

Pontypridd School Log Books

World War 1

Identified Themes

Supporting the Troops. From the autumn of 1914 schools took up the challenge of supporting the war effort. At first their efforts were directed towards practical activities such as making “comforts” for soldiers and, in some cases, for teachers and former pupils (old boys) serving in the armed forces. Schools also raised money for local and national charities set up to help the war wounded and their families.

“Today I forwarded to HRH Princess Mary a postal order for £1 as a donation towards Her Royal Highness’ Fund to provide Christmas Gifts for our sailors and soldiers at the front. The donation was obtained by means of a Prize Draw among the children. The teachers provided the prizes and children who wished paid a penny each for tickets. The teachers also contributed to make the donation up to £1.” ELL26/2 Tonyrefail Mixed.

“Books and magazines for the troops brought by the pupils and sent to the Postmaster.” EPP6/1/9 Graig (Board) Graig-y-wion Girls School.

“We are giving a concert in the ... town hall this evening in aid of the War Heroes Fund.” EPP9/5 Hopkinstown/Trehopcyn Girls School.

“A flag day was held in order to provide wool for knitting comforts for our soldiers in school. The sum of £2.18.1 was collected. This money was spent on buying wool and knitting needles.” ELL22/2 Miskin Mixed and Infants.

“Children received postcards of thanks from British Expeditionary Force for cigarettes received in November.” ELL23/2 Penrhiwfer Mixed and Infants.

“In response to an appeal for literature for the soldiers and sailors on active service sent out by Mr Pinkney, the Pontypridd Postmaster, and passed on to schools by the Secretary, a very large quantity of books was obtained and ... sent to the Post Office this week from the Boys and Girls Departments .” EPP20/1/5 Trefforest (Board) Boys.

Helping Military Hospitals. As the number of war wounded mounted many were brought to hospitals in South Wales. Schools often made links with local military hospitals and occasionally hospitals further afield e.g. Netley Hospital in Southampton – one of the largest hospitals in the country. Schools provided books, clothes and even food for the wounded and would often stage concerts for the wounded able to visit the school. Many schools in south Wales were requisitioned during 1914-18 for use as military hospitals. At least one school in the Pontypridd area, Lan Wood Primary, was being used as a hospital by 1917.

"We are deviating from the timetable this afternoon as the wounded soldiers are coming up to receive the books we are presenting to them as a result of our St David's Day concert." EPP9/5 Hopkinstown/Trehopcyn Girls School.

"The Infants Department having been taken over by Military Authorities and the Red Cross Society for use as a hospital, girls now have to use the boys' entrance." EPP13/2 Lan Wood Girls.

War Savings. Pontypridd did not follow the example of local authorities, such as Merthyr, that encouraged schools to raise funds for specific projects (e.g. the Mayor's Appeal in Merthyr raised funds to provide an Ambulance Car for the Front). However, the authority was an active supporter by 1917 of the national campaign to set up a War Savings Association in every school. Children were encouraged to make regular contributions and national campaigns were used to encourage and promote the purchase of War Bonds. This included a visit by Tanks to towns in south Wales in 1918 and the display in some towns of captured German guns. Schools played an important role in raising money and promoting the savings campaigns. Notional targets were set for each town dependent on its size and often linked to the cost of a specific piece of equipment. For example, Pontypridd was asked to raise £100,000, the price of a submarine. Additional holidays were awarded to the most successful schools based on the amount raised per pupil. The National Savings campaign was continued after 1918 as the country attempted to address the costs of the war.

"School closed this afternoon for a meeting of teachers at Mill Street, Higher Education school to consider the establishment of War Savings Societies." EP 9/3 Hopkinstown/Trehopcyn Boys and Mixed School.

"Mr W Phillips JP, Chairman of the Pontypridd District Council, visited the school this afternoon. He gave the boys a short address on the necessity for saving and referred to the War Savings Association attached to this school." EPP13/1 Lan Wood Boys.

"We have started a War Loan Savings Association. Although the scholars are very young they seem very interested in the matter and I am sure that it will prove to be a success." ELL13/1/2 Gilfach Goch

"The War Savings Association accounts have, at the invitation of the local War Savings Committee, been kept open the whole of this week in order to assist Pontypridd in its efforts to buy a £100,000 submarine." EPP6/1/7 Graig (Board) Graig-y-wion Boys School.

