

Hallaton

The Story of the Village: The Pre-War Years

The Hallaton of 1913 was a village of around 550 people split almost equally between men and women. It was like much of England at that time, a deeply divided society. There was a chasm between the working-class labourer and the gentrified land owners. Whilst there was an ever growing and aspirational middle class the rigid structure of society still remained solid and constant, even in a small rural community like Hallaton where everyone pretty much knew everyone else. If the differences in class remained wide the differences between the sexes was just as commanding. If the opportunities for the working-class man were limited, those for women were even more restrictive.

In the first years of the new century the country was starting to change, and as we shall see Hallaton was changing with it. Despite its fairly isolated rural setting Hallaton was in no way a backwater, cut off from the rest the country and indeed the rest of the world. It was, though, a traditional society. One where the villagers were God-fearing, where the church and chapel played significant roles in the spiritual and physical well-being of the people and set the tone for much of the social side of village life. Hallaton was also not a village unused to war. Around 20 local men had gone off to fight in the Boer War and two had not returned. This was dwarfed by the losses to come in the Great War, yet the people of the day were more used to death than we are today. It wasn't hidden from them and many people died young. In some ways they were prepared for what was to come. Brought up on the notion of King, country and empire, and watched over by an approving God, was firmly reinforced throughout schooling and beyond the classroom. The following pages will examine how Hallaton was run and who ran it. They will assess how Hallatonians lived and died, how they worked, how they played and where possible what they thought and believed. They will be placed in the physical environment in which they lived, examining the

houses they lived in, the land they worked and the roads and paths they walked on. Throughout the war years we will see both how local and national and international events wove themselves into the fabric of Hallaton society, examine how people lived in the darkest of times and discover, once the country and Hallaton had emerged on the other side of the dark tunnel of war, whether the war had changed the village forever.

A village is nothing without its buildings and infrastructures and we will start our exploration of Hallaton with them.

Infrastructure and Buildings

In this section we will look at the roads and go underground to discuss the water supply and drains and sewers which Hallatonians used in the run-up to the first world war. We will also look at the buildings in the village, assess their condition and ownership and look at how this affected the lives of the locals.

It is apparent to the most casual observer that the road system of Hallaton is like the spokes of a wheel, spreading out in all directions. The implication is that these highways were created by the inhabitants of the town travelling out to other towns and villages. However, the reality is probably the very reverse. In the Iron-Age, Roman and early Anglo-Saxon times Hallaton was an important centre of pagan worship, with trackways leading into it. In Anglo-Saxon times the great three field system was established, and this can still partly be seen in the extensive ridge and furrow in many of the fields surrounding Hallaton. The open field system respected the existing main roads into the town, which flourished, and which the Normans thought important enough to build a Motte and Bailey castle here. In 1284 King Edward I granted a weekly market and two important three-day fairs; with another one granted in 1304. The town of

Hallaton was the major market town for south-east Leicestershire and the Welland Valley.

The very names of the roads in Hallaton tell the story of its past glory with the Market Cross (now shortened to The Cross); Horn Lane for the sale of cattle; Hog Lane for the sale of sheep and pigs; the Shambles for the butchery of the animals; Horse Fair (now called North End) for the important horse fairs that took place next to Hacluit's Pond; Tenters Jitty, leading to the tenterhook field serving the weaving and skinning trade in the town. In 1384 there were at least nine Ale Houses in the town and still six in 1753

The very large parish church, with the flow of pilgrims into the town in the 13th to 16th centuries all attest to its past importance as a centre, served by a network of roads, converging on the central hub of Hallaton town. The layout of the houses tells the same story, not scattered randomly as in many villages, but each house abutting its neighbour and fronting directly onto the street, with often a toft of land behind and business conducted in the room fronting the street. A self-sufficient town with all the trades necessary for serving the community and the surrounding areas.

The main highways leading to Hallaton have probably been in existence for some 2000 years with only minor additions as the town grew or trade necessitated. For example, Tupwell Lane (now Tugwell Lane) was created in 1771 by the Enclosure Award to serve as a private road for the benefit of Glebe Farm; before the 1950s there was no road in front of the Bewicke Arms, only a footpath and

narrow jitty, with all carriage traffic having to pass up the High Street.

The roads in Hallaton were maintainable by Hallaton Rural District Council, including the scraping and cleaning of them, but the pavements, paths and street lights were the responsibility of Hallaton Parish Council. The street lamps were run on oil and the Parish Council stipulated that Tea Rose or Bear Creek oil must be used. Gordon Hawke was the lamplighter and the lamps were to be lit from 17th September to 17th April in 1913, except for the three nights before and one night after a full moon. The streets were made of rolled gravel with slate or granite kerbs and cobbled gutters, and the pavements were slabbed and cobbled. Up until the 1950s the roads into Hallaton on the north side were all gated; this includes the Goadby Road, the East Norton road at Moor Hill, the Allextion Road and the road to Horninghold. The only open roads were those from Cranoe and Medbourne.

The maintenance of the roads was a costly business, and each year the Hallaton Rural District Council would ask for tenders from local stone companies to provide the granite with which the roads could be maintained. The tender for the immediate Hallaton area was usually won by the Mountsorrel Granite Company, and they delivered four different grades of granite to Hallaton Station, where it was kept and from where it was collected by the road rolling company. There was constant discussion in the Council's meetings about asphaltting the road from Medbourne to Ashley Station but the decision to do so was always deferred. In 1913 the surveyor



Hallaton High Street being steam rolled circa 1905. © F. C. Hawke.

The man with his foot on the roller was John Gray, the district surveyor. Driving the roller was Robert Vials of Arthingworth and the man leaning on the spade was W. Green of Stoke Albany. Of the children, the middle one was Arthur Lount, and in the doorway Mrs Lount.

to the Hallaton Rural District Council reported that the stretch of road required tar painting. There was a long discussion resulting in the decision not to proceed with the work, the main reason being that those who opposed it felt that tar painting was dangerous for horse traffic on the road. The years of cars dominating the roads had not yet arrived! Some of the cost of maintaining the roads was met by the better off local people, who paid a sort of road tax.

Road accidents were not uncommon; usually they involved cyclists, with the steep hill and sharp bend opposite the rectory being considered especially dangerous. The *Market Harborough Advertiser* of Tuesday 23rd September reported on an accident the previous Friday:

“Mrs Osborn, wife of Thomas Osborn, the stud groom at the Manor House met with a bad cycle accident on Friday afternoon. She was coming down the hill just outside Hallaton on the road to Medbourne when she apparently lost control of her bicycle and dashed into the bridge at the bottom. She was very severely injured and was picked up in an unconscious condition and conveyed to her home.”

The non-asphalted roads of the time saw fine dust kicked up in dry weather but when they were wet they often turned muddy and slippery. As well as being difficult for cyclists, those fortunate to own a car also sometimes struggled, as the narrow tyres of the time gave them little grip in muddy conditions.

