

Ellastone, Stanton, Calwich, Stanton & Wootton in September 1914

September 1914 was a time of great change in the parish of Ellastone, and everyone in the village was even busier than normal because of the extra work incurred by the nearby war in Europe that began the previous month.

The village doctor Dr Covey had incurred severe extra duties and he was to take on an even heavier workload in the very near future. Dr Covey was already the Medical Officer for Denstone College and he had a surgery in Rocester as well the surgery & dispensary at his home - Adam Bede Cottage on the Wootton Road, but now he also turned his attention to giving Nursing Instruction classes in the Parish Hall twice a week. His classes were very well attended, fifty people came from Ellastone, Denstone & Rocester! One of the classes was preceded by French lessons given by Mrs Hartley. Presumably a large number of women in our village and nearby, hoped to volunteer as nurses in the war - whether in Belgium, France or England.

Local men were also leaving their homes and jobs behind to enlist and answer the call of their country for men to take up arms against Germany and defend Belgium.

The Ashbourne Telegraph of Friday, 11th September 1914 (which is available to view on microfiche at Ashbourne Public Library), reported that "Stirring scenes were witnessed at Norbury & Ellastone Station on Thursday morning when 33 more recruits answered their country's call. The platform presented a remarkable scene, being crowded with enthusiastic villagers, and as the train steamed out, hats and handkerchiefs were wildly waved, and cheer after cheer given. The Vicar, Rev'd E H Birley and Dr Covey witnessed the departure of the men, bidding them 'God-speed'.

The same edition of the Ashbourne Telegraph also reported that the Wootton Hall Cricket Club is to disband for the duration of the war, owing to the number of members enlisting, and added that it was hoped that the club will resume after the war.

At churchwarden Alfred Duncombe's home of Calwich Abbey, *eight* promising young men enlisted and the homes of other gentry in the village were also affected. Life was never to be quite the same again in many big houses and small cottages throughout our area...and October was to bring even more radical changes!

More next month!

The Exhibition about Ellastone in the Great War is still up in St Peter's Church, and is available to view at weekends during daylight hours when the church is open.

When the exhibition opened I made some Anzac biscuits because of our local connections with the NZ forces - one of our village men, Arthur Charlesworth, joined the New Zealand contingent and died at Gallipoli. Several people requested the recipe so I include it below.

Anzac Biscuits

1 heaped tablespoon golden syrup
6 oz butter or margarine
3 oz sugar
3 oz porridge oats
2 oz desiccated coconut
4oz plain flour
2 level teaspoons of bicarbonate of soda

Grease and flour baking trays. Gently melt syrup, butter/margarine and sugar in a pan and stir in the oats, coconut and flour. Dissolve the bicarbonate of soda in a t tablespoon of hot water and add to other ingredients. Divide mixture into approximate 25 - 30 portions and roll into balls, flattening them slightly. Bake at 335f ,160c or Gas mark 3 for approximately 20 minutes. Remove from oven when golden and leave for a few minutes to harden before cooling on a tray. Enjoy!

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