Lord Mayor of Bristol – as opposed to the elected mayor – serves a mostly ceremonial role, the office was very influential then. The Lord Mayor was expected to play a full part in the political and administrative life of the city, chairing committees and acting as a sort of local prime minister.

Sheppard's elevation was a matter of cold political calculation on the part of the local elite. Sheppard was seen as a unifying figure; a trade unionist who would be able to persuade the working classes to get behind the war effort (his own sons were in the Army) and head off industrial disputes, particularly at the Avonmouth and City Docks.

Sheppard was popular. His union supporters held a rally at the Colston Hall to celebrate his appointment, and collected money to pay for his mayoral robes and for a silver tea and coffee service for the Lady Mayoress.

Frank Sheppard was probably the most powerful and influential Labour figure ever to serve on Bristol's council. Between the wars he chaired the Housing Committee,

overseeing the construction of thousands of new homes. For 45 years he was effectively leader of the Labour party in Bristol, and leader of the Labour group on the council for 20 years.

Labour's growing influence was also due to the widening franchise, which gave the vote to many working class men for the first time in 1918. It is well-known that the 1918 election was the first in which women (over the age of 30) could vote, but this was also the first time that all men over 21 could vote as well.

Previously, only men paying rent above a certain sum, or owning property above a certain value, were allowed the vote. Had this remained in force in 1918, well over a third of adult males would have had no vote at all, but to deny the franchise to men who had served their country in uniform was politically impossible.

If the 1918 election results endorsed the Liberal/Tory coalition, it was not a return to any kind of pre-war normality. To Britons in 1918, the whole world seemed to be in turmoil, and there was no reason to assume that peace had fully returned.

In Russia the communists had overthrown the old regime and murdered their royal family. British forces were fighting against the Bolshevik revolutionaries in Russia; there was communist agitation on the streets of Europe, even in Britain, most notably on Clydeside. The crowned heads of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia and Ottoman Turkey had been deposed and there seemed no guarantee that the House of Windsor – which had changed its name in 1917 from Saxe-Coburg-Gotha to cover up its German origins – would not go the same way.

In London even the police had gone on strike. If you read the minutes of Bristol's Watch Committee – responsible for public order in the city – at the end of the war, you find them obsessed with the reliability of the Bristol Constabulary. Once the money was found to give the police a pay-rise in keeping with the rising cost of living, the jittery city fathers calmed down a little.

The two main parties on the council, the Conservatives and Liberals, had suspended hostilities during the war. Liberals and Tories continued to contest Parliamentary elections in Bristol under their own names, but they now merged into a single 'Citizens' Party' on the city council in the mid-1920s.

The Citizens claimed that party politics had no part to play in the running of the council. No doubt many of them sincerely believed this, but in truth they were dissolving the historic differences of centuries in the face of the existential threat from Labour. The Liberals gradually lost numbers and influence among the Citizens, who soon enough sounded like the Conservatives they actually were, and could be relied on to oppose most spending plans put forward by Labour.

Labour's first MPs in Bristol were voted in in 1923 – former wartime conscientious objector Walter Ayles took Bristol North, while Walter Baker won in Bristol East. It would be another 14 years before Labour took control of Bristol City Council, though it would have happened sooner had it not been for the Citizens' Party's manipulation of the system of appointing Aldermen.

Such was the party bitterness that on gaining power in 1937 Labour moved quickly to place its own members in majorities on all council committees, something the opposition decried as tyrannical and undemocratic.

Labour retained majority control on Bristol's council for much of the rest of the twentieth century.

The rise of Labour in Bristol was one symptom of how the First World War dismantled the old Victorian world which many had taken for granted. It marked the end of centuries of people's uncritical deference to their social 'betters'.

There were other symptoms, too. In the 1920s and 30s, the letters and opinion columns of the local press were wailing about the 'servant problem', the difficulty in finding people, especially women, willing to work as domestics. While many married working women had returned – willingly or unwillingly – to being housewives at the war's end, many others, particularly unmarried ones, could now find work in offices and factories with far better pay and conditions than in domestic service.