If the roads around Hallaton were largely of a primitive nature, the buildings of the village ranged from simple farm buildings and out-houses to the grand Hall and Manor House. In a time where ownership of land and property was the preserve



A typical rural road close to Hallaton and Horninghold circa 1910.

of the few it is worth spending some time looking at Hallaton’s houses and buildings — who owned them, who lived in them and what they were like. Though, as we shall see, there have been many changes over the last 100 years, the village still contains a nucleus of buildings that would at least appear familiar to those Hallatonians of 1914.

Though Hallaton, unlike other villages of the time, was not dominated by one huge stately home and estate, it did have its grander buildings. The two finest were Hallaton Hall and the Manor House. By 1913 Hallaton Hall had seen several different owners and was then owned by Herbert Fletcher and his family.

The Hall had been occupied by the Bewicke family for many years. The *Leicester Journal* newspaper of 13th August 1848 carried an advert for the letting of the hall. It gives the following glimpse into the quality of what was on offer.



*Hallaton Hall.
© F. C. Hawke.*

“A very desirable and commodious mansion house called Hallaton Hall. Comprising entrance hall, billiard room, dining, drawing and breakfast rooms, exclusive servants rooms, capital cellarage, kitchen, butler’s pantry, housekeeper’s room etc... Stabling for 18 horses, double and single coach houses — whole including paddock in front is 9 acres Gardens and grapery in 1st rate order and very productive.”

In 1897 it was sold by the Bewicke family to the Leicester banker, Samuel Nevins Bankart. He purchased it for around £9,200 and then is reported to have spent a further £20,000 on extensions and improvements in the following years. A quite staggering sum if correct. He certainly spent a lot of money in the garden, where he installed new greenhouses, an orangery and a chrysanthemum house. All of which were heated by boilers, which he had delivered to Hallaton Station. Much of the work was overseen by his head gardener at the time, Evan Huggard. He also acquired land on the other side of North End, where he built a water tower (see below) and developed a cottage garden and built the circular riding school. It is possible Bankart ran into financial trouble; the papers relating to his time at the hall certainly show much mortgaging and re-mortgaging of the property, and in 1910 Bankart sold Hallaton Hall to his brother-in-law, Herbert Fletcher.

The 1910 Finance Act was devised for levying rates through the assessment of land value. Under the provisions of Part I of the Act, a full and detailed survey of landownership in the United Kingdom was undertaken. This became known as the Lloyd George ‘Domesday’ Survey. To implement Lloyd George’s new duties a sophisticated valuation was necessary. To carry out this work the country was split into regions. Property and landowners were asked to return questionnaires, and subsequent valuation office surveys were carried out by assessors. The information which they gathered between the years 1910 and 1915 was written down in field note books, which survive. They give a wealth of outline information on ownership, usage and condition of buildings and those for Hallaton are especially useful.

On 9th May 1913 the inspector visited Hallaton Hall. His outline report reveals a house of a scale far greater than every other building in the village.

On the ground floor there was an entrance porch with a mosaic floor, which opened into a large entrance hall/lounge with a recessed centre and projecting wing on either side. This had wooden panelling in Jacobean style with an elaborate screen

and fireplace, and Art Nouveau patterned stained glass in the windows.

A large oak panelled dining room had two fireplaces, an ornate plaster ceiling and a deep bay, the entrance to which was supported on wooden recessed columns and pilasters. An Adam style drawing room led to a billiard room through an archway supported by four fluted Ionic columns. The drawing room was decorated in the Adam style with a lofty ceiling, handsome carved wooden mantle pieces and over mantel supported by Corinthian columns inlaid with silvered glass panels.

The survey noted a study with fine window. In 1903 a single storey music room with a stone square bay window facing the garden had been added. It had a 16-foot-high ceiling and the window frames had been removed from the old Houses of Parliament. To the left of the music room was an elaborate conservatory with glazed front and gabled roof, and gabled central entrance with double glazed doors.

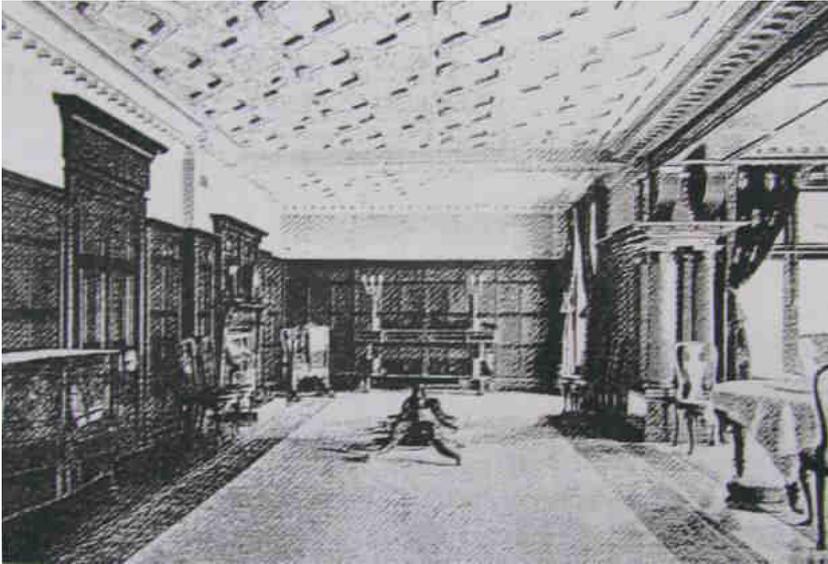
A very fine oak staircase and staircase hall had been remodelled early in the twentieth century. The staircase hall was lit by an oval skylight with elaborate patterned and coloured glazing. The first floor consisted of 15 principal and secondary bed and dressing rooms. One bedroom was panelled in oak from floor to ceiling. A second had a handsome mahogany inlaid mantel and over mantel containing an eight day striking timepiece and three silvered glass panels. There were three bathrooms, all with hot and cold water. As well as baths two had a shampoo douche and one a hot towel rail.

On the second floor were seven maid-servants’ bedrooms, sleeping up to 12 people. Six of them contained fireplaces. Male servants had four bedrooms on the first floor, two with fireplaces.

