

Bertie Parker Walton Collingham's Conscientious Objector

'The case of Bertie Parker Walton was perhaps the most intriguing in the Newark area during the entire War. All men who hesitated to volunteer to fight in The Great War were branded 'shirkers' by the patriotic population; but Bertie seems to have been singled out for particular venom by the local authorities. Try as I might, I have not yet discovered whether he was ever sent to War.'

- Trevor Frecknall, author of 'Newark in the Great War'

Bertie Walton

Bertie Parker Walton was born in Newark in 1897, the only child of Charles John Walton (1870-1954) and Emma Walton née Parker (1869 - 1935). Charles, from Beccles in Suffolk, was initially a coach-painter and then a house painter.

Around 1910 the Waltons moved from Barnby Gate, Newark, to Woodhill Road in Collingham (somewhere between nos 14 and 20). Charles advertised his painting and decorating business under his middle name of John in Kelly's trade directories. He would have been in direct competition with painter Henry Hoe (1854-1920) on Low Street. Hoe, whose son Frank (1898-1982) was almost the same age as Bertie, was a well-established figure in the village.

It would seem that unlike Frank, Bertie had no intention of following his father and grandfather before him into the painting and decorating trade. In 1916 the 18-year old was a clerk at Wakes and Lamb, an engineering firm based in Mill Gate, Newark.

Where he did follow in his father's footsteps was in his faith; like Charles (and Emma), Bertie was a Christadelphian. Records show he was baptised in Newark on May 22nd 1912, aged 15 and welcomed into the Newark Christadelphian Ecclesia (church) thereafter. The family would make the 6-mile journey to Newark and back every Sunday. The Newark ecclesia's register notes they would often arrived late, which isn't surprising given they probably walked.



Photo: Woodhill Road from Rio Drive. The Waltons lived to the right of Dawnsmere (no 20 Woodhill Road on the left).

Christadelphians

Founded: In the USA in 1848

Founder: John Thomas (1805-1871)

About: 'The name Christadelphian means 'brothers in Christ'. The Christadelphians have no paid ministry, no robes, or elaborate ceremonies. There is no 'head of the church' and no legislative council. Their ecclesias organise their own affairs, though the pattern is very similar everywhere. Like the 'elders' of New Testament times, members are appointed by each ecclesia to manage its affairs and preside at its meetings.

At the weekly meeting for the 'breaking of bread', there are hymns, prayers, readings from the Bible, and a short talk (an 'exhortation'). The bread and wine circulate among all the 'brothers and sisters' present. Voluntary collections are taken to meet all the expenses.

Christadelphians hold regular public talks and exhibitions about the Bible and what it teaches. They also teach children in Sunday Schools and Youth Groups. As a community, Christadelphians try to help and care for each other, with ecclesias in many parts of the world.¹

Newark has had a Christadelphian ecclesia since 1850. For many years they met in various halls and rooms in the town centre. It is believed during the war years they frequently hired The Corinthian Rooms in Carter Gate. Meetings were often advertised in the local papers:

LOCAL AND DISTRICT NEWS

WAR! WAR! WAR! — During this crisis time Great Reductions at J. W. Stevens, Church-street, who is showing a splendid variety of Boys' Suits of the latest styles and colour, good quality, from 2/6, 2/9, 2/11, 3/9. Also Tunic Suits from 4/6, 5/-. 5/6, etc. A good line of Boys' Jerseys in all colours, from 2/3; Boys' Cloth Hats and Fancy Caps from 4/11. Rubber Collar Bows, Shirts, Socks, Belts, etc. Boys' strap bottom Cord Knickers for school, very strong, at 2/6, 2/9, 2/11; also Cloth Knickers from 1/11, band bottoms, 2/6; good qualities. Fine show of Velvet Cord Knickers in navy, brown, sage, green and Quaker colours, all at 1/11, grand value. Good assortment of Boys' Suits from 2/6, 4/6, 5/9, to 7/9. Men's and Youths Rugby Suits, odd samples, Jackets, odd Trousers, from 3/6, odd Vests, 2/6. Suits to measure a speciality, from 25/-. 30/-. 35/-. Men's and Boys' Caps, Braces, etc., etc. These goods we can and do supply cheaper than any large shop in the town. Large profits and big profits, little shops and small profits. Good variety of boys' overcoats, clothing cleaned, repaired, and pressed.

CHRISTADELPHIAN LECTURE — A lecture will be delivered (God willing) in the Newark and District Friendly Societies Hall on Sunday night at 6.30. All seats free. No collection. All are earnestly invited. Entrance Lombard-street end of Clinton Arms Yard. — *Adv.*

WRITING PADS, of all kinds; Compendiums containing good quality Writing Paper, and Opaque Envelopes in a variety of sizes and prices. LINNEYS, 49, Stodman-street, Newark. — *Adv.*

F. SMITH for a choice selection of goods for the Summer Season. GLOVES in Suede, Kid, Silk, Chamol, and Fabric. A large range of HOSIERY, Dainty BLOUSES and NECKWEAR. NEW CORSETS and UNDERWEAR. — 28, Market-place, Newark.

SPECIAL DISPLAY Non-Oreaseable Rubber-lined Gents Ties 1/6 each. See windows. — **NEWARK CLOTHING Co.**, 7, Stodman-street, Newark. The noted Shirt House — *Adv.*

MILITARY
Whastell
on vacati
battalion
formerly a
and for ma
old 4th Lin
On the form
ferred to th
he retired a
break of th
and he wa
Battalion fr
to the North
structor of a
captain in th
embodied tre
NEWARKE
rence, second
Sleaford road
of the most se
but is prog
brokers on he
Stanley Wor
Engineers in
training, he w
and went alim
the battle at
60, Givenchs,
had several ver
occasion mark
wound. Just
was at Albert,
until he receive
August 3rd. E
hospitals, and
C.S.M. H. Law
has just left hos
bullet through
rebellion. A th
Corps, and had
He has now been
Egg COLLECT
making a grand
wers: — The May

ND,
Maker,
Dealer,
op),
ATE.
Property
exchanged.
ision.

Church,
RK.
at 2.15.
O.
WON."
OK.
E.
fe.

grip
Savage.

rad.

