

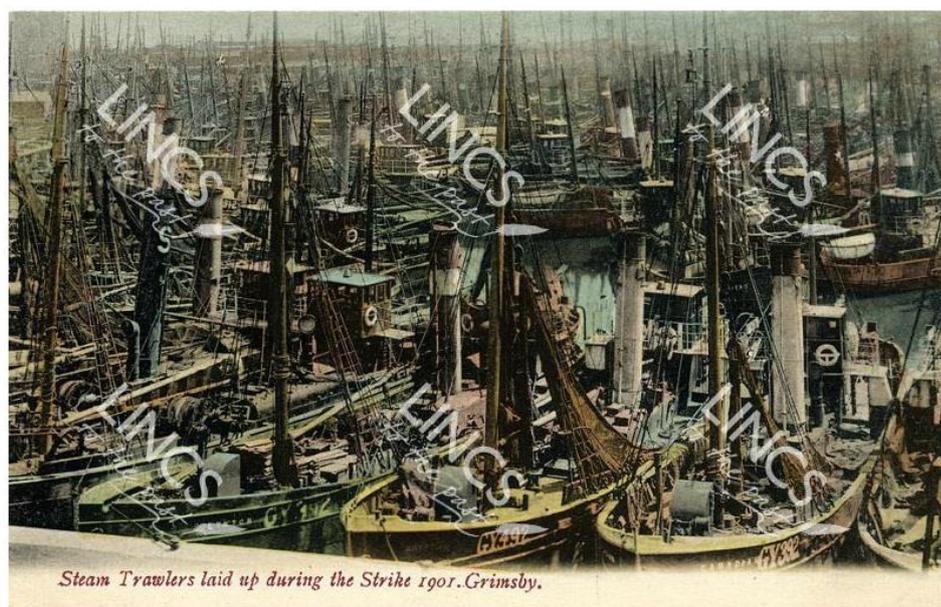
FISHING PORTS AND COASTAL TOWNS

POSITION OF LINCOLNSHIRE'S FISHING INDUSTRY 1914

An important part of Lincolnshire's responsibility in the Great War was to provide the nation with fish. Ability to do this depended on the current state of the industry, conditions of life and work of the fishermen, the fish stocks and the attitude of the government and military authorities to the need for fish compared to military requirements. Also to be taken into consideration was the need for ports to be used to ship troops and their horses, together with the materials required by them across to the continent. Lincolnshire's long coastline harboured fishing communities in many coastal villages: Boston, Skegness, Chapel St Leonards, Mablethorpe, Saltfleetby and Grimsby are some of the places mentioned in contemporary Eastern Sea Fisheries Reports. Nonetheless, fishing was a precarious, dangerous and hard way of earning a living, the work causing injury and suffering. The uncertainty of a good catch meant that most fishermen remained extremely poor. In contrast, some fishing boat owners did very well. Two fishing towns, one at either end of the county, Grimsby and Boston, were thriving places. This sector of the home front was where British people came into direct contact with the enemy and his new, technological weapons of war.

GRIMSBY AND BOSTON

The steam trawler transformed the burgeoning fishing industry, enabling Grimsby to become the greatest fishing port in the world.¹ By 1914 thirteen full fish trains left Grimsby every day heading for London and the industrial centres of the North and Midlands where fish and chip shops provided what was often the only hot meal for slum-dwellers.² However, there was danger of serious over-fishing and a history of extremely poor industrial relations. Chamberlain said trawler owners, men like Harrison Mudd, Henry Smethurst, G.F. Sleight and the Aylwards, known as the fishocracy, wanted to reduce matters to a state of serfdom.³ They were the suppliers of ice, food, coal and stores so there was no competition to keep prices down. The system of fleetings introduced to increase profits was dangerous and depleted fish stocks rapidly. Fishermen were often badly housed and exploited. The method of payment known as poundage which eventually became the main element of a fisherman's income, meant that without a good catch his wage was insufficient to live on. The outbreak of war saw a lessening of the mass strikes which included the 1901 lock-out by Grimsby owners (Fig. 7.1).⁴ Fishermen's involvement in the Seamen's Union was an offshoot of this huge upsurge in class conflict. In 1917 a retired Grimsby skipper, Captain Bingham, established the National Union of British Fishermen with a membership of 51,000 men based primarily at the Humber ports.



Lincs to the Past reference: MLL 18334

Fig. 7.1. MLL 18334 - vessels laid up in the strike of 1901

From Lincs to the Past courtesy of Lincolnshire County Council

<http://www.lincstothepast.com/searchResults.aspx?qsearch=1&keywords=MLL+18334&x=0&y=0>

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Smack-owners in Boston and Grimsby recruited cheap labour by apprenticing for seven years boys from reformatories and workhouses. The punishment for desertion was imprisonment and the 1880 Merchant Shipping Act was intended to stop this. Grimsby magistrates found a way round it; the Town Clerk, William Grange, was congratulated by Mayor Harrison Mudd for his work in forcing hapless apprentices back to sea. Grimsby industry was concentrated in the hands of a few powerful men including George Doughty, twice Mayor of Grimsby and Grimsby's MP from 1896. By the 1880s, including fish merchants and curers, it was difficult to find a magistrate who had no connection with the fishing industry. This was significant when fishermen came before conscription tribunals. Demand for labour gradually declined and by 1915 the number of apprentices taken on was down to single figures where it mostly stayed until 1929 when the system disappeared.⁵

Apart from buildings like the Yarborough Hotel, the Town Hall, the station, and chapels, Grimsby was a sprawling, unsanitary slum. The Bishop was troubled by its 'horrible and shameless immorality' due to prostitution and alcohol consumption.⁶ To keep lads off the streets, out of local brothels, and to offer some training and religious instruction, certain smack-owners provided the Fisherlad's Institute in the Temperance Hall in Orwell Street where classes were held, and where there was a gym, reading room and swimming pool.⁷ In November 1914, it was decided to convert the Institute into a Soldier's Institute. However, there were double standards of morality. In February 1916, the Bishop noted there are 8 liquor dealers on the Watch Committee!⁸

Grimsby relied to a large extent on deep water fishing, but Boston coastal fishermen were a mixture of longshore, fishing along beaches and small inlets, the near water fishermen working further out, and deep sea fishing. The Wash, which is about sixteen miles by twenty miles, was approached by channels known as the Boston Deep's⁹ around which are many dangerous sandbanks where cockles and mussels are most prolific. Small fishing boats had to lie on them for up to six hours but if the wind changed and came strongly from the opposite direction there could be trouble. Another danger was fog. When gathering mussels the fishermen might walk over two miles from the boat, and if fog suddenly fell making the boat invisible, they could be trapped and drowned as the tide came in. (Fig.... picture of Wash)



Fig. 7.2. Towards Herring Hill, the Wash. TF 4036. 1453218. 63c3bd22

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By 1914 new steam trawlers were beginning to replace the fishing smacks around the Wash. They had a larger capacity and were not subject to the vagaries of the weather. However, there were rumours about the condition of trawlers and no regular supply of fish. The Boston Deep Sea Company was in serious financial difficulties before the outbreak of WW1.¹¹

A Joint Committee, appointed in 1875, managed the inshore fisheries from Donna Nook in Lincolnshire to Happisburgh in Norfolk. The Borough of Boston was given powers to regulate the local mussel and oyster



Lincs to the Past reference: MLL 8681

Fig. 7.4 MLL8681

Small sea going vessel (perhaps a trawler), probably has a Ruston and Hornsby of Lincoln marine engine or generator.