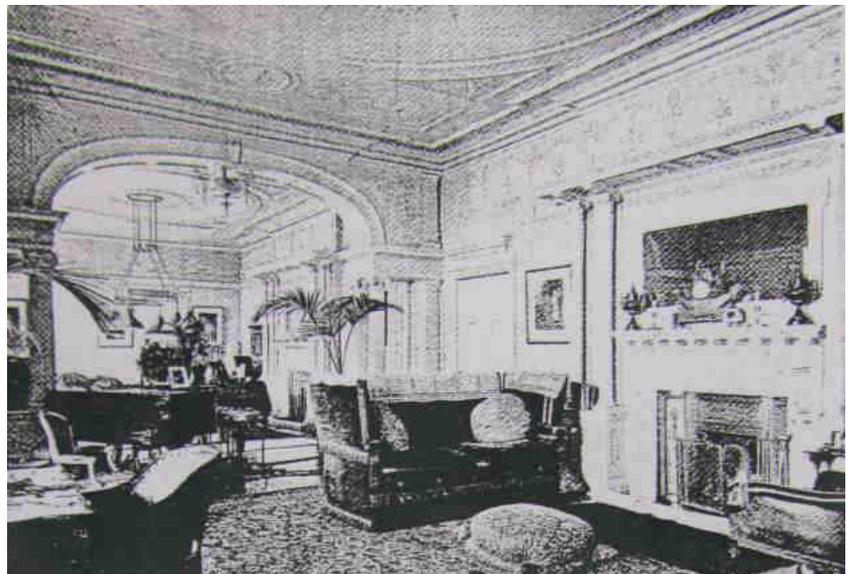
The domestic offices comprised a kitchen with an Eagle range. There was also a serving room, a servants’ hall, a housekeeper’s room, safe room, scullery, large dairy, box room, boot room, brushing room and a servants’ lavatory and WC.

The house was lit by electricity generated by a 16HP Hornsby oil engine with dynamo and 55 storage batteries. It was carried to the whole of the house, the stables and outbuildings and to three cottages on North End.

Outside were several large conservatories and greenhouses, new brick and slate stables, ten horse boxes with lofts over them and an older brick and slate stable for six horses. There was a carpenter’s shop and various corrugated iron buildings, including a circular riding school made from wood and with a corrugated roof. The latter still survives today



Left: Hallaton Hall dining room. Image from 1921 sale particulars.



Right: Hallaton Hall drawing room with billiard room in background. Image from 1921 sale particulars.



The circular horse training school as it is today.

and as such is without doubt the most important agricultural building from the period in the village.

Perhaps most impressive of all the outbuildings was the water tower with a brick and slate engine room with a dynamo and pump. The Hall not only had its own electric supply but also its own water supply (see below). As such this was a very special house with facilities that most Hallatonians could only dream of.

The second substantial house in Hallaton was the Manor House. This was in the possession of the Price-Dent family by 1913. It had its entrance with three bays and central four storey tower overhead. On the ground floor were an entrance hall, an inner hall, drawing room with bay window, dining room with bay window, library, smoke room, work room, store room and WC. For the servants there was a butler's pantry, servants' hall, kitchen, scullery, larder and strong room. The house had a half-landing, on which there was a bedroom and WC. The first floor had four further bedrooms, two dressing rooms and a WC plus a maid's pantry and box room and what were described as three back bedrooms, a bathroom and linen cupboard. There were also four attic bedrooms and substantial outbuildings, including a brewhouse, hen house, greenhouse, vinery and a coach house, as well as substantial gardens with fine views.

Two other houses worthy of note were the Rectory and the Grange, both also still stand today. The Rectory, a stone house with slate roof and described as in fair condition, was owned and occupied by the Reverend Preece. The ground floor had large dining and drawing rooms, a sitting hall, small study and conservatory and a good-sized kitchen.

The survey noted a bathroom but without running water. The first floor had four bedrooms, and there were a further two attic rooms. Outside buildings included a brick and slate stable and coach house, and a wood and corrugated iron village room with wooden floor. This is, of course, the building which became the Tin Tab, and is now the museum. The Rectory had a large attractive garden with flower borders, lawns and fruit trees.

So far, the houses we have looked at were owned by those who lived in them. This was far from the norm and most properties were rented. This was the case for the Grange. It was occupied by Miss Taylor but owned by the Price-Dents. Despite looking alright from the outside the building was noted as being in poor repair. The house was a mixture of brick and stone, some of it plastered and with a slate roof. The ground floor contained an entrance hall, morning room, dining room, drawing room, kitchen, scullery and pantry. The first floor had five bedrooms, work room, lavatory and linen cupboard. Three attic bedrooms were all in a poor state. There was also a cellar. Outside were a plethora of buildings, including a brick and slate laundry and wash house, a five-stall stable with loft over, which was then used for storing wood and coal. All these were in poor condition. Other buildings included brick and slate horse boxes, a two-bay open cart shed, a double coach house and harness room. The grounds were good with a very old selection of fruit trees. For this Miss Taylor paid the not inconsiderable yearly rent of £60. She also had to pay the yearly land tax of £1-11s-0d and a sum of 19s-6d to the Hallaton Rural District Council. She held the property on a yearly renewable lease.



Hallaton Manor House.
© F. C. Hawke.



*A view down Eastgate.
© F. C. Hawke.*

This photograph, a less common view of Eastgate, is perhaps more typical of the mix of housing found in the village. The house at the far end was occupied by Luck Colston and was part of the farm he rented. His land was outside the village off the road to Goadby. The house, which he rented at £18 per year, was brick built with a slate roof and in fair condition. The windows had brick arches with plaster sills. There was a brick and concrete porch. The ground floor had two rooms, a kitchen, scullery and larder, whilst upstairs were four bedrooms and a box room. Outside was a small garden and a collection of cowsheds and stables, all in poor condition.

The large three-storey house half-way down on the right was rented by the McTurk family and was part of a very large farm he rented with fields in Hallaton, Slawston and Blaston, amounting to several hundred acres. The stone farmhouse was in fair condition with three reception rooms, a kitchen, scullery and larder on the ground floor, five bedrooms on the first floor, and three further large rooms on the third floor.

The thatched house immediately on the right of the picture and the one next to it were in a group of four houses owned by Miss Baines, who bought them on 6th October 1891 for £160. All of them were in poor condition by 1913 and not well maintained. The far house was a brick house with a slate roof, and a ground floor that consisted of just one room and a kitchen, whilst upstairs were two bedrooms. Outside there was a small common yard shared between the four houses. This one had

its own tiny garden, which perhaps accounts for its higher rent of £5-12s-0d per year. It was let on a monthly tenancy to Albert Driver.

The thatched house was either let to William Jarvis or Charles Marlow. Their two houses have a very similar description. Both were old stone houses with thatched roofs, which by the time of the survey in 1913 were covered with corrugated iron. Each had three rooms downstairs and three bedrooms upstairs and use of the common yard. Marlow rented his house for £4 per year on a monthly lease, whilst Jarvis paid £5-2s-0d per year rent but enjoyed a quarterly agreement.

It is these sorts of houses which typify the properties that the poorer members of Hallaton had to live in at the time.