“The school work has been somewhat disorganised this week because of the attention paid to the purchase of War Certificates. The actual amount of money taken in this department is £189.19.2 plus two £5 bonds. 245 War Savings Certificates have been bought by the boys.” EPP13/1 Lan Wood Boys.

“A special effort is to be made during the next three days to raise a substantial sum for the War Loan. A Tank is in the town and it is anticipated that several children will be allowed to inspect same after purchasing a Certificate.” EPP18/11 Pwllgwaun (Board) Infants.

“The scholars contributed during the week ending today, £66 to the War Savings Association.” EPP11/4 Park Boys.

Life in school. The war had an immediate impact on schools. Air attack and the movement of children around the country were primarily a feature of the Second World War. However, schools in the Pontypridd district did take in a number of children from families that had fled Belgium in 1914 and were being housed in south Wales..

“Five Belgian boys were admitted to the school today. They are the children of refugees who are domiciled at Clydach Court.” (March 1915)

“One of the Belgian boys attending this school was drowned in the canal this morning while bathing.” (June 1915)

“A large number of the Upper Standard boys attended the funeral of Jaak de Haas this afternoon which caused a considerable decrease in the attendance.” (June 1915)

All - EPP1/5 Cilfynydd Primary School, Boys School.

“This afternoon two Belgian children, some of a family of refugees staying in the neighbourhood, were brought to school by their mother. One was taken to the Infants Department. The mother speaks English fluently but the children do not speak anything but Flemish.” ELL26/2 Tonyrefail Mixed.

“Three scholars were marked “left”. The father of these scholars was last week arrested on a charge of being an alien enemy – namely a German. The family have now cleared off from the place – the father having been remanded in custody for a week.” ELL26/2 Tonyrefail Mixed.

Teachers and Military Service. Boys were taught almost exclusively by male teachers and ,therefore, boys’ schools were particularly hard hit as staff volunteered or later in the war were called up for military service - often at very short notice.

“Mr D T Tanner, in response to an appeal from his University, has joined the Royal Fusiliers and was requested to report himself at Wrexham yesterday morning.” EPP1/5 Cilfynydd Primary School, Boys School.

“Mr Simpson did not attend school. It is rumoured that he has joined Kitchener’s Army.” ELL1/1 Beddau.

“Mr D G Griffiths left the school today to join the RAMC. He is given leave of absence for the duration of the war.” EPP9/3 Hopkinstown/Trehopcyn Boys and Mixed School.

“Mr Llewellyn called at my house last evening to inform me that he had failed to enter the Navy, being rejected after medical examination but that he had been accepted for the Army having joined the 7th Welsh (Cyclist) Bat.” ELL26/2 Tonyrefail Mixed.

“Mr G Owen left this morning having joined the Public Schools and University Battalion.” EPP23/1/2 Trerobart School.

“Received from Education Secretary this morning the information that Mr A J Chick, a member of our staff, has joined the Army (RAMC). He is released today but will receive his usual pay and superannuation fees. I am instructed to deduct from salary 1/- per day (Army Pay) until further particulars are received.” EPP12/2 Pontshonnorton Boys.

“J H Humphreys has been absent 10 days up to end of May. He ceased to form part of the staff on June 30th. He will join the King’s Royal Rifle Brigade in London leaving home on the 5th inst. ... He called at the school Tuesday the 4th inst to wish the staff and myself goodbye.” EPP12/2 Pontshonnorton Boys.

“Robert Jones, the school caretaker, left his work today to join the Army. He received his calling up notice yesterday. His wife will attempt to do his work during his absence.” EPP20/1/5 Trefforest (Board) Boys.

“Henry R Jenkins CA informed me that he intended joining the Army and he was granted leave of absence tomorrow to enable him to go to Cardiff for that purpose. He failed to pass the medical test on account of a wrenched knee tendon – the result of a fall at football. He was very disappointed and returned to duty this morning.” EPP20/1/5 Trefforest (Board) Boys.

The Derby Schemes for recruitment and formal conscription were introduced from 1916. The schemes led to a further wave of teachers joining the armed forces. As the war progressed those identified initially as medically unfit or as holding reserved

occupations were frequently reassessed and passed fit for active service. Those conscripted had the right of appeal and a number took this option.