From Lincs to the Past courtesy of Lincolnshire County Council

<http://www.lincstothepast.com/searchResults.aspx?qsearch=1&keywords=MLL+8681&x=0&y=0>

WAR-TIME

On the outbreak of war, realising that many fishermen would be unemployed, the Mayor and Town Clerk of Grimsby went to London to gain governmental support in finding new employment knowing that Grimsby's trade would be suspended. Fishing became difficult or impossible. Sailings of merchant vessels were prohibited, no vessels could arrive with timber so timber yards and sawmills would close; building was discontinued.¹⁷ The Mayor immediately set up the Mayor's Relief Fund with many groups, like sub-committees, being formed. During the second week in September 1914 the Grimsby fund was £6,509 11s 6d.¹⁸ The Grimsby Boot Repairers Association promised to repair forty pairs of boots free each week; other groups gave similar help. At first the idea was to help people with food and money, but before the war ended, this war charity had grown and added many branches of work. The Mayoress' sub-committee, through the Infant Welfare Centres provided dinners and infants' food to expectant and nursing mothers. There were 59,917 dinners provided to about 747 mothers at a cost of £1,679 11s 2d, and the total expended on 508 infants in food was £1,500 8s 0d.

On Tuesday, 4 August 1914, fishing craft returning to Grimsby found light cruisers, submarines and treacherous mines laid in the North Sea by Britain and Germany, so the fish dock quickly became clogged. Most trawlers were immediately commandeered for Admiralty service and within a few hours some were engaged in minesweeping. Grimsby became a minesweeping base and during 1914, 156 Grimsby trawlers were requisitioned. By the end of the war, of Grimsby's 700 steam trawlers, 600 were requisitioned, 433 became fighting units, and some 60 were lost with 519 men, leaving 313 widows and 480 orphans. Altogether 5,875 Grimsby men joined the Navy or the auxiliary services on patrol and minesweeping duties.¹⁹ Minesweepers were repaired in the shipyard of John S. Doig and were re-converted to trawlers at peace. However, men and ships were inadequately prepared for war. Few men were trained in the work which was not confined to the North Sea. A large number from Boston were dispatched to sail out of Great Yarmouth which became an important base.

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The Boston Mayor, Alderman C. Lucas, opened a local war distress subscription list during August, and joined the National Fund but control as far as Boston and the Holland Division were concerned rested in the County Council. The Mayor promised to open a public subscription list, and that distress collections taken at churches and chapels would be given to the fund. Mr J.M. Simpson, a Holland County Council member and director of the Boston Fishing Company, said that Boston would probably want to draw a good deal out of that fund. The Fishing Company were waiting to see if they could get war insurance on their vessels now laid up at the dock. They had received orders from the Admiralty that at present no steam trawler was to be in the North Sea at night under any circumstances whatever. Every boat, if sent out, must return to port at night.²⁰ This would reduce the catch and therefore fishermen's income.

In Boston, the first sign that all was not well came as the trawlers which had left port on various dates in August did not return as scheduled. The *Brotherton* and the *Sutterton* returned on 30 August and the skipper of the *Brotherton* reported picking up a lifebuoy marked 'Lindsey, Boston' and other wreckage from fishing vessels. On 3 September Mrs Fane wrote that eight Boston trawlers were missing believed lost. Each carried nine hands, most of them married.²¹

On the outbreak of war, the Royal Naval Reserve was already formed. On 8 August fishermen along the East Coast mobilized and formed the National Auxiliary Patrol. In addition, between 1,000 and 2,000 fishermen enlisted, or were called up as the Royal Naval Reserve (RNR), or to crew reserved trawlers. Fifty steam drifters were manned by 500 fishermen, now members of the RNR who received a wage of 4s 11d per day all found. They received a Naval Reserve uniform, usually worked in ten day spells with six days off, when their ships could be seen at the Fish Dock at Grimsby, although they might be required to remain much longer at sea. By 24 October the RNR call-up had taken some Boston fishermen, and ten Lynn men and four Bostoners on cruisers recently sunk in North Sea were believed to be lost.²² The trawler-men in their new roles as soldiers were ill-equipped. Newspapers carried frequent appeals for comforts: For Our Minesweepers . help knitting helmets, socks, mittens and gloves and for hospital use.²³ However, some people resented the appeals and took exception to the men who manned these boats being paid, protesting Why do they need to have articles knitted, why don't they buy them out of the £3 or £4 they earn per week, or their wives buy wool and knit instead of reading novels?²⁴

Ships were taken by the Admiralty for purposes additional to minesweeping. By October 1914 the trawlers *Bostonian*, *Cambrian* and *Etrurian*, belonging to the Boston Deep Sea Fishing and Ice Company Ltd had been engaged for patrol service. Four further trawlers were being prepared and would probably be manned by Boston men. On 19 May, 1915, the steam trawlers *Herbert Ingram* and *Witham* were hired on military charter to block the New Cut, Boston. Their return to fishing a year later was delayed by bureaucracy. On 29 May 1916 the *Antelope* arrived to take their place. The two trawlers were removed to Boston Dock.²⁵ On 7 June, 1916, Lieutenant G.E. Clarke, RNVR, Boston Harbour Trust, wrote to Captain Groom, HQ Lincolnshire Coast Defence, Alford, pointing out that the trawlers had been lying in the dock for a week and a half and that the Fishing Company was likely to claim for consequent depreciation. He suggested a Naval Engineer be sent to undertake a survey with a Fishing Company Representative. Ten days later Lieutenant William J. Satchell from Alford advised the Accountant General at the Admiralty that unless the hiring was terminated by the 19th, another month's payment would be due. On 28 June instructions were sent that Mr Walker, the Manager of the Fishing Company could start opening out the trawlers' engines and boilers and have both ready for the Inspector on the following Monday. However, the 36 tons of coal on board the *Witham*, and 20 tons on the *Herbert Ingram* should be allowed for by the Fishing Company at the price the Admiralty paid, namely 22s 11d per ton bunkered. The hirings were intended to be terminated on 4 July, but the trawlers were not inspected until 4 and 5 July. Then Howard Clifton Brown, Brigadier General, Commanding Lincolnshire Coast Defences, gave notice that they were no longer required and discharged them. Finally, Commander Pollen authorised them to be handed over to the Boston Deep Sea Fishing & Ice Co. Ltd on 13 July, nearly seven weeks after their removal to the Dock.

The three main war-related dangers to the fishing fleets were enemy surface ships, mines and submarines. During the August 1914 twenty-six trawlers were sunk by the German navy, the majority from Boston and Grimsby. Such dangers led to concerns in 1915 that unless the Government acted, Grimsby would have to stop fishing altogether. Skippers were wary of putting to sea because of mines and it became difficult to secure the men. Restrictions were placed on fishing grounds and only a limited number of vessels were allowed to pass in and out of port.²⁶ The work was highly dangerous, no crew member was obligated to go. However, it seems reasonable to question their freedom of choice. As the wife of one Grimsby fisherman said: If you didn't catch fish, you didn't eat. Certain areas were left uncleared, entry prohibited,

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but the increased risk of striking a mine was often outweighed by the chances of a good catch of fish. Many skippers took the risk. If caught, they were arrested by the Navy and returned to port to await a court hearing. The court cases of Boston skippers James Bartholomew, of the *Brothertoft*, and William Lucas, of the *Dalmation*, were on 9 September 1916.²⁷ The result of these limitations was that in November 1914 a fish famine was reported at Grimsby. No vessels arrived on the morning tide and as only twenty-three arrived overnight the fish supply was utterly inadequate. The shortage meant a rise in price, cod was 8s 6d per stone, three times its normal value.²⁸ In the New Year due to the limited catch the wholesale price increased to 22s for one stone of North Sea plaice, i.e. 1s 6d per lb, and cod at 11s 6d per stone. Such prices were prohibitive for the merchants, many of whom suffered a financial loss owing to the constant short supply.²⁹

In January 1915, Hans Sorensen Hansen, skipper of the trawler *King Harold* was charged with entering with his trawler into a prohibited port on 13 January, contrary to the Defence of the Realm Consolidation Act. Councillor Frank Barrett, JP, ex-Mayor of Grimsby, and his outdoor manager, George William Margaron, were charged with aiding and abetting him. The defence admitted all the facts, but Mr Barrett was unaware that foreign trawlers were prohibited from entering a British port.³⁰ Fears of spying led to prosecution. At Grimsby in May 1915 the fisherman Ernest Gustaf Waldemar Olsson, a Swede, formerly mate of the Dutch vessel *Zeearend*, trading regularly between Grimsby and Rotterdam, was committed to the Lincolnshire Assizes charged with endeavouring to procure information likely to be of service to the enemy respecting the Humber defences. Bail was refused.