Whilst many of the houses were owned by the wealthier families in the village and rented out, some of the housing for the poorest and needier of Hallaton was owned and maintained by the Hallaton Charity. These were located on Hog Lane. Some survive today and face the allotments, which were there in 1913. In this small area, plus that now mainly occupied by the children's play area with the rocking horse, were 16 charity cottages. It is fair to say that they were in poor condition and judging by the comments in the charity minute books in need of constant repair. Sadly, we have no contemporary images of them, but the notes made in the valuation survey give some indication of how grim it was to live in them. Those occupying them were often the elderly and among the most vulnerable in the village. The houses were not all identical. One described as



*The Buttercross with Bewicke Arms on right of picture.
© F. C. Hawke.*

an old mud and thatch house in poor condition had one ground floor room, one bedroom and a small garden. There were half a dozen houses of brick construction with slate roofs. The ground floor contained one room and a scullery whilst upstairs were two bedrooms and outside a small garden. Those qualifying for financial help from the charity could rent the houses for 6d per week.

In 1912 their minutes reported the following illustration of just how bad the condition of some of these houses was at the time.

“The question of a vacant cottage being the end of the thatched row, lately in the occupation of Mrs Marlow, was mentioned, and it was pointed out that unless it was attended to, it might fall down.”

The meeting agreed to at least make sufficient repairs to make the house watertight. The charity usually spent some money plastering and whitewashing houses and generally tidying them up at the changeover of tenants. In the meeting in October 1913 the following was reported:

“The cottage off the lane was in a dangerous state and the Reverend Preece reported that it had been arranged for the building to be pulled down.”

Though the charity undoubtedly did its best it was frankly up against it due to the age and condition of the houses, most of which probably needed rebuilding from scratch.

This classic picture (above) shows two interesting properties, one still there and the other not. The house immediately opposite the Bewicke Arms is the one no longer present. In 1913 it was occupied by the Buxton family, who rented it on a quarterly tenancy from a Mr Crane at the cost of £8 per year. It was a brick and plaster building with two rooms and a scullery on the ground floor and three bedrooms upstairs. Outside was an old brick and slate coal place and wash house with a loft over. The Buxtons, as well as their rent, had to contribute a 1s-8d drainage fee to the local rural council. The interesting thing to note in this photograph is the roof. This was originally a thatched roof, but has been covered over with corrugated iron.

On the left of this house as we look at the photograph is the house of Dr Morrison. He had moved there around 1912 from Eastgate. The house was one of those owned by Mrs Effie Bewicke. Described as being in fair condition it consisted of three rooms and a kitchen on the ground floor and three bedrooms on the first. Outside there was a reasonably sized garden and an old brick and slate stable. There was also a new addition done by Dr Morrison himself. This consisted of a board and felt roofed surgery and a wood and corrugated iron waiting room. This was noted as being the property of the tenant (i.e. Morrison), rather than the owner. Dr Morrison paid the rent of £12-10s-0d and had a yearly agreement. He also had to pay £5 per annum towards the upkeep of the roads.



View down High Street towards the Buttercross, circa 1905.

© F. C. Hawke.

The above evocative view down High Street is especially interesting. Not only for the houses, but also because you get a good view of the street lighting that the village used at the time, with one light on the right on the corner with Hog Lane and another in the distance. The two houses on the immediate left of the picture were both owned by the Hallaton Oddfellows. The first, a brick and slate building described as being in fair condition, was rented by J. S. Cotton for £10 a year. It had four bedrooms on the first floor and two rooms and a pantry downstairs. Outside was an interesting mix of old buildings, including a brick butcher's shop with a room over, a brick and slate slaughterhouse, by then being used as a stable for two horses, and a further stable. The house shared a yard with next door, which was occupied by Edwin Hawke. Smaller than his neighbour's house, he paid £5-10-0s per year in rent, for which he got two upstairs rooms and two rooms and a scullery downstairs.

Next down on the left was occupied by Charles Ward and his family. The survey described the property as a very old stone, plaster and thatched house in poor condition. It had three bedrooms upstairs and three rooms downstairs. Outside was a small yard and a brick and slate stable, also in poor condition.

Next to them was one of the best houses in the village. Owned at the time by a Miss MacDonald it was let to John Redfearn Laundon on a seven-year lease for £26 per year. Of brick and slate construction, it had stone arches, sills and mullions and was described as being in good condition. As well as two attic rooms, the first floor had

four bedrooms and the ground floor a further six rooms. Outside was a good range of brick and slate buildings, including a stable and two coach houses, as well as a good sized garden.

Opposite the Laundon's by the horse and trap was the village post office and the homes of Fred and G. W. Hawke. Both houses had been bought by Fred Hawke for £350 on 23rd January 1908. Between them they had six first floor rooms and seven ground floor rooms, including the post office, a printer room and a bootmaker's shop. As well as a small garden outside were all the accoutrements of Fred Hawke's businesses, a glass printing shop, presumably for his photographic business, another printing shop and a wood and corrugated iron motor shop.

Of the stone thatched cottages, on the near right of the picture, the first on the right was occupied by W. Grocock and had a living room, kitchen and pantry on the ground floor and two bedrooms upstairs. Outside was a garden and his wood workshop. He paid £7-10-0d per year for the lease. Next to him lived Eli Lount and his family. Their house had two bedrooms upstairs whilst the ground floor was described as having an entry passage, living room, pantry and a small lean-to scullery. Outside they enjoyed a small garden, all for the rent of £4-10s-0d per year held on a quarterly tenancy.

This final view at the top end of High Street bears a close resemblance to the view today. On the left of the picture are a group of five terraced houses. It is not possible to say who lived in which one, but among the residents were Joseph Simkin, Samuel Kilbourne, Edwin Belton Marlow and Charles



*Top end of High Street.
© F. C. Hawke.*

Henry Grocock and his family. All were owned by W. W. Tailby and described as being in fair condition. They were all rented for £6 per annum on a yearly lease and as all were similar the surveyor only described one. Built in 1873 they were brick with slate roofs. The windows had stone arches and brick sills. The first floor had three bedrooms and on the ground floor were two rooms. All five houses shared a common passage, and outside there were three WCS for all the houses to share and each had a small garden.

Further up on the left is one of the larger properties in the village. Again, owned by W. W. Tailby it was rented out to Fred Pick on a yearly tenancy of £38 per annum. It was an old brick-built house with a slate roof. The window sills were plastered, and you approached the building up four steps from ground level. The ground floor had two rooms, a kitchen and a small hall. The first floor had three bedrooms whilst there were a further two bedrooms on the attic floor. The house also had a very large cellar. Outside was a brick and corrugated iron washhouse and coach house, both in fair condition, a stone and slate roofed stable for three horses with a loft, described as being in poor condition, and a further wood and corrugated iron shed. At the back were a small paddock and field.

On the right of the picture are a group of four terraced houses. They varied slightly in size and were all rented on a quarterly tenancy for sums ranging from £3-10s-0d per year for the smallest house, which had just two bedrooms and one downstairs room, up to £10 per annum for the largest. This one was occupied by the village policeman, George Mayes, and his family. This was an old brick house with a slate roof. The property had no window sills.

Described as being in fair condition it had two rooms and an old washroom on the ground floor and 3 bedrooms upstairs. The survey suggests that part of the property at the back was stone built. It shared a common passage that led to the back of the house, where there was a small garden. W. Buxton lived in one of the other similar houses and he enjoyed the use of three first floor bedrooms, whilst on the ground floor he had two rooms and a scullery. In addition, outside was a brick and slate roofed wash house and a small yard. The other property was similar but had no yard.

