



DERBYSHIRE LIVES THROUGH THE FIRST WORLD WAR

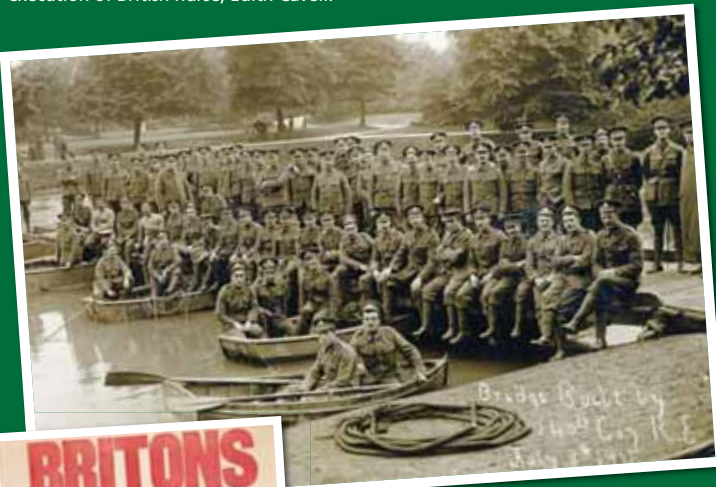
Answering the call

Lord Kitchener has one of the most famous and recognisable faces, appearing, with magnificent moustache, on the recruitment poster 'Your Country Needs You!'

Kitchener's poster has become a design icon and the recruitment campaign was so successful that 175,000 men volunteered in a single week ending 5th September 1914. By the end of September 750,000 had enlisted. An average of 125,000 enlisted each month up to mid-1915. 2,467,000 men enlisted in 18 months, leaving the army short of rifles and uniforms.

Pressure was placed on men to enlist with posters aimed at questioning men's masculinity; if you had not enlisted you were not a man, using wives and children to shame them.

Others promoted the image of Germans as ruthless and inhuman, exploiting notorious events such as the treatment of Belgium, the sinking of the Lusitania, or the execution of British nurse, Edith Cavell.



Soldiers in Pavilion Gardens, Buxton, 1915.
Courtesy of Buxton Museum & Art Gallery and www.picturethepast.org.uk



Recruitment poster

If you are looking to investigate your own community's heritage, the Derbyshire Record Office holds a wide variety of First World War archives, these include official documents, personal letters, diaries and photographs.

All are available to research at the Derbyshire Record Office in Matlock.



Tel: 01629 538347
record.office@derbyshire.gov.uk
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Auxiliary Hospitals

At the outbreak of War, the British Red Cross and the Order of St John Ambulance formed the Joint War Committee. They had formed Voluntary Aid Detachments, VADs, in 1909 which trained volunteers in First Aid, Nursing, Sanitation, Hygiene and Cookery.

For the War, they also provided motorised ambulances, replacing the old horse drawn vehicles. Auxiliary Hospitals were also set up across the country to treat wounded men returning from the front. There were 40 auxiliary hospitals in Derbyshire. They were set up in town halls, schools, cricket pavillions and even private houses, large and small.

The hospitals were run by thousands of volunteers, including Vera Brittain, who nursed in the Buxton Dome. Female doctors were very rare and were often treated with disrespect and suspicion. One of the first women doctors was Elsie Inglis in London. She approached the government offering her services. Her proposal was dismissed and a ministry official remarked "My good lady, go home and sit still".



Blackwell Red Cross Hospital.
Courtesy of Derbyshire Libraries and www.picturethepast.org.uk



Red Cross charity collection.
Courtesy of Derbyshire Libraries and www.picturethepast.org.uk

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Conscientious Objection

Many men held beliefs that led them to refuse to fight. They were called conscientious objectors. During the First World War there were 16,000 'COs', or 'conchies'.

Some took up work with the ambulance service at the front, but did not take up arms, others refused to take any part in the War.

Men met hostility from their families, their communities and the press. A man in the street judged as fit and able, and not fighting, could be given a white feather as a symbol of his believed cowardice, usually by women. It took huge courage to refuse to fight and face the abuse and accusations of cowardice.

Once conscription was introduced, it became harder for people to refuse to fight and many were sent to internment camps and prisons. Henry 'Harry' Haston of Stonebroom, Derbyshire, was conscripted towards the end of the War but registered as conscientious objector. He was sent to Dartmoor Prison where he died aged just 26.



Henry 'Harry' Haston.
Courtesy of Ms A.P.Y. Gallon and www.picturethepast.org.uk

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Women and War

The role of women in British society changed drastically during the War

The War was a terrible time but it did have some positive outcomes for women in Britain. With so many men fighting at the front women were needed to take on the jobs vacated. Edith Lytton Gell of Hopton Hall, Derbyshire, published a pamphlet, "Mobilising Maidens", encouraging women to take up war work, particularly farm work, to ensure the food supply.

Many women famously took up dangerous work in munitions factories, such as the explosives factory at Langwith and the shell filling works in Derby. Many women also took jobs on buses, trains and at coal mines.

Women still met prejudice and resistance. Some were refused work simply because they were female. A woman doctor in London, Elsie Inglis, was told; "My good lady, go home and sit still" when she approached the government offering her services. However, things were beginning to change and activists for women's rights continued to campaign throughout the War.

The 1918 Representation of the People Act gave women over 30 who owned property the right to vote in election for the first time. A combination of the pre-War Suffragette movement and the work done by British women to support the war effort meant the act passed through Parliament with an overwhelming majority.



Women workers at Claye's Wagon Works, Long Eaton.
Courtesy of Derbyshire Libraries and www.picturethepast.org.uk

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