Consolidated Fisheries Ltd and G.F. Sleights owned fifty and fifty-one steam trawlers respectively. The greater part of their herring catch was exported to Russia and other Eastern states but this market was lost in the war and subsequent revolutions. On 7 April 1915 the *Skegness, Mablethorpe & Alford News* reported it was unlikely that any herring fishing would be permitted that season in the North Sea. The herring industry was among those hardest hit by the war and curers were disgruntled that the Government failed to give financial assistance despite its embargo on the export of herrings to every neutral country except America.³¹ This affected the 7,000 men fishing from Grimsby and the 21,000 workers in ancillary industries, not only trawler hands, but also wharf lumpers, net-makers, boat-menders, salt-dealers, coal-heavers and other affiliated trades.³² In November 1915 the fish-curing premises in Victoria Street, Grimsby, became the National Shell factory premises.

In February 1915 Mr Tickler, MP called attention to the disorganization of the fishing trade in Grimsby. The Admiralty, he said, had not only restricted the fishing area and taken 260 steam trawlers as mine-sweepers, with 2,600 British fishermen to man them, but they had forbidden the employment of a single foreigner on a fishing vessel. As a result there were over 600 alien fishermen, chiefly Danes, Dutchmen, and Norwegians, now walking the streets of Grimsby, yet owners were unable to send their vessels to sea for want of men. Neutral and friendly aliens were recognized as amongst the most efficient hands of the Grimsby fleet. He urged that the prohibition on the employment of these foreigners should be removed.

As the roles of Grimsby fishermen changed so did that of women in the industry. Now the traditional ways of self-help among fishing communities became difficult to sustain, especially in the one-man or one-woman industries such as the cutting and shaping of sails, rope-making and net-making. Older men and women skilled in these trades were becoming pensioners. Fisher lasses traditionally travelled in gangs following the herring to fishing ports, where sheds on the wharves were used for their accommodation in seasons when extra plentiful schools of herring were caught. They prepared the fish for the brine barrel, split it, cleaned it and others then packed it. Many women turned to net-braiding as a source of income. Net braiders played a crucial part in the war effort and the Grimsby Corporation helped them get orders for camouflage netting. It was all women braiding, some down the dock, and lots did it at home when their husbands were at sea. It was hard on the hands and hard work. The wages were poor but Grimsby had 250 net braiders working primarily for the fishing fleet during the war.³³ Women also worked at CoSalt, the Great Grimsby Coal, Salt and Tanning Co., of which Harrison Mudd was director. The firm made sails and ropes as well as nets which were then tarred. The Belgian refugee sisters Madeline and Laura Boenne whose father brought them from Antwerp to stay in safety in Grimsby before the outbreak of war, are known to have worked there as machinists. CoSalt used the Grimsby Flag Day as a means of promoting itself while also raising war funds through selling numbered tickets one of which was lucky. (Fig. 7.5) Many of the young women workers were orphans of sea-lost fathers and had a widowed mother to maintain. However, by April 1916, the entire deep-sea fishing industry was at a standstill. Some of these girls turned to munitions; others worked the mails or the plough; one hears of a few following the long-shore fishery. There was a call to help them because Fishery needed many skills and a new brigade could not be raised

in one or two seasons. The removal of these ~~lasses~~to towns threatened the future survival of the fish industry.³⁴



Fig. 7.5. CoSalt Coupon showing the Union Jack. Lucky number 10187 on ticket, possibly winning £5. Grimsby Flag Day. 28 or 25, 26 September 1914. Photograph reproduced courtesy of North East Lincolnshire Council Library Service

TRAWLER LOSSES and PRISONERS

In September 1914, Mrs Fane inserted in her diary a newspaper cutting which bore the headline:

TEN BRITISH TRAWLERS MISSING.

Nothing had been heard up to yesterday of the ten missing Boston (Lincolnshire) steam trawlers, carrying ninety-one hands, which, it is no longer doubted, have been sunk or captured in the North Sea. The Boston Deep Sea Fishing Company in consequence yesterday suspended business indefinitely. A large number of workpeople are affected.³⁵

She added ~~News~~ arrived that fifteen fishing boats have been sunk by a German squadron, the fishermen were taken prisoners.^q

The Boston Fishing Company, like Grimsby, employed apprentices, mostly from orphanages such as Barnardo's. The Apprentices Home was situated in South Terrace, facing the river and was run by Mr Brightey and his wife, who was known as ~~mother~~to the boys. Albert Stearns, John Wilmot, Robert Foster, Thomas Cornford, Charlie Smith, John Graham and William Henry ~~Lizzie~~Harris were taken prisoner. ~~Lizzie~~wrote most of the letters home for the other boys, including one to Mr Brightey. Letters were undoubtedly read by German censors before being sent.

I suppose you missed us when we did not come home. I am pleased to say that both the crews and the apprentices are all safe and well in Germany as prisoners. We are being treated with ~~o~~ the greatest of civility. We have plenty to eat and tobacco is allowed us. ~~o~~ We have the crews of the *Lindsey*, *Kesteven*, *Porpoise* and a Grimsby trawler here in Cuxhaven. ~~o~~ All the boys wish Jennie many happy returns of the day, and hope she will live to see another 24 years, and we all hope that her son is doing well. Tell ~~mother~~not to trouble about us as we are faring well~~o~~ With very best regards, from your boys ~~o~~ We are seven jolly fishing apprentices just captured at sea.

Men who were neutral nationals were soon released. First, a Dutchman on the Grimsby *Seti*, C. Johnson. Then Henry Peter Neilsen, a Norwegian from the Boston steam trawler *Marnay*, arrived in Boston on 26 September. Around this time some of the Boston families received letters from crew members. Mrs Royal, wife of Fred, second hand of the trawler *Lindsey*, received a postcard from her husband that read 'I hope you will be able to keep my "shipwreck" paid up, because I have lost everything. I had no boots on when I was taken ashore, but I had an old pair given to me. Do try and keep a good heart. ~~o~~ from your loving husband, Fred.'³⁶

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Captured fishermen were transferred to Spandau, a Berlin suburb, and housed on the Ruhleben racecourse.³⁷ Mrs Eggers, the wife of Skipper Eggers of the *Kesteven*, received a postcard from him about her weekly allowance of £1 paid by the Boston owners from 27 November 1915. Mr D. Walker, manager of the Boston Deep Sea Fishing & Ice Co. also received a postcard from Eggers on the same matter. In December 1915 John Bontoft of the *Skirbeck*, Joseph Bontoft of *Flavian*, both First Engineers, and John Pratten of the *Walrus*, captured by German Gunboat *Hamburg* on 22 August 1914, asked their employers through the United States Ambassador, Berlin, to pay similar allowances to their wives, but were told this depended on the British Fishing Vessels War Risks Insurance Association Ltd admitting liability. The Bontofts' identical letters state that they signed ships' articles for owners to pay their wives 30s a week respectively, part of wages, but they had so far received nothing. In February 1916, Joseph Henry Pratten, a crew member of the *Walrus*, was in the same position. Then the German Government promised to maintain interned men from the British fishing vessels at the rate of two marks (2s 6d) per day. This meant the owners of the vessels need not now pay the money previously requested. It became clear that families did not know how to contact prisoners, so Mr Walker placed a letter in the local paper telling them that 'One envelope should be placed inside another addressed Prisoner of War interned in Germany, c/o GPO Mount Pleasant, London. Private and family news only, in English, no postage need be paid.'³⁸

