

HTSM First World War Monthly Journal

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Entertaining the Troops

The Rector's Lenten Letter referred briefly to the War, describing Lent as 'an opportunity for securing faith, courage and self-sacrifice to help us in our trouble'. He maintained a grave, but positive attitude throughout the war.

The parish was responding well. Concerts and entertainments were put on for the men of the Royal Field Artillery who were billeted in the town. Similar events were a common part of parish life, usually given by ladies and gentlemen, with songs, readings, poems and sketches. This sort of hospitality continued throughout the War.

The Rector asked for warm shirts, scarves, cardigans and 'woolies' for the soldiers billeted in the town. The local women always responded well to appeals like this. £25-8s-0d had been raised for comforts for the men of D Company of the Queen's Regiment in Windsor. These would probably include chocolate, cigarettes and magazines.

So many men from the parish were joining up that there were vacancies in Holy Trinity choir. Several of the men would lose their lives in the War, but the choirs of both churches, and St. Luke's, continued throughout the War. In 1906 there had been no choir master, and the rector daringly suggested that a lady might step forward if no gentleman could be found, but there is no evidence that this happened, even in wartime. The Sunday Schools had worried that they would have to abandon their prize-giving, but they were able to hold it. This may have been because of a general uncertainty about how much of normal life could or should carry on.

Two soldiers from the parish were killed in February. George Frederick Kimber of the 1st Battalion The Queen's was killed in action on 4th February in France, near Peronne. His wife Mary lived at 1, Norfolk Cottages on Bright Hill. He was 36 and had been a labourer at the Friary Brewery. Leslie Conrad Collier died of wounds on 28th February, aged 22. He was in the 18th (Queen Mary's Own) Hussars, and had been an errand boy for a bootmaker. Two of his brothers died later in the War.