

FROM PEACE TO WAR

In July 1914, war-clouds darkened over Europe. Some British people were aware of the impending crisis, but few expected that there would be a war, or that it would be so catastrophic. With the Bank Holiday ahead, the Great North Railway arranged excursions along the east coast through Norfolk, Lincolnshire and East Yorkshire. The *Spalding and Lincolnshire Standard* even announced the departure of children aged 14 . 18 for France the week after war was declared, to learn to speak French correctly.¹

Not everyone was in favour of war; Gedney Adult School sent a memorial to Sir Edward Grey asking him to mediate. A Sunday meeting on the Cornhill, Lincoln, sent copies of their unanimous resolution to the Prime Minister and Sir Edward Grey, declaring great alarm at the 'prospect of a European war involving all the nations of Europe, owing to secret alliances.' Further, as Britain was not implicated in any quarrel arising from the actions of Austria in Serbia, the Government should 'rigidly decline to engage in war'.² One of those who agreed with this view was Holbeach-born Norman Angell who in 1933 won the Nobel Peace Prize. On 2 August Angell was one of the speakers in Hyde Park appealing for peace.³

Among the anti-war faction was the Bishop of Lincoln, Edward Lee Hicks. The *Lincolnshire, Boston & Spalding Free Press* of 4 August reported him pleading for neutrality on the beach at Cleethorpes with the fleet riding at anchor behind him. He hoped Britain would keep out of it, saying 'Rushing into war without reason was tempting Providence. War would inflict a tremendous curse on our industrial community.' He was right. The peaceful, but busy life of Boston (Fig. 1) typically became a town of unemployment and suffering.



Lincs to the Past reference: 1065

Fig. 1. LCL 1065. Boston in the 1900s. Looking North. Private wagons owned by Boston Deep Sea Fishing passing over LNER crossing; Great Northern Hotel on left; open topped tram; passers by.
From Lincs to the Past courtesy of Lincolnshire County Council.

<http://www.lincstothePast.com/searchResults.aspx?qsearch=1&keywords=LCL+1065&x=71&y=34>

Developing the Home Front

When war was declared Bishop Hicks wrote that Sir Edward Grey & Co had 'steered the nation into the most horrible war of European History which could have been avoided by avoiding the triple entente, and ideas of the balance of power.'⁴ However, as *The Times* pointed out, it was 'unpatriotic' socialists who demanded neutrality thus denigrating all who tried to prevent the coming slaughter.⁵

The authorities were well prepared for War. In June 1911 plans were made for local secret agents. Laws entitling the Military to take any horses they wanted, by force if necessary, under Section 115 of the Army Act were ready by 4 September 1912. In East Kirkby and Spilsby VAD detachments were formed in March 1913, and six others were formed in Lincolnshire that year, ready to nurse the wounded. Leave for the armed forces was cancelled on 3 July 1914 and by the 5th, Police Superintendents had received orders for calling out Parish and Special Constables to guard places such as railway bridges.⁶

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DAILY LIFE IN THE HOME FRONT

The home front was the foundation of the fight in Europe. Civilian morale indicated ability to sustain the War; if the home front crumbled, so would the military. The quality of daily life was therefore highly significant and realising that change was inevitable some people started writing diaries.

James Arthur Herbert Bell, assistant curate at St James's Church, Boston from 1913 to 1917, curate of Market Deeping from 1917 to 1918, began his war diary on Sunday, 2 August. Noting the change to war footing, he wrote: 'This morning we were told by Mrs Webber the agent's wife that the German trading boats now in Boston must leave by the next tide, whether unladen or no.' The price of bread had risen by 1d a loaf implying hardship for many. The Bank Holiday weekend was extended and on Monday, a notice was placed on the Custom House Door telling Naval Reserves to report at 10 Skirbeck Road. On Tuesday news came of the embodiment of the Territorial Army; detachments out on manoeuvres were recalled to their Camps although the actual state of war did not begin until 11.00 p.m. on that day. A policeman exhibited the General Mobilization order outside the Assembly Rooms and *Guardian* offices displayed a telegram giving news of the ultimatum sent by Britain to Berlin. War was imminent. When the Bishop went to Barrow-on-Humber on Thursday he noted that Immingham oil-tanks were already being carefully guarded by thousands of troops.

Mrs Helen Beatrice Fane, the wife of Colonel William Vere Reeve Fane of Fulbeck, whose son Harry, aged 16¾, went to the Front in March 1915, began keeping her War Journals on Tuesday, muddling the day and date in her excitement, writing 'Wed. 4th Aug 1914.' She realised this mistake the next day and began over-writing the figures.⁸ Her journals consist mainly of cuttings from newspapers, but she also wrote brief personal notes. She dismissed two gardeners with a month's wages and their fare home, hoping they would enlist. She bought two bags of flour, and ordered from Harrods one bag each of split peas, rice, and beans. Mrs Royce, wife of the local Labour politician, reported to the Spalding Board of Guardians that panic buying of flour had already forced up the price from 25s to 37s a quart.⁹ Petrol was said to be getting scarce. Another lady's husband was about to organise a system of motor cars to see that those who would otherwise go hungry could be fed.¹⁰

Communications were disrupted. Letters failed to arrive punctually and on Wednesday, the Government took over the railways. By Thursday, £1 bank notes had been issued. As there was no news about the fleet Rev. Bell concluded that the papers must be under some sort of censorship. Helen Fane was dismayed that the village nurse had volunteered for active service. She had great hopes she would be refused!¹¹

On Thursday, 17 August, the Military took over Boston Dock. It was guarded by constables of the Police Reserve, some with firearms. The next day the German iron-built schooner, the *Gerhard* of Geestemunde, Prussia, laden with timber, was towed into Boston as a war prize. The borough police, with the Customs collector, Mr G.E. Hall, took over the vessel from Admiralty officials at the river mouth and the crew were taken into custody.¹² Security was increased by the repair of the dock gates and the dock offices were railed in. Mr B. Dyer, Clerk to the Boston Harbour and Dock Commissioners, warned that from now on, tradesmen having business on the Dock premises, also sailors and fishermen, would have to obtain a pass at the Dock offices which must be given up to the sentry before admission.¹³ During October, increasing security but decreasing trade, the government's decision that 'From Thursday, foreign trawlers are banned from East Coast ports' was published.¹⁴

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Boston had 50 cyclist scouts encamped in the St James Schools who kept the Telegraph safe. Boy Scouts were used to take the place of Parish Constables. They received 1s per day as ration money. Acting under Police authority, Scouts began patrolling roads around Spalding at night, working in twos and threes. One night in mid-August, Mr E.W. Bell Jnr and Mr G. Lacy Barritt were on duty at Pinchbeck Road, Sharpe's Bridge. Accosting two men who were apparently speaking in a foreign language, they discovered the foreigners were going to Surfleet. While following them, they met a colleague, Mr Smith, also on duty, who recognised them as farm workers, one of many false alarms.¹⁵

AGRICULTURE

August and September were the first harvest months of the war and the crops were reported to be the best for ten years.¹⁶ At harvest workers could increase their income. As early as 15 August, the Government called to farmers to cultivate more, to avoid the slaughter of immature or breeding stock and asked that the total head of livestock, particularly pigs, should be increased.¹⁷ Farmers were told strict economy in feeding was necessary. People were urged to keep poultry and local newspapers printed advice about care, and what to do after killing.¹⁸ A sufficient supply of food was vital and surplus vegetable seedlings should be distributed among neighbours rather than being composted. However, by 10 September there were eleven outbreaks of Foot and Mouth Disease. People were concerned that German prisoners might spread it, but were assured arrangements for their detention prevented contact with farm stock and clothing could be disinfected. Prisoner of war camps were at Cammiringham and Lenton. In late September, because labour was scarce, several Belgian refugees went from Spalding to Bourne Fen to assist in the potato harvest. Farmers wanted children to work on farms.

However, indicating a conflict of Governmental interest, recruiting meetings were held across the county. There were stirring speeches at the South Market Place at Alford in early September. The area was packed with people, a great number attending from country districts.¹⁹ Farm workers probably had more incentive to enlist than other groups of workers.²⁰ Soon many were away fighting in Belgian and French trenches. By 31 August, 18 men from Fulbeck had enlisted, three of whom wanted to volunteer for foreign service.²¹

MOBILIZATION

The mobilization of Territorials led to additional expenditure for local authorities and in early August the Boston Town Council voted an extra £300 to the Mayor to enable him to defray the cost. C Company, Boston Territorials, wrote thanking the Council for this grant. It enabled us to march out of Boston within 36 hours of the order to mobilize with our field equipment complete. A Meeting of the Lincoln City Council was informed that ten reservist members of the constabulary had rejoined their units, and advised that replacements for these men should be sought at a wage of 27s per week.²² Some Territorials and Reservists serving with the Boston Fire Brigade were immediately called to the Front. Capt. Rysdale and Mr McGuire, who both belonged to the National Reserve and were liable to serve, wanted the Corporation to say whether they should offer themselves for enlistment. The Council thought they should not leave the town as they might at any time be required in connection with the Fire Brigade.²³

Rev. Bell decided at the end of August it was his duty to enlist, but asked the Chancellor if he considered it proper for a Deacon to go to war. The Chancellor considered military service to be a breach of a Deacon's ordination vows. Bell disagreed, but followed his advice.²⁴ Three Belgian students who were staying with Rev. W. Lieber, the Catholic Priest in Sleaford returned to Belgium to enlist.²⁵

Thousands of men now gathered together in one place created disruptions. When 5,000 troops were billeted at Gainsborough all public buildings were utilised. Stabling was requisitioned, and large garages were wanted for guns. Grass by the Trent provided an ideal place for training, and the town's fine 1,000 yards rifle range was taken over. The Military considered drafting 3,000 men and 3,000 horses for the winter in Skegness where the ice rink would be used for horses. Local hospitals were lent for the wounded, making it more difficult for civilians to get treatment. Wisbech Town Council offered the Sutton Bridge Urban Council the use of the port hospital for wounded men.²⁶ However, Lincolnshire men were reported as not responding to the enlistment call as was hoped. Men were asked if there was any reason why they should not enlist. A public meeting to promote recruitment was held in the Palace Theatre, Scunthorpe, on 4 September at 9.00 p.m.²⁷ Additional moral pressure was applied by local newspapers. On 19 September the *Boston and Lincolnshire Standard* published its roll of honour, a list of men serving in the forces. In the following months it became a gallery of photographs and ultimately a list of men dead or wounded.