In May 1915 an Interned Boston Fishermen's Fund was organised for men at Ruhleben and Sennelager by Mr Walter Royal of the Loggerheads Hotel and brother of Fred. Mr Francis of Messrs Willer and Riley gave boxes and Mr F.M. Woodthorpe supervised the packing of herrings, ships biscuits, loaves, plum loaves, *café au lait*, tea, tins salmon, tins tongue, tinned meat, Oxo cubes, tins of mustard, salt, pepper and so on. In Grimsby a similar fund was organised by Lady Doughty. The *Boston Guardian* and the *Standard* both organised a relief Christmas fund in 1914 for the internees, and the Prince of Wales set up a fund for the families of interned men. Spalding's Shipwreck Society cared for the widows of deceased members and on 13 February, 1915, at the Annual Dinner it was reported that there had been only one claim for loss in connection with the auxiliary branch of the Royal Navy . minesweeping. Mr Royce said the sailors and fishermen had paid the sacrifice the country had asked of them, cheerfully and with courage. They were bequeathing a legacy like none before.³⁹

In early 1916, the position of dependents of fishermen who lost their life or liberty at sea by the hazards of war was placed on a more satisfactory basis by a scheme of the War Risks Association, approved by the Board of Trade. A special committee was formed at Grimsby to administer the scheme. It comprised an equal number of trawler owners and labour representatives who had power to award a widow £300 and an additional £26 annually for each child under fourteen. In cases where the man was a prisoner £1 weekly might be allowed during his captivity.⁴⁰

Trawler losses continued throughout the War. In April 1916, it was feared that two of Boston Fishing Company's trawlers, the *Carrington* and the *Holland*, had been lost at sea. They carried a full complement of about eighteen hands. The *Holland* was skippered by Thomas Storr and the *Carrington* by Walter Brunning. Brunning had a son who was a prisoner of war in Germany. On the *Carrington* was Charles Christopher Smith, one of the fishing apprentices mentioned above, who was released and sent home 24 December, 1915. If these missing trawlers did not return it would raise the number of missing boats to fourteen.

<i>Holland</i>	<i>Crew</i>	<i>M or S</i>	<i>Carrington</i>	<i>Crew</i>	<i>M or S</i>
Skipper	T. Holland	M	Skipper	W. Brunning	M
Second hand	W. Harman	M	Second Hand	W. Page	M
Third hand	W. Young	M	Third Hand	J. Greenacre	M
Deck Hand	A. Thomas	S	Deck Hand	C. Ladds	M
Steward	J. Eastick	M	Deck Hand Apprentice	C. C. Smith	S
First Engineer	A. H. Smith	M	Steward	W. Tyler	S
Second Engineer	C. Weatherhogg	S	First Engineer	E. Anslow	S
Fireman	H. Colley	S	Second Engineer	S. Willows	M
			Fireman	J. Pick	S

Table 7.1. Crews of the Boston trawlers *Holland* and *Carrington*.⁴¹

S = Single. M = Married.

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Within three months, 20 Grimsby fishing vessels were destroyed, 83 men lost and 128 became prisoners of war. The Grimsby steam trawler *Nelson*, owned by Mr J. Grant, struck a German mine in the North Sea on 9 September and foundered. The crew of nine included O.W. Neal, steward, of Bourne, and A.W. Scrivens, third hand, of Grantham. The Grimsby trawler *Rosella* also struck a mine off the East Coast the same week. The Captain and chief mate were drowned but eight survivors were landed at South Shields. The steam trawler *Salvia*, which carried ten men and left Grimsby six weeks previously on a voyage to Iceland, was then a fortnight overdue.⁴² On 25 January 1915 *The Times* reported that while the steam trawler *Bernicia* was making for Grimsby they sighted an open boat adrift. It contained Skipper Harrison and eight men, the crew of the Grimsby steam trawler *Windsor* owned by the Queen Steam Fishing Co. Ltd, which had been wrecked by a mine twenty-four hours earlier. On June 11, 1915, four more Grimsby trawlers, the *Tunisian*, *Castor*, *Velocity* and *Cardiff* were reported as sunk by a submarine, although the *Mercury* had managed to escape by chopping away its gear and steaming away at full speed. The Bishop of Lincoln noted the loss of men evident from the mourning clothes of their families. On 1 January 1915 he walked to Cleethorpes from Grimsby, enjoying the sea air. He then preached to a goodly congregation at St Aidan's of wives & families of sailors & soldiers . many in black⁴³

At first the little fishing ships were not armed but fishermen wanted to be armed in order to defend themselves.⁴⁴ They faced same threats as men on minesweepers and received increased insurance premiums and war risk money as an addition to their wages. Enemy action sank over 200 fishing vessels and killed more than 1,000 fishermen.⁴⁵ This was seen as a war on defenceless trawlers. In May, 1915 the *Lincolnshire Chronicle* recorded 'German submarine (U14) pirates have been unusually busy attacking fishermen in the North Sea, having sunk eight unarmed trawlers including the fishing vessel *Rugby* from Grimsby. All crew were allowed to leave the trawlers before they were sunk.'⁴⁶ By May Grimsby had lost twenty-eight trawlers since August. The *Wessex*, last sighted on 5 November, was now presumed lost with all hands.⁴⁷

On 4 February 1916, the steam trawler *King Stephen* from Grimsby found a disabled Zeppelin, the L19, in the North Sea. The car was entirely submerged and about twenty men were driven to the upper part of the envelope which was floating in the water. Other crew members were on board. Thinking that they might be over-powered the nine fishermen did not rescue them, but promised to give the location to the naval authorities on their return to port. The Germans, however, were not rescued, so the matter remains open to question.⁴⁸ The trawler skipper was so traumatised by the experience that he never went to sea again. He died soon afterwards and the trawler was sunk by enemy action in 1918.⁴⁹

DISTRESS AND RELIEF FUNDS

The number of men losing their lives while fishing was so alarming that the Fishermen's Emergency Relief Fund was established to provide relief for widows and families of fishermen lost as a result of enemy action. Many foreigners were given the chance to return to their native lands, but particularly those who had wives and children in Grimsby wanted to stay on in the town. Grimsby, like other towns in Britain, received gifts from the Dominions. These included (Table 7.2):

5,620	stones of	Flour.
4,998	lbs. of	Tinned Meats.
5,318	lbs. of	Frozen Meat.
3,857	stones of	Potatoes.
2,560	lbs. of	Cheese.
4,800	lbs. of	Tinned Salmon.
840	lbs. of	Sugar.
720	lbs. of	Paisley Corn Flour.
587	tins of	Condensed Milk.

Table 7.2 Gifts of food to Grimsby from the Dominions.⁵⁰

The main charity concerned with fishermen's welfare and that of their wives and families was the Royal National Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen. Rosina Ada Newnham, the Mission's Superintendent at Grimsby, lived in a house in Orwell Street. However, the Mission was inadequate to meet the demands of the growing industry and a new building was planned but postponed when war was declared. Captain Smedley, Port Missioner for Grimsby since 1895, was the one to break the news of the loss of men to the families. Miss Newnham used the Mission journal *Toilers of the Deep* to appeal for black dresses, jackets, stockings, and other items for mourning clothes for the widows and orphans. A distress fund was established and the Mission developed the care of fishermen prisoners-of-war as its war work. In December 1914, with the help of Mrs H.L. Taylor and Mrs J. Smith, the Mission began to assist war widows and wives by providing knitting work which continued until 14 May 1919. The women, who received £948.5.11 in wages, made 7,255 pairs of sea boot stockings, 605 pairs of socks, 33 Jerseys and 36 pairs of Meltor twine gloves which were sent to the men.⁵¹ Knitting work was notoriously unremunerative.

The Deep Sea Mission had no branch at Boston, but in December 1917 the Bishop went there for a service of Dedication for a new Missionary motor boat at the harbour near Skirbeck.⁵² Large quantities of tobacco and articles were sent to British prisoners in the German camps, much from the Gorleston Mission, Norfolk, via Grimsby, but these had proved insufficient to enable the Boston fishermen to have a share. Mr A.D. Snell, the ship's husband at Gorleston, received a letter from a Boston fisherman, now a prisoner in Germany, appealing for a 'bit of tobacco.' After the War, throughout the fishing slump, the Mission continued supporting fishermen and families.