“Trefor John Rhys AT has been medically examined and placed in Grade 1. He will report for the Army on Jul 2 and ceases school duties today.” EPP9/3 Hopkinstown/Trehopcyn Boys and Mixed School.

“Mr Davies and Mr Jarman absent in the afternoon appearing before the Military Tribunal.” EPP23/1/2 Trerobart School.

“The services of Mr W J Jane who is an excellent teacher will be lost to the school after today. He has enlisted in the Glamorgan Garrison Artillery.” EPP6/1/6 Graig (Board) Graig-y-wion Boys School.

“Mr T J Williams (CA) left for Army Service this day. He had previous to this, been rejected on account of under- stature.” .” EPP 8/1/3 Hawthorn Mixed School.

“D M Jenkins was called up for re-examination by Military Authorities today and was examined at Cardiff. He was again placed in Category C3. Llewellyn Jones, Student Teacher joined the Army on June 14 on attaining the age of 18. He has been sent to Kimmel Park Camp to the 57th Training Reserve.” EPP20/1/5 Trefforest (Board) Boys.

“E E McCarthy did not arrive this morning until 11am. He had been making arrangements for his appeal for Military Exemption.” EPP13/1 Lan Wood Boys.

“Mr P J Johns and Mr Stanley Davies are absent from school. They have been asked to appear before the Medical Board at Cardiff to be re-examined.” EPP11/4 Park Boys.

Teachers supporting the war effort. Schools and teachers were also expected to “do their bit” on the Home front. This included military training for men, helping with the registration of volunteers and, in the later years of the war, the establishment of a rationing scheme. As confirmed in the school log books the local authority frequently closed schools or extended holiday periods so that teachers could undertake work to support recruitment and rationing.

“Mr Ceiriog Williams left school this morning at 11am in order to do some registration work at the Recruiting Office. He will be absent from his school duties until the registration work is finished. I also left at 11.30am to perform registration work but resumed duties at the afternoon session.” EPP13/1 Lan Wood Boys.

“Half Holiday to enable teachers to distribute National Service Forms in the Pontshonnorton district.” EPP12/2 Pontshonnorton Boys.

“The teachers will be engaged next week in registration work in connection with the national scheme for food rationing. The school will therefore be closed for the week.” EPP1/5 Cilfynydd Primary School, Boys School.

Women and the war. Although seen as a temporary measure, women were increasingly employed in boys' schools to fill the gaps left by recruitment to the armed forces. In addition, given the shortage of teachers across all sectors, dispensation was given for married women to continue to teach for the duration of the war. Many combined teaching with work in local hospitals.

“Miss May Ashton on account of her approaching marriage resigned her position as Certificated Teacher in the department but because her husband will almost immediately leave with His Majesty's Forces for active service she has been reinstated and will continue to teach during the period of the War.” EPP1/4 Cilfynydd Primary School, Girls School.

“Miss Phyllis Lane has been transferred to the Boys School owing to the number of teachers from that department having enlisted for War Service.” EPP11/2 Park Girls.

“All uncertificated female teachers have been granted a War Bonus of 13/- per month.” EPP20/1/5 Trefforest (Board) Boys.

“All members of staff are present with the exception of Beatrice Morgan, Certificated Assistant, who has joined the Women's Royal Auxiliary Army.” EPP8/1/1 Hawthorn Infants School.

Schools and coping with shortages. Although rationing was not introduced until 1918, schools along with the general population experienced shortages of fuel and food. Applications to the local authority for children to be released from school before the age of 14 were commonplace. They were driven by the need not only to provide extra hands but also to release others to take up employment in industry and agriculture.

“Marshall Jones and George Jones two boys nearly 14 years of age were marked “Left” this week by instruction from the Office. The parents of both are in the Army and both boys have been employed for several weeks and still remained on the school registers.” EPP20/1/5 Trefforest (Board) Boys.

“Stationery has advanced 275% on the pre-war tender.... Instructions have been given to all staff to economise as much as possible in the use of exercise books and drawing books and paper.” EPP20/1/5 Trefforest (Board) Boys.

Shortages, particularly following the introduction of rationing, impacted directly on attendance with children kept at home to queue for food. Head Teachers did what they could to provide direct help to those in need and to provide advice to families in finding ways and means of coping with the shortages.