Finally, further along on the right of the picture, it is possible to spot the overhang of a thatched roof. Here were two further cottages both described as being in poor condition and both owned by Samuel Nevins Bankart. Both were plastered, with thatched roofs. One, occupied by William Lount, was rented on a mere weekly tenancy for £4-6s-8d per year. For his money he got a house with two rooms on the ground floor and two first floor bedrooms. Outside was a small garden and a common yard shared with the other house, which was occupied by the Tinklers. In similar condition this had three bedrooms on the first floor and two downstairs rooms. Their rent was £5-4s-0d per annum, or for shorter terms lets, 2 shillings per week. As Hallaton approached 1914 there is no doubt that the quality of housing was mixed, some very poor indeed. In 1913 the Leicestershire County Council health officer's report looked at the state of housing in the Hallaton district. His conclusion was that:

“A few modern workman's cottages should be built in place of some of the oldest properties at Hallaton, Medbourne and Great Easton.”

It is harder to give much detail about the insides. With the exception of the grander buildings the houses would have been simple inside and lit by oil lamps, maybe just one for the main living quarters in poorer households and supplemented by candles, and would have been much darker than our houses are today. In the winter they were almost certainly damp and probably troubled by vermin. They could not be described as especially healthy places to live. Some houses would have had ranges in either one of the downstairs rooms or in a kitchen if they were fortunate to have one. They certainly did have one at Fearn Farm, an isolated building off the Allextion Road on the fringes of the parish boundary. This was owned by the Hallaton Charity and leased out to a tenant farmer. In October 1910 the tenant, a Mr Fox, had complained to the charity asking that the boiler for the kitchen range be replaced. It was, at the cost of £7-5s-4d. Many houses were overcrowded with large families living in just a few rooms, a bedroom for single occupancy would have been a rarity outside the biggest properties. As well as family members many houses had lodgers adding to the overcrowding. Again, in October 1910, Mr Fox wrote to the charity to see if they would enlarge the dining room at Fearn Farm by adding a bay window as it was very cramped, not only for his family, but also for the two men who worked there and took their meals with the family.

A childhood memory of Jack Stamp's helps to confirm the rather less than luxurious interiors of some Hallaton homes. Recalling his family's move to a house on Hunts Lane in 1919 he recalled:

"It was accommodation of some questionable quality. In fact, the place could well be described as squalid. What a wretched house it was. The bedrooms were so small and ceilings so low that we almost had to creep to bed. Floors were hard concrete, and the bedrooms were little more than lofts. This new home was a really miserable habitation... Winter brought other problems. The bitterly cold nights and the shortage of bed clothes made life difficult. Although mother, dear soul, always set us off to a good start with a quick chase around the bed with her warming pan, the heat never did prevail for long... Everything about our home in Hunts Lane was something which had to be endured. Extremely funny thing about the geographical aspect of the scene was the fact that our house faced an area occupied by houses with similar characteristics called Mount Pleasant. What a misnomer. It was certainly a mount, but it fell far short of being pleasant. Overcrowded as it was and suffering the same problems." (Jack Stamp, *Step by Step*, pp. 10–11. Wellandside (photographics) Ltd, 1971).

The photograph below is likely to be the house of Charles and Elizabeth Hawke on High Street, as the woman is known to be Elizabeth Hawke. The photograph was taken in 1897, but it is unlikely that much would have changed by the outbreak of the First World War.

In the background you can clearly make out the range, which would have been heated by coal. This was a time when coal was king. Open fires would



Inside the Hawkes' house on High Street.
© F. C. Hawke.

have been in all homes and the charity records report not only replacing the grates in the best bedrooms of Fearn Farm, but also replacing grates in some of the charity houses. Coal was an essential of life. Coal trains steamed along our local railway, carrying the fuel from Nottinghamshire mines to various parts of the Midlands, including supplies to Hallaton, that were stocked in the extensive goods yard. There were then several local firms trading in coal, which was collected from the rail yard by the local carters and delivered weekly to households. Every house had some form of coal store, but most people had little money and tended to hold minimum stocks.

Almost all domestic heating was provided by coal fires. The morning ritual of clearing out the ashes from the grates and lighting the fires usually fell to the women or children of the household, or to a servant if you were well enough off to afford one. Kindling was a constant need, for which many housewives had become expert in folding and twisting old newspapers as an early form of fire-lighter. Almost everyone 'going for a walk' would take along a bag to 'do a bit of sticking' on the way.

Many households cooked their food over an open fire or in fireside ovens. Grates incorporating a boiler, a fire-grate and an oven were installed in most homes and continued to be common for several decades after the war. For larger dishes

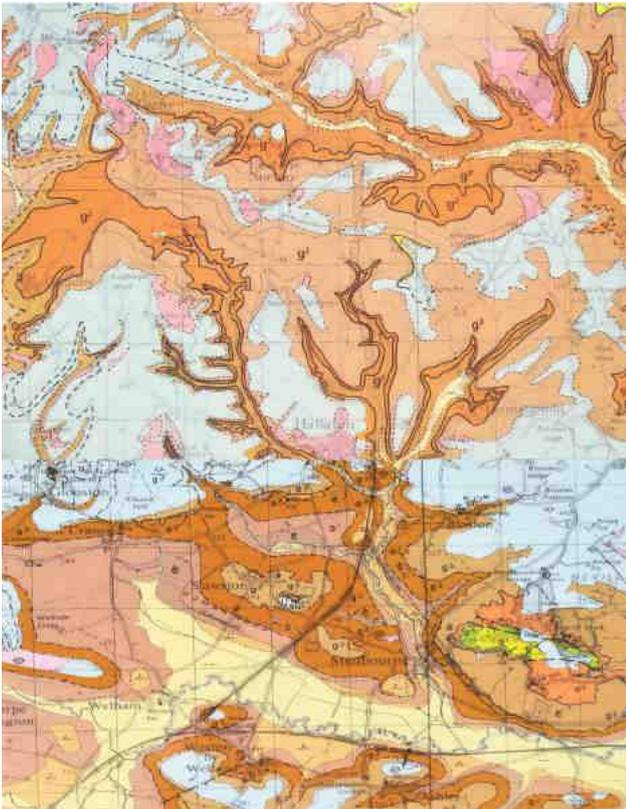
people would take their food to the local bakers, who would put it in their large oven for a small fee.

The picture also clearly shows what is thought to be a very young Jesse Hawke being bathed. Houses did not have running water, including (as we have seen) some of those with bathrooms. It is worth spending some time looking at both the water supply and the drainage system that existed in Hallaton at the time.

