

# BEYOND THE GRAVES

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## THE GREAT WAR "LEST WE FORGET"

With Armistice Day almost upon us again, this issue remembers  
The Great War of 1914 – 1918  
and how it affected the people of Ryde.

*"This war is really the greatest insanity in which white races have ever engaged."*  
German Admiral von Tirpitz, in a letter to his wife, October 1914.

### EARLY CASUALTIES

#### Navy

One of the first men from Ryde to die in World War One was George Patrick Mayo, aged 30. His father Harry, retired coastguard, ran the Hand-in-Hand public house in Nelson Place. George Mayo, a Petty Officer on HMS Good Hope, Admiral Cradock's flag ship, died along with the rest of his crew when the ship sunk on 1 November 1914, in the Battle of Coronel off the Chilean coast.



HMS Good Hope

The HMS Good Hope was a 14,100 ton Drake Class Cruiser and could reach a speed of 23 knots. She was armed with 33 guns and 2 submerged torpedo tubes. She was sunk along with HMS Monmouth by two German armoured cruisers, with the loss of her entire complement of 900 hands.

#### Army

Ryde soldiers suffered casualties in the first months of the fighting, two of them being the sons of local coachman Harry Williams. LCpl Arthur Williams of the 1st Battalion Hampshire Regiment was wounded at Ploegsteert on 7 November 1914 and as a consequence lost an eye. His brother George of the same Battalion was killed in fighting at Ploegsteert on the following day. Arthur had recently become a father for the third time, his wife Ada having produced a son Leonard on 4 October.



Arthur and Ada Williams

*"Don't believe stories which you see in the papers about troops asking as a special privilege not to be relieved. We stick it, at all costs if necessary, as long as ordered, but everyone's glad to hand over to someone else. And anyone who says he enjoys this kind of thing is either a liar or a madman."*

Captain H Yoxall, Kings Royal Rifle Corps.

## RYDE NEWSPAPER SNIPPETS 1914 – 1915

13 February 1914 - In the case of Islanders who die in action or from wounds, thus giving their lives for their country, no charge will be made for the record of death in this column although it may include matter ordinarily chargeable. (*Isle of Wight County Press*)

7 November 1914 - Thirteen employees of the Ryde Gaslight Company have joined the forces, and are receiving from the Company allowances ranging from 3s. to 15s. per week, according to the circumstances of the case. All have been promised re-employment at the conclusion of the war. The Company has also subscribed 50 guineas to the National Relief Fund. (*Isle of Wight Observer*)

7 November 1914 - It was announced that Miss Forsyth was collecting pots of jam for distribution among our sailors of the Fleet, and that lady would be glad if those who desired to assist in this direction would send their gifts addressed to her, care of Mr Colenutt, grocer, Union Street, who would pack the same for forwarding to their destination. (*Isle of Wight Observer*)

22 April 1915 - The license of the Satellite Inn, Prince Street, was transferred from Thomas Scott (now a Brig. Sergt.-Major in the Army, stationed at Colchester), to Oliver Corney. (*Isle of Wight Times*)

1 May 1915 – Isle of Wight Electric Light Company - It was reported that the Company had suffered from the effects of the war, the lighting of the business premises and public streets having been much curtailed, and coal and labour had cost the Company £461 and £182 more respectively. Fourteen of their staff, including the chief engineer had been serving the colours. (*Isle of Wight Observer*)

10 July 1915 – On Saturday evening an enjoyable concert, arranged by Mrs G W Colenutt, took place in the grounds of the Davenport Nursing Home, on the Strand, for the benefit of the wounded soldiers there. Musical items were contributed ... A comic sketch was performed... Two of the soldiers also took part in the programme. Mrs Colenutt acted as accompanist, and needless to say the entertainment was highly appreciated. (*Isle of Wight Observer*)

16 October 1915 - Mr W P Brigstocke, of Ryde House, having received a Captain's commission as general service officer, has gone to France, and wishes letters to be addressed c/o Mr G H Brigstocke, The Terrace, Ryde. (*Isle of Wight Observer*)