“Enquiries are made every Friday in the three departments for the names of the parents who may have enlisted. This list is forwarded weekly to the Office and the particulars sent to the chief clerk of the Relief Committee.” EPP20/1/5 Trefforest (Board) Boys.

“The staff of the three departments of this school subscribed £3-0-6 towards the “Boot Fund” for providing the children of Soldiers and Sailors requiring boots in the Committee Schools.” EPP23/1/2 Trerobart School.

“The Head Master has been able to assist several mothers in making out their claims for allowances from the War Office.” EPP9/3 Hopkinstown/Trehopcyn Boys and Mixed School.

Keeping up morale. The War led to the production of the first Government sponsored propaganda films. Schools in many local authority areas were encouraged to attend the films made in the early years of the war including “Britain Prepared”. The local authority also expected schools to use the opportunities offered by Empire Day and St David’s Day to provide lessons on “patriotism”. Throughout the war a number of national campaigns were used to promote the Allied cause. Schools often used stories based around figures such as Nurse Edith Cavell and Jack Cornwell to praise the heroism of those who fought against the Germans and their allies.

“The boys have received constant assistance in following the events which have been reported from the front. A war map has been prepared and in the progress of the forces recorded. Lessons in patriotism and the sacrifices which have been made are constantly given and the children are encouraged to look upon the war with courage and without excitement. A Roll of Honour containing the names of old scholars who have joined His Majesty’s Forces has been prepared.” EPP9/3 Hopkinstown/Trehopcyn Boys and Mixed School.

“Empire Day. A special programme will be arranged for this afternoon. ...For the afternoon lesson each teacher will talk to her class of our country and

Empire and endeavour to inculcate love for, pride in and loyalty towards our country.” ELL25/1 Tonyrefail Infants

“This week we have commenced teaching the children the Russian and Belgian National Anthems.” ELL26/2 Tonyrefail Mixed.

“During the week lessons on the War e.g. causes, why we are fighting, countries involved, our fight a just one – will be given to Standards 4, 5 and 6 by their teachers.” EPP6/1/6 Graig (Board) Graig-y-wion Boys School.

“The senior boys returned to the school at 6pm to hear a lecture on the “The British Navy” by a lecturer connected with the Navy League. The lecture was admirably illustrated by means of lantern views and was very much appreciated by the teachers and scholars present.” EPP20/1/5 Trefforest (Board) Boys.

“Before the children are dismissed at 3 o’clock they are to have a suitable lesson on France and the noble part she is taking in the World War, lesson to be given by order of the Committee.” EPP25/1 Cribindu Infants School.

“Empire Day Programme 1. Address on “The British Empire” by the Head Master – special reference being made to the War and glorious response of the “Sons of Empire” in the hour of trial. 2. “The Rally round the Flag” by students. Recitations etc (patriotic) by scholars from each class. 3 Singing of Rudyard Kipling’s Recessional Hymn “Lest we Forget” and National Anthem. 4. Cheers for the King and Queen.” ELL26/2 Tonyrefail Mixed.

“In Standard 1 the last two lessons of the morning session were devoted to a task as suggested by the Board of Education on “The Inadvertent Disclosure of Military Information”. The same will be carried out in other classes during the week.” EPP18/11 Pwllgwaun (Board) Infants.

News from the Front. News from the front was provided primarily by national and local newspapers. The newspapers provided extensive coverage of the military campaigns . This information was supplemented by the frequent visits of former teachers and pupils to their schools when home wounded or on leave.

“Second Lieutenant W S Jones, BEF France, a member of the staff before he joined the Colours visited the school this morning and was received by the scholars with cheers.” EPP23/1/2 Trerobart School.

“Last evening (Wednesday 20th inst) Private Ralph Lilwall, Shropshire Light Infantry, old pupil of this school was presented with a silver cigarette case on

his return from the Front after 12 months fighting by Mr WH Hancock of this school." EPP12/2 Pontshonnorton Boys.

"An old scholar, Owen M Foster, called at the school at 11.30am today. Foster is a Private in the 10th Royal Welsh Fusiliers and was recently awarded the Military Medal for distinguished conduct at the Battle of the Somme. This is the first case of a reward for gallantry to old scholars who are now in the Army and Navy." EPP20/1/5 Trefforest (Board) Boys.