Bristol boasted many industries, notably chocolate, tobacco and pottery, which employed large numbers of women. Jobs at Wills and Fry's, particularly, were sought-after.

The tobacco industry in Bristol flourished in the 1920s and 30s because the war had popularised cigarettes. Previously most smokers had been men, and many smoked pipes, but life in the trenches made cigarettes more convenient. Only a few medical minds regarded smoking as harmful (lung cancer was still relatively rare, and the cause was believed to be air pollution); on the contrary, many saw smoking as good for 'calming the nerves'. It became a patriotic duty to send cigarettes to the men at the Front.

The war also saw a dramatic rise in the number of women smoking, partly because factory work gave them the disposable income for cigarettes. There were periodic tobacco shortages during the war elsewhere in the country, though Bristol does not seem to have suffered unduly because of its tobacco industry, and because of the immense stocks in dockside bonded warehouses in 1914.

There was a shortage locally in 1919. The sales manager of Imperial Tobacco said it was because women were now smoking so much these days. 'Recently,' he said, 'two girls about to start on a fortnight's holiday called on one of our customers [a tobacconist] for

2,000 cigarettes, which they hoped would see them through.'

The war created other new habits. By 1918 younger men were all wearing wrist-watches instead of carrying the old pocket-watches favoured by their fathers. This fashion came directly from the trenches where wrist-watches were obviously more convenient.

Meanwhile, women's new-found spending power went on to create a mass-market in cosmetics. The First World War also popularised the brassiere; previously the preserve of middle class ladies, working class women now started wearing them in preference to the shifts and vests which their mothers wore.

Pubs, subject to draconian regulation during the war, did not see a complete return to the old times. While it was no longer illegal to buy someone else a drink in a pub, the wartime licensing hours remained in force and beer never regained its pre-war strength. The war saw a marked drop in drunkenness and alcohol-related violence and disturbances, and Bristol, with its long tradition of temperance, approved. The city remained puritanical in matters of drink for decades. In 1945 Bristol's licensing magistrates gave special permission for the pubs to open longer to celebrate victory over Germany on VE day – they closed at 11pm instead of 10pm.

Pub closing hours and frequent beer shortages during the war led to a rise in the popularity of the cinema. Moralists feared the effect these lurid films, particularly those from America, would have on impressionable young minds.

Other forms of entertainment were similarly frowned upon; many families during the war spent the higher wages they were earning in war industries to buy an upright piano. Many of these would eventually find their way into the 35,000 or so new homes, both council and private, which were built in Bristol between the wars.

The old pre-war world of huge numbers of families existing on the poverty line, of a small number of very wealthy families running the city, was breaking down. Most Bristolians did not regret its passing.

More Than the *Wills* Memorial Building

by Sarah Whittingham

In February 1913 the tobacco millionaires George and Henry Wills announced that they were giving a new building to the University of Bristol in memory of their father Henry Overton Wills III. He had effectively founded the institution by giving £100,000 to University College, Bristol, and served as its first Chancellor from 1909 to his death in 1911. However, the Wills Memorial Building – as it was eventually called – can be seen as more than a memorial to just one man or family.

The site of the new building was the old Bristol Blind Asylum and a drill hall at the top of Park Street. To obtain possession of the latter, George and Henry Wills and the Council had to jointly purchase an alternative site and pay for a new drill hall for the 4th Battalion (City of Bristol) Gloucestershire Regiment. This condition was fulfilled in Old Market, with a building opened in June 1915.

Demolition of the old buildings then began, using as few men of military age as possible, but construction work ground to a halt in October 1916, and did not start again until December 1918. The Wills Memorial Building was eventually opened on 9 June 1925 by King George V and Queen Mary. The war had vastly increased costs, and the final bill to the Wills brothers was half-a-million pounds.

On a beautiful, hot June day the whole of the city was decorated: brightly coloured flags, bunting, and lines of fluttering streamers filled the streets, many of which were closed to traffic. A Guard of Honour of 100 officers and men of the Bristol University Officers' Training Corps (BUOTC) was inspected by King George, before the King and Queen entered the building.