SPECIAL CONSTABLES

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Men were needed to enrol as Parish or Special Constables to cover the shortage in police manpower. Captain C. Mitchell-Innes, the Chief Constable of the County at Lincoln appealed to magistrates and justices to take the lead in enrolling. He said that this honorary position would give the fullest moral support to the Chief of Police in the County.²⁸ John Amos Hipkin of Stickford, Boston, age 47, Grocer, Draper and Provision Merchant, was appointed a Special on 7 September 1914. His certificate of authority, signed by the Director of Recruiting dated 31 October 1915 entitled him to call upon men who were eligible for enlistment.²⁹ His More Important Duties included arresting any person wandering abroad and lodging in any Barn, Outhouse, or Enclosed premises, not having visible means of subsistence or any person being a deserter from the Army or Navy. He could be most useful to the Police by noticing and communicating to Police the arrival of any strangers in your District; noticing if any of the inhabitants were not following their usual occupations and in what way they were spending their time. He must notify the Police immediately should he hear any conversation by strangers which he thought would be of service to the Authorities. However, some men, when sworn in, were reported as not fit enough to do the required Swedish drill.³⁰

Over 1,000 Grimsby men were in the Special Police, formed under Major Bennett, the force at its strongest being 770. Much of their work lay in ordinary street duty, but their existence enabled the Chief Constable of that area, John Stirling, to release 46 men for the army. Specials helped the Police and the railway telephone network in reporting and issuing air raid warnings. Some people deprecated their mandatory put that light out, but after the War, Grimsby inhabitants agreed that the darkness saved them. Air raid action was taken on fifty-seven occasions.³¹

AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS

Civilians were asked to take their own anti-aircraft precautions. In practice this meant acceding to Police, Admiralty or Military requests. The Home Secretary made Provincial Orders to certain areas in the Thames Estuary to extinguish lights at 10.00 p.m. each night; similar orders were made shortly afterwards for Grimsby and Cleethorpes. During the next few months inland Orders were made for Grantham, Newark, Sleaford and Stamford.³² Superintendent Barton could see Spalding lights at Sutton Bridge and Councillor Stapleton said the glare could be seen nearly at Skegness.³³ On 10 September it was announced that the Admiralty wanted Spalding lights to go out after 11.00 p.m. On 10 October the street lights at Sutton Bridge were turned off. Shops and other premises were required to reduce their lighting because it could be seen 25 miles away. Once the buzzer sounded to warn of an aerial attack, lights had to be turned off. If driving, the car's headlights must be put out. From Monday, 5 April 1915, official lighting restrictions came into force for whole country. Lights visible from the sea or estuary must be extinguished. Indoor lights were to be obscured from outdoor vision.³⁴ Lighting restrictions meant from September 1915 Kirton-in-Lindsey Church Evensong began at 6.00 p.m.³⁵ Trains had to obscure carriage lights by drawing down blinds, and the locomotives' fireboxes had to be screened. Sometimes it was difficult to know whose orders to follow and the Police were advised that the over-riding authority was Northern Command at York.³⁶

In February 1916 a notice was posted in the Grantham newspapers that implied people would be fired on if they flashed torches when an air raid was expected. The sale of fireworks was prohibited. In October 1917 the Rev. J.M.F. Humphreys was summonsed for contravening the Defence of the Realm Lighting Regulations. Mitchell-Innes said 'his excitable demeanour towards the Bench during the hearing of the case attracted general attention.'

On 15 September 1916 the Chief Constable of Lincoln, Mr F.J. Crawley, issued instructions concerning action to be taken if enemy aircraft were signalled in the city vicinity. The engineering firm, Ruston, Proctor & Co. Ltd, would blow blasts on their buzzer for two minutes with stops every ten seconds. All lights must be extinguished and citizens must shelter in their cellars or lower parts of the house. Special Constables were to assemble at their respective Police Stations. If aircraft were not detected prior to their arrival over the city, and the buzzer therefore was not blown, as soon as they realised the danger people were expected to act in the same way. The all clear would be one minute's continuous blast on the buzzer.³⁷ People were not allowed to ring bells. The Vicar of Barton on Humber, Mr Varah, wanted to ring bells in the half hour after sunset. He was not allowed to do this. However, in November 1917 permission was given in certain areas but not in Lincolnshire. In March 1916 Mr Varah was served with a summons for the defective lighting of his church and fined £2.0.0.³⁸

PREPARATIONS FOR INVASION

In early December, the Lord Lieutenant of Lincolnshire Lord Brownlow of Belton House, issued invasion instructions. It was anticipated that the enemy might beach ships on Lincolnshire's shores. If invaded Lincolnshire people were to stay by their farms and other work places and carry on as normal. He wrote:

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'Nothing could be more harmful or dangerous than a general movement in the nature of flight or uncontrolled panic on the part of women, children or old people.' He assured *Lincolnshire Star* readers that 'Any movement ordered by the military would be properly controlled' but also warned that able-bodied men would be required.³⁹ Huge posters, printed in red were issued.⁴⁰ (Fig. 2). These were distributed to the Police on 16 December with instructions that they were only to be displayed when necessary but in the meantime people should be quietly warned of the instructions the King's proclamation conveyed and advised what they were expected to do.⁴¹

Another statement was made on 7 January 1915 by Sir John McGrath, Chairman of the Nottingham Watch Committee. This coincided with publication of the House of Lords debate on instructions issued to Lord Lieutenants of certain counties. Emergency Committees had been appointed on the East Coast of England including Nottingham, York, Lincoln and Norfolk. They would provide men who could hurriedly dig trenches. Nottinghamshire should expect between 10,000 to 20,000, even 100,000 refugees from other counties such as Lincolnshire, and needed to prepare for them.⁴²