Above: 'A lecture will be delivered (God willing) in the Friendly Society's Hall on Sunday night at 6.30. All seats free. No collection...' Notice placed in the Newark Herald 1916

¹ <http://www.dawnbooksupply.co.uk/>

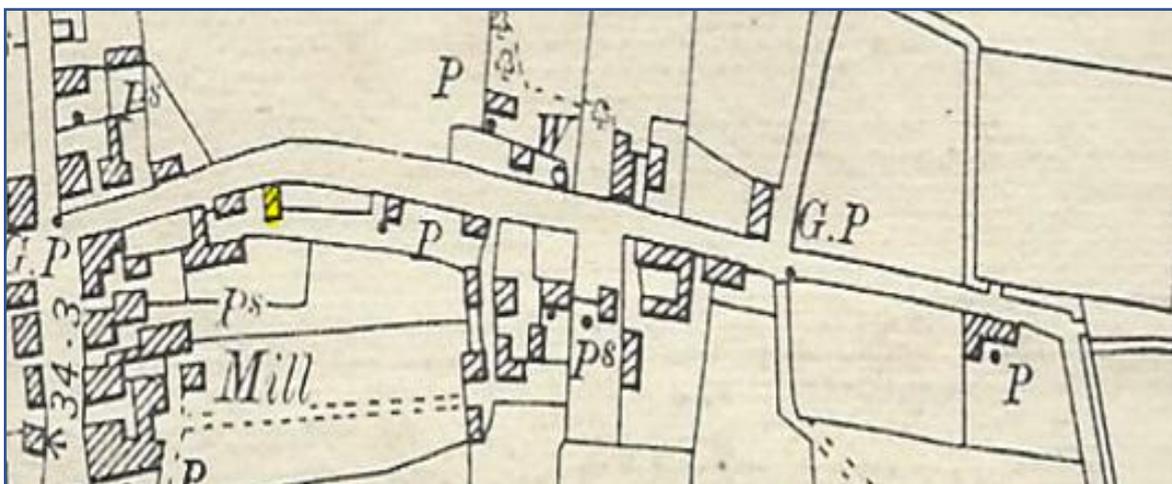
There is still an ecclesia in Newark today. They meet at the Christadelphian Hall on Cliff Nook Lane.

The Waltons in Collingham

The Waltons settled down well in Collingham. The 1911 census finds them in a 5-roomed house with Bertie at school, Emma a housewife and Charles with his own account as a painter. No doubt Collingham, with its long history of Nonconformism², suited them, despite the long journey to their own church every Sunday.

Woodhill Road was quiet with mainly farms and farm workers' cottages beyond the junction with the High Street. The clear views over the fields from their front windows would have been very different from their house on 42 Barnby Gate and presumably the family would have been made as welcome as any newcomers. In fact, people were probably much more interested in the family two doors up.

Living in Waterloo House was widow Martha Aimee Swann (1846-1936) and her daughter Kate. Born in Nassau, on the Bahamas, where she'd raised eight children with her husband, the late Rev. Robert Swann, Aimee (as she preferred to be called), had moved to England in the mid-1880s where Robert had a living as the rector of Marholm Parish near Peterborough. After his death in 1899, the remaining Swanns had a spell in Cheltenham before moving to Collingham around the same time as the Waltons. To make Aimee even more of a curiosity in social circles, her eldest son, another Robert, who had worked for the Indian government, and his Belgian wife Madeleine, plus their Bombay-born children, were staying in Waterloo House for the duration of the War. Nassau! Bombay! How plain and ordinary the Waltons must have seemed by comparison – just how they preferred it.



Above: Woodhill Road 1900 OS Map with the Walton's property highlighted in yellow, two doors down from 'Waterloo House' on its left.

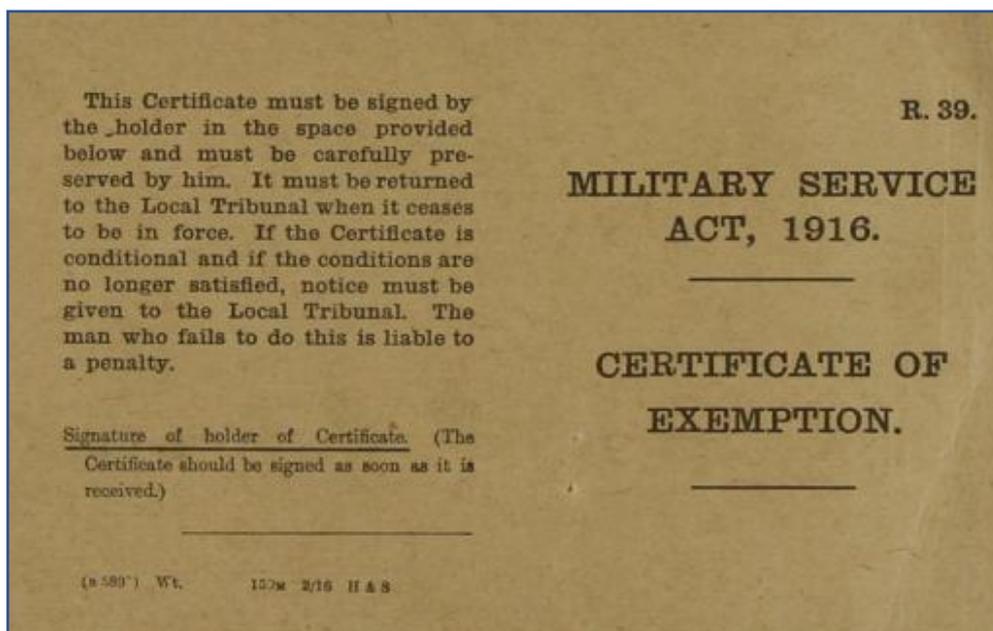
Then came the War, and with it, in 1916, conscription...

² John Theaker, Quaker, lived in Collingham c 1660 (see Issue 6 East Midlands Heritage magazine p9) The Baptist Church in Collingham was the oldest in Nottinghamshire est. c 1670 closed 2012. There was also a Meeting Room of the Plymouth Brethren (19 Low St) a Jericho Hall and several chapels.

The Military Service Act 1916

The Military Service Act was passed in January, 1916. For the first time in British history, men could be conscripted into the army. While this was common practice in countries such as Germany, the British had always relied on a territorial force³ in times of need to supplement the regular army. However, the huge losses on the Western Front since 1914 meant the regular army and even the territorials were perilously low in strength. Lord Kitchener's 'New Army', made up entirely of civilians, had bolstered numbers but it was still not enough to meet demand. By now the queues of bright-eyed, enthusiastic young men raring to enlist had long gone, leading to an urgent need to find more recruits. After the failed 'Derby Scheme'⁴ conscription was seen as the only option and from March 1916 all single men of eligible age (aged 18-41) had to join up. In May, it was extended to married men in the same age group.

The new act was met with great opposition, especially from Socialist groups and those who saw it as an erosion of freedom and civil rights. To offset these protests, Herbert Asquith, the prime minister, inserted a 'conscience clause' into the Act. Those wishing to abstain could apply for a certificate of exemption.



Above: Image of the certificate of exemption

Grounds for exemption were:

- Unfit on medical grounds.

³ Newark had the Sherwood Rangers Yeomanry, for example

⁴ Using data collected in the National Survey in 1915, the Group Scheme (or Derby Scheme named after its instigator, Lord Derby) was a bid to coax men in reserved occupations and those who had so far not enlisted to do so between Oct 1915 & Feb 1916. However, of the 318,000 + fit men, 38% single and 54% married men refused to do so.

- Serving in a reserved occupation such as doctor, teacher, clergyman or work of national importance such as iron and steel, farming etc
- Military Service would cause undue hardship to livelihood or family
- Conscientious objection on moral, political or religious grounds

Medical Grounds for Exemption

Those men seeking exemption on medical grounds had to undergo medical examinations. They were given a category rating from A-D with 'A1' being 'fit for dispatching overseas' and 'D' being 'unfit but could be fit for limited duties within six months.'