For three days afterwards a continuous stream of people thronged to view the interior. As well as the splendid rooms, they would have seen the war memorial, then outside the library, that lists the names of 173 members of the University who lost their lives. It was unveiled on 4 July 1924 by Field Marshal Lord Methuen, assisted by the Reverend Dr de Lacy O'Leary, formerly Chaplain to the BUOTC.

The sharp-eyed visitor might have spotted something else. One of the most striking things about the Wills Building are the carved stone grotesques all over it, which portray many contemporary characters carved in a modern style. And one of them bears a striking resemblance to Field-Marshal Douglas Haig. Haig was Commander-in-Chief of the British Expeditionary Force for most of the war, and debate over his role and tactics continues.



Grotesque resembling Field-Marshal Douglas Haig on the Wills Memorial Building. This photograph was taken in March 2013 when the building was being cleaned. University of Bristol/Dave Skelhorne.

Towards the end of 1918 the Council conferred the Freedom of the City on Earl Haig. He was not able to visit Bristol until 15 April 1920 when, apparently, he had a great welcome in which many hundreds of ex-service men took part. He was awarded the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws by the University, and made a Freeman of the Society of Merchant Venturers. He also paid a visit to his old school, Clifton College. The grotesque is depicted wearing a cap with a BUOTC badge on it, and although it could therefore represent a member of staff, none has been identified. It might therefore be conferring honorary membership on Haig in the light of these connections and honours.

Ironically, the grotesque was designed by Jean Hahn, a German national. Born Johannes Hahn in Grossenheim, a small town in Saxony, Hahn arrived in England in 1897. During the war he was declared an enemy alien and forced to give up his plaster, wood, and stone carving business. He was allowed to work as an employee, although his movements were strictly limited to a radius of five miles from his home, and he had to report regularly to the police. During this time he made artificial hands for war victims.

Hahn was presented to the King, and was present in the Great Hall for the opening ceremony. As was a plumber called Henry John (Harry) Patch, although he later wrote that, 'I can't say I was that interested.' Little did Harry know, however, that 80 years later he would be awarded an honorary degree by the University in that very room.



The topping out ceremony of the Wills Memorial Building on 27 February 1925. The architect George Oatley is standing in the third row from front, fourth from right. Harry Patch is seated at the left-hand-end of the front row.

Harry Patch was born in Combe Down near Bath in 1898, and served on the Western Front from June to September 1917 as part of the Lewis Gun team in the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, 7th Battalion. During that time he went 'over the top' in the Third Battle of Ypres, or Passchendaele, launched on 31 July 1917 by Field-Marshal Haig. He was later hit by shell shrapnel and shipped home for treatment, and by the time he was fit again the war had ended.

In the early 1920s Harry worked for Scull & Son as a plumber on the Wills Memorial Building. On top of the tower, above the belfry, is a trap door. Harry later remembered how, when the job was coming to an end, he and a lad he was working with signed their names in the wood, and placed two new pennies dated 1925 below the trap door, before sealing it with lead. He was also present at the official topping-out ceremony on 27 February 1925.

Harry Patch lived to become the last surviving British soldier from among the five million infantrymen who fought in the trenches of the Western Front during the First World War. In July 2007, to mark the ninetieth anniversary of the beginning of the Battle of

Passchendaele, he revisited the site in Flanders. There he described war as the 'calculated and condoned slaughter of human beings' and said that 'Too many died. War isn't worth one life.'

At my suggestion, Harry – as a native of the county of Somerset, a veteran of the Great War and a member of the workforce that constructed the Wills Memorial Building – was awarded an Honorary Degree of Master of Arts by Bristol University on 16 December 2005. And on 20 February 2008, aged 109, he was chosen to conduct the official switch-on of the new floodlights to illuminate the restored tower at night. (see photograph on inside front cover)

Harry died the following year, on 25 July 2009, aged 111. Pauline Leyton, manager of Harry's residential home, later recalled that when he received his degree, 'at that moment he was right at the top of the pinnacle... his eyes sparkling, looking down on the assembled congregation. The recognition meant so much to him.'