War Cabinet papers record that during February and March 1917, thirty steam trawlers out of a total fleet in the whole country of less than four hundred left to fishing had been destroyed by submarines, involving a loss of about 15,000 tons of fish per annum. They recognised that unless effective measures were taken for the safety of the remainder, a very valuable source of food supply would be seriously reduced. The Minutes continued: *It is not practicable for the ordinary Patrols to afford protection to steam trawlers, as the latter, in order to fish efficiently, must necessarily operate at a considerable distance outside the Patrol Lines, and it is considered that the only effective mode of protection is to arm the vessels themselves.* The number of guns available would be insufficient to arm them all so they wanted to compel unarmed vessels to operate closely with those that were armed. *owing to the reckless courage of the trawler-men and their frequent disregard of regulations made for their own safety, it is not considered possible to carry out any such arrangement, unless the trawling fleets are organised on a Naval basis, and made to operate under strict Naval control.* It was thought it may eventually become necessary to take direct control of the drift-net vessels and sailing trawlers and to treat them according to the scheme proposed for steam trawlers.⁵³ Fishing fleets were placed under Admiralty control and fishing grounds closed from April 1917 to 23 June 1919. Vessels were placed in sections and two boats in each section were fitted with wireless and armed with guns. Boston steam trawlers operated out of Grimsby in convoy and were not allowed to resume fishing from Boston until 30 November 1918.⁵⁴

DISASTERS AT SEA

Caring for survivors from disasters at sea had always been a responsibility for coastal areas, but was now increased. Mrs Fane wrote on 7 September: *The Wilson liner Russo was sunk by a mine yesterday about 20 miles off the East Coast. All the crew and passengers were saved except about 20 Russian emigrants.* Her husband was stationed at Grimsby and wrote to her that *the survivors of the Russo were arriving there, about 150 were saved. One poor woman was confined about an hour after she was landed. Today come accounts of further disasters to trawlers in the North Sea.*⁵⁵

Not all marine disasters were due to the war. In February, 1915, the *Marguarette* bound from London to Hull with a cargo of copra, used in the manufacture of margarine, ran ashore in heavy gales on Theddlethorpe flats.⁵⁶ The same week the steam trawler *Hector* No 896 of the Hellier Company, containing 180 kits of fish, ran ashore two miles north of Mablethorpe. In July, the lifeboat was launched to Wainfleet Sandbank in heavy seas to help a ketch in trouble sailing from Harwich to Hull with 150 tons of shingle. She had run afoul of *The Swan*, a Grimsby fishing smack owned by Mr A. King, which had been whelking. The smack sank just prior to the arrival of the lifeboat, but her crew of four, Young brothers of Cleethorpes, managed to board the badly leaking ketch and the six lifeboat crew went aboard to help pump it. The ketch and the smack crew were taken to Boston.⁵⁷

Around the Wash many young men now became skippers in place of older, more experienced fishermen who were away at the war. The manpower situation was serious; all the men left were either medically unfit

or over age, and boys like Frank Castleton from Kings Lynn could almost pick their berths. In 1918, when Castleton was fifteen, youngsters were the only available crew.⁵⁸ Lifeboats were manned by older men.⁵⁹ At Skegness where Mr Perrin and his son lived on and manned the lifeboat at Gibraltar Point, 3,500 lives were saved during the war. In February 1915 a floating pile driver, with a crew of twelve, engaged at Clee Sands, off Cleethorpes, capsized. Men were flung into the water. The mishap was seen from Grimsby and the lifeboat called. The master of the tug *Solway* also saw it and made for the scene of the accident. All twelve men were picked up and safely landed at Grimsby.⁶⁰

BOSTON'S DIFFICULTIES

Until WW1 sailing ships were towed into Boston docks by tug. The Pilot Commissioners for the Port of Boston reported at the Guildhall in February 1916 that Pilots' earnings were reduced. There had been only 438 vessels compulsorily piloted in and out of the port in 1915, whereas there were 1,367 in 1914. Non-compulsory pilotages were 168, compared with 314 in 1914.⁶¹ On 12 March 1915, Henry Lawson wrote to the Boston MP, Charles Henry Dixon, on behalf of the pilots, asking him to approach the Admiralty to get some of the minesweepers working around the Wash to use Boston for coaling. Boston had been used as a coaling base for Destroyers, but owing to a re-disposition of the Flotillas, it became inconvenient. The Admiralty replied that efficient labour arrangements there were difficult to make and charges exceptionally high. They suggested that if these men had difficulty in making a living, any who were willing to accept Admiralty employment afloat should communicate with the Superintendent of Mercantile Marine, Grimsby. Mr E.J. Foley, for the Director of Transports, approved the answer but added: **± do NOT think we ought to tell War Office about it.**



Lincs to the Past Reference: MLL 8685

Fig. 7.6. MLL8685. 'Bristol Pilot no.2' boat, probably powered by a Ruston and Hornsby of Lincoln marine engine.

From Lincs to the Past courtesy of Lincolnshire County Council

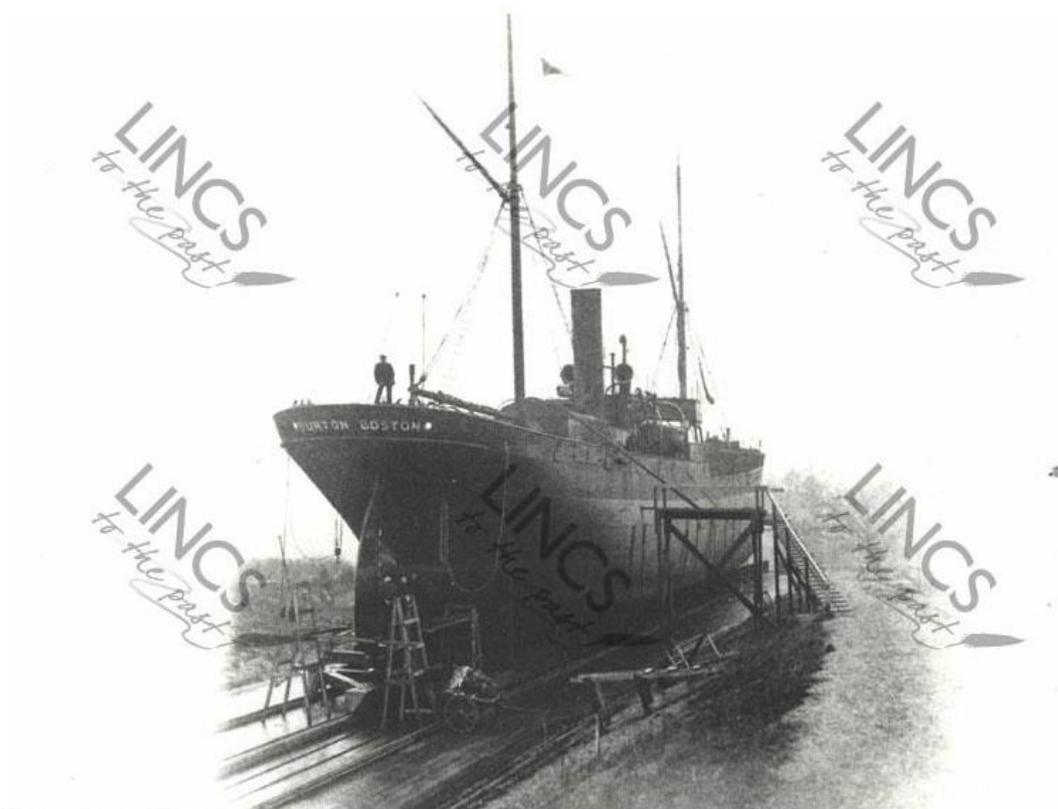
<http://www.lincstothepast.com/searchResults.aspx?qsearch=1&keywords=MLL+8685&x=0&y=0>

In January 1916, in the House of Commons, Dixon asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade, Mr Pretyman, to send some of vessels held up in Hull to ports hard up for employment, such as Boston. Vessels were sent to Boston to unload, but by July this slacked off. To make matters worse, the War Office was stacking on the dock-side immense quantities of hay, which was sent by rail to Salford and Middlesbrough where ships were loaded with steel for the French government before completing with hay.