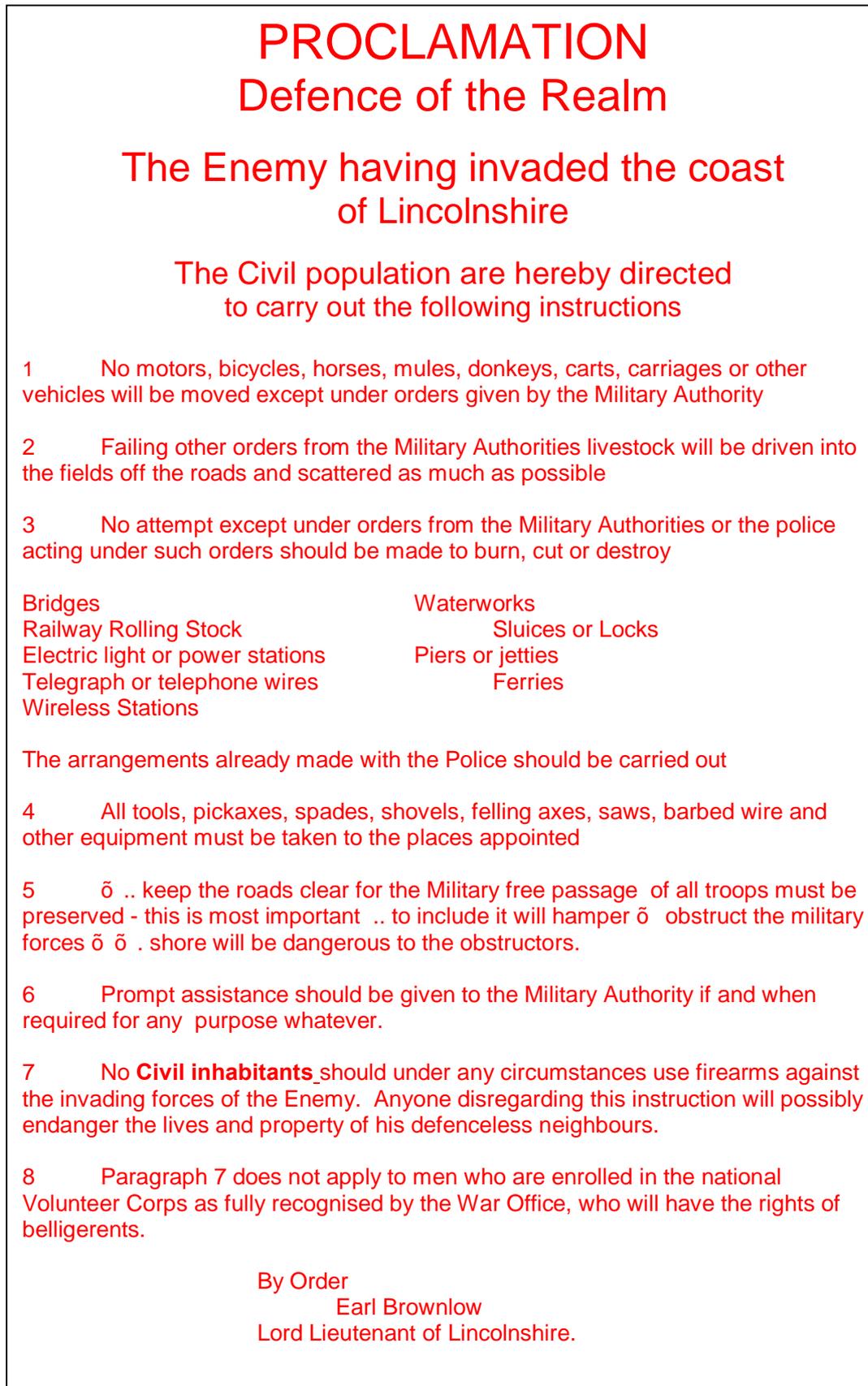


Fig. 2. Invasion Poster. LA. 9 ANC 9/4/9

RELIEF AND FUND RAISING

In 1910 Norman Angell published *The Great Illusion* in which he argued that a war would be economically destructive for victor and vanquished.⁴³ It was now generally accepted that the war would have a serious effect upon the economy and consequently many relief committees were established. Fund raising now formed an important part of daily life. In 1917 Miss Agnes Conway of the Imperial War Museum compiled a list of 100 Charities to which Lincolnshire people subscribed. It is undoubtedly incomplete.⁴⁴

PRINCE OF WALES RELIEF FUND

On 7 August the Prince of Wales established his National Relief Fund to alleviate the deep anxiety and considerable distress to those least able to bear it. The Mayor of Boston, like other Mayors, received a letter from Edward asking him to create a subscription list and forward the results to Buckingham Palace.⁴⁵ However, how the Fund was to be used was unclear so the former Prime Minister, Arthur Balfour, sent an explanation to local newspapers. He said it was to relieve civil and military distress and women must be included. For my own part it is the women thrown out of employment by the war who seem to have the strongest claims upon our sympathy and aid and so, I believe, think my colleagues of the Executive Committee.

In early September Holbeach, which supported a Holiday Home for Disabled Soldiers at Lowestoft, decided to start a subscription list for the Prince of Wales Relief Fund. One hundred residents wanted to contribute one pound each.⁴⁶ Later that month Spalding organized a collection for the National Fund. The Gentlemen's Society gave £100. Mr J.T. Atton wanted ladies to collect from house-to-house. He said they had a very nice and pleasant way, much more so than the men, in introducing the matter. Rev. A. Morris said his parish was poor and there had already been a collection for the Red Cross and an appeal for the Belgian refugees now in the town. Spalding had been a little bit overdone lately.⁴⁷

People helped a range of charitable enterprises by donating time, goods or money. At Tattershall, there was a working party under Miss Skipworth for soldiers and sailors, the town supported the Prince of Wales Fund and Mr J. Sogarby offered three rooms of his house for the use of Belgian refugees. Patriotic concerts were a popular way of fund-raising, often involving local refugees. Spalding Nonconformist Choir Union's concert on 1 February 1915 supported the Belgian Relief Fund and the Spalding Nursing Association. Sometimes civilians and locally stationed military groups jointly raised funds. On 14 November the town of Alford and the 5th Battalion, East Yorkshire Regiment had a football match which raised over £10. The total combined with other smaller efforts was £18.

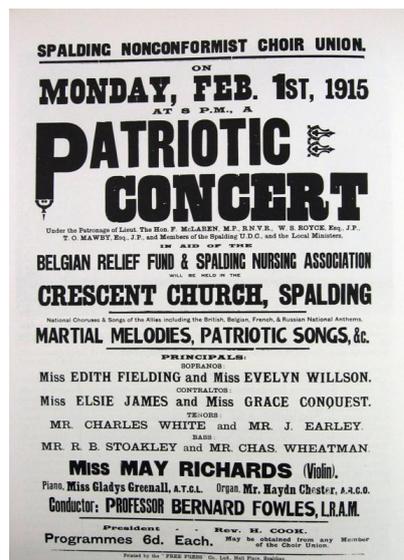


Fig. 3. Leaflet advertising Spalding Patriotic Concert.
Free Press. January 1914

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There were local funds, including for Belgian refugees, for wounded troops at home and those serving abroad, for sailors as well as soldiers, for local women who served abroad with organisations like the Scottish Women's Hospitals and for War Bonds. At Barnetby Parish Church the Rev. C.F. Brotherton made a special reference to the war. Collections were taken in aid of the Relief Fund, on Saturday the jumble sale in aid of same Fund realised £9 and the Women's Unionist Association local branch was also working for the same cause.⁴⁸ People invented ways to raise money that would encourage contributions. The *Epworth Bells* of 22 August proclaimed 'We learn that a public meeting has been held at Owston Ferry to inaugurate an Owston Ferry Shilling Relief Fund. ... The money will be forwarded to the Prince of Wales's National Relief Fund.' Precise details of contributors and amounts contributed were frequently printed. Owston Ferry published a list of forty-four names of people who promised subscriptions and work, and those who attended the meeting and promised work were identified. A further twenty-one ladies were also named.⁴⁹ Local celebrities helped swell the collections. For example, the old clown, Mr W. King and his dog, collected for the Mayor's relief fund in April 1915 at the Army and Navy Canteen Board, Pasture Street, Grimsby.



Fig. 4. G727:940:3

Mr W. King and his dog raising funds.

Photograph reproduced courtesy of North East Lincolnshire Council Library Service

Although the government promised separation allowances to troops' dependents, they were often delayed for such long periods that families were in serious straits. Elderly parents were worst off because no provision was made for them until late 1915. The Holbeach Board of Guardians discussed whether to help a destitute woman whose husband was at the Front. All Board members were surprised because they thought soldiers' wives were being paid. However, it was confirmed that this was a genuine case. Should she be relieved and pay the money back later? They wondered if the Soldiers and Sailors Families Association (SSFA) could help and whether the National Fund was for cases like this. Giving relief caused anxiety for men who were afraid of pauperising people, of spongers, and of having to raise the rates.⁵⁰ Although over-cautious, their concerns were occasionally justified. In February 1917 the relieving officer discovered £176 hidden among the belongings of Mrs Platt of Spalding who before her death had received out-door relief. The hoard, hidden away in old linen, gloves and stockings, comprised £3 10s in gold, £165 8s in silver, and over £7 in copper. In May they discovered that over twelve years Spalding had paid out £170, supposedly to Mrs Platt, but claimed by the eldest son, who lived at Coventry. In October, the Boston branch of the National Union of Railwaymen appealed to the Government for a more adequate and generous allowance to the wives and dependants of soldiers and sailors - one that would ensure a living to every widow and orphan, and so that those that were maimed did not have to depend on charity after fighting for their country. However, for people like the Bishop, there was the moral question of whether unmarried partners and their children should be helped. The Chancellor consulted him in September about the relief of soldiers' concubines etc. Can it be done by moral people?⁵¹

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SSFA

On 7 August, Queen Alexandra, President of SSFA, appealed to women to provide for soldiers and sailors families left without sufficient means of support. Each county had local branches of SSFA which co-operated with the Prince's appeal. On 5 August Mrs Fane's sister, Lilian Crichton-Stuart, travelled to London to offer her services as secretary to a London branch of SSFA. Helen Fane's work with SSFA delayed the setting up of a working party at Fulbeck. She wrote *at present my hands are full with the entertainment we are getting up in our Village Hall for the SSFA . two little plays and some singing.* This raised £14. She also wrote to each Clergyman in the Thaford (Shaford) political Division, asking them to find out which wives of men on active service were in want of funds . also if they could contribute something. On 12 August, she held a Meeting of the SSFA Committee at Fulbeck Hall. Despite the fact that only she, Arthur Willson, Secretary to the local branch, and Rose Willson were present, they managed to start work and later in the month she and Arthur agreed to give relief in several cases.

WAR LOAN

People were urged to subscribe to the War Loan. The Co-operative Society of Howick, Northumberland, population 235, decided to subscribe £800 and in the process took the opportunity to extol the virtues of the co-operative movement. Saxby All Saints followed the example. This village, with a purely agricultural population of 270, was particularly isolated because five miles from a railway. Nevertheless, the cooperative store hoped to send over £100 to the War Loan ~~to~~ back up our sons and brothers fighting at the front. Q.M.L. Evans, at Saxby Rectory, wrote that *in this cooperative movement lies the solution of the problems of English village life and also the future hope of grappling our Empire together in closest bonds of unity.*⁵²

RED CROSS HOSPITALS AND WOMEN'S WORK

Red Cross work was an area where women were needed in the rapidly developing home front. Although they did not yet have the parliamentary vote and were therefore not full citizens, women were expected to show their support for the war, but only in ways that extended their domestic and caring duties. Many rushed to learn nursing and first aid at the Johnson Hospital in Spalding.⁵³ After the war, the name of Nurse M. Currington, who worked at the Johnson Auxiliary Hospital, was brought before the Secretary of State for War for nursing services rendered. This was the civilian equivalent of being mentioned in Dispatches. Four days after the declaration of war Miss Clegg, Miss Groom, and Mrs C. Mawer had three detachments of the Boston Branch of the Red Cross ready for action. They planned to improvise three elementary schools as hospitals. One of the first local soldiers to need such nursing help was Private T. Bugg of Revesby who served with the Lincolnshire Regiment and was wounded in the first weeks of the war.⁵⁴ Women's care of the wounded could not extend to practising as doctors for the military, no matter how well qualified and experienced they were.⁵⁵ However, as an article in the *Sleaford Journal* noted on 22 January 1916, a Lady Doctor was House Surgeon at the Lincoln Dispensary.