The Wills Memorial Building was officially opened on 9 June 1925 by King George V and Queen Mary. University of Bristol Library, Special Collections.

CONCLUSION

Why the War was Necessary

by John Blake

The question of why the First World War broke out is subtly different from the question of why Britain fought in it. On the face of it, there was little to connect the interests of the most powerful empire in the world with those of a small, increasingly-aggressive Balkan state in its confrontation with a decaying Central European empire. There had been two Balkan Wars in the years prior to 1914 which Britain had not deigned to engage with; why was the Austro-Serbian conflict of 1914 not simply another one of these? Of course, the intervention of Russia in the Balkans heightened tensions, but despite a century's-worth of misleading textbook assertions, Britain had no alliance with Russia, and indeed significant reason to want her kept busy and away from the frontiers of the British Raj in India. So it is conceivable that a war could have been fought on the edges of Europe in which Britain had little interest and no intention of expending blood and treasure. Some have argued that, even once Germany had found a way to involve itself – a way which necessitated war with France – Britain could still have stood aloof.

Given that Britain was the last of the major belligerents to declare war, it is clearly the case that its involvement was not essential for beginning or expanding the conflict. However, to argue that Britain could, or should, have kept away from the pan-European conflagration is not simply politically naïve, it is morally deficient.

To illustrate the first point, consider not the German invasion of Belgium in summer 1914, but Queen Elizabeth I's assistance to the Dutch Revolt in the later part of her reign, 350 years before. Extraordinarily cautious in the deployment of military force and money, Elizabeth sanctioned support for the Dutch because she recognised, in the words of her leading minister, the Low Countries as a 'counterscarp' (literally, the outer part of a fortress) to her kingdom. Though Elizabeth lacked the power to control the Low Countries herself, it was essential for the security of her realm that they be denied to an actively hostile power. In Elizabeth's case, that power was Hapsburg Spain, but though the nature of the challenge changed, the strategic importance of the Low Countries to Britain did not. In possession of Channel ports, a hostile Germany would have been significantly strengthened against the Royal Navy, and would then pose an alarming threat to the British mainland and to the seaborne trade upon which the value of the Empire rested,

and more, which fed and clothed the people of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales. This strategic imperative in no small way fed into the British determination to ensure Belgian neutrality – a feature of international geo-politics which all powers, including Germany's rulers, had guaranteed in the 1839 Treaty of London – was maintained. A state's first responsibility is to the defence of its people from attack, and on such grounds, the overthrow of Belgium was (rightly) not tolerable to the British government.

However, it would be wrong to suggest that this strategic calculation was coldly made with little consideration of the specific events of 1914. Just as her own Protestant faith drove Elizabeth to support the Dutch, so British policy towards Germany in 1914 had a strong moral element. The manner in which the Kaiser's army had destroyed the neutrality of Belgium aroused more passion than the matter of the continental balance of power. The German treatment of occupied Belgium and France made any attempt by Britain to step aside ethically untenable. By October 1914 German troops had deliberately killed over 6,000 Belgian and French civilians and forcibly deported 23,000 more to labour camps inside Germany. Although such atrocities have been dismissed as manufactured British propaganda, there is abundant evidence of their occurrence. One of the most compelling eye-witnesses to the maltreatment of Belgium is a man named Thomas Kettle. So horrified by what he saw of the German invasion, Kettle demanded Britain provide immediately both military and financial aid. 'Belgium is in agony,' he wrote. Kettle was no jingoistic Brit, bent on war – he was an Irish nationalist who was in Belgium on a mission to buy guns for the Irish Volunteers, a paramilitary organisation set up in anticipation of the outbreak of conflict with Ulster and the British Army over Irish Home Rule. Overcome at the suffering of the Belgians, including the wholesale destruction of the University of Louvain, Kettle insisted that passivity was impossible in the face of the German Army's abandonment of civilized behaviour. Returning from Belgium, Kettle became a recruiter for the British Army and eventually himself fought, and died, in the trenches of Flanders.

