

HTSM First World War Monthly Journal

December 1914

The Rector went to Southampton Docks with the men of the Queen's to bid them goodbye. He presented the 5th Battalion with a regimental flag taken at Lucknow. He reported that they had arrived safely at Port Said.

The colours of the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the Queen's were laid up for the war, hung in the Queen's chapel.

The Parish Hall had been turned into a club for HM Forces, and was mainly used by the Reserve Battalion, the Queen's. The Mothers' Union was holding intercessions for soldiers and sailors in the Parish Rooms.

All clergy had been sent a letter from the War Office asking them to identify retired NCOs under 50 who could train men. It was thought that clergy were well placed to do this.

A poem was printed, called *To a False Patriot*, about someone who persuaded a man to enlist, then got him drunk to celebrate and put under guard.

No soldiers were killed this month, but there would of course have been many casualties, as in every month of the war.

A Guildford soldier who was not killed in the war took part on the Christmas Truce. This was Edward Berryman, an officer with the 39th Garhwal Rifles, Indian Army, who were on the Western Front. He wrote to his mother 'about an extraordinary thing that happened on Christmas Day'. On Christmas Eve he had seen 'the German trenches were lined with little lights, which we afterwards discovered were Christmas trees. Well, next morning we heard them singing and shouting in their trenches ...' About midday the Germans gradually climbed out of their trenches into the open. 'Of course, one couldn't shoot them in cold blood like that' so he and his men climbed out and for about an hour both sides walked about 'talking & laughing, swapping baccy & cigarettes, biscuits etc.' The English Colonel had a long talk in German with the other side '& you would never believe we had been fighting for weeks'.

Mary Alexander, November 2014