Table of Categories Measuring Recruits Fitness for the British Army 1914-1918

A	Able to march, see to shoot, hear well and stand active service conditions. <i>Subcategories:</i>
A1	Fit for dispatching overseas, as regards physical and mental health, and training
A2	As A1, except for training
A3	Returned Expeditionary Force men, ready except for physical condition
A4	Men under 19 who would be A1 or A2 when aged 19
B	Free from serious organic diseases, able to stand service on lines of communication in France, or in garrisons in the tropics. <i>Subcategories:</i>
B1	Able to march 5 miles, see to shoot with glasses, and hear well
B2	Able to walk 5 miles, see and hear sufficiently for ordinary purposes
B3	Only suitable for sedentary work
C	Free from serious organic diseases, able to stand service in garrisons at home. <i>Subcategories:</i>
C1	Able to march 5 miles, see to shoot with glasses, and hear well
C2	Able to walk 5 miles, see and hear sufficiently for ordinary purposes
C3	Only suitable for sedentary work
D	Unfit but could be fit within 6 months. <i>Subcategories:</i>
D1	Regular RA, RE, infantry in Command Depots
D2	Regular RA, RE, infantry in Regimental Depots
D3	Men in any depot or unit awaiting treatment

As can be seen, even those classed as C3 and D were still deemed potentially able to carry out certain roles within a military context.

Conscientious Objectors (COs)

'What do we mean by conscientious objector? Is a shirker a conscientious objector? Is a coward a conscientious objector? No; a man is not a conscientious objector unless he has principle or religion behind him. That man I would stand by with all my heart and power... If a man's convictions are honest, sincere convictions, he ought to be honoured for them.'

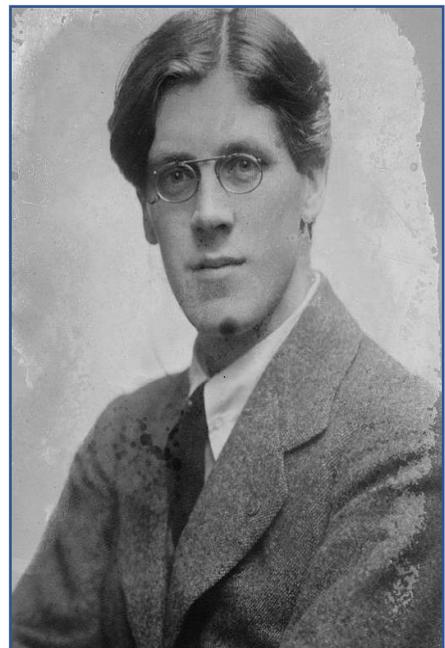
- Rev. Fuller Gooch May 1916⁵

There were 3 different types of exemption for conscientious objectors in 1916:

- **Absolute Exemption** meaning they were free to go about their lives.

Many pacifists and socialists were absolutists. Number 9 of the Ten Socialist Commandments is: *'Do not think that he who loves his own country must hate and despise other nations, or wish for war, which is a remnant of barbarism.'*⁶

The establishment of the No-Conscription Fellowship movement in London in November 1914 was a leading force in opposition to conscription in any shape or form. The group consisted of many luminaries such as philosopher Bertrand Russell and Fenner Brockway (right) of the Independent Labour Party. The committee's publication of *'The Tribunal'* newsheet was a constant thorn in the side of the government. Brockway was jailed for refusing conscription and spent time in the Tower of London and later Lincoln Prison, not being released until 1919.



Absolutists were the most stigmatised and vilified of all conscientious objectors by the Establishment. Some 1,350 men held out for "absolute" exemption from military service and around 985 of these refused to recognise the tribunals or the military orders they received as non-combatants.

⁵ *Refusing to Kill* published by Peace Pledge Union p 4

⁶ Cyril Pearce 'Comrades in Conscience' p 53. See sources

- **Conditional Exemption** meaning men would not need to serve in the forces but had to do 'work of national importance' (WNI) at home eg: in munitions, down the pit, in hospitals etc.

- **Exemption from combatant duties only**
These men agreed to serve in the armed forces but refused to fight or use weapons. Instead they were given roles such as stretcher-bearers or medics. Others were tasked with labouring jobs such as building roads, railways, driving, or digging sanitation pits in the trenches.

Non-combatants were expected to wear uniform and undergo military training.

Quakers were well known for filling non-combatant roles and formed the FAU (Friends Ambulance Unit) providing medical care to the sick and wounded on the Western Front.

At least 20 men from Nottingham were members of the FAU⁷.

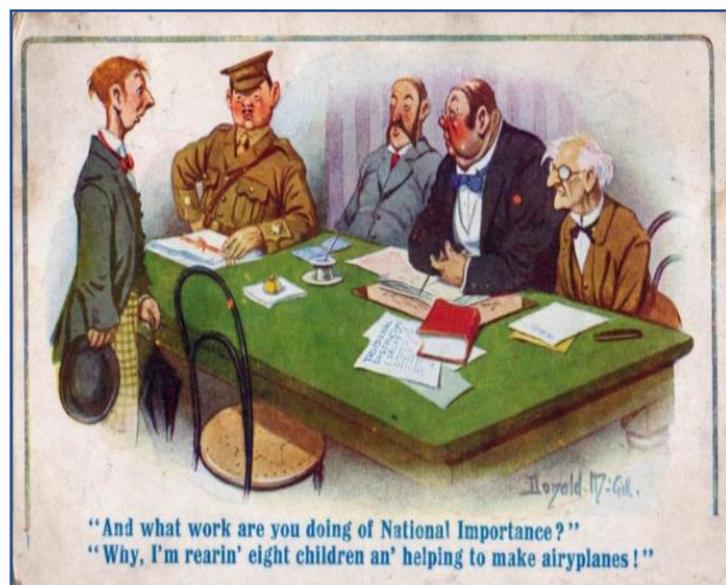


Above: Stretcher-bearers (denoted by SB armbands) were non-combatants & often COs.

Tribunals

2,000 Tribunals were set up around Britain to 'honestly and fairly judge the sincerity of men who applied for exemption.' The Tribunals were set up in a similar way to a court but without judges or lawyers. Instead the appointed men (very few women served on these panels) were typically those of social standing within the local community such as bank managers, councillors, businessmen, clergy etc. In addition, each Tribunal had a Military Representative and in rural regions, an Agricultural Representative.

The Tribunals would consider applications for exemption. Usually the applicant had to



Above: Cartoonist Donald McGill's (1875-1962) take on a 'typical' Tribunal scene c/o Tony Allen

⁷ Source: <http://www.nottsheritagegateway.org.uk/people/cos.htm>

appoint someone to speak on their behalf, such as their employer or father (in many cases the applicant's employer was his father).

If the application for exemption was turned down, there was an appeals process.

The Newark Rural Tribunals

The Newark Tribunals took place at the Ossington Coffee Palace on Beast Market, Newark (now Zizzi's) although occasionally they were held at the Duke of Newcastle's Estate Office. Newark's Mayor, coal merchant and proprietor of the Newark Advertiser John Kew (1868-1929) was chairman.

A typical panel in 1916⁸ consisted of:

Chairman: **J Kew**

Messrs **J Spray** (seed merchant)

W Buck, & F G Vessey JP.