The behaviour of the German Army and especially its leadership throughout the war more than justified Kettle's belief in the necessity of resistance. General Erich von Ludendorff, who became the most powerful figure in Germany in the course of the war, had plans drawn up for the expulsion of Polish and Jewish populations from conquered areas in Eastern Europe, ready for German colonisation. These plans were ultimately abandoned for fear of international condemnation but such concerns did not prevent the German High Command imposing extraordinarily avaricious terms on Russia as the price of peace after the Bolshevik Revolution. Germany claimed a quarter of the Russian population, some of her most fertile farming land and nearly all her coal. German princes were to be set up as lords of Baltic vassal states. The treatment of Germany at Versailles pales beside their treatment of Russia.



British officers outside ruins of a pharmacy in Bethune, 7 May 1918. The war-damaged town in Northern France was 'adopted' by Bristol in 1920. © Imperial War Museum Q10994.

There can be little doubt that there was both a strategic and moral imperative to stopping the expansion of Germany in 1914. Though the cost was great for the British people, the war was a necessity. Furthermore, the behaviour of the German High Command makes clear, that – for all the horrors of the trenches – Europe was a better place for British intervention in the First World War.

Why the War was a Waste

by Neil Faulkner

Britain's rulers persuaded men to volunteer for military service in 1914 by portraying Germany as autocratic, expansionist, and a threat to peace. Newspapers decried the German invasion of Belgium and German atrocities against Belgian civilians. The same pro-war arguments are recycled today by right-wing politicians and revisionist historians.

War propaganda is always one-sided. Belgium was a small country invaded by a foreign power – Germany. Ireland was a small country under permanent military occupation by a foreign power – Britain.

The Germans executed thousands of Belgian civilians in 1914. This was reported because Germany was Britain's enemy. Belgian colonialists were chopping off the hands of children as punishment on rubber plantations in the Congo. The Serbs were engaged in widespread ethnic-cleansing of Muslims in the Balkans. The Russians carried out anti-semitic pogroms in Eastern Europe. These atrocities went unnoticed – because Belgium, Serbia, and Russia were Britain's allies.

The biggest empire in the world in 1914 was the British Empire. The second biggest was the French. Britain's rulers thought the rising power of Germany a threat to their empire. So they formed an alliance with France and Russia to encircle Germany in Europe, and engaged in a naval arms race which gave them a navy roughly twice the size of Germany's.

Germany's rulers wanted 'a place in the sun' like Britain and France. By 1914 they thought they were losing ground. They faced a 'war on two fronts' in Europe, and the Russian and French armies were becoming more powerful. They believed war was inevitable, and they thought it better to fight sooner rather than later.

All the great powers had the same basic aim in 1914. They represented rival groups of bankers, industrialists, and colonialists who were competing for empire and profit. The British, the French, and the Russians were determined to hold what they had and grab more if they could. The British and French planned to carve up the Middle East and seize German colonies in Africa. The Russians wanted Constantinople.

The Germans and Austrians wanted more control over Central Europe, the Balkans, and Turkey. They seemed more belligerent because they had more ground to make up. But the aim was the same in every case: to enrich a minority of capitalists by building an empire.

The global system was highly dysfunctional. The world had been divided into competing nation-states and empires, each controlled by a ruling class of bankers, industrialists, and millionaires. Because of the international tension, vast resources were wasted on battleships, artillery, and conscript armies that were eventually millions-strong.

British military expenditure increased 150 per cent between 1887 and 1914. The French Army at the outbreak of war comprised 700,000 front-line soldiers and another three million trained men in reserve.

In total, in the last four years of peace, the aggregate military spending of the great powers trebled. When the war began, six million conscripts headed for the Front, and another 13 million reserves mustered in the rear.

Even these numbers were dwarfed by what followed. The First World War transformed modern society's capacity to satisfy human need through mass production into its opposite: industrialised slaughter. The result was a 'war of attrition'. The Fronts went into lock-down. There was trench stalemate. So the demand was always for more men, more guns, more shells, more killing.