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Dixon wanted the Admiralty to send some boats to unload at Boston and then to load up with hay. He said: *All I care about is to get some work for my poor people at Boston. The Port is absolutely empty and idle and it seems a pity that some use cannot be made of it for smaller vessels and so relieve the big ports.* The Admiralty was unaware that hay was being railed from Boston to Middlesbrough. However, although enquiries revealed that the bulk of the Boston hay was for home consumption, Foley promised arrangements would be made to ship hay for France from Boston direct although he needed to know when sufficient hay was collected to warrant the despatch of a ship to Boston.

In fact, Boston was well adapted for a variety of tasks including all repairs (**Fig. BOS 718**). It had two good berths on a slipway for cleaning ships' bottoms, also a splendid gridiron, which were all under control of the Boston Deep Sea Company. Despite this, and other advantages over King's Lynn, the Admiralty Office concerned with the Wash was located at Lynn. Both ports, liaising with each other, were used by the Admiralty for loading steamers with hay and potatoes.⁶²



Lincs to the Past reference: BOS 718

BOS718 Boston Trawler 'Burton' undergoing repairs.

From Lincs to the Past by courtesy of Lincolnshire County Council.

<http://www.lincstothepast.com/searchResults.aspx?qsearch=1&keywords=BOS+718&x=51&y=21>

Loading arrangements at Boston and King's Lynn were in the hands of the Admiralty Agents at Hull, William Mathwin & Son together with their Boston agents, Alfred H. Read & Sons. Sometimes transports arrived unexpectedly, but telegrams could not be sent as this might alert submarines. Both Boston and Lynn had difficulties with the height of tides. Heights given in tide tables could not be relied on if there was a south wind keeping the water low which meant that sometimes vessels could not sail.

In November Ogden Taylor, Manager of the King's Lynn Docks and Railway Company, was appointed Naval Transport Officer at King's Lynn with the rank of Lieutenant. He was also Admiralty Representative on the Port Committee at Boston.⁶³ Taylor was unhappy with the duplication of effort arising from the agents' work. It was proposed to cancel Mathwin's agency and appoint Taylor as Admiralty Agent. Taylor agreed to issue sailing orders to transports loaded at Boston, but needed to make the Admiralty aware of the restricted local communication facilities. On one occasion he had tried unsuccessfully for two hours to

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phone the Rear Admiral Commanding East Coast of England, Immingham Dock. Sending instructions by train depended on the co-operation of the railway company's officials and apart from the ordinary postal service, the only trains to Boston from Kings Lynn were:

KING'S LYNN depart	7.05 a.m.	9.55 a.m.	1.03 p.m.	3.45 p.m.
BOSTON arrive	8.58 a.m.	11.28 a.m.	3.26 p.m.	5.51 p.m. ⁶⁴

On 20 November, having received the Admiralty's telegram giving the transport *Prince Leopold's* destination, he sent the sailing instructions to Boston by the first available train. However, the Railway Company demurred at taking the letter without the usual Warrant, potentially causing a serious delay.⁶⁵

The Admiralty Agent in the Wash was Lieutenant G.E. Clarke, RNVR, Engineer of the Boston Harbour Trust who held an Honorary Commission without pay, and therefore had no code or telegraphic address. The lack of full military status caused communication difficulties. On 4 December 1916, Clarke contacted Immingham Dock. He wrote:

Early yesterday morning I received a telephone message from Lt Ogden Taylor, RNVR., District Naval Transport Officer, Kings Lynn, to inform the Master of the transport *Prince Leopold* to proceed to Calais in place of Cherbourg. As communication was bad between Boston and Kings Lynn at night and on Sunday, would it not be safer to send any late instructions to me for ships in Boston? I in no way wish to interfere with Lt Taylor's work, but delays might occur.

Taylor's report showed the communication difficulties even more clearly. He had:

received instruction for *Prince Leopold* to Cherbourg about 2.45 a.m. but about 10.00 p.m. altered to Calais. The last mail for Boston had been despatched. No train service until Monday morning and as the vessel was due to sail at noon on Sunday I phoned Lt Clarke about 10.00 and asked him to go aboard in order to alter the destination. Done to save expense of hiring a motor to make a special journey to Boston and back. Lt Clarke had previously agreed to be helpful, his contention re communication between Kings Lynn and Boston incorrect, I was put through to him within three minutes and the conversation was perfectly distinct.

Clarke had been recommended for a proper commission with pay according to his rank provided he resigned his position under the Boston Harbour Trust, but this he was unwilling to do. It was therefore not possible to send him telegraphic sailing orders and the existing procedure could not be altered. As Taylor was frequently at Boston it was suggested that he be appointed Transport Officer there as well as Kings Lynn and superintend transport work at both ports. However, as Taylor was Dock Manager at Kings Lynn it was considered his appointment at Boston might accentuate the jealousy which existed between the two ports and that a separate Naval Transport Officer stationed at Boston would be preferable if necessary.

MORE FISH NEEDED

The reduction in fishing gave some species a chance to recuperate. The Annual Meeting of the Eastern Sea Fisheries Committee held at Spalding in May 1916 was told that sprats and herring had entered the Wash for the first time since 1894-95 due to the lack of deep sea fishing. Stake nets were fixed on the Wash foreshore in the winter and the highest single herring catch was 1,500. Herring caught by stow nets were generally small.⁶⁶

The size and quality of the fishermen's catch affected other jobs such as the buying, selling, and packing of fish. Grimsby's economy was hit hard as there was no other large industry. Fitters, net-braiders and fish house workers suffered.⁶⁷ As trawlers were commandeered or lost, other boats were pressed into service to fish.⁶⁸

During January 1918 the Board took its Census to show the depletion of shore workers at Grimsby due to conscription. The information received from 225 merchants' firms that furnished returns, given in the Appendix, showed that in most categories the number of men fell. However, the percentage of secretaries and managers increased; some were in category A1 and therefore healthy enough to enlist. The explanation that that there were now more firms is inconsistent with the fact that the number of buyers decreased by 52 per cent and the number of clerks by 50 per cent. There were now no women clerks whereas in 1913 there were three. Some buyers and packers were also A1. Foremen increased despite the fact that labourers were greatly depleted, being replaced by casual workers. In most ports coopers

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practically disappeared due to the cessation of the herring trade with the continent but in Grimsby the number remained constant at thirteen although the number of smokers and splitters decreased. A Memo on the Grimsby shore workers stated that these jobs were ~~u~~clearly unsuitable for women and beyond their strength, but elsewhere they have been employed in increasing numbers.⁶⁹ The returns showed an increase in female labourers, whose numbers went up from 75 to 148. The number of women curers increased from eight in 1913 to twenty-seven in 1917.

Forty-two owners furnished returns, having about five-sixths of the boats of their 1913 number. The number of secretaries and managers increased by 206 per cent and there were twenty-eight ship's husbands in 1917 compared with twenty-five in 1913. In all other categories the number of men employed decreased. There was a constant need for trawlers to be repaired but the number of men carrying out this work reduced from twenty-eight to one. The Admiralty's requisition of trawlers meant that those who were able to continue fishing prospered. The diminished catch led to increases in fish prices. However, by April 1915 the number of trained fishing hands was reduced by 1,500 men. The shortage of crews would be acute when prawning got into full swing.⁷⁰ In March 1917 there was a further military call for 110 fishermen, making a total call of about 850 men.⁷¹

In August 1917 the Government discussed the importance of the fish supply to the home front not only in winning the war but coping with the first months of peace. Rowland Prothero, President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries felt that inexpensive and abundant food would help with both problems.⁷² He was acutely aware that the use of trawlers for mine-sweeping and patrols would probably continue long after the end of the war and that this would delay the rebuilding of the British fishing industry. While his main solution was to import fish from Canada and Newfoundland, he also set up a committee to consider practical means of increasing supplies of sea fish for the home market. This included giving a grant to increase the fishing power of vessels other than steam fishing vessels, in particular, assisting owners of their own boats.⁷³ The Fisheries Division of the Board asked the Air Ministry to consider using aircraft to locate shoals of fish and thought that Air Stations near fishing ports might help. The Admiralty enquired how often shoals of fish had been noticed by the smaller airships and were preparing data on the running and maintenance costs.⁷⁴

PRISONER REPATRIATION

Boston's lack of significance in the air war was used to advantage by the British government in making arrangements with Germany for prisoner exchange. It was suggested that the route taken should be through Holland to Rotterdam and then to Hull; this was unacceptable to the German Government as Hull was still a target for zeppelin air raids. The British Admiralty then suggested Boston, which was accepted.