Military Reps: **C C Curtis** and/or **Col E H Nicholson**,
commanding officer of the Notts Volunteer Force.

Agricultural Rep: **Mr J C Fisher**

Clerk: **Mr A J Franks** (Arthur James Franks, Clerk to the
Newark Rural District Council & Board of Guardians)

The Tribunals met at least once a month and the outcomes were reported in the local papers: the Newark Herald (Saturdays) and the Newark Advertiser (Wednesdays).

Appeals were heard by Nottingham's County Appeal Tribunal at Shire Hall (now the Galleries of Justice Museum).



The Ossington Coffee Palace c 1915

The vast majority of the cases were from farmers, shopkeepers and tradesmen fearful of the impact on their businesses and their families if they or their workers were sent to the Front. Often, the applicants already had one (or more) workers fighting and were already struggling to keep on top of things. These cases were often only given only conditional exemption with orders to enlist being deferred for a few months.

It's telling that women were often used as a reason why exemption was denied. Collingham butcher George Thompson was told, for example, that his 32-year-old daughter, Charlotte, could take over in the slaughterhouse from her brother Ralph. Father-of-three Ernest Healey was told his wife Florence could run the general dealer's shop (Feb. 1917). Two stunning examples of how super-capable women had become all of a sudden. Anyone would wonder why those suffragettes had needed to do all that protesting before the War.

⁸ Source: Newark Advertiser Aug 1916 (held at Newark Library on microfiche)

There was an added dimension to the Newark Tribunals for Collingham men that didn't affect those from, say Lowdham or Balderton. The Military Representative, Charles Constable Curtis Esq. JP, (1852-1936), owned a great deal of land in the Collingham area. Not only the land, but many a tied cottage, too. Add to that the fact that his only son, Thomas Lancelot Constable Curtis (1888-1956) was in France fighting in the thick of it with the Coldstream Guards, it's not difficult to imagine what it must have been like to face 'Squire Curtis' across the table. While there is no evidence that Curtis was anything other than 'honest and fair' in his dealings with the men before him there is no doubt where his priorities lay.



Right: Charles Constable Curtis in 1907

Bertie Walton and the Tribunals

As mentioned, Bertie Walton was a Christadelphian and the 'brothers in Christ' were absolutists, meaning they didn't believe in any form of military service. Luckily, one of the Christadelphians' leading lights in London, Frank Jannaway, had provided the War Office with a register of all bone fide Christadelphians of military service age. Any Christadelphians applying for exemption were checked against this register. Bertie Walton was No.156. L.22⁹.

When Bertie Walton's plea for absolute exemption was put before the Tribunal, he must have been fairly confident, given Jannaway's register, of a speedy hearing. He couldn't have been more wrong. The following accounts are from Trevor Frecknall's 'Collingham and district in The Great War.'¹⁰ They are a chronology of the Tribunal meetings reported in the local press featuring Walton:

Thursday 16 March 1916: Newark Rural District Tribunal refused to exempt from military service Bertie Parker Walton, 18, of Woodhill Road, North Collingham, a Christadelphian for four years and a conscientious objector. He said he was doing War Work as a clerk at Wakes and Lamb¹¹. They said he was not indispensable. Bertie launched an appeal ...

Monday 3 April 1916: Among Newark Rural District appeals heard by the Notts Appeal Tribunal under the presidency of Lord Galway in the foreboding settings of Nottingham Shire Hall¹², which historically was the scene of public hangings, William Mitchelson, managing partner in the Collingham grocery and provisions stores, is told to enlist immediately; women can do his

⁹ Source: Cyril Pearce via letter Dec 2014

¹⁰ See sources

¹¹ Wakes & Lamb were an engineering firm on Mill Gate, Newark

¹² Shire Hall is now better known as The Galleries of Justice Museum, Nottingham

work ... Farmer's son Leonard Taylor, 29, was given until 1 June to get the corn sown before going off to fight. Farmer's son Sydney Blay Clements, 20, of South Scarle was given until 1 June to sow the corn and enlist ... **Conscientious objector Bertie Walton was told he must do non-combatant service; he insisted he would not.**

In the following report, Bertie wasn't at the hearing but he was being made an example of:

Tuesday 15 August 1916: Newark Rural Tribunal had another long sitting – and members complained of a 'scandal' that men refused relief from military service had yet to be called-up. Chairman Kew said it was most unfair to men who had made sacrifices and gone into the Army that others equally liable should escape. The matter was becoming a public scandal and he would be no party to it. A strong protest would have to be made to the War Office and HQ at Derby. For instance, a young man named Walton from Collingham was turned down by the Tribunal. He had a conscientious objection to serving though he was working in munitions. Various excuses why this young man had not yet gone into the Army had been given out, none of which allayed the public complaints. Clerk Franks said it was probably because Walton was only 18; he could not be enlisted until he was 19. Chairman Kew persisted: *"I shall have this case inquired into forthwith. If the facts are as reported to the Tribunal, I shall make strong representations in the proper quarters."*

There are no details of where these 'public complaints' about Bertie had come from.

Tuesday 16 January 1917: Newark Rural Tribunal chairman Kew was furious that conscientious objector Bertie Walton, 19, was still at home in Collingham "doing a lot of harm to recruiting and the work of the Tribunal" months after he had been ordered to go for non-combatant service. By some means he appeared to have been shielded in a most extraordinary manner. Tribunal was very dissatisfied with the military because there seems neither rhyme nor reason for this man not being in the Army. Colonel Nicholson said he had written two strong letters to the recruiting officer but had had not even received an acknowledgement. It was decided to ask Captain Starkey MP to raise the matter in the House of Commons; and to write to the Secretary of State for War.

Friday 16 February 1917: Newark Rural Tribunal announced its complaints about conscientious objector Bertie Walton were being investigated by the War Office. Chairman Kew said inquiries would centre on how the War Office exempted Bertie from military service at the insistence of Frank G Jannaway, head of the Christadelphians ...

March 1917 By March 1917 Bertie had moved from Wakes & Lamb to working part-time for a Mr Ellis, miller. Mr Ellis was told by the Tribunal that part-time work was not acceptable and Bertie was directed to full time work in munitions or on the land. An army medical passed him as only grade 'C1'¹³ and he was judged unsuitable for farm work. Mr Ellis offered him full-time work.¹⁴ According to Frecknall, Mr Kew made no mention of this. 'He merely added that the Tribunal was 'very dissatisfied with the military' because there seemed neither rhyme nor reason for this man not being in the army. The Military Representative, Colonel Nicholson, said he had written two strong letters to the recruiting officer but had not even received an

¹³ Categories ranged from A1 to D3. C1 = 'Able to walk 5 miles, see with glasses and hear well.'

¹⁴ Cyril Pearce letter / date as before

acknowledgement. Tribunal decided to ask Capt. Starkey (Newark's MP) to raise the matter in the House of Commons; and to write to the Secretary of State for War.'