The British Army numbered about 400,000 men at the outbreak of war; it numbered four million by its end. At first the British had only a few dozen reconnaissance aircraft and no motorised trucks at all; by 1918 they had 22,000 aircraft and 56,000 trucks.

War was no longer the business of small professional armies campaigning in distant places. It had become a monstrous mechanism of destruction that engulfed entire societies. Around 15 million were killed and perhaps twice that number permanently maimed, either physically or mentally. Tens of millions had their lives torn apart by bereavement, displacement, or impoverishment. An estimated 750,000 civilians starved to death in Germany alone.

This was the human price of an industrialised war fought in the interests of the rich. Ordinary people – workers and peasants in Europe, subject-peoples in the colonies – were victims. British soldiers went back to the slums and unemployment of the industrial towns. Irish soldiers found themselves still living under colonial rule. Tanzanians and Syrians found that nothing had changed except the policemen's uniforms.

And the same dysfunctional global system – based on division, competition, empire, and profit for the few – soon plunged the world into the misery of the Great Depression, Fascism, and the Second World War. The children of the men who fought in the trenches found themselves fighting an even longer and bloodier war than their fathers: this time with 60 million dead.

Nor did it end there. The world was re-divided again, and the next generation lived in the shadow of the bomb. *The Bomb*. The ultimate insanity: the ingenuity and industry of humanity transformed into arsenals of destruction capable of killing every living thing on the planet.

And it continues today, with our rulers' self-proclaimed 'war on terror', which has unleashed a wave of instability, displacement, and sectarian killing from West Africa to Central Asia.

1914 marks the beginning of a century of industrialised warfare. It marks the advent of a world gone mad. A world shaped by the greed of millionaires and the ambition of warlords. A world in which the collective labour of humanity – which might be used to abolish hunger, homelessness, and disease – is devoted to creating vast mechanisms of killing and destruction.

It is something Harry Patch, the last fighting Tommy, knew. Were he still alive, his voice would be heard denouncing the jingoism and warmongering of our rulers as we enter the centenary of the First World War.

Harry had lived in the filth of the trenches, 'gone over the top' at Passchendaele, and seen the bodies of men ripped apart by flying metal. He had not wanted to go: he was conscripted. He had not wanted to kill: he made a pact with his mates never to kill a German. He hated war until the day he died in 2009. He told Tony Blair to his face that 'war is organised murder'.

That is why millions opposed war in the summer of 1914. It is why millions turned against the war as it raged. And it is why the war was ended in 1917 and 1918 by the greatest wave of mutinies, strikes, demonstrations, and revolutionary insurrections in human history. That triumph of the human spirit over profiteers and warlords is what we should be celebrating today.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

John Blake teaches history in a London comprehensive school, and has an interest in education policy. He is a Labour Party member and founder and one of two editors of *Labour Teachers*. He has written for the *TES*, *LabourList*, *Progress* and *Shifting Grounds*. Website: johndavidblake.org.

Charles Booth's present research interests concern collective memory, and the processes and artefacts of commemoration. He is an advisor to the BBC for their 'World War One at Home' 2014 Centenary project, and he is acting as researcher and consultant to a number of local and regional organisations involved in centenary projects. With Kent Fedorowich, he is working on a project about emigrants from Bristol who enlisted in dominion forces during the First World War. He is a volunteer tour guide at Arnos Vale Cemetery.

Lucienne Boyce is a writer of fiction and non-fiction who was born in Wolverhampton and now lives in Bristol. Her historical novel, *To The Fair Land* (Silverwood Books, 2012) is an eighteenth-century thriller about a voyage of discovery which is set in London, Bristol and the South Seas. *The Bristol Suffragettes* (Silverwood Books, 2013) is a history of the suffragette campaign in Bristol and the south west which includes a pull-out map and walk. Lucienne is currently researching the impact of the First World War on the suffrage movement, and writing a historical novel about a Bow Street Runner who is also an amateur pugilist. Website: lucienneboyce.com.