Hallaton is fortunate, lying as it does, on a bed of sand and gravel, which is sandwiched between a top layer of boulder clay and a lower layer of Upper Lias clay. Water is trapped between these layers and escapes though the gravel middle layer in the form of springs, of which Hallaton has many. It also means that in the township of Hallaton it is possible to predict the depth at which one would hit the water table, depending on how far up the slope of the town the well is dug. The plentiful supply of water would have been one of the reasons for siting the original settlement on this south-facing slope.

In past centuries springs were often referred to as wells, for example, Stowe Welle, mentioned in a deed in 1318; this was later to be renamed St Morrell's Well, to serve the pilgrims flocking to St Morrell's chapel.

The depth of the deep wells varies considerably. The well dug in front of 8 Churchgate and at The Grange are about four metres deep. The Old Rectory, the Bewicke Arms and the Old Railway Station are all about five metres. Higher up at the Old Glebe Farmhouse on Tugwell Lane, and the Old Bakehouse on Eastgate, the depth is 10.5 metres, with the public pump in the High Street 11.5 metres. However, only 50 metres further up the road, in the upper section of High Street and near the Fox Inn, the depth of the wells drops to around four metres.



Left: Geological map for Hallaton.

Above: Mediaeval stone well in the Old Rectory orchard.



The conduit near the Market Cross.

Hallaton was an important market town in mediaeval times and the need for a plentiful supply of water would have been paramount. As a result, each of the main streets of Hallaton has a public well, one at the Market Cross, in Churchgate, Tugwell Lane, High Street, Eastgate and North End, but only two now have a visible standpipe pump. The centre of the town is the old Market Place, now called The Cross, with the conical Buttercross in the centre. A public water supply here was vital and in addition to the well opposite Tenters Jitty, this area was served by an ancient conduit. This is the small, almost square stone building, with a pitched stone tiled roof, on the topside of the market place,

and looking rather like a village lock-up. This conduit was fed by spring water higher up High Street, carried by lead pipes down to the lead lined tank inside the conduit. In Victorian times a tap was fixed to the outside. Records exist for over 250 years for repairing the conduit.

The townsmen were responsible for maintaining these public water supplies in late mediaeval times and this later devolved to the Parish Council. There are well over 50 deep wells, some very ancient, in the township and these provide clear, but fairly hard, drinking water. There are also many Victorian brick water chambers which collect soft water from house gutters, and this is excellent for washing clothes. The water is usually drawn up with a hand pump fixed in the outside wash-house for ease of use.

Albert Simkin remembered that as a boy, one of his tasks every Sunday after church service was to fill up two buckets of water at the pump opposite the church gates, hook them onto the chain hanging from each side of the wooden yoke on his shoulders, and carry them back home.

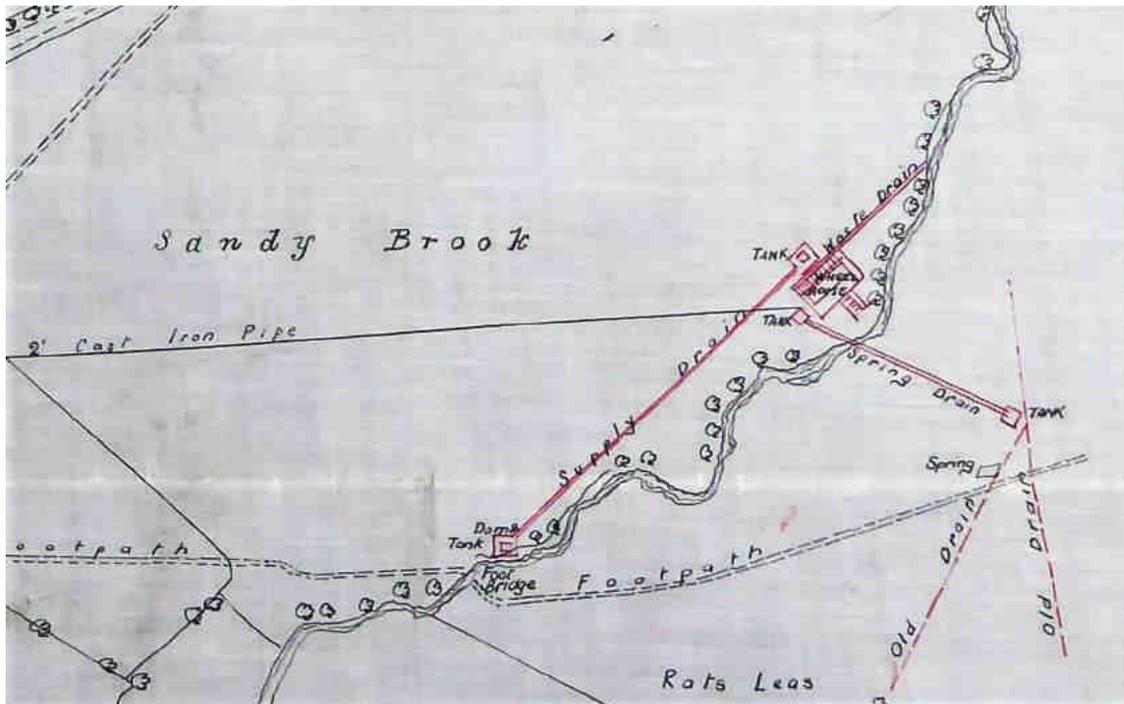
With six public wells and pumps in the streets of Hallaton, the Parish Council were kept busy keeping them in good working order. The most common repair was the replacement of the wooden and leather clack valve, that stops the water draining away when water is pumped up to the surface. With about 50 privately owned wells in Hallaton in



Left: A popular meeting place, the High Street pump near corner of Hog Lane. © F. C. Hawke.

Below: Clack valve and stirrup found abandoned in Hacluits Pond.





Plan of water supply, pumping house and pipework.

1914, the village plumbers Hawke and Sons, in the High Street, were kept busy and their account books are littered with records of repairs to faulty pumps.

All the clack valves and interior fittings would have been of this type, with the exception of the deep well in the High Street, where the Parish Council had it and the pump replaced in August 1913 with a cast iron pump and metal valve, which still exist to this day.

In late Victorian times, through the Great War and during the first half of the 20th century,

Hallaton Hall enjoyed its own special water supply system. Despite having a large well in the centre of its courtyard, the water requirements of a large country house necessitated creating a much greater and more convenient water supply, but how and from where?

The solution, built around 1889/90, was a fine example of Victorian engineering and was known as Bewicke's Water Supply Improvement. As the owner of Hallaton Hall, Theodore Calverley Bewicke also owned nearby land at Sandybrook, which as the name implies was down by the Hallaton Brook.



The water tower and storage tank being dismantled.



Top: Remains of the pumping house.



Right: What is left of the sluice gates at Sandybrook.