As the prisoners from Boston and Grimsby were repatriated it became evident that the prisoners' conditions were bad, a fact that was necessarily concealed in censored letters. The prisoners were kept going by parcels sent out by their Lincolnshire families. On 23 November 1917, Fred Royal arrived home released due to age, with Lawrence Green, second engineer on the *Walrus*. There were more men over 45 years old waiting to return including Jimmy Fisher, well known in Boston and Grimsby, who was 65.⁷⁵ Another much larger exchange took place on 7 January 1918. This repatriation was expected to include 375 civilians, 235 soldiers and 18 officers. They left Rotterdam on the *Sindoro*, the *Zealand* and the *Koningen Regentes* and came into the Boston Deepes about six miles from the river, where they were met by the tugs *Nimble*, *Earl Roberts*, *Frenchman* and *Marple*. Civilian and military prisoners were transferred to four tenders, which went down the river from Boston Dock to Clay Hole on the evening tide on Sunday. The Press was denied facilities to witness events, and reporters were prevented from talking to the men, but from vantage points down the river at day-break on Monday prisoners were visible being brought onto the fish pontoon. This had been transformed into a reception station for the soldiers by Army workmen. Rest rooms were fitted with wooden forms for stretcher cases and special stoves were made to keep away the winter chill. Civilians were taken to the Seamen's Institute just outside the docks, while 'mental cases' were taken to other public buildings. By mid-day the men had been disembarked and refreshments and cigarettes given out. There was cheering from the waiting people and much bunting flying. Outside the Institute, fishermen met their wives usually accompanied by their children who, in some cases, were born in their father's absence. Ivy Parker was seen greeting her father, Captain William Henry Parker, a skipper captured in 1914. Louis Braime, third hand on the *Skirbeck* was met by his wife and two daughters. During his captivity two of his sons had lost their lives, one minesweeping, the other fishing. His other two sons were away on war service. The Boston fishermen released included Frank Gale, chief engineer of the *Marney*.⁷⁶ Others were:

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W. Cole	A. Johnson	W. Ward	W. H. Parker
F. Gale	C. E. Walkerley	E. Rear	W. T. Bird
I. Taylor	H. Crowder	L. Braime	W. Woods
J. Bourne	W. Chaffey	J. South	F. Pearce.
F. Gale			

Two hospital trains backed onto a special length of line which ran directly onto the pontoon. The first carried 160 cot cases straight to London the other went direct to Nottingham. Three trainloads of Germans being repatriated arrived in Boston on 9 January and the remainder arrived the following day. These prisoners included military officers and men, and naval officers and lower ratings who were quickly transferred to the tenders which took them to the waiting steamers in the Boston Deepes and then set sail for Rotterdam. Four more exchanges took place before the end of May 1918. These signalled the approaching end of hostilities.

ARMISTICE

During the Armistice the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries's Fishermen's Registration and Recruiting Section administered the demobilisation of pivotal men in the fishing industry, including fishermen. Forms were despatched to all applicants to obtain military particulars and other necessary information to facilitate the selection of men to be nominated for release.⁷⁷ By December recommendations were being forwarded to the Ministry of Labour.⁷⁸

Councillor George Moody, JP, was optimistic about the future of the fishing industry, provided Parliament agreed to the suggestion that a Fishery Minister be appointed after the war. He said that there was an enormous life in the trade and Grimsby was in a natural position to be the metropolis of the fishing world. But Grimsby had suffered more than any other UK fishing port, both in terms of the loss of boats and men. It also needed a change of attitude on the part of owners towards their men before this would happen.⁷⁹ The priority for the fishing industry was reconverting Admiralty-requisitioned trawlers back into fishing vessels. New trawlers were commissioned to replace those lost. Predictably, since this took time, owners preferred to acquire previously requisitioned vessels to make the most of replenished fish stocks . the result of four years of enforced conservation. However, conditions endured by fishermen in the immediate post-war period remained much as they had pre-1914 largely because the men remained un-unionised whereas the employers had strong associations and effectively ran a closed shop. At the end of the war the owners had built up a modern fishing fleet, sometimes 50 going out on a single tide, the largest in the world, and with a supportive ancillary infrastructure, all on the backs on an under-paid fishing force.⁸⁰ Now disputes began again. All round the coast trawlermen struck for improvements in pay and conditions. In January 1919 there was a strike for improved wages, but it was a grass roots demand and was not union backed; in Grimsby trouble did not erupt until 1922. Some eight trains per day of fish traffic were despatched from Grimsby in 1923 and rose by some 10,000 tons per year between 1922 and 1928. Immingham, which opened shortly before the war, subsequently played a major role as a coal export port, the function for which it was primarily designed.⁸¹

Even when the war was officially over thousands of fishermen were still engaged in the dangerous work of clearing the seas of mines. Trawler losses continued and during September 1920 the *Bostonian* and *Lindsey* did not return to port. It was thought all three struck floating mines. Thirty men were assumed to have been killed. After the war officially ended another 30 trawlers were sunk by mines with 370 lives lost.

During WWI and the immediate years after, Boston's trawler losses amounted to 22 trawlers lost to enemy action, one attacked but later salvaged and one run aground. Human losses were 91 men and boys taken prisoners, four dying in prison; 80 fishermen killed. There were at least another 28 local men killed while minesweeping or sailing from other ports. In 1918 when hostilities ended, 298 Grimsby trawlers, either fishing or engaged in war work, had been lost at sea with the loss of 398 men. It had been a long hard war for the Lincolnshire fishermen and their families.

Around the Wash, many of the remaining fishermen looked for jobs ashore, sometimes obtaining work related to the sea or rivers. A large part of the fleet was laid up, sold or left until broken up. Some were used as stow boats in the river. No good skippers were available. The post-war great depression hit the fishermen hard. Beer cost four old pence a pint . double that of a few years previously. They were unable to sell their catches, let alone get more money for them.⁸²

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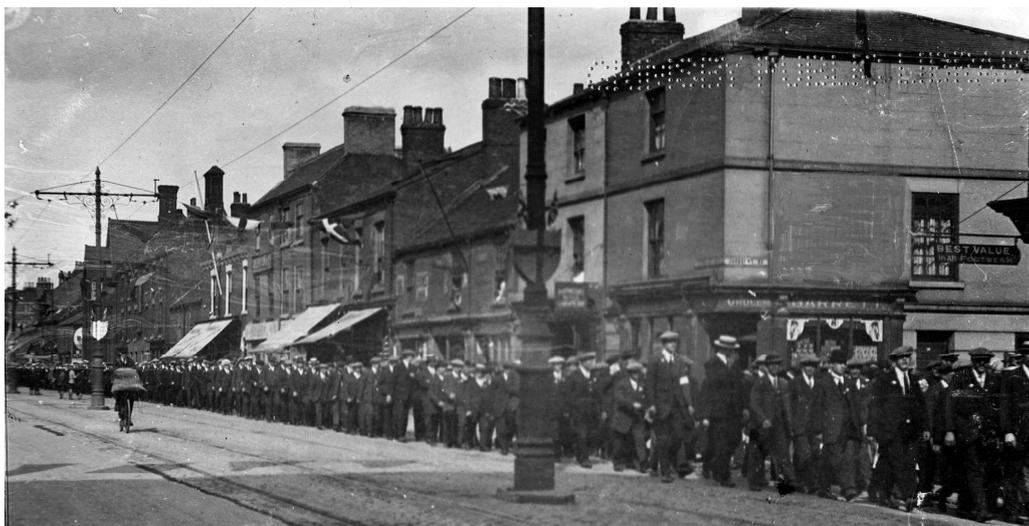
For at least one man, however, the end of the War brought opportunities. Fred Parkes, born in Sleaford, had started from the very bottom of the social ladder. He managed to buy a fish merchant's business then expanded into farming and trawler ownership. During the war he concentrated on farming but post-war bought several new Admiralty-ordered trawlers while still under construction. He was elected to the Board of the Boston Deep Sea Fishing & Ice Co. on 8 May 1919. This was the largest employer in the town and despite the fact that in 1919 it had only one trawler fishing, it made the highest profit in its history.⁸³

FISHING LOSSES THROUGH U-BOATS AND MINES

At the war's end, 156 Grimsby vessels and 553 men were lost whilst fishing, leaving 225 widows and 679 orphans. Forty vessels were blown up by mines, and about 300 men died.