Clive Burlton is an author, publisher and social historian. Following a corporate and consultancy career, in 2011 he wrote *Trenches to Trams – The Life of a Bristol Tommy* (Tangent Books). The story, about his wife's grandfather, led him to discover that three of his own grandparents did their bit during the Great War. Stanley Barnes volunteered with 'Bristol's Own', his wife Daisy was in the Land Army and Hermon Burlton served in the Royal Field Artillery. A volunteer at Bristol Record Office since 2008, Clive is a regular speaker at history and community groups across the city. He co-founded Bristol Books CIC in 2012 and he's a non-executive director of Empica PR Ltd. He is co-author with Eugene Byrne of *Bravo, Bristol!* (Redcliffe Press, 2014).

Eugene Byrne is a freelance journalist and author. He is currently also editor of the Bristol Times local history section of the *Bristol Post*. His previous books for Bristol Cultural Development Partnership include *Isambard Kingdom Brunel: A Graphic Biography* (2006) and *The Bristol Story* (2008), both with artist Simon Gurr. His other recent works on Bristol history include *Unbuilt Bristol: The City that Might Have Been 1750-2050* (Redcliffe Press, 2013). He and Clive Burlton have written a social and military history of Bristol during the First World War, *Bravo, Bristol!!*, which was published by Redcliffe Press in 2014.

Nigel Costley started work as an apprentice compositor – one of the last to be trained in ‘hot metal’. He was elected Father of the Chapel and spent 15 years in the role through the most turbulent times for printing and trade unionism. He particularly championed support for those out of work, including establishing a unique training cooperative. Having escaped school as soon as he could, Nigel returned to education on a part-time basis, eventually achieving a MSc with Leicester University. He became South West TUC Regional Secretary in 1996. He is the author of *West Country Rebels*.

Neil Faulkner is a freelance archaeologist and historian. He works as a writer, lecturer, excavator, and occasional broadcaster. He is currently a Research Fellow at the University of Bristol, a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, the Editor of *Military History Monthly*, and a Lecturer for NADFAS. A leading First World War archaeologist, he co-directs the Great Arab Revolt Project in Jordan, and is author of the forthcoming *Lawrence of Arabia's War*. He is also founder-director of the long-running Sedgeford Historical and Archaeological Research Project in Norfolk. Website: www.neilfaulkner.org.uk.

Dr Anna Farthing is Director of Harvest Heritage Arts and Media and a founding partner of Harvest Films Ltd. Following a decade as a freelance director in media and performance, Anna began using drama to engage audiences with heritage in 2004. Anna studied Drama at Bristol and Manchester Universities, where she gained her PhD in 2011. Anna was elected to the board of the International Museum Theatre Alliance in 2006 and served as Chair from 2009 to 2012. She is currently a director of the Bristol Shakespeare Festival and Bristol Festivals. She is a Visiting Fellow of Bristol University and an Associate of the Higher Education Academy, and the Research Associate for the Conservatoire for Dance and Drama.

Kent Fedorowich is Reader in British Imperial History at UWE. The over-arching theme throughout all of his work to date has been a comparative approach and one that is permeated by the fascination with Anglo-dominion relations. As a Canadian who has lived in the UK for more than 30 years, he believes he can give a unique insight into this relationship. It has been this theme which has formed the backbone of his work whether it is empire migration, POW history, or more recently Anglo-Canadian wartime relations.

Professor Paul Gough is a painter, broadcaster and writer. He has exhibited widely in the UK and abroad, and is represented in the permanent collection of the Imperial War Museum, London, the Canadian War Museum, Ottawa, and the National War Memorial, New Zealand. His research into the imagery of war and peace has been presented to audiences throughout the world. He has published five books: a monograph on *Stanley Spencer: Journey to Burghclere* (Sansom & Co, 2006); *A Terrible Beauty: British Artists in the First World War* (2010); *Your Loving Friend* (Sansom & Co, 2011), the edited correspondence between Stanley Spencer and Desmond Chute; *Banksy: the Bristol Legacy* (editor, Redcliffe Press, 2012); and *Brothers in Arms: John and Paul Nash* (Sansom & Co, 2014). He has curated a number of exhibitions linked to the First World War in 2014. He is Pro Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President at RMIT, Melbourne, Australia.