"An old scholar, Joseph Welsh who is in the R G Artillery called today to bid me "goodbye". He leaves from the front. He believes that his lot is to be sent to Serbia. He supplied me with the names of 13 old boys ...who are serving with the forces." EPP6/1/7 Graig (Board) Graig-y-wion Boys School.

"An old scholar Henry Walker ... who left here in July 1904 called this morning. He had been in Canada but during the last 3 years has been in France with the Canadian Field Artillery. He was wounded on Oct 25 1917 and is now on sick leave and stays with his parents who reside in Maritime St. He returns to France next week. He was delighted with his visit here. He is very fine specimen of manhood." EPP 6/1/7 Graig (Board) Graig-y-wion Boys School.

The rapid increase in the size of the armed forces and level of casualties at the Front had an ongoing and significant impact on the lives of many pupils and staff in schools.

"All members of staff were present with the exception of Mrs M A Morgan who is unable to be present through family bereavement. Her son has been lost at sea through torpedoing of the vessel on which he was an engineer." EPP1/1 Cilfynydd Infants School.

"Miss MB Williams heard of the sad death of her brother on the battle field and hence did not attend school." ELL19/11 Llantwit Fardre Infants.

"Mrs Pilkington and her sister Miss Annie Ashton are absent this morning. The former, whose husband is in Flanders with the London Rifle Brigade, has heard this morning that he is "missing since the beginning of May". EPP1/4 Cilfynydd Primary School, Girls School.

"Miss Howell (CA) is absent this week on account of the death of her brother through an accident in an aeroplane." EPP8/1/3 Hawthorn Mixed School.

"Another member of staff H Iestyn Llewellyn has been reported missing in France. He has not been heard of since Oct 6th. Mr Llewellyn was a most

popular and successful teacher and further news is awaited with great anxiety.” EPP9/3 Hopkinstown/Trehopcyn Boys and Mixed School.

“Ivor Green is a prisoner of war in Germany. His brother David Green was killed last year.” EPP6/1/7 Graig (Board) Graig-y-wion Boys School.

War Heroes. The extent to which the names of servicemen awarded medals and/or died in the war were recorded in log books was variable. Nevertheless, the log books contain a considerable list of local soldiers and sailors and many schools maintained a Roll of Honour listing former pupils and teachers killed in the war.

“A Roll of Honour consisting of 32 names of fathers and 56 brothers who attended this school was placed in a prominent part of the hall together with a laurel wreath in honour of Corporal Herbert Fishlock who was killed in action on November the 9th.” EPP11/4 Park Boys.

“It is with much regret that I have to chronicle the death of Lieutenant D T Tanner somewhere in France. The War Office telegram states that he was killed on Aug 31....He joined the Army in response to an appeal from his University on October 12 1914 and he had by diligence and perseverance worked his way upwards filling very position from Private to 1st Lieutenant and acting Captain.” EPP1/5 Cilfynydd Primary School, Boys School.

“Some little time back I had the great honour of exhibiting to the scholars the Distinguished Conduct Medal posthumously awarded to one of our old scholars, John Roberts, who made the supreme sacrifice in Mesopotamia in 1917. Another old boy , Leonard Lewis, has been posthumously awarded the Military Medal. He gave up his young life at Bourlon Wood, France in Nov 1917.” EPP6/1/7 Graig (Board) Graig-y-wion Boys School.

“School was closed at 4 o’clock today. At the close an unveiling took place when a photo of the late Mr T J Williams, a member of our staff was placed in the school. Mr Williams joined the forces on Jun 15 1917 and was reported killed in action in the beginning of Apr 1918.” EPP8/1/3 Hawthorn Mixed School.

The End of the War. Confirmation of the signing of the Armistice was received in most schools on Nov 11th 1918. It resulted in celebrations and many schools were closed for the rest of the week to mark the occasion. By the early months of 1919 many teachers were being discharged from the armed forces and returning to school life. In 1919 there were national celebrations to mark the signing of the Treaty of Versailles and to commemorate the signing of the Armistice.

“Mr Robert Thomas Morgan resumed his school duties today after an absence of three years and two months serving in the British Army.” EPP11/4 Park Boys.

“Mr Davies who has been active service resumes his duties here this morning.” EPP23/1/2 Trerobart School.