## HAZELWOOD RED CROSS HOSPITAL

In the early war months some people still seemed unaware of the seriousness of the situation and expected life to go on as usual. Before the outbreak of war, Hazelwood had been used by the Young Men's Christian Association for holidays but had quickly become an invaluable Red Cross Hospital. However, in February 1915, Mrs Fetherstonhaugh on behalf of the YMCA, notified Hazelwood's Commandant Miss Kleo Friend, that the ground floor was required for Christian Young Men at Easter and for the summer and that nursing would therefore have to take place in the attics. Miss Friend appealed by letter to John Oglander:

*"... it certainly would be a disaster to have to move ourselves and the 17 beds we have on this ground floor up into the attics, where light and air (essential in nursing) are so scarce and where the chimneys are so badly built as not to admit of our having fires. And perhaps worst of all - there is neither a bathroom, a sink, a tap of drinking water, nor any conveniences for carrying on nursing on the whole floor. To nurse under such conditions as these, in order that young men who have not responded to the call of their country, may have a holiday... seems little short of calamitous."*



*"I shall not easily forget those long winter nights in the front line. Darkness fell about four in the afternoon and dawn was not until eight next morning. These 16 hours of blackness were broken by gun flashes, the gleam of star shells and punctuated by the scream of a shell or the sudden heart-stopping rattle of a machine gun. The long hours crept by with leaden feet and sometimes it seemed as if time itself was dead."*

F Noakes in 'The Distant Drum'.

A notice in the Isle of Wight Observer of May 1915 reflects a similar opinion of those not responding to Kitchener's call:

15 May 1915 - *The Shadow of Conscription* – *It would be a pity after the voluntary system has yielded such splendid results, if conscription should be necessary, but the possibility has to be faced. Hundreds of thousands have risked all for their country, but there are thousands more who should have been among the first to go but who have no intention of going. They belong to what is called the "C.L.M." Brigade (can't leave mother).*

22 March 1917 - Hazelwood Hospital, the following gifts have been received at this hospital during this week:- Cigarettes, Miss Stride; Soup, Miss Denman Murray; Puzzles, Miss M Fardell, Miss E Ryall; Dressings, The Joint War Committee, London; Slippers, Miss Baines; Papers and Books, Mrs Latto, Mrs Stainer; Brandy, Mr Latto; Flowers, Miss Lawson. 14 patients were discharged during the week. Total now in Hospital 80. The men were entertained at Trinity Hall to a Whist-drive. The Hospital was inspected by Mrs Latter, assistant Matron of the Joint War Committee, British Red Cross and St John Ambulance, she expressed herself very pleased with all she had seen. (*Isle of Wight Times*)

17 December 1917 - The Mayor's Fund for the wounded soldiers at Hazelwood amounts to £371 19s. (*Isle of Wight Times*)

### THE CASTLE HOSPITAL

During World War One many grand private homes were offered for War Service and The Castle was adapted as a fully equipped Red Cross Hospital.

In 1915 Kleo Friend, Commandant Voluntary Aid Detachment Hants, wrote to John Oglander, Island Lord Lieutenant, to say that Colonel Hosie considered The Castle, offered by Colonel Cradock, most suitable. It had four Officers Rooms and the War Office Food contribution would be 2/- per head, 3/- for enterics. 30 convalescent typhoid cases had already been taken. She also reported that doctors in the town were speaking very highly of the work of her members.

Mabel Gough-Calthorpe also wrote to John Oglander to explain that she had been trying very hard to get Miss Friend started at The Castle. "Lord Kitchener stated he would require 40,000 more beds by the end of March:- here is a house which in a week's time could be ready to receive about 40 wounded men, the house fully equipped as a convalescent hospital with all necessary material and a division of well trained nurses. Our wounded men will be nursed back to health and so in many cases able to return to the front and God knows we want every available man if England is to win in this awful war."