In case any sick or wounded men were landed at Grimsby, the authorities planned to use the Harold Street Schools as a temporary hospital under the auspices of the Red Cross. Cases were to be dealt with by the Grimsby and District Hospital. Mrs E.J. Brockway of Cleethorpes, Vice President of the local branch, called for garments and other necessities for the sick and wounded. Appeals were displayed in Post Offices. Beds were fitted and provisions made ready. The Red Cross published a long list of required items, including brandy, mackintosh sheets and money.⁵⁶ On 11 August, a cartload of articles from Tealby and Walesby arrived for Mrs Thomas (Maggie) Wintringham ready to be used. It was suggested that other villages further inland should copy this example.⁵⁷ Maggie Wintringham was a member of the National Union of Women Workers. She helped administer the Prince of Wales Fund for the relief of industrial distress and lodged some refugees in their Tealby home. By 13 August arrangements were complete and the schools ready to be utilised as the chief nautical hospital.⁵⁸ However, although it had provision for 300 wounded soldiers and sailors it was closed by the Admiralty later that month as most of the wounded were landed elsewhere. Wounded soldiers, first seen in Lincoln on 29 August, were hospitalized at the Fourth Northern General Hospital in what had been the Wragby Road Schools, where Bishop Hicks visited them on 15 September.⁵⁹

It was necessary to establish a Ladies Territorial Committee in every parish to undertake the Territorial soldiers' laundry. In Grimsby Mrs Sutcliffe, Mrs A. Mountain, and Miss L.E. Bennett appealed for the formation of a League of Help to do any work required by the Navy, Military or Medical authorities. This group was later renamed the Women's Emergency Corps, the same as a London group, also voluntary, which included, but was not exclusive to, women well-known in both the constitutional and militant suffrage

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movements.⁶⁰ Whether the Grimsby Corps was affiliated to the London Women's Emergency Corps is uncertain but both were cross political party groups and both had women's suffrage connections although the London Corps undertook a wider range of services than Grimsby. Mrs W.H. Wintringham was the Grimsby Honorary Treasurer, working with her sister-in-law Maggie Wintringham. Many hundreds of ladies, of all classes and political persuasions were drawn to the movement, which spread rapidly. The Grimsby Corps' aim was to cheer and encourage our soldiers and sailors and to render the greatest possible help to the hospitals and the Red Cross Society.⁶¹ They completed kit bags for local soldiers during the early period of the war, when the authorities were completely unable to meet the situation and afterwards sent comforts to individuals at home and abroad. Altogether 9,317 gifts were distributed.⁶² Gifts of money and materials were accepted by Mrs Wintringham at the Abbey, and concerts were held in the grounds and in the hospital. Cleethorpes women formed their own Committee to undertake the same type of work. The Corps also helped wounded soldiers on arrival in England. These men needed somewhere to convalesce and the Vicar at Wigtoft was among those offering to take in wounded Belgian soldiers. The Belgian Consul General accepted the offer.⁶³

The middle-class female voluntary sector was also admonished to use their love to influence some man to go bravely forward and fight but, more practically, to sew necessary items for the ill-equipped troops. On 13 August a Red Cross working party was started at Leadenham. By October Kirton-in-Lindsey Ladies Working Party had sent 182 items and lint bandages.⁶⁴ Lady Maria Welby wrote to Helen Fane asking her to get 6,000 kit bags made for the soldiers in the Grantham district! Mrs Reeve hopes to get 400 made in Fulbeck, Leadenham and Welbourn.⁶⁵ Halfway through the month Mrs Fane was straining every nerve to get together clothing for Will's [her husband's] men at Grimsby, they are short of everything, no change of underclothing to be had from the Government. I have got together nearly ten shirts this week and about two dozen pairs of socks. She collected 114 shirts and sent those given to her by Arthur Leslie-Melville of the Red Cross to the Third Battalion.⁶⁶ On 12 September she sent off several items to the Red Cross Centre at Boston, some to the Territorials at Lincoln Barracks, and others to the Soldiers' Hospital at Lincoln where a needlework department was established with Mrs H. Clements, Atherstone House, in charge.⁶⁷

In early September members of the Lincolnshire Branch of the Red Cross met at the Johnson Hospital with Mrs Gleed in the chair.⁶⁸ The Spalding Centre dealt with 15 villages as well as the town, and had forwarded to the county secretary at Boston 704 articles, more than any other Lincolnshire centre except one; some had been kept back for use at the Johnson Hospital. Mr Maples, who had collected £226 3s 2d from parishes, said HQ had asked for flannel shirts, socks, woollen garments and kit bags. Workers were reminded that new articles needed washing first. Some items were first cut out by London firms such as Whiteleys or Harrods; Red Cross branches sent them out to be made up by volunteers. For example, Sutterton Ladies sought members to help make shirts for troops at the front and in hospital. However, shirts made up by the Women's Unionist Association and supplied to the Spalding Territorials were too large although cut out according to patterns that were far below the average build of the Regular Army soldier. One unsympathetic man stated that too large a shirt was better than no shirt. Towns and villages competed to see which could provide most for the troops in money or goods, or was notable in some other way. In October, Market Deeping, with a population of about 900, sent 224 garments to different forces support charities. In Weston Hills the oldest inhabitant, Mrs Burt, aged 85, was helping to make shirts for the Front.⁶⁹

Some of this type of work was undertaken for Queen Mary's Needlework Guild. She appealed to members to organize a large collection of clothes for the military, their families and hospitals, also those among the poorer classes that might suffer distress as a result of the war. In response, the President of the Lincolnshire Needlework Guild convened a meeting at the Albion Hotel, Lincoln, on Friday, 14 August to undertake work for the troops.⁷⁰ It was decided to use Normanby Park, Frodingham and Scunthorpe Station as collection points. Lady Sheffield, who presided, promised to organise a committee to undertake distribution and to form a list of ladies to collect the needlework to send on.⁷¹ Sir Berkeley, who was MP for Brigg between 1907 - 1929, and Lady Sheffield were involved in many charitable enterprises and provided work and accommodation for Belgian refugees.

Needlework Societies held fund-raising events to help with the purchase of materials. Ladies at Wigtoft worked for Belgian refugees as well as soldiers and sailors.⁷² Caistor Church Needlework Society's social evening proceeds in March 1915 were £11 11s.

CHILDREN

Children's lives were immediately affected by the War. As male family members marched away, some never to return, daughters were told to help their mothers and sons to look after the family. Before hostilities started, underfed children were of concern and in late August the Holland Education Committee discussed the provision of school meals.⁷³ At the start of term on 24 August 1914, most of the children attending St Andrews Senior Mixed School, Lincoln, seemed well fed. However, in September most of the fathers were on half time work and children were being given breakfasts at school.⁷⁴

Children were asked to help the war effort by collecting fruit stones and nutshells and to keep up the supply of wool before the sheep lost their winter fleeces by gathering the tufts left on hedges and moors.⁷⁵ Spalding Goodfellows and St John's Schools collected horse chestnuts for the Ministry of Munitions. The Headmaster of the Louth British School took the top class boys on a Brambling under the County Council Scheme but said it did not justify the loss of half a day's lessons. Schools also raised money for funds including the Red Cross, the Patriotic Fund, Serbian Relief Fund and Empire Day Children's Penny Fund. The Headmaster of Spalding Goodfellows Church of England School was the organizing secretary of the Spalding War Savings Central Committee and his school was particularly active in fund-raising.

Pupils learned concern for Allied children. Monday, 10 July 1916 was set apart for children of the British Empire to do their bit for their brothers and sisters in Belgium. The children of the St Martin's Parochial Schools gave a fund-raising entertainment which included songs, a sketch, Morris and country dances, and Swedish drill by the boys. The sum of £11 was raised. Children also learned that others were helping them. American children sent gifts to children of belligerent nations for Christmas 1914. At Grantham, where they were distributed by the SSFA, the number received fell short of the applications. Those made fatherless by the war were first considered; Belgian children received a goodly share and the remainder went to the most deserving cases. Some towns could not distribute the gifts because the quality was below standard.

Education was disrupted when teachers were called to the colours, and when school premises were used for war-related purposes. Welbourn School was closed for Mrs Fane's entertainment with Mrs Bainton of the Old Rectory in aid of the Red Cross in January 1915. Troops were sometimes billeted there and evening classes stopped in case school lights attracted enemy bombing. Children also took part in military occasions. At Lindsey County Senior British School at Louth on 11 April 1917 they sang Old English and patriotic songs at the Town Hall when Sergeant C.D. Tylor, an old scholar, was presented with the DCM medal by General Von Donop for bravery in Gallipoli. The Borough presented Tylor with a gold wristlet watch and a silver cigarette case with an inscription.⁷⁶

Half-holidays were given for various events. At Bourne Fen, on 5 February 1915, children had a half-holiday for a large Coursing Meeting held on Twenty Farm. On 20 May 1915 several absented themselves to see soldiers at Bourne, so a school holiday was given in the afternoon. On 10 December 1915 children at Louth British School attended a matinee at the Picture Palace in aid of the Serbians. Patriotism was always fostered on Empire Day, 24 May. At St Andrews, after addresses on Food Economy and Patriotism, the scholars were dismissed for the day.