In the later stages of the war two-thirds of the Grimsby fishing fleet was out of action. There had been 670 boats registered at the port at the beginning of the war. Of this number, 300 were taken over by the Admiralty and 200 sunk by U-Boats or mines. The remainder were left for fishing. The total cost of the losses was estimated at £4 million but the Admiralty only paid compensation up to 80 per cent of the fare value of the vessel where the loss was due to the enemy or stress of the weather. The total loss of life was roughly 2,000 men leaving a still greater number of dependents. The loss by the trawler owners not only included the boats, but the money made from fishing during the four years although those that fished made fair amounts of money. The three greatest sufferers, in order for losses, were Grimsby, Hull and Aberdeen.⁸⁴

The Bishop noted the minesweepers' independence when he visited Grimsby docks Chapel in October 1916 the where they were ready for Church Parade. ~~None knelt!~~⁸⁵ Their march through the town when Grimsby welcomed them home on 6 September 1919 is commemorated in Fig. 5 .



G727:940.46. Welcome Minesweepers.

Photograph(s) reproduced courtesy of North East Lincolnshire Council Library Service
*Welcome home of the troops from the war. Here are men from the minesweepers. Photographed at the corner of Victoria Street with Fotherby Street. Published in the Grimsby News, 12th September 1919.*⁸⁶

¹ Peter Chapman. *Grimsby's Own: the Story of the Chums*. Grimsby Evening Telegraph & the Hutton Press, 1991. 15

² John Goddard & Roger Spalding. *Fish 'n Ships: The Rise and Fall of Grimsby – the World's premier fishing port*. Dalesman Books with Channel 4 TV Co Ltd. 1987. 11

³ Charles Ekberg. *Grimsby Fish*. Barracuda Books, Buckingham, 1984. p.64.

⁴ *Times*. 20.1.1915

⁵ Goddard & Spalding. *Fish 'n Ships*. 11-14, 24, 28

⁶ *Hicks Diaries*. 1911 75 Sat. January 21.

⁷ Ekberg. *Grimsby Fish*. 35-36, 38, 58.

- ⁸ *Hicks Diaries*. 872 17.2.1916
- ⁹ Cuppleditch, David. *Lincolnshire Coast*. Stroud: Sutton. 1996
- ¹⁰ <http://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/1453218> <http://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/1494200>. Downloaded 7.1.2011
- ¹¹ Mark Stopper & Ray Maltby. *Boston Deep Sea Fisheries*. Hutton Press, 9, 12
- ¹² Castleton. *Fisher's End*. 111, 206
- ¹³ National Archive. CAB 24/7 0081 14.3.1917. 364
- ¹⁴ Goddard & Spalding. *Fish 'n Ships*. 68
- ¹⁵ Triplow et al. *Women Left Behind*. 65, 71.
- ¹⁶ Frank Castleton. *Fisher's End*. 1988. 40-59, 103,109, 112-113, 118, 131
- ¹⁷ Jackson. *Grimsby's War Work*. p.5
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- ²⁰ *Lincolnshire, Boston & Spalding Free Press*. 18.8.1914
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- ²³ *Skegness, Mablethorpe & Alford News*. (SMA News). 23.12.1914
- ²⁴ Paul Meyer and John C. Revell. *Boston, its Fishermen, and the First World War*. p.20
- ²⁵ TNA. MT 23/523 T.38526/1916
- ²⁶ Nick Triplow, Tina Bramhill, Jade Shepherd. *The Women They Left Behind*. Fathom Press, ?2009. pp. 18-21
- ²⁷ Paul Meyer and John C. Revell. *Boston, its Fishermen, and the First World War*. Pages 2-4, 20, 25
- ²⁸ *SMA News*. 25.11.1914
- ²⁹ *Lincolnshire Chronicle*. 9.1.1915
- ³⁰ *Lincolnshire Standard*. 30.1.1915
- ³¹ Goddard & Spalding. *Fish 'n Ships*. 25
- ³² TNA. NATS 1.923
- ³³ Triplow et al. *Women they Left Behind*. pp. 37, 56-58.
- ³⁴ *Times*. 4.4.1916
- ³⁵ LA. 9 Fane 1/1/4/5 Fane War Diary.
- ³⁶ Meyer and Revell. *Boston, its Fishermen*. pp.2-6
- ³⁷ Stopper & Maltby. *Boston Deep Sea Fisheries*. p.17. *Lincolnshire Standard*, 22.11.1914. Some items they brought back with them are in the Grimsby Fishing Museum.
- ³⁸ Meyer and Revell. *Boston, its Fishermen*. p.7
- ³⁹ *Lincolnshire Standard*. 17.7.1915; 13.2.1915
- ⁴⁰ *Lincolnshire Standard*. 19.2.1916
- ⁴¹ *Boston Guardian & Lincolnshire Independent*. 8.04.1916
- ⁴² *Lincolnshire, Boston & Spalding Free Press* 3.11.1914
- ⁴³ *Hicks Diaries*. 846 1.01.1915
- ⁴⁴ Jackson. *Grimsby's War Work*.
- ⁴⁵ Goddard & Spalding. *Fish 'n Ships*. p.24
- ⁴⁶ *Lincolnshire Chronicle*. 8.5.1915
- ⁴⁷ *SMA News*. 23.12.1914
- ⁴⁸ *Lincolnshire Standard*. 5.02.1916
- ⁴⁹ Charles Ekberg. *Grimsby Fish*. p.65
- ⁵⁰ Jackson. *Grimsby's War Work*.
- ⁵¹ Triplow et al. *Women Left Behind*. 26-27. Jackson. *Grimsby's War Work*. p.6
- ⁵² *Hicks Diaries*. 1156 17.12.1917.
- ⁵³ TNA. CAB 24.10. 10.4.1917
- ⁵⁴ *Times*. 30.11.1918.
- ⁵⁵ LA. 9 Fane 1/1/4/5 Fane War Diary
- ⁵⁶ *Lincolnshire Standard*. 1.01.1916.
- ⁵⁷ *SMA News*. 21.7.1915
- ⁵⁸ Frank Castleton. *Fisher's End*. 1988.
- ⁵⁹ *SMA News* 22.8.1915
- ⁶⁰ *Lincolnshire Standard*. 20.2.1915
- ⁶¹ *Boston Guardian & Lincolnshire Independent*. 12.1.1916
- ⁶² TNA MT 23/353. T6309/1915

- ⁶³ TNA. MT 23.713A
- ⁶⁴ TNA. MT 23.713A T100296.
- ⁶⁵ TNA. MT 23.713A T100335. 20.11.16
- ⁶⁶ *Boston Guardian* 6.05.1916
- ⁶⁷ Tripplow et al. *Women Left Behind*. p.20
- ⁶⁸ TNA. CAB 24/7 0081 14.3.1917. 365
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- ⁷² TNA. CAB 24.23. August 1917. 1 (42)
- ⁷³ TNA. CAB 24/7 0081. 14.3.1917. 364
- ⁷⁴ TNA. CAB 24.72.
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- ⁷⁶ *Times*. 8.1.1918
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- ⁷⁹ *Grimsby News*. 8.11.1918.
- ⁸⁰ Goddard & Spalding. *Fish 'n Ships*. p.28
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- ⁸³ Stopper & Maltby. *Boston Deep Sea Fisheries*. p.12
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