22 March 1917 - The Castle Hospital, the hospital is still full up. Mrs Latter, assistant Matron inspected the hospital and expressed herself pleased with it. The whist drive at Trinity Hall, to which the patients were invited by the Trinity Canteen helpers, proved a great success. Mrs Grant, Miss Young and Mr Hackshaw sent illustrated papers; the Rev T J Puckle, Mrs Richards, Miss Cocks, and Mrs Forsythe, eggs; Mr Carter, rabbits; Col and Mrs Cradock, daily papers; Misses Morris, a home-made cake; Miss Lawson, arum lilies; and Miss Mechan, cigarettes. (*Isle of Wight Times*)

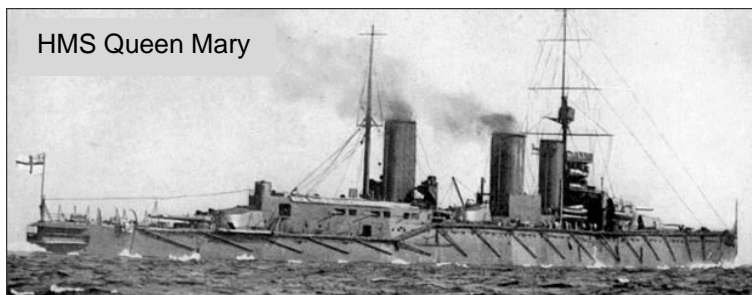
***"In no circumstances whatever will the expression 'shell-shock' be used verbally or be recorded in any regimental or other casualty report, or in any hospital or other medical document."***

British Army General Routine Order No 2384, issued 7 June 1917 in France.

### THE BATTLE OF JUTLAND 31 MAY 1916 – 1 JUNE 1916

Able Seaman Ernest Young, aged 19 years and described as a gallant seaman, perished when HMS Queen Mary blew up during the Battle of Jutland in 1916, the largest naval battle of World War One. His father George Young was a gardener in Ryde and Ernest had been a patrol leader in the local scouts.

HMS Queen Mary was the largest British warship sunk by German gunnery in World War One. Said to be the most beautiful ship the RN ever possessed, her loss was a severe blow; 1,266 of her crew were killed (only 9 survived). Her guns were the most accurate in the British fleet. Sadly her meagre armoured protection meant that 12-inch shells could penetrate into her heart and caused the explosion that sank this mighty ship in a few seconds.



## WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTION



The Women's Army Auxiliary Corps was established in December 1916 after a War Office investigation into the number of non-combatant tasks being performed by soldiers on the Lines of Communications in France. It was estimated that 12,000 men could be freed for service in the front line, and although women would not be suitable or strong enough to undertake all these jobs it was decided that they could make a significant contribution. The first party of 14 women arrived in France on 31 March 1917, and eventually 9,000 women were to serve there.

It was a continually evolving service with rules and regulations being formulated in response to experiences. On 9 April 1918 the service was renamed Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps, with the Queen becoming Commander-in-Chief.

Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps ceased to exist on 27 September 1921, but some 57,000 women had served with the unit, both at home and in France.

Mrs Mary Louise Rogers, widow of the late Evelyn Charles Rogers, of Percy Terrace, Monkton Street, Ryde and daughter of Mr and Mrs J Rogers, of Monkton Street, Ryde served in Queen Mary's Women's Auxiliary Army Corps and was attached to the 18th Officers' Cadet Battalion at Prior Park, Bath. Sadly she passed away on Wednesday 23 October 1918, at a hospital in Bath, after a short illness at the young age of 34. She was greatly respected by her colleagues. Her body was returned to Ryde and the funeral took place at Holy Trinity Church, Ryde followed by burial in Ryde Cemetery. As well as close family, there were about thirty members of the QMAAC from the 3rd Officers' Cadet Battalion at Parkhurst in attendance. Because she was serving in the QMAAC at the time of her death, her grave is marked by a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

Source: Imperial War Museum website and Isle of Wight Observer 2 November 1918.