Numbers of children entering and leaving classes changed owing to disturbances to the civilian population and when military personnel were transferred. Children of Naval personnel at Cranwell and service personnel stationed at Leadenham aerodrome, most of which was on Welbourn Heath, went to Welbourn School. Classrooms were used for, or shared with Belgian refugees, for example at St Mary's Sleaford and Wragby Hall respectively. At St Andrews Senior Mixed some Flemish-speaking Belgian children were admitted for the first term of 1915. Language difficulties made teaching complicated. At Spalding Goodfellows Girls Mixed, basket making could not be taught because cane was unobtainable. The curriculum included war-related topics. Boys sketched the skeleton of a bomb. One morning the teacher arrived to find a message left on a blackboard. It read: Best wishes to the British School children from Corporal Arthur H. Staples of the Australian Engineers, once a scholar in this school (1892-1900).⁷⁷ Earlier that month, the Head Teacher at St Andrews Senior Mixed wrote in his log that during the week he had heard of the fifth death among old boys of the school who had joined His Majesty's Forces, three in the Navy and two in France.⁷⁸ By September 1915 ten old boys had been killed.

Pupils at the Middle Township School at Deeping St Nicholas had to untangle the mixed message that killing Germans was approved, but assaulting a British person was a crime, when, on 26 September, the

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Holland Education Committee summarily dismissed head teacher Mr G.H. Barley. He had been convicted of assault.

Poor health was another problem. On 11 January 1915, attendance was poor due to influenza. At Bourne Fen children were absent due to whooping cough. At Louth British School, Millicent Marshall, who had been present on Thursday 22 February 1917, died on Saturday night. A new boy, admitted on 8 January, 1918 died on the 14th. At this particular school, where the master himself was often absent under the doctor, there were many children with poor health. On 28 June, 1918 the school nurse called to see which children would be selected for the Open Air School and on 15 July five children were transferred. In May 1919, British School teachers began doing a fortnight's session there. Impure water supplies caused disease such as typhoid. In October, 1914 the Boston branch of the National Union of Railwaymen tried to secure an adequate supply of water which the Waterworks Company of the Borough of Boston had failed to do. They urged the Council to take the waterworks over and use the powers they had at their disposal to supply the town with water for the benefit of the inhabitants.⁷⁹ At Caistor, one of the Belgian refugees, Mr Derbaix, a schoolmaster, had taught himself plumbing, carpentry and painting. The Parish Magazine recommended that whenever a tap went wrong, Mr Derbaix should be called for.

NEWS

People depended on newspapers for information but accurate news about the progress of the war was limited because journalists were not allowed to go near the Front and the press was censored. The lack of news was frustrating but Mrs Fane acquired information through her network of family and friends such as J.S. Reeve of Leadenham who told of a 'naval engagement on the 7th in the North Sea'.⁸⁰ British people who returned from the continent published their experiences. Lucy Tasker from Boston travelled from Hamburg to Rotterdam, then sailed to Harwich on the *Dresden*. She saw warships, large ships turned into hospitals for the sailors, and vessels dragging for mines; she realised they could be blown up. The authorities sent her home from Harwich to Boston on refugees' tickets because she had only German money. She said a great many people were still in Germany and no English male between 14 and 35 was allowed to leave the country. One was stopped at the frontier while she was there.⁸¹

ALIENS – PROHIBITED AREAS

People's liberties were reduced and attitudes hardened, especially towards foreigners. On 5 August, the Government passed an Aliens Restriction Act which was rushed through all its Parliamentary stages and published as an Order-in-Council. It flagged concern with spies by controlling entry at ports and prohibiting wide areas around the coast to aliens (the legal term for foreigners). Any aliens found in such areas were liable to be arrested. Some ports, but none in Lincolnshire, were approved as places where aliens could land. By 11 August the Lincolnshire coast was guarded by coastguards and the military. Skegness, Mablethorpe, Sutton-on-Sea and other coastal towns had their military guarding post offices.⁸² The prohibited areas had an adverse effect on Lincolnshire's ability to man its trawlers; trawlermen became minesweepers and owners were not allowed to employ aliens.⁸³ On 3 November the prohibited areas were extended to 16 Urban Districts, including Holbeach and Long Sutton (Table 1).

County Borough	Grimsby
Municipal Borough	Louth

Urban Districts	Alford Barton Upon Humber Brigg Broughton Brumby and Frodingham Cleethorp with Thruscoe Holbeach Long Sutton Mablethorpe Market Rasen Roxby cum Risby Scunthorpe Skegness Spalding Sutton Bridge Winterton
Rural Districts	Boston Caistor Crowland East Elloe Glanford Brigg Grimsby Louth Sibsey Spilsby Spalding

Table 1. Parts of Lincolnshire prohibited to aliens.⁸⁴

Other places such as railway stations and bridges were regarded as particularly sensitive areas from which all aliens were prohibited under the Defence of the Realm Act, (DORA). Soldiers guarded the bridges at Fosdyke and Sutton Bridge and motorists were stopped to give an account of themselves. One car at each bridge failed to stop, and therefore had their tyres spoiled. On 4 September Hampshire Territorials arrested the Editor of the *Spalding Guardian* on Fosdyke Bridge because he could not produce his licence, which was at home in Spalding. At Sutton-on-Sea two 'foreigners' were seen cutting telegraph wires. One got away, but the other was caught almost immediately and detained at Headquarters. Such men were usually telephone company workers. Hitherto acceptable actions were now deemed suspicious. A Skegness schoolboy aged 16 was accused of spying having made sketches in a notebook in the vicinity of the Naval Aerodrome at Skegness. The charges were dismissed because he acted in ignorance, albeit foolishly. He was warned to keep away from such places in future.⁸⁵

On 4 September 1914, under Regulation 3 of DORA (No. 2) 1914, C. Mitchell-Innes, the Chief Constable of Lincolnshire prohibited the keeping of carrier and homing pigeons unless a permit was obtained from the local Police Superintendent. Worse, any pigeon flying seawards was to be shot, rescued from the sea if necessary and examined for messages.⁸⁶

SPIES

The panic about spies was due to government action, exacerbated by the press. Spies were assumed to be instantly recognizable by their appearance or behaviour. Mr Durose, an Accountant of Nottingham, reported on 6 August that while staying at Woodhall Spa he found a German Prince staying at the Eagle Hotel, constantly receiving and sending telegrams. He was actually Prince Frederick Duleep Singh, of Blow, Norton Hill, Thetford, exile from India. He had been visiting Woodhall Spa for the last eight years and had already offered his services to the War Office.

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Another more likely case was when Herbert Jan Kewsitz was arrested at Waltham and charged at Coningsby County Police Court with trying to obtain information at the Wireless Station. He was not allowed to be there, and the sentry was particularly suspicious because he spoke with a pronounced foreign accent. Nevertheless, he had gone with the sentry willingly, unaware of his error. Kewsitz, a Russian, was employed as a clerk at Wintringham's timber merchants and had been in Grimsby about twelve months.⁸⁷

Patriotism demanded suspicion of foreigners, even when well-known. Mr J. Hots, the manager of the Goring Hotel, and Mr W. Holst, manager of the Mall Tavern, both German residents at Woodhall Spa, were arrested and taken to Horncastle, and then to Lincoln. After undertaking to be peaceful and report at regular intervals, they were allowed to leave.⁸⁸ Mrs Fane recorded the arrest of a German in Leadenham after being accused of spying on 8 August, and on 24 October, the *Lincolnshire Standard* reported that four alien enemies in the Borough of Boston, all Germans, had been rounded up. They were detained at the Borough police station and sent to Wakefield. A musical director, two nurseryman, and an insurance agent were all charged with travelling more than five miles without permits.⁸⁹ The possibility of spying was sometimes realized too late. Police files listed five instances of men going into various firms, such as Brotherhoods of Peterborough, and asking questions including whether there were any aircraft defences. They left without being mistrusted.

Holbeach Guardians gave an extra 6d per head to every man, woman and child in receipt of parish relief to cover the cost of items which would now have to be imported from elsewhere because the Government banned goods imported from Germany. This helped to foster an atmosphere of animosity towards people of German or Austrian origin. Some foreigners applied for British nationality before war was declared. Maximilian Raphael Julius Behrendt, a German resident in Scunthorpe, was issued with certificate 25339 on 4 August 1914.⁹⁰ From the outbreak of war German-owned shops were attacked. Shop-owners might have British wives and British-born children. Nevertheless, their German name damned them. On Saturday night, 8 August, about 11 o'clock there was a crowd of approximately 2,000 gathered people outside the premises of Messrs Frank and Son, pork butchers in Boston, where business was carried on by Messrs Leonard and George Cantonwine, both Germans, though naturalised British subjects. Leonard had lived in Boston for about twenty-five years. A missile was thrown through one of the plate glass windows; the premises were hastily closed. The Cantonwines escaped and were sheltered by friends but the disorder continued until early on Sunday morning. Police formed a cordon and using their batons cleared the thoroughfares. A young boy was injured and taken to hospital, and one man was arrested.⁹¹

In September, Mr Cunnington, a well-known farmer, was arrested by soldiers and handed over to the police for having a firearm without a licence. There had been consistent rumours about the nationality of this man's wife. People thought she was German because she had been partly educated in Germany.⁹² Suspicions were increased because the children's governess was German. Without warning the Military searched Cunnington's premises at Moulton and the family were held at bayonet point. When the soldiers left, the villagers ducked Cunnington at the pump. War was an opportunity for the mob to take control, a chance to settle old scores.