*This was, apparently, the last mention of Bertie from the Newark Tribunal.
Whether Starkey raised the matter in the House of Commons or not requires further research*

Reaction in the Village

News of Bertie's constant refusals to enlist would have travelled fast through the district. No matter how sure Bertie was of his religious convictions, and how much support he had from his family and ecclesia, there was bound to be a backlash from some quarters. However, the only recorded criticism beyond the Tribunals was from the Rector of St John the Baptist, Rev. Albert Maxwell. In his monthly newsletter for South Collingham (August 1917) he acerbically points out that: '*Not one in this parish¹⁵ has refused to serve when the call has come, by slinking away through the loophole of conscientious objection, which was most regrettably left open by the late Government responsible for the Conscription Act.*' He then continues to barrack his own parishioners for not praying enough for the soldiers, lamenting the absence of many of their relatives and friends at church services.

It is also noticeable that Charles Walton, unlike Henry Hoe, didn't advertise his business in the 1916 trade directory, although he had done so for the first time in 1912 and did so from the 1922 edition onwards. This might be reading too much into things!

The Electoral Register for 1925 shows that Bertie was still living with his parents on Woodhill Road so he was certainly not hounded out of the village. Whether he was subject to any verbal abuse or, conversely, respected for his beliefs, is unknown.

Did Bertie Walton serve in the army?

¹⁵ North and South Collingham were separate parishes until the 1970s. Bertie lived in North Collingham

In 1918, the Tribunals were still meeting and still sending men to the Western Front. The Germans' huge successes during the Spring Offensives from March – June and our continued losses created panic and there were appeals in the House of Commons to widen the criteria for conscription further. Men over 40 and 50 - those in previous reserved occupations – were all targeted as the War office 'scraping ever closer to the bottom of the barrel' as Trevor Frecknall put it. Was Bertie finally browbeaten into joining up?

Name.	Corps.	Rank.	Regt. No.
WALTON.	North Derbyshire Pce		44553.
	March 4.		64416.
Bertie			
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.
VICTORY	H/1104 B285702		
BRITISH	do.	do	
STAR			
Theatre of War first served in			
Date of entry therein			
K. 1380			

There are medal index cards for dozens of 'Bertie Waltons' who served in the armed forces 1914-1918 but their details don't appear to fit Collingham's Bertie Walton. This is another area for further research.

Above: A medal index card for a Bertie Walton.

Trevor Frecknall's final entry on Bertie:

Monday 27 December 1926: Collingham's most reviled 'hang back' was married – and in some style. Bertie Parker Walton wedded Kathleen Mary Stevenson (born 1906, Newark), who lived at 5 Church Street, Newark, with her widowed mother Lucy Ann (born 1878, Sutton-on-Trent), her butcher father William Lawton Stevenson (born 1879, Farndon) having died in 1924. There was not even a mention of Bertie's beliefs causing so much controversy during the War in the *Advertiser* report of what it called "an interesting local wedding" in Newark Parish Church. Of greatest interest to the reader were Bertie's gifts to his beloved: a fur coat and a gold signet ring. She gave him a gold wristlet watch, a very modern accessory in an age dominated by the fob watch. There was no hint in the report of what the groom did for a living or where the happy couple would live after their London honeymoon. But both died in Gloucestershire: Bertie in 1967, Kathleen in 1970.

ooOOOOoo

Added: Bertie's wife Kathleen and her parents were also Christadelphians.

The Newark Christadelphian Ecclesia's records show that Bertie and Kathleen moved to Ashby-de-la-Zouch in February 1927 and joined the Ashby ecclesia.

The Dagleish family tree on Ancestry.co.uk indicates that Bertie and Kathleen had at least one child – Peter Walton (1928-1999).

Bertie's father, Charles, was remembered by Collingham resident George Longland¹⁶. George, whose parents later lived next door to the Waltons, recalled: *'...he used to talk to his hens every day. I'd hear the old man over the fence every day murmuring, 'It's three or four days since you laid ... time you gave me another one for my breakfast.'* And every Sunday he cycled into Newark to his church. *Come hail, rain, snow or blow, he never missed.'*

Conclusion

During World War One, about 16,000 conscientious objectors stood up for the right not to bear arms. Many were jailed for their beliefs, and in the infamous case of the Richmond Sixteen, almost shot by firing squad for treason: <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/learn/story-of-england/modern/richmond-sixteen/>

It is easy to see how conscientious objectors, especially absolutists like Bertie, might be pilloried for not 'doing their bit.' The threat of German invasion was a real one and the thought of defeat by the 'Hun' unconscionable. Traditionalists like John Kew, who had worked tirelessly throughout the war, alongside his wife, Annie, to support the local troops, firmly believed the Germans must be overcome at all costs. The notion of 'patriotic duty' was a strong and dearly held belief by the majority at the time. Men and women like Kew simply couldn't understand how anyone, regardless of religion, could even contemplate not stepping forward to defend their country in such extreme circumstances.

¹⁶ George Longland 1922-2016 interviewed by T Frecknall and Helena Pielichaty 2015

On the other hand, it is hard not to admire Bertie Walton. He was, after all, barely nineteen when he faced the wrath of the Tribunal time and time again. His faith must have been very sure indeed to give him the strength to stand up for what he believed in. After all, it is one thing being a conscientious objector in a large town where like-minded people gather and support each other, quite another when you live in a small village where even the vicar is hostile towards you.

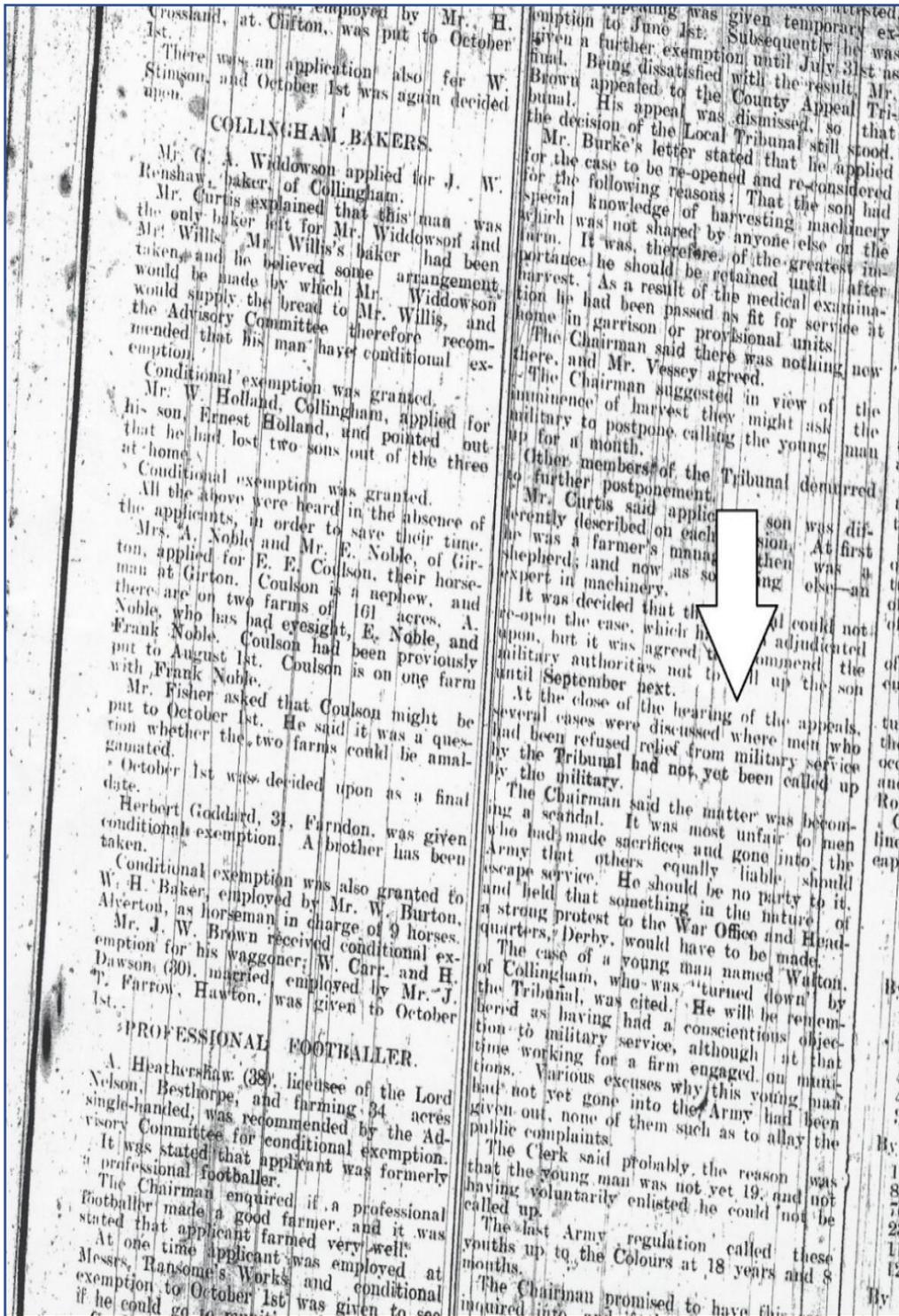
The tale of Bertie Walton, Collingham's conscientious objector, is an intriguing one and adds to the many, many stories the villages have of the Great War.