*"No-man's land under snow is like the face of the moon: chaotic, crater ridden, uninhabitable, awful, the abode of madness."*  
Lieutenant Wilfred Owen, in a letter to his mother, January 1917.

## RYDE NEWSPAPER SNIPPETS 1917 - 1918

3 March 1917 - The Red Cross Sale, numerous and in many cases valuable gifts which the Mayor and Mayoress have received for this sale have now been removed to Purnell & Purnell's rooms and will be sold by auction on Thursday next. They have been classified and catalogued into 300 lots, we were surprised at the many really beautiful, useful, and artistic gifts. Buyers will find something they want and at the same time be assisting the funds of the local institutions which are providing such valuable service and help for the men who have fought for their King and country and freedom of the world. (*Isle of Wight Observer*)

18 August 1917 - As will be seen by our advertising columns an evening concert will be given next Friday at the Town Hall by the Blind Musicians from St Dunstons Hostel, who made a most favourable impression on their visit last year. (*Isle of Wight Observer*)

25 August 1917 - The Soldier's Canteen which was closed owing to a fire at Surrey Lodge, Barfield, has been reopened at Mount House School, George Street, kindly lent by Miss Greenup. All soldiers are heartily welcome from 6.30 to 9.30 pm. (*Isle of Wight Observer*)

17 January 1918 - The St Helens Food Control Committee have fixed the price of Island made butter at 2s.6d. per lb. They have also adopted the Milk Supply (priority) scheme. (*Isle of Wight Times*)

## GALLANTRY AT VIMY RIDGE 9 - 13 APRIL 1917



Joseph Beeney may be remembered by some of Ryde's older residents as one of the town's real characters. He is shown here in a familiar pose outside his "Aladdin's Cave", in the Upper High Street, many years ago.

Mr Beeney, who died in 1955 aged 63, was a general dealer who stocked an amazing range of goods, much of it purchased at Way Riddett auction sales.

As a young man he played soccer for Tonbridge Wells Rangers in his Kent birthplace. He was in business in Ryde for 17 of his 21 years on the Island and was a member of the Ryde Social Club.

However what few people among his many friends realised was that he held the Military Medal, awarded for his gallantry during the ferocious battle of Vimy Ridge in World War One – an action which won him promotion to King's Corporal.



Battle at Vimy Ridge by Richard Jack

*"Being shelled is the main work of an infantry soldier, which no one talks about. Everyone has his own way of going about it. In general, it means lying face down and contracting your body into as small a space as possible."*  
Louis Simpson, in 'Air with Armed Men'.

## WOUNDED AT GAZA NOVEMBER 1917

Sergeant Arthur Richard King, 1/8th Hants Regiment, died on Tuesday, 9 April 1918 at Netley Military Hospital from the effects of wounds received at Gaza on 4 November 1917.



He was the son of Mr and Mrs King of Bettsworth Road, Ryde. Sergeant King joined the Isle of Wight Rifles in October 1907, and was mobilised on the outbreak of war, and at once volunteered for Active Service. He went to Gallipoli in 1915 and in December of that year was brought to Glasgow suffering from enteric fever, which, with other complications, necessitated a stay of some nine months in hospital. On recovery, after a few months in England, he rejoined his Regiment in Egypt in January 1917, and was wounded at the battle of Gaza very severely in the right foot, also in the left knee. He was taken to Netley, and after undergoing many painful operations it was found necessary to amputate his right foot, but unfortunately this did not have the desired effect, and after much suffering, all of which was most cheerfully borne, he died from the result of septic poisoning.

Prior to the war Arthur King worked for Messrs Saunders of Cowes. He was a prominent member of the United Methodist Church and was held in great esteem by all those who were connected with him.