In October 1914 the Home Office calmed fears by declaring that the names and occupations of spies were known. They had been watched for years and all who were dangerous had been arrested.⁹³

WAR SPIRIT AND THE JUSTIFICATION FOR WAR

It became unacceptable to talk of peace or negotiation. The Spalding press reported as pro-German' Keir Hardie's House of Commons question suggesting the German Ambassador had been prepared to submit to his Government alternative proposals in response to Britain's ultimatum. Churches were liable to be denigrated if they petitioned the Almighty for peace instead of for victory. The *Boston and Lincolnshire Standard* headed an article with the phrase 'Peace at Any Price', words that were to become synonymous with pacifism and perceived cowardice, implying that honour would be lost if Britain did not fight to the victorious finish that was considered inevitable and expected within months. In Boston, the Free Church Council, including the Wesleyan Methodist, United Methodist and Zion United Methodist churches, decided that the latter church should be opened for an hour each evening to petition the Almighty for peace. People could take part if they were so pacifically disposed. If attendances became too small the meeting would be abandoned. Readers were assured that 'these are Meetings, not services'⁹⁴

Many people's attitudes transformed from promoting peace to defending the decision to fight. Dr Clifford, who in mid-August returned from a peace conference in Germany, preached at Westbourne Park Chapel on 16 August, and whole-heartedly approved Great Britain's warlike action. He said that at stake was the

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principle of spiritual ideas over brutal ones. Britain had been caught between the forces of freedom and of slavery. Like most such speakers he concluded 'We were forced into it.'⁹⁵

The Press was at the forefront of endorsing the required xenophobic, militaristic attitudes. On 19 September the Fat & Lean column of the *Spalding and Lincolnshire Standard* was headed: 'Contemptible!' This referred to the Vicar of Holbeach, the Rev. F.W. Hutchinson, who was reputed to advise young men not to enlist, although he prayed for victory. He said the war was a judgment for national sins, England's being drinking, gambling and impurity. Although this argument was used by priests of many denominations, it implied that the war was not one of good versus evil, and therefore not intended by God to punish Germany for its crimes. The corollary to this argument was that England should accept its divine punishment and not fight. Hence the writer found the Vicar 'Contemptible'. A further reason for this judgement was that Germany's invasion of Belgium resulted war crimes such as those recounted by Belgians sheltering in Lincolnshire. On 26 September the *Spalding Guardian* described 'what the refugees saw.' This 'included children placed against the wall and shot and their parents thrown into the house which had been fired.' Although later such accounts were queried, atrocities undoubtedly occurred.

CIVILIAN LIFE - REGULATIONS

Britain never had been truly democratic and became more authoritarian and bureaucratic as civilian life became more regulated. As a grocer Mr Hipkin needed to collect and deliver foodstuffs. In accordance with the provision of the Road Transport Order, 1918, made under DORA, Regulation, 2JJJ, he needed a permit giving him permission to drive his 20 h.p. Ford Van,⁹⁶ with a further permit stamped by the Ministry of Food (Continuance) Act and issued under the Road Transport (Requisitioned) Order. Hipkin had to show the number, and his name and address, clearly marked on the vehicle itself. He also needed permits for his six horse-drawn goods-carrying vehicles.

The Intoxicating Liquor (Temporary Restriction) Act of 31 August gave local Police Chiefs the power to restrict licensing laws. The government thought people would produce more if they had less access to alcohol and they did not want off-duty soldiers drinking. Grimsby licensing justices decided on 15 September to prohibit the sale of intoxicants in licensed houses and clubs after 9.00 p.m. from the following Monday. Protestant nations like Britain had come to regard drinking as a social evil, and the prohibition movement was being accelerated by the circumstances of the Great War. Lord Roberts vigorously protested 'against the pernicious custom of treating our recruits.' He thought attention should be called 'to the apparent reluctance of the local licensing authorities in or near the camps to diminish the temptations to drink by closing the public-houses until a late hour in the morning and at an early hour in the evening.' He claimed that 'Unless this is done the threatened deterioration of our young soldiers, together with the terrible increase among the women of drinking in public-houses, must continue.'⁹⁷ This was relevant to Grantham where thousands of troops were stationed.

This moral panic about women in public houses gave rise to the suggestion that 'before relief is given to the wives and families of men on active service and to the unemployed, it should be made illegal for a woman to enter a public house and for a man inside one to treat a woman outside.'⁹⁸ In February the Bishop, who was active in the temperance movement, signed a manifesto, together with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and others, appealing for prohibition of the sale of spirits for the duration of the war. People found ways round unpopular rules. 'Shebeening' was the act of drinking in an unlicensed, and therefore slightly disreputable house. A policeman dressed as a soldier obtained beer at 355 Heliers Road, Grimsby, and found soldiers in uniform drinking inside. They were able to drink for two hours daily despite this being in contravention of the rules. The householders were fined £10 plus £2 costs or two months' imprisonment.⁹⁹

SHORTAGES AND THE COST OF LIVING

The German submarine blockade reduced the amount of imported food so generally the diets of middle and upper-working class people improved because they were consuming less sugar, fat and meat, and eating more bread, potatoes and vegetables.¹⁰⁰ In October 1917 the Fanes began to have 'baked potatoes at tea time, to reduce the amount of bread eaten during the week.' However, working-class people, particularly in towns, suffered from poverty and under-nourishment. TB (consumption) was rife. Some children were severely malnourished. In Spalding 600 Spalding children were fed by the Salvation Army at the Cooperative Hall.¹⁰¹ In Caistor Mr Derbaix showed how to increase the food supply by keeping a large number of rabbits. Mrs Fane found it difficult to get paraffin and could not get cartridges at all.¹⁰² However, the Ministry of Munitions agreed to release a certain quantity of lead to make into shot for shooting game.

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Price rises that had been noted on the outbreak of War continued throughout it due to shortages caused by the lack of imported goods and inflation. Between September 1916 and January 1917 the Spalding and District Master Bakers Association advanced the price of bread by 1½d and the price of milk went up to 1s 4d per gallon.¹⁰³ Dried fruits were in short supply. Skegness was advised to tell visitors to bring their own sugar. There was a beer famine for the first time in its history and several public houses had to close until more could be found. Lard was rationed, as was coal. Only one ton per fireplace was allowed and each house could only have twenty tons per annum. Three tons of coke could be had as an alternative to two tons of coal. Helen Fane wrote: *in this house 104 tons of coal was consumed from 1916-17. So how 20 ton (sic) is to be made to do the work I do not know. We shall use as much wood as we can. German prisoners helped chop it. Shortages meant housewives had to spend each morning standing in queues for food so girls stayed at home to help with work.*

In February 1917, the Food Controller, Lord Devonport, announced that voluntary rationing was necessary and it was to be left to the nation's honour to comply or compulsory rationing would be instituted. Helen Fane's opinion was derisory. *I think it mere waste of time to appeal to the nation's honour.*¹⁰⁴ In March, Kirton Church published Lord Devonport's list which Lloyd George called *a National Lent*. The weekly ration suggested was:

Bread 4 lb (3 lb flour)
Meat, 2½ lb including ham, bacon, poultry, game, etc.
Sugar ¾ lb

Bishop Hicks recorded that in April 1917 the King's Easter *Proclamation on War Economy*, especially in Wheaten flour, was read. *England is near starvation, through the German submarines.*¹⁰⁵ On 16 May 1917, the Board of Trade confirmed that the cost of food was 98 per cent higher since the war began. Rationing was introduced in certain areas in January 1918 and the system of meat rationing trialled in London was made national on 25 March. Sugar, butter and margarine were also rationed. Leather was needed by the military and in December 1917 control was extended to a ban on High Boots for Women. After 1 January 1918 the Army Council prohibited the manufacture of these with uppers exceeding seven inches in height if of leather, or eight inches if of any other material.¹⁰⁶

Rates had risen by another 5d in the pound by September 1915.¹⁰⁷ As a result of the increased cost of living there were a number of judgement summonses at Holbeach County Court in which the defendants were earning under £1 a week. Judge Mulligan KC commented that the cost of living had risen 34 per cent and he refused to make orders. In contrast, for the first time in the history of the Holbeach Public Hall Company, a dividend of ten per cent was declared in August 1917. Nearly all the shareholders were local people who subscribed the capital of the company for the purpose of providing the town with a large hall.¹⁰⁸

EAST COAST PROBLEMS

By December 1914, many boarding house owners on the east coasts of Britain suffered hardship because of lack of trade and there was unemployment in Skegness. Rumours that Zeppelins visited Skegness every night; that the pier was demolished and the pier master killed; that the town was full of soldiers who had dug up the whole of the parades for trenches, were printed in the *Nottingham Guardian*. Such rumours would seriously affect the season's business, so on 30 June 1915 an article entitled 'Rumour and Humour' was published in the *Skegness, Mablethorpe & Alford News*. It stated that the only person who reported seeing Zeppelins was drunk and saw them regularly, the pier was intact, and on checking with the pier master, he was still alive. The trenches might be last year's cart ruts, which had now been made up; and finally, bathing was carried on as usual - 'SO COME TO SKEGNESS!'