As a final twist, we return to Rev. Maxwell.

In 1919 he, along with his South Collingham War Memorial Committee, chose to honour the dead by commissioning a parishioners' plaque and a beautiful stained glass window by renowned glassmakers Shrigley and Hunt. There's nothing unusual in that – most towns and villages did the same. What is interesting is that the committee chose St Martin of Tours, the Patron Saint of Conscientious Objectors, for one of its lights.



Right: The light showing St Martin of Tours in front of his cathedral; part of the War Memorial window in St John the Baptist Church



Above: Report of the Newark Rural Tribunal in The Newark Herald, Sat 19th Aug 1916 courtesy of Newark Library

The Daily Telegraph

LONDON, WEDNESDAY APRIL 10, 1918

PREMIER'S APPEAL FOR MEN FOR THE ARMY

MILITARY AGE 50

CONSCRIPTION FOR IRELAND

A HOME RULE BILL.

"The fate of the Empire, the fate of Europe, the fate of human liberty throughout the world is at stake in the present battle." Those were almost the opening words of the Prime Minister yesterday as, in a crowded House, he began a most momentous speech of two hours' duration. From time to time he kept striking the same note - that Germany is bent on forcing a military decision this year, whatever the consequences to herself, that the battle will rage from the North Sea to the Atlantic, and that there is a possibility of it lasting for seven or eight months on end. Never was a graver speech delivered by the Chief Minister of the Crown, and it was followed by a brief speech from Mr. Asquith no less impressive, no less grave, no less solemn. "Never," said he, "has the situation been anything like so grave as it is at this moment," and he too pleaded with the House to realise the truth that only "a supreme and sustained effort" can make the position secure, and to consent to any sacrifice required to save our heritage and our liberties.

Parliamentary unity was obviously never more essential than now; yet the bitter truth was soon made manifest that the House of Commons was rent asunder. The Irish Nationalists are in violent revolt against the proposal to apply conscription to Ireland. Member after member got up and vowed that he would oppose it tooth and nail, and at every stage, Mr. Asquith, it should be added, pleaded for a little more time for careful consideration, and adjured the Government and all parties to keep their ears and minds open to reasonable argument. On the Government's actual proposals he reserved judgment, observing that he would consider them not on the ground of principle, but of expediency. "If the balance of military result seems to me to be in their favour," said he, "then I am with you."

NEW PROPOSALS.

What, then, are the Government's proposals? Mr. Lloyd George said that we had to prepare for the advent of 550,000 additional young men into the struggle, as Germany is calling up another class, that of 1920. Briefly stated, the measures of preparation are these:

1. A very strict comb-out is now in progress. The munition works are yielding up 100,000 men of Grade 1. The coal mines are supplying 50,000 men, and will be asked to find 50,000 more. In the Civil Services a clean cut is to be made of young fit men below 25.
2. The occupational exemptions are to be cancelled by age blocks, and the period of the calling-up notice is to be reduced from fourteen days to seven.
3. It may be found necessary to curtail the existing rights of appeal on medical grounds,

because frivolous appeals are not uncommon, and there is a great shortage of medical men.

Other proposals, however, are quite new:

1. The military age is to be raised to 50, and in some special cases - e.g., doctors - to 55.
2. The whole range of exemptions is to be revised. Some will be cancelled altogether.
3. The areas and composition of the tribunals are to be revised, and their procedure speeded up. Grounds of appeal will be restricted.
4. The clergy and ministers of religion will be pressed to undertake non-combatant services - e.g., dealing with the wounded.
5. The extension of the Compulsory Service Acts to Ireland on exactly the same footing as they apply to the United Kingdom.

THE MEN OF OVER 40

Naturally, members were eager to hear the exact bearing of the proposal to raise the age to 50. But on this vital point the Prime Minister was not very explicit. After explaining that we had to prepare for home defence, and that there were many Army services which did not require the very best physical material, he added that the proportion of men between 41 and 50 available for service was expected to be about 7 per cent. Mention of that figure drew loud cries of wonderment, as though there must be some mistake. A perfect volley of questions was shot forth. Seven per cent, repeated the Prime Minister, and observed that he thought he had made it perfectly clear. But he puzzled his audience by using different phrases, such as "available for the Army," "available for the Fighting Services," and "available for this Bill," and the House was still further nonplussed by his refusal to state the total number which this 7 per cent was expected to yield. On this point, therefore, where precision of statement was looked for, it was not forthcoming.

The vast majority of members took the new proposals very well, and the Prime Minister was loudly cheered when he said, "We have to choose between submitting to defeat and taking the necessary measures." If it had not been for the Irish Nationalists and the uproar they made over the application of conscription to Ireland, the temper of the House of Commons would have been worthy of the occasion.

IRISH UPROAR.

Mr. Lloyd George's moral case for bringing Ireland under compulsion was overwhelming.

He quoted from speeches of Mr. Redmond and Mr. Dillon to show how absolutely the Irish Nationalists had accepted this war as their own. Irishmen, said the Prime Minister, were being conscripted for the war in the United States, in Canada, and in New Zealand; the depleted Irish battalions at the front were now half filled with Englishmen; how, then, could he ask young Britons of 18½ and men of 50 to stand in the breach to defend Irish liberties while young Irishmen of military age slouched and sheltered themselves at home? "It is not merely illogical," he said, "it is unjust."