Water for the project came from two sources. Firstly, water came from Hallaton Brook via a sluice gate and channel to a holding tank next to an underground pump house. Secondly, natural spring water for drinking came from higher up in an adjoining field called Rats Leas. This was firstly collected in holding tanks in Rats Leas and then gravity fed to a second holding tank. The pump house held a 5hp oil fired stationary engine, from Blackstone of Stamford, with a secondary flywheel, which pumped the water a third of a mile in a two-inch iron pipe, raising it up 100 metres to just beyond Hallaton Hall in O/S field No. Pt. 165. There it was held in a 7,000-gallon water storage tank on a tall brick-built water tower. From this it was fed, by gravity, to the Hall, servants' quarters, stables and outbuildings.

Initial plans show that to begin with the pipe ended at one of the outbuildings which at the time were not attached to the hall. After the hall was sold to Samuel Nevins Bankart he acquired a thin strip of land opposite the Hall on North End around 1901, and shortly afterwards is likely to have constructed the water tower. The sale

contract between the Bewickes and Bankart stated that Bankart was not only purchasing the house and accompanying land, but also the wheelhouse, drain tanks and works for the supply of water to the house, along with all the tanks, machinery and pipes connected with the scheme.

Bankart and his heirs were to enjoy a perpetual right to draw water for the supply of Hallaton Hall, but could only use the water for domestic, stable and horticultural purposes. Bankart was to have free and uninterrupted passage along the supply drain and spring drain to the wheelhouse and thence through a pipe all the way to Hallaton Hall. The waste water was to be discharged back into the stream along the waste drain. Bankart was also allowed to enter Bewicke's land to access the pipe and machinery, should they be in need of repair or replacement, and he could bring horse and carts onto the land to do this. However, it was stipulated that Bankart was allowed on Bewicke's land "*for no other purpose whatsoever*"; Bewicke continued to pay for the scheme until the final payment was met in 1911.

It is surprising to think that mains supply water was only finally piped into Hallaton as late as 1961,



Above: Notice put up advising people not to drink the water.

Right: Remains of a field drain and cast iron grate near Hallaton today.



and until then almost all household water was carried by bucket from a public street pump or drawn up from one of the 50+ private wells in the village.

After the mains arrived, the Market Harborough Rural District Council declared that the pump water was unfit for drinking purposes and fixed notices to that effect; this one (above) is from Tugwell Lane near the cemetery.

Properties outside the main village area had their own wells. Fearn Farm certainly did and there was one which supplied the railway station and the nearby railway workers' cottages, which still exists today. Accompanying the pump were three wheels. You turned two off at any one time and thus filled, in turn, the water tanks in the station, the outside toilets for the station cottages, or a trough at the top of Cow Close. In an interview with John Morison, Sid Read recalled the daily process of pumping the water from the well to the station, a ritual which no doubt had been the same in the years before the Great War.

“There was a pump at the top of the garden. The well used to supply the station, the station house and these three cottages. When I was on early shift, that was 5 o'clock in the morning when the two passenger trains had gone, and I'd cleaned the office out and all that jazz, you used to go

to the pump and put 300 pumps up and down with the handle to fill the tank in the station, then you switched it off up there to supply the station master's house. It was an hour's job to fill the station tank and the station master's and if we wanted ours doing there was that as well.”

Drainage and the disposal of human waste was another matter altogether, one that eventually led to a massive engineering project just after the turn of the century.

All around Hallaton you can see the remnants of the ridge and furrow system of arable farming, created by ploughing with four oxen on the individual strips of land in the ancient three field system. During the ploughing a single plough share always turned the soil towards the centre of the strip. This system was practised in Hallaton for over some 1000 years, from around 650AD to 1770, when everything changed. There is a belief that the ridge and furrow system was introduced for the purpose of draining the land, but in reality, this is not the case; any improvement in the drainage of the land was only a by-product.

However, farmers have always been aware of the need to drain land for better crop cultivation, but in Hallaton this only came into being after 1770, when the three great open common fields were

enclosed and parcelled out to individuals for their exclusive ownership and use. At this point there was then the incentive for individuals to drain their own land, particularly if it was to remain arable. Land drains were dug into the ground and this practise continues to this day. Remains of field drains can still be found today, but there is some uncertainty how reliable and correctly located were the field drains in Leicestershire in 1913.

“Under much of the land in the district, the drainage was faulty. Often the drains had been set 4ft deep at wide intervals, under one of the mistaken theories advocated in the early days of tile drainage when it was not entirely realised that drains ought to be set deep or shallow, according to whether water rises from below or is soaking down. On the heavy clays of the Midlands, the function of the drains is to get the rain away from the land, so they should not be set more than 30 inches deep.” (A. D. Hall, *A Pilgrimage in British Farming 1910–1912*, pp. 418–19. John Murray, 1914).

The drainage of the township of Hallaton takes two forms. The carrying away of storm rain water and the drainage via sewers of our personal waste.

Hallaton is fortunate in being sited on sloping land with a brook in the valley. As a result, the

removal of storm rain water has been a fairly straightforward affair, and our ancestors laid out a comprehensive system of storm drains throughout the township, much of which is still in use today. The majority of this groundwork was probably carried out in Victorian times with the building of some excellent quality brick culverts and street gutter drainage, which also served the terracotta pipework to individual houses. Some of the larger houses would have had individual soakaways. Much of this rainwater was taken down towards the church and then under Churchgate via a very large stone-built culvert, which may well have been built in early Georgian times. A circular brick culvert then takes the water down to Hallaton Brook, below The Grange. These large early culverts may well be the source of the belief that there were several secret tunnels beneath Hallaton.

An examination of the brick-built road bridge at the bottom of Church Bridge Hill will reveal that there is an additional storm culvert built into the bridge. Halfway along this, and at right angles, is a small circular culvert just wide enough for a child to crawl up. It is said by several of the older males in the village that as part of their growing up, they would dare each other to crawl up this storm drain and finally emerge in the church. This is no longer possible and should not be attempted.



Left: Somewhere beneath Hallaton.

Below: John Morison emerging from the storm drain from the church.



From early times there has been a village pond at the top of the township. Hacluit's Pond is named after John Hacluit, *circa* 1350, who was lord of the Hacluit's Manor of Hallaton. 700 years ago the pond was used for watering the stock and washing the carts. By the mid-1500s the famous Hallaton horse fairs had moved, by Royal Order, up from the High Street, to what is now called North End, and was then called 'Horse Fair'. This wide and long straight street was set out specifically for use as a Horse Fair, where the horses could be paraded, trotted, walked, and bought and sold. Hacluit's Pond, by the Fox Inn, served the vital purpose of providing water for the many horses. The horse fairs in Hallaton died out in mid Victorian times and the pond reverted to its everyday use as a cart wash.