Patrick Hassell is a retired engineer who has worked for Handley Page, British Aircraft Corporation (on Concorde), Douglas and Saab, mostly on aircraft performance and flight testing. He was Business Development Manager for Dowty Propellers but retired early to follow his interests in aviation history and served a term as a Bristol City Councillor. He is Vice-Chairman of the Rolls-Royce Heritage Trust in Bristol.

Peter Insole is a Senior Archaeological Officer in the City Design Group at Bristol City Council with responsibility for managing the Bristol Historic Environment Record. During 2010-11 he managed the English Heritage funded project to create Know Your Place, an online geographic information system (GIS). In 2013, through his company Local Learning, he secured Heritage Lottery funding for a community heritage project to explore the history of the Shirehampton Remount Depot. This culminated in the creation of Avonmouth Primary School's play *Their Lives Beneath Our Feet* and the BBC documentary *The Equine War*.

Alys Jones graduated from the BA Honours Illustration course in Falmouth in 2006, and completed her MA in Illustration: Authorial Practice, also in Falmouth. Her MA project focused on the generation of visual responses to First World War literature. This became combined with an exploration of Meta-fictional narratives, culminating in the production of her book *Beyond the Wire* which was jointly awarded the 2011 Graphic Literature Prize by Atlantic Press. She has worked on commissions for Daunt Books, Truro Arts Company and Falmouth Art Gallery, as well as continuing to develop her own projects. Website: alystration.wordpress.com.

Melanie Kelly is seconded from Business West to Bristol Cultural Development Partnership as Research Director and Project Manager. Her publications include *Brunel: In Love with the Impossible* (co-editor and author), *Darwin: For the Love of Science* (co-editor and author), and *Take Flight: Celebrating Aviation in the West of England Since 1910* (co-author). She has co-ordinated and written support material and children's editions of books for the Great Reading Adventure since 2003. She has also written on managing partnerships and making cities legible.

Dr Nick Nourse is a postdoctoral research assistant at the University of Bristol. He has participated in a series of public engagement projects including working with his co-author Pete Insole on the history of the Shirehampton Remount Depot; his research has been used in the BBC documentary *The Equine War* and he is writing an account of the depot for publication. His subject specialisms include social history, cartography and GIS, musicology and popular music of the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Dr Sarah Whittingham FSA is a writer and lecturer whose books include: *Wills Memorial Building* (Bristol: University of Bristol, 2003); *The University of Bristol: A History* (Bristol: University of Bristol, 2009); *The Victorian Fern Craze* (Oxford: Shire Books, 2009); *Sir George Oatley: Architect of Bristol* (Bristol: Redcliffe Press, 2011); *Fern Fever: The Story of Pteridomania* (London: Frances Lincoln, 2012), and *Remembering and Forgetting: Three Sisters and the Great War* (forthcoming). Website: www.sarahwhittingham.co.uk.



'Convoy Arriving with Wounded' (oil on canvas) depicting an arrival at Beaufort War Hospital by Sir Stanley Spencer, CBE, RA (Cookham 1891 - Cliveden 1959) © the estate of Stanley Spencer. All rights reserved, 2014/Bridgeman Images. DACS/National Trust Images.

The first Bristol Great Reading Adventure took place in 2003 with a mass-read of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*. For this year's project we've commissioned a collection of short essays on a range of topics to tell the story of Bristol and the First World War. You'll learn about events in the city when war was declared; different branches of the fighting forces with Bristol connections; local industries contributing to the war effort; changes on the home front that resulted from the conflict; Bristol's conscientious objectors and the commemorations of the dead; the post-war years and more.

This book has been produced especially for the Great Reading Adventure which is part of the Bristol 2014 programme, commemorating the centenary of the start of the First World War. It is distributed free of charge to readers across the city. If you have finished with this book and do not wish to keep it, please pass on to friends or family without charge.

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