At this the uproar broke out anew. "It's a declaration of war against Ireland," shrieked Mr. O'Brien. Then the Prime Minister went on to announce the intention of the Government to introduce without delay a measure of self-government for Ireland, enacting what is just to both Irish parties, and what he hoped could be carried without violent controversy. "Keep it!" shouted the ragged chorus.

telegraph.co.uk/news/ww1-archive

Daily Telegraph Wednesday April 10th 1918 proposals to extend the age for conscription

B.C. 45 to A.D. 375 are found here in great numbers; a church is supposed to have existed here, the remains of which, it is said, were used in the erection of South Collingham church. The present mission chapel of St. Stephen was erected in 1885 at a cost of about £750, and will seat 100 persons; there is also a Wesleyan Methodist chapel.

WHEATHILLS or Wheatleys, 1 mile south-east, derives its name from the fact that wheat is here cultivated with more success than on the adjoining sandy ground; most of the soil is sandy, through which a tract of higher clayey land extends. Snake Hall is a farm 3 miles south-east; Potter Hill, 2 miles east, is said to have been the site of a Roman pottery. Coneygree (formerly abounding in rabbits or coney) is 1 mile south.

DANETHORPE, 3½ miles south-east, now consists of a few scattered farms, houses, and cottages, but was formerly a place of some importance. At the time of Domesday there was a church here and a priest. As the hill commands the station of Brough and has yielded fragments of Roman pottery, it may have been the site of a Roman outpost.

Post, M. O. & T. Office, Collingham.—Miss Annie Gibson, sub-postmistress. Letters arrive by mail cart from Newark & are delivered at 7 a.m. & 5 p.m.; Sunday, 7 a.m.; dispatched at 10.20 a.m. & 3.25, 4.50, 5.50 & 8 p.m.; Sunday, 5.50 p.m.

NORTH COLLINGHAM.

PRIVATE RESIDENTS.

Bailey Miss
Berry Thomas Letts
Bradley Thomas, The Willows
Broadbent Frank L.R.C.P.Edin. The Old hall
Brooke Thomas Kaye
Brooks William Nathaniel
Cooper Robert Henry, Fleet house
Copnall Henry Hampton, Rutland ho
Davison Mrs
Denman Mrs. Mayfield house
Dignan Ernest, Oakdene cottages
Dolphin Samuel, Swinderby
Gould Rev. Reginald Freestone M.A. (vicar), Vicarage
Harrison Miss, The Nook
Hutton Mrs. Carshalton
Johnson Miss
Kirk Mrs. Crescent house
Loveday Arthur, Holly house
Lucas Mrs. Brooklands
Maltby Mrs. Oakdene cottages
Ostler Aaron
Pennington Edward Cartwright
Dignan Ernest, Oakdene cottages
Riches Arthur, The Pleasaunce
Smith Miss Cath. M.B. The Old hall
Swann Mrs. Waterloo cottage
Tarton Edward
Wright William

COMMERCIAL.

Bailey William, baker
Baker Thomas, miller (wind)
Bates Walter Wood, shopkeeper
Bealby Walter, plough maker
Bingham Arthur, plumber
Bocock Joseph, farmer
Bradwell Gervaise Wm. Grey Horse P.H.
Broadbent Frank L.R.C.P.Edin., M.R.C.S.Eng. surgeon, & medical officer & public vaccinator Collingham district, Newark union & Eagle district, Lincoln union & medical officer of health to Newark Rural District Council, The Old hall
Broadberry Alfred Wm. cycle agent
Broadberry Robert, farmer
Brown Annie (Mrs.), chemist
Brown Arthur, market gardener
Carter Herbert, farmer
Clark John, farmer
Clark Joseph, nurseryman & assistant overseer
Clayton John Henry, farmer
Collingham Cricket Club (Arthur Loveday, sec)
Collingham Gas Light & Coke Co. Ltd. (Richard Cook Richmond, sec)
Collingham Gymnasium Club (Frdrk. Hoe, sec)

Collingham Public Hall Co. Limited (George Hind, ces)
Collingham Rural Library (Miss E. Brooke, librarian), open on Wednesdays from 3.30 to 5 & Fridays 6 to 8 p.m.)
Cree George, carrier
Crocker Henry, farmer
Davies Walter E. cycle agent
East Frederick & Thomas, butchers
Fairest Bernard Walter, shopkeeper
Hind George, tailor
Hoe Henry, painter
Holland Arthur, furniture dealer
Holland Walter, grocer & draper
Holmes Alice (Miss), registrar of births & deaths for Collingham sub-district, Newark union
Hunt John, farmer
Kemp Joseph, ironmonger
Merry Wilfred O. reporter, Stickswold
Millns John, cowkeeper
Millns William Thompson, builder
Mills H. & Son, boot makers
Mitchelson William Edward, grocer
Moss George, plough maker, wheelwright, smith, carpenter & undertaker
Moss Joseph, coal dealer
Moss Samuel J. carpenter
Newark Co-operative Industrial & Provident Society Ltd. grocers & Nicholson David, coal dealer
Nicholson Jarvis Wm. coal merchant
Nottingham & Nottinghamshire Banking Co. Limited (sub-branch to Newark), open Mon. from 1 till 3.30 p.m.; draw on London & Westminster Bank Ltd. London EC
Nowell Sarah Ann (Mrs.), shopkeeper
Perry John C. White Hart P.H.
Preston Charles Edward, blacksmith
Price Robert, beer retailer
Pridmore William, saddler
Reeve Hubert, insurance agent
Richmond Richard Cook, tailor
Sharp John, chimney sweeper
Sheldon Geo. farmer & cattle dealer
Skerritt Henry, monumental mason
Smith Catherine (Miss) M.B., Ch.B. Glas. deputy medical officer Newark & Lincoln union; lecturer on ambulance to Kesteven & Notts County Councils
Speed Thomas, wheelwright
Tanner William D. grocer
Taylor William, market gardener
Taylor Wm. Hy. market gardener
Thompson George, butcher
Waddington Ezra, Jolly Bargeman P.H.
Walton John, painter
Wells Harry, Royal Oak & Railway htl
White Mary Ann (Mrs.), farmer

Wall Box, South Collingham, cleared at 10.10 a.m. & 6.5 & 7.50 p.m.; Sunday, 6.5 p.m.
Wall Box, Brough, cleared at 8.20 a.m. week days only

PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.

District of North & South Collingham.

Council School (formerly Wesleyan), for 85 boys; average attendance, 58; Archibald Ludlow Phillips, master
Girls & infants, erected by subscription in 1839, for 200 children; average attendance, 95; Miss Mary J. Wilson, mistress
Miss Alice Holmes, correspondent, North Collingham
Brough (mixed & infants), erected in 1896, for 69 children; average attendance, 24; Mrs. M. & Miss F. E. Griffith, mistresses
T. C. S. Woolley esq. South Collingham, correspondent
County Police, North Collingham, William Cooper, sergeant in charge
County Police, South Collingham, Thomas Simons, constable
Railway Station (North Collingham), Arthur Edwin Kind, station master

Carriers to:—

Lincoln.—Cree, Fri. returning the same day
Newark.—Cree, Wed. & Sat. & Hickman, Wed. & Sat. returning same days

Widnall George, plumber & gasfitter
Willis & Co. bakers & millers (steam)
Wilson Thos. Fields, chimney sweeper
Wiseman Robert, market gardener

SOUTH COLLINGHAM.