The imaginative Victorians put the pond to an extra use by building a series of brick pipes, channels, gates and sluices all throughout the village, so that water from Hacluit's Pond could be diverted to sluice out any part of the system, as required. That ingenious layout of pipes still exists, and forms part of our storm water drainage system mentioned above. In living memory the pond, when frozen, was used by the villagers for ice skating and ice hockey matches. To keep the pond full of water it was fed from a spring in Towns End Close, the field opposite, owned by George Plowright. The responsibility for providing this water supply lay with the Parish Council, and on 20th February 1898 they ordered Butteriss Brothers to make the connection from Mr G. Plowright's spring into Harquelets [Hacluit's Pond] good. Then on 27th February 1902 the Parish Council clerk was authorised to see that the connection from Mr Plowright's spring to Harquelets was in working order.

The second part of drainage for Hallaton is in respect of the disposal of foul sewage. In the Victorian era the inhabitants of Hallaton had two options when it came to 'spending a penny', either a convenient hedge or the privy in the back yard, with its wooden plank with a hole and a bucket. Basic but functional. The disposal of the contents of the bucket, 'night soil', then became the responsibility of the Parish Council. For this purpose, they employed a man to go around the village with a night soil cart, visiting each privy in turn, emptying the full buckets, and taking the contents away. Not the most popular job in the village. For much of the year this happened at night, and as a result the men were known as the 'Midnight Warriors'. In September 1896 the Parish Council passed a resolution that "*The Night Soil Cart be not allowed*

to go out of the village unless a fee of 5/- shillings [25p] be paid for the use of it."

However, by 1897 there was a foul sewer in the village, as in December 1897 Mr Sharman requested permission from the Parish Council to connect his new closet to the main sewer. He lived at the bottom of High Street on the left side, now numbers 5–11. This was approved subject to the approval of Mr James, the Sanitary Inspector from the District Council. It appears, therefore, that this was a joint drainage system and was the same as the one flushed by storm water from Hacluit's Pond. Then in January 1898 Miss B. M. Edwards' contractors asked the Parish Council for permission to connect the rain water off the new cottages in Eastgate Street with the main sewer. These are the five cottages numbered 26–34 Eastgate, built in 1897. It would be several years before all houses were connected. Many, like 8 Churchgate, occupied by John Garner the butcher, merely converted their bucket privy in the farm yard into a water closet, flushing to the new mains. The idea of having foul sewage inside the house was anathema.

In October 1898 the Parish Council proposed "*To construct a sluice for stopping of the sewerage during the time the Catchpit is being cleaned out.*" The sewer also existed in Hunt's Lane at this time. In November 1898 the Parish Council authorised the cleaning out of the settling tank and also the purchase of the necessary 12-inch drain testing plug.

Some of the larger houses had their own cesspits for the collection of their foul sewage, and in April 1898 Omar Neale won the tender (of £4) for cleaning out the cesspits in Mr Peck's Home Close and in Miss Taylor's orchard... "*9 times in the year; also to receive all fees for use of Sewerage Cart and the amount deducted from his said tender £4.*"

In July 1898 the Parish Council set up a committee to look at the drainage of the village in conjunction with the District Council. Things moved slowly, but in June 1900 the District Council engaged Messrs Coales and Johnson, an engineering firm in Market Harborough, to survey the village of Hallaton and to produce plans for a new sewerage scheme. This they did, and the estimated cost was £2000. It is fair to say that this was a most contentious matter. At a meeting of the Hallaton Rural District Council, Mr McTurk, Hallaton's representative, intimated that the village authorities had not anticipated such a high cost and they were likely to draw up their own scheme. He was gently admonished by the chairman who said that the scheme was not unexpected, and by the clerk who stated that

Hallaton Parish Council were fine to pursue this line of action, but it would not relieve the Rural District Council of responsibility in this matter. The plans were to be deposited at the offices of Coales and Johnson for a period of two weeks for anyone to inspect, and then be sent to Hallaton Parish Council for a similar period. The matter was laid over to the next meeting when they were happy to meet representatives of Hallaton or receive deputations. As predicted by Mr McTurk, Hallaton Parish Council employed Mr Cowdell, a surveyor of Leicester, at a cost of five guineas, to prepare a counter scheme. The siting of a sewerage farm was discussed at length and the Bewicke estate was approached for land down on the Medbourne Road. However, they refused to countenance the sale of any land for this project. In July 1900 the Hallaton Charity was approached for financial assistance but decided not to contribute to the new drainage scheme for Hallaton. The Hallaton Parish Council did not give up, though without the consent of the Bewicke estate and the financial backing of the charity, their project never really stood a chance. At the next meeting of the Hallaton Rural District Council a letter from the Parish Council was read out, stating they had an alternative scheme under consideration, and requesting the Rural District Council to defer the decision until after a further meeting of the Parish Council. The Rural District Council, clearly starting to lose patience, replied that the Parish Council could happily employ a surveyor to propose an alternative scheme, but they would not be bound by it. Moreover, they pointed out in no uncertain terms that the Parish Council had no legal right in deciding the matter. The medical officer for the District Council also wrote, stating he had no objection to an alternative scheme providing it was carried out in full. At the end of August, the District Council placed adverts in the local newspapers requesting tenders to construct the sewerage system and sewerage disposal works in Hallaton.

In the end the District Council's scheme was approved and on 26th November 1900 the Parish Council wrote to the District Council stating that they had no observations or suggestions to make.

The scheme was not without a financial cost, and an initial loan for £1800 on a 35-year payback period was taken out in 1901, followed by an additional £200 loan on the same terms the following year. Disputes over the levels of compensation for land lost to the project continued for the next two years and there was the issue of putting the streets back

in order after the construction was complete. The Hallaton Parish Council even complained about the District Council employing a clerk of works at the new sewerage works, questioning the need. The reply was that he was employed to ensure the work was carried out in the interest of the people of Hallaton, and the sooner properties were connected the quicker complaints would come to an end. Disputes continued into 1903. At a meeting of the District Council in February that year a deputation of the residents of Hallaton complained that flood water found in the public streets whilst construction was undertaken had been diverted to private property. The main complainant was a Mr Pick, who said the water was diverted onto his property at his cost. Mr Bankart backed him up, saying the contractor had come across a spring and the water had been diverted as stated. The District Council, by now utterly fed up of the constant moaning and complaints, declined to take the matter further, and in due course the new vented foul sewer system was installed, together with the new sewerage farm. It would take a few years for all to be connected but on 9th October 1906 the old sewerage cart was offered for sale by auction at The Cross and fetched £4-15-0.

A new Special Sanitary Rate was imposed by the Parish Council in addition to the Poor Rate already in existence. These had to be collected, and clearly feathers were ruffled when in March 1909 the headmaster of the village school, Mr Denley, was offered the position of Assistant Overseer of the Poor with the responsibility for collecting the Poor Rates and the Special Sanitary Rates, at the salary of £17 and £3 per annum respectively. He was appointed but had resigned within the week.

Public buildings in Hallaton were not that numerous. The church and chapel are covered later but there was no village hall by the outbreak of the war. There was the Parish Reading Room. In 1894 the new rector of Hallaton, Canon Chetwynd-Stapylton, purchased this building to serve the village for recreation and as a reading-room.

However, his generous gesture failed to secure him a