Despite this humour, there was serious unemployment which Councillors Moody and Holmes tried unsuccessfully to get the Council to help. Skegness women were angry. Mrs Bonser of 6 Edinburgh Avenue, whose letter was read out at a Council meeting, asked *What is Skegness without its women?* She pointed out that men could get work elsewhere, but women had to stay put. Their alternative was to go to the Workhouse in Spilsby. She argued that Skegness would be at a standstill if women left, but if people *aren't* allowed on the sands, they won't come here. If the war goes on for three years as Lord Kitchener says, it will be a poor lookout for Skegness. *Oh there will soon be a lot of empty houses.*¹⁰⁹

In October, 1915, Scarborough landladies appealed to the Queen. Immediate inquiries were made and grants given by the Government Committee on Prevention and Relief of Distress to women in various East Coast towns. A Conference decided on the equitable apportioning of the fund. It was urged that the claims

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of fishing towns and villages with trawlers and fishing boats taken over by the Government should not be overlooked.¹¹⁰ The sum of £150,000 was to be allocated and each case considered on its merits. This did not solve the problem for long. In a House of Commons debate on May 30, 1916 it was suggested that the billeting of troops and facilities for convalescent soldiers could help alleviate East Coast distress. Belgian refugees could not be placed in these boarding houses, since the areas were prohibited. On July 25, 1916, representatives of various East Coast Distress Committees were received by Walter Long, President of the Local Government Board (LGB). The towns represented included Skegness, Grimsby and Cleethorpes. On 31 July 1916 Mr Long promised he would put the matter before the Chancellor and press for assistance.

Action was taken. As a result of the exceptional distress among lodging-house keepers of the East Coast, in 1917 the Canadian Fund of the LGB allocated £105,006 to the area.¹¹¹ In February 1918 the East Coast Conference Committee met in London to allocate £70,000 granted by the Treasury to help local finances. The allocation was based on figures relating to losses on rates and in respect of education grants and trading losses. Cleethorpes seconded an amendment put by Scarborough, which said the inclusion of trading losses of £46,000 unfairly affected some towns, because £21,000 was lost by two towns. This left out Cleethorpes, Skegness and other towns which had very small trading losses.¹¹² By 1919 a large proportion of money being distributed from the National Relief Fund in ordinary cases was for people in East Coast watering places which have suffered exceptionally. A further final grant of £100,000 was made, making a total with the previous grants of £290,000.¹¹³

BELGIAN REFUGEES

The home front's task included supporting Allied refugees although the Aliens Restriction Act caused problems in housing. Nonetheless, on 9 September, just after the defeat at Mons, the British Government offered the hospitality of the nation to the Belgian people. Local committees formed to provide accommodation, raise funds, supply clothes and food. Most refugees were Catholics and a key factor in Lincolnshire's refugee relief was the presence of Belgian, or Belgian-trained Roman Catholic priests already resident in the area.

Helen Fane wrote to the War Refugees Committee, offering to take a woman and three or four children for three weeks, and to pay their fare from London. On 15 October, she met at Leadenham Station Mons. and Mme Paquet who were of good position, and the four dearest little boys imaginable all dressed alike.¹¹⁴ On 21 September 1915, she wrote about the Belgian lady staying with her in the house and the Belgian family who were working in the garden. a most honest hard-working clean pair, with two nice children.¹¹⁵

It is not known how many Belgians were given hospitality in Lincolnshire, but at least 250,000 at some time arrived in Britain. Statistics were not thought important at the beginning of the war but figures were eventually compiled and show that in 1917 Lincolnshire had around 1,000 honoured guests. This small number was similar to Cornwall and less than Yorkshire due to the agricultural nature of the county and lack of large towns. The Metropolitan area of London gave refuge to most. (Fig. 5). Nevertheless over 80 Lincolnshire villages and towns helped. Most refugees were women and children so consequently many, through domestic ties or age, needed support from the local relief committees for all their time in Britain.

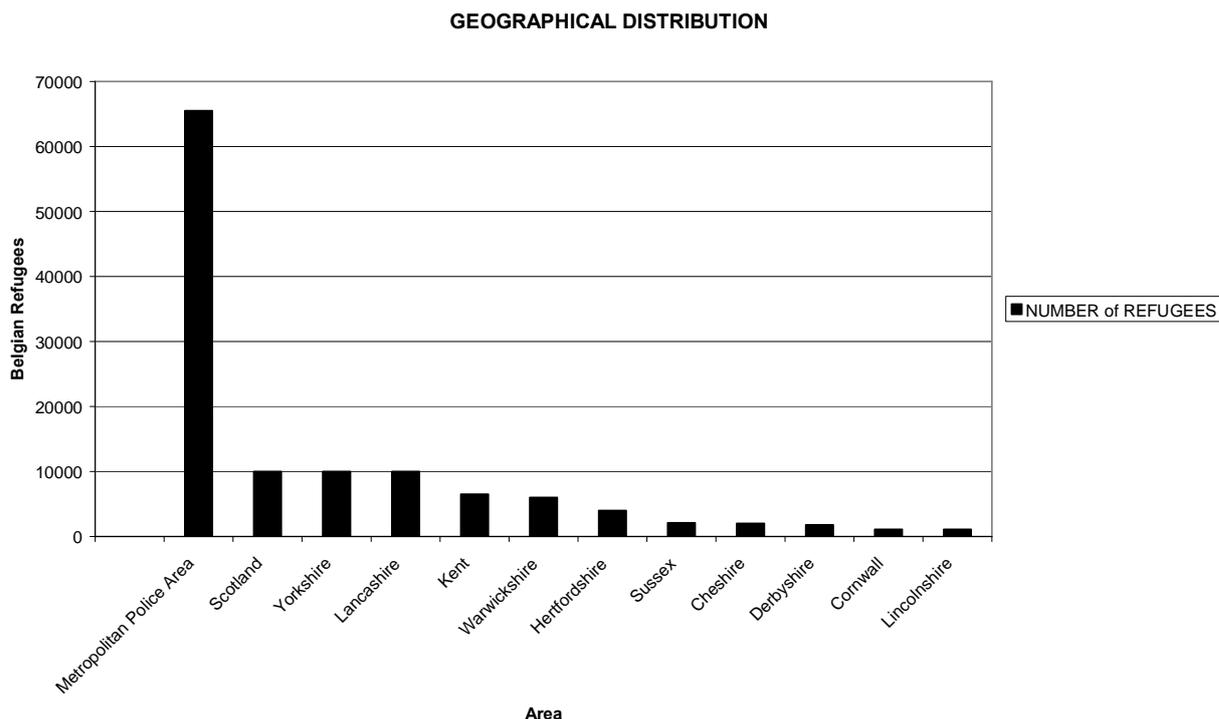


Fig. 5. Numbers of Belgian Refugees in Some English Counties, November 1916. Compiled from information in T.T.S. de Jastrebski -Report of the Work Undertaken by the British Government in the Reception and care of the Belgian Refugees, 1920. Parliamentary Archives. SAM/A/47.

Care of these guests was personal and time-consuming. In July 1915 the Lincoln Belgian Relief Committee took a party, chiefly women and children, for an outing to Drinsey Nook, near Lincoln. They went in barges along the Fosdyke, accompanied by ladies and gentlemen who had been looking after them. They were given tea and took part in various sports.¹¹⁶ When possible refugees took employment, including in munitions and agriculture; some became self-employed. In many cases friendships were forged and marriages took place between Belgians and Lincolnshire people. (Fig.5). Rachel de Breffe, seen here second left, back row, who with her parents and brother was given hospitality in Grimsby, having been repatriated at the end of the war, returned to marry W.T. Dovey whose family were bakers in Fairweather Street. The wedding was 1 September 1920, when Rachel was nineteen.

STIFFENING RESOLVE

While coping with daily difficulties, regulations, unemployment and price rises, people were anxious about husbands, brothers and fathers fighting aerial battles or floundering in the mud of trenches. Consequently the authorities did what they could to stiffen civilian resolve and keep up spirits. The First Battalion Lincolnshire Regiment in September captured the first German field gun. A Krupp, it was displayed in the courtyard of the War Office and was the first trophy to be exhibited in London, a matter of pride for the Regiment and County.¹¹⁷ The Lincolns also captured another German gun in the fighting round Bezu. The War Office loaned it primarily for a military demonstration at Lincoln by the Sixth (Service) Battalion from

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Belton Park on Saturday 6 February. On Monday, it was returned to Belton and was on view on Tuesday. On Wednesday it was in the Grantham Market Place in charge of armed sentries and thousands of townspeople inspected it. On Thursday morning it was taken to the station by an escort with a drum and fife band to be returned to Woolwich. In March 1916, German guns were loaned to Spalding for a month to be put on display.¹¹⁸ Such displays were to encourage support and to raise funds for the War. Daily life increasingly became a matter of the home front doing its bit to win it.

The Press had promised the war would be over by Christmas but when this failed to happen Mrs Fane had 'a melancholy time without Will.' In the New Year Mrs Rivett of 9 Orchard Street, Lincoln, received a letter from her husband, Private M. Rivett of C Company, Second Lincolns, at the Front. He told her about the 'Mutual armistice [that] led to exchange of greetings with the enemy between the trenches.' The authorities stopped further fraternisation.

¹ *Spalding And Lincolnshire Standard*, 8.08.1914

² *Lincolnshire Chronicle*. 3.08.1914.

³ *Lincolnshire Star*, 8.08.1914

⁴ *The Diaries of Edward Lee Hicks, Bishop of Lincoln, 1910 - 1919*. Selected and edited by Graham Neville. Lincoln Record Society, 1993. (*Hicks Diaries*) 540. 5.08.1914. The numbers given are paragraph numbers as in the text.