PRIVATE RESIDENTS.

Armstrong Thomas
Bartholomew Joseph, Verdala
Broadberry Mrs
Browne Mrs
Cox Horace
Gibson George
Manuel Misses
Maxwell Rev. Albert James (rector), Rectory
Palmer William A. Red house
Rice Mrs. Longman, The Gables
Shepherd Rev. Wm. Thos. (Baptist)
Wigram Henry Joseph, The Lodge
Wigram John, The Manor
Woolley Misses
Woolley Mrs. John, The Cottage
Woolley Thomas Cecil Smith

COMMERCIAL.

Aitchison Gworie Colquhoun, land agt. see Smith-Woolley & Wigram
Andrew William, market gardener
Bastin Walter Thomas, farmer
Bocock Hadfield, farmer
Broadberry Benj. farmer, Whitemoor
Clark Miles, farmer
Clayton Henry, farmer
Clayton Robert, farmer
Collingham Farmers' Club (James Crocker, sec)
Colton & Cox Limited, corn & coal merchants. T A "Cox;" T N 2
Crocker James, farmer
Crocker Joshua, farmer
Crossland Fanny (Mrs.), King's Head P.H.
Gibson Joseph, farmer
Harrison Thos. & Mitchell, farmers
Hatcliffe Herbert, tobacconist
Hawkins William, shopkeeper
Healey Ernest, brush ma & boot repr
Hickman William, carrier
Hoe Arthur Thomas, butcher
Holland Walter, china & glass dealer
Hunt William, farmer
Liley Henry, higgler
Nicholson & Co. drapers
Pratt James William, farmer
Shaw Arthur, farmer
Smith-Woolley & Wigram, land agents & surveyors. T A "Woolleys;" T N 4
Staley John Thomas, deputy registrar of births & deaths, Collingham sub-district, Newark union
Taylor William, farmer

Collingham in 1912

Kelly's Trade directory page for 1912 with John Walton's entry - middle column third from the bottom - courtesy of Newark Library Local Studies

SOUTH COLLINGHAM,
With Brough and Danethorpe
PARISH MAGAZINE.

AUGUST, 1917.

The War.

MY DEAR PARISHIONERS,—

Saturday, August 4th, is the third anniversary of the outbreak of the great war in which nearly all the great nations in the world, and many of the small ones are engaged. The Clergy and all Christian ministers are bidden to emphasise this fact at the services of Sunday, the 5th inst.

Three years ago, while everyone, in some measure, realised the gravity of the situation, few, except the most thoughtful and far-seeing members of the community, expected that the war would spread in the far-reaching manner that it has done, or that in three years' time peace would not even be in sight. Yet such is the case. Still Germany threatens to inflict her tyranny upon the rest of the world. She hopes to carry out her purpose rather by wearing, wearying, and dividing the Allies, than by the hope of vanquishing them all on the field of battle. It is therefore the solemn duty of all who love this country and the great cause of the right of the weak to freedom, to which she is committed, to see to it that they are not wearied or divided by the obstinacy and brutal strength of the foe. This we can only do by putting forth all our strength and all our prayers into the cause. Are we doing this?

There are ninety-two names on our Roll of Honour, of whom nine have given their lives for their country, five have been incapacitated for further service by the wounds they have received, or other causes. Not one in this parish has refused to serve when the call has come, by slinking away through the loophole of conscientious objection, which was most regrettably left open by the late Government responsible for the Conscription Act. But do we support our heroes by our prayers? In public worship, at all services, we pray God to bless our cause, but alas! how few, comparatively speaking, take part with us in this great duty. On Sunday evenings we mention in prayer to God the names of all those on our Roll who are on active service, and yet, most sad to say, many of the parents and other nearest friends of those who are so prayed for seldom or never join us in the act of prayer for those

they love. The question is often asked "Does God care?" the answer is: "Do you pray?" A true and blessed victory will only be given to a God-fearing and praying people.

Therefore, my dear parishioners, I invite you all to draw nearer to the Throne of Grace and to join with me and each other in public prayer more earnestly and insistently than you have done before, that the great God who made and governs all things will grant unto the Allied Nations such faith, courage, and perseverance that their efforts for the victory of the cause of righteousness may be crowned by an early and convincing success.

I am,
Your faithful friend and Rector,
A. J. MAXWELL.

Choir Excursion.

At an early date during the present month two of the choir boys will call on members of the congregation to solicit subscriptions to defray the expenses of the annual excursion of the Choir and Bell-ringers. It is of course impossible to go to the sea-side as we used to do before the war, and now even Nottingham or Lincoln are beyond our reach owing to the 50 per cent increase of railway fares, and the increased cost of food. It is proposed, therefore, to drive to Belvoir Castle in a brake. This proposal will avoid railway travelling, and food and other expenses will also be somewhat reduced.

As the members of the choir and bell-ringers have voluntarily and regularly given their services throughout the year, it is felt that the congregation, as a whole, will be glad to mark their appreciation of this fact by contributing to the cost of this outing, which is so keenly enjoyed.

Parish Church Services.

HOLY COMMUNION.

- | | | |
|---------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Aug. 5. | 9th Sunday after Trinity. | 8 a.m.
and mid-day. |
| „ 12. | 10th Sunday after Trinity. | 8 a.m. |
| „ 19. | 11th Sunday after Trinity. | Mid-day. |
| „ 24. | S. Bartholomew. | 10.30 a.m. |
| „ 26. | 12th Sunday after Trinity. | 8 a.m. |

Sources:

- Book: T Frecknall *Collingham and district in The Great War* published 2015
- Website: Ancestry.co.uk (for census returns)
- Newark Advertiser/Newark Herald microfiche 1916-1918 available to view in Newark Library
- Correspondence with Cyril Pearce 2014. The Pearce Register of Conscientious Objectors is available to view online via the Imperial War Museum website <http://www.1914.org/news/cos/>
- Correspondence with Edward Purver of Newark Christadelphian Ecclesia via email April 2018
- Book: *Refusing to Kill – conscientious objection and human rights in the first world war* Peace Pledge Union publications by Meager & Harrison 2006 (from Five Leaves bookshop, Nottingham <https://fiveleavesbookshop.co.uk/>)
- Book: Cyril Pearce 'Comrades in Conscience' – the story of an English community's opposition to the Great War Francis Boutle publishers 2001
- The Daily Telegraph (see p 15)
- Tony Allen post cards: www.worldwar1postcards.com
- South Collingham Parish Newsletter courtesy of Collingham and District Local History Society (the Society holds the entire archive of Rev Maxwell's newsletters throughout the War Ref: EC/B/46-52)

For more information on the modern Christadelphian Ecclesia in Nottinghamshire go to <http://www.ukchristadelphians.org.uk/info.asp?area=12>

H P 12/07/2018