Source: Isle of Wight Times Thursday 18 April 1918 and image of the battle of Gaza from [www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk](http://www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk)

## RYDE NEWSPAPER SNIPPETS 1918 – 1919

11 July 1918 - Friday next is being observed as Ryde's Recruiting Day for the Land Army, when an effort will be made to secure recruits for the land in order to assist in the work of the harvest. (*Isle of Wight Times*)

25 July 1918 – We are glad to know that the Flag-day arranged last week by the Mother Superior of the Convent of the Cross in aid of Sir Arthur Pearson's Blinded Soldiers' Children Fund raised £31 5s. (*Isle of Wight Times*)

3 August 1918 - Mrs G G Flux of the Beeches, secretary to the Kut Prisoners of War Fund, has been officially informed that parcels and letters for English prisoners in Turkey are held up by the Austrian railways. (*Isle of Wight Observer*)

3 August 1918 - A series of talks under the auspices of the National War Aims Committee are now being held in the Island.

2 November 1918 - Ex-Service Men - The first general meeting of this new association was held at the Welby Institute, West Street on Tuesday evening. Weekly meetings will be held on Friday evenings from 8 to 9.

2 November 1918 - The Isle of Wight County Hospital Committee gratefully acknowledge donations from Mrs Edgar Thornton, Ryde, being her earnings in the Women's Land Army driving a motor plough (4th donation).

27 December 1919 - The Committee who entertained the active Soldiers and Sailors, residing in the borough, August 27, have expended the balance of the fund on coal for the war widows and children, each widow receiving 9cwts, and each child 1cwt, over 17 tons being distributed.

## THE SILENT ENEMY

Those servicemen fortunate enough to have survived the horrors of World War One were not yet out of danger, finding themselves, along with the rest of the world's population, under a catastrophic attack from a particularly virulent form of influenza that came to be known as Spanish Flu.

The epidemic lasted from March 1918 until June 1920 and claimed, it is estimated, in excess of 50 million lives whereas the hostilities had accounted for probably less than 15 million. Although Great Britain escaped relatively lightly, deaths were still in the hundreds of thousands and reached every part of the country.

The Isle of Wight Observer of 17 May 1919 quotes from the Medical Officers Annual Report "The Health of Ryde - a severe epidemic of influenza began in the latter part of September and lasted till the end of November. 8 deaths occurred in the Borough in addition to 2 which were transferred away."

**SPANISH "FLU" AND GAS.**

**Wonderful Cures by the Old Remedy—  
Veno's Lightning Cough Cure.**

L/Corporal A. J. Turner, of the 4th Essex Regiment, writes: "I was in hospital, and lying opposite me was a sergeant in the R.F.A., who had been badly gassed. It was awful to hear him coughing night and day. Knowing Veno's, I told him of it, and from the first dose all the fellows in the ward noticed a decrease in his coughing. In six weeks that same man proceeded to a convalescent hospital in my company. Two men and myself affected with Spanish "Flu" found instantaneous relief in Veno's."

**Veno's Lightning Cough Cure**  
is the world's supreme remedy for Coughs and Colds, Lung Troubles, Asthma, Bronchitis, Nasal Catarrh, Hoarseness, Difficult Breathing, and Influenza. Specially recommended for Whooping Cough and other Bronchial Troubles in children. Prices: 11d., 1s. 3d., and 3s., from Chemists and Stores everywhere.



Shell Shattered area of Chateau Wood Flanders (from [www.greatwar.co.uk](http://www.greatwar.co.uk))

## In Flanders Fields

By John McCrae, May 1915

In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.

*"Yesterday I visited the battlefield of last year. The place was scarcely recognisable. Instead of a wilderness of ground torn up by shell, the ground was a garden of wild flowers and tall grasses. Most remarkable of all was the appearance of many thousands of white butterflies which fluttered around. It was as if the souls of the dead soldiers had come to haunt the spot where so many fell. It was eerie to see them. And the silence! It was so still that I could almost hear the beat of the butterflies' wings."*

A British Officer, 1919.