⁵ *Lincolnshire Star*. 8.08.1914.

⁶ LA. CONSTAB 2/3/1/2/1

⁷ LA. MISC DEP 678. Bellø's Diary

⁸ LA. 9 FANE 1/1/4/5. Fane War Diary Vol I.

⁹ *Lincolnshire, Boston & Spalding Free Press*, 4.08.1914

¹⁰ J.R. Marshall, 'Lincolnshire in August 1914' in *Lincolnshire Life* vol. 24 (5), pp. 18-19

¹¹ LA. 9 FANE 1/1/4/5.

¹² *Lincolnshire, Boston & Spalding Free Press*. 25.08.1914

¹³ *Lincolnshire Standard*. 19.08.1914

¹⁴ *Boston Guardian and Lincolnshire Independent*. 3.10.1914.

¹⁵ *Spalding Guardian*. 22.08.1914

¹⁶ *Lincolnshire Chronicle*. 14.08.1914

¹⁷ *Lincolnshire Standard*. 15.08.1914

¹⁸ *SMA News* 31.1.1917

¹⁹ *Lincolnshire Chronicle*. 12.09.1914

²⁰ Dewey. *Agriculture in World War I*. Routledge, 1989, 38.

²¹ 9-FANE 1/1/4/5. See Appendix 1

²² Marshall, 'Lincolnshire in August 1914'

²³ *Lincolnshire Standard*. 19.08.1914

²⁴ LA. MISC DEP 678

²⁵ *Sleaford Journal*. 15.08.1914.

²⁶ *Lincolnshire Standard* 10.09.1914, 26.09.1914

²⁷ *The Star*. 29.08.1914

²⁸ *Spalding and Lincolnshire Standard*. 5.09.1914

²⁹ LA. LLHS/8 Papers of J A Hipkin & Son (Grocers) of Stickney, relating to WWI, 1914-1921

³⁰ *Lincolnshire Standard*. 5.09.1914.

³¹ *Grimsby's War Work*. Grimsby. Published by W. H. Jackson & Co.

³² TNA. AIR .721.46.4. 46/6. Anti-Aircraft Precautions (Civilian). 1914-1918. 5

³³ *Lincolnshire Standard* 10.09.1914

³⁴ *Skegness, Mablethorpe & Alford (SMA) News*. 14.04.1915

³⁵ LA. MISC DON 824/2/18

³⁶ LA. CONSTAB 2/3/1/2/1. Signed Wm. Trigg, HQ County Police, Lincoln. Chief Constable's Office

³⁷ LA. 9-FANE 1/1/4/13

³⁸ LA. CONSTAB 2/3/1/2/3

³⁹ *The Lincolnshire Star*. 5.12.1914

⁴⁰ LA. 9 ANC 9/4/9

⁴¹ LA. CONSTAB 2/3/1/2/1

⁴² *Grantham Journal*. 9.01.1915

⁴³ Norman Angell, *The Great Illusion: A Study of the Relation of Military Power to National Advantage*. Heinemann, 1909.

- ⁴⁴ See Appendix 1A. IWM. Women's Work Collection. BO 1.1/3 Charity Commission. War Charities Act, 1916. 3.03.1917.
- ⁴⁵ *Lincolnshire Standard*. 19.08.1914.
- ⁴⁶ *Spalding & Lincolnshire Standard*. 5.09.1914
- ⁴⁷ *Lincolnshire Standard*. 26.9.1914
- ⁴⁸ *Lincolnshire Star*. 22.08.14
- ⁴⁹ *Epworth Bells*. 22.8.1914
- ⁵⁰ *Lincolnshire Standard*. 3.10.1914
- ⁵¹ *Hicks Diaries*. 561
- ⁵² *Times*, 9.07.1915.
- ⁵³ *Spalding and Lincolnshire Standard*. 15.08.1914
- ⁵⁴ *Boston and Lincolnshire Standard*, 26.9.1914
- ⁵⁵ Monica Krippner, *The Quality of Mercy: Women at War, Serbia, 1915-18*. David & Charles. London. 1980, pp.28-30
- ⁵⁶ Appendix 1B
- ⁵⁷ *Market Rasen Mail*. 15.08.1914
- ⁵⁸ *Grimsby Evening Telegraph*. 5.08.1914. 7.08.1914. Preparations at Grimsby.
- ⁵⁹ LA. 9-FANE/1/1/4/5. *Hicks Diaries*. 554
- ⁶⁰ *Jus Suffragii*, Volume 9, no 5. 1.2.1915.
- ⁶¹ *Grimsby Evening Telegraph*. 11.8.1914.
- ⁶² <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~englin/mem/grimsby.htm> Accessed 26/02/2011 18:34
- ⁶³ *Boston and Lincolnshire Standard*, 26.9.1914
- ⁶⁴ LA. MISC DON 824/2/18. Kirton-in-Lindsey Church Magazine. October 1914
- ⁶⁵ LA. 9-FANE 1/1/4/5
- ⁶⁶ LA. 9-FANE 1/1/4/6
- ⁶⁷ *Lincolnshire Chronicle*. 10.08.1914.
- ⁶⁸ See Appendix 1C Red Cross
- ⁶⁹ *Lincolnshire Standard* 17.10.1914
- ⁷⁰ Present were Hon Mrs Sutton-Nelthorpe, Scawby, Miss Welby, Denton Manor; Mrs Rawnsley, Harrington Hall; Lady Heneague, Hainton Hall; Mrs Dymoke, Scrivelsby Court.
- ⁷¹ *Lincolnshire Standard*. 15.08.1914. *Lincolnshire Free Press*. 25.08.1914
- ⁷² *Boston and Lincolnshire Standard*, 26.09.1914
- ⁷³ *Lincolnshire Standard*. 29.08.1914
- ⁷⁴ LA. SR 570/8/1
- ⁷⁵ *SMA News* 8.05.1918
- ⁷⁶ LA. SR 690/8/5 Lindsey County Sr. Louth British Mixed, 1915-1929. Kidgate.
- ⁷⁷ LA. SR 690/8/5. Louth British School. Mixed, 1915-1929. Kidgate, 25.07.1916.
- ⁷⁸ LA. SR 570/8/1. St Andrews Senior Mixed School. Lincoln. 1915. July 9, 1916
- ⁷⁹ *Lincolnshire Standard* 24.10.1914
- ⁸⁰ LA. 9-FANE 1/1/4/5
- ⁸¹ *Boston Standard*. 12.09.1914
- ⁸² *Lincolnshire, Boston & Spalding Free Press*. 11.08.1914
- ⁸³ *Times*. 3.02.1915
- ⁸⁴ TNA. HO 144/1358/261916
- ⁸⁵ *Lincolnshire Standard*. 29.08.1914
- ⁸⁶ LA. CONSTAB 2/3/1/2/1
- ⁸⁷ *Lincolnshire Star*. 8.08.1914.
- ⁸⁸ *Lincolnshire Standard*. 19.08.1914
- ⁸⁹ *Boston Guardian and Lincolnshire Independent*. 19.09.1914
- ⁹⁰ TNA. HO 144/1321/253414
- ⁹¹ *Lincolnshire Star*. 15.08.1914
- ⁹² *Lincolnshire Standard*. 12.09.1914
- ⁹³ LA. 9-FANE 1/1/4/6
- ⁹⁴ *Boston and Lincolnshire Standard*. 8.08.1914.
- ⁹⁵ *Spalding and Lincolnshire Standard*. 22.08.1914
- ⁹⁶ LA. LLHS/8 Papers of J A Hipkin & Son (Grocers) of Stickney, relating to WWI, 1914-1921
- ⁹⁷ *Times*. 10.11.1914
- ⁹⁸ *Times*, 18.08.1914.
- ⁹⁹ *The Lincolnshire Star*. 5.12.1914

¹⁰⁰ Richard van Emden, & Humphries, Steve. *All Quiet on the Home Front, An Oral History of Life in Britain during the First World War*. London: Headline, 2003, p. 230

¹⁰¹ *Lincolnshire Standard*, 2.01.1915

¹⁰² LA. 9-FANE/1/1/4/18

¹⁰³ LA. 9-FANE 1/1/4/5

¹⁰⁴ LA. 9-FANE 1/1/4/16

¹⁰⁵ *Hicks Diaries*. 1046

¹⁰⁶ LA. 9-FANE/1/1/4/18

¹⁰⁷ LA. MISC DON 818.3.7

¹⁰⁸ *Times*. 7.08.1917

¹⁰⁹ *SMA News*. 2.12.1914

¹¹⁰ *Times*, 25.10.1915, 17.11.1915.

¹¹¹ IWM. BEL 1/15, CD 8697. 46th Annual Report of the LGB for 1916-17, p.14

¹¹² *Times*. 20.02.1918

¹¹³ CAB 24/78 29.4.1919. p. 247

¹¹⁴ LA. 9-FANE 1/1/4/6. For further information about the Belgian refugees in Lincolnshire see K. Storr, *Belgian Refugees in Lincolnshire and Hull, 1914-1919*. www.yourpod.co.uk/ 2011.

¹¹⁵ LA. 9-FANE 1/1/4/13

¹¹⁶ *Lincolnshire Standard*. 31.07.1915

¹¹⁷ LA. 9-FANE 1/1/4/6

¹¹⁸ *Boston Standard*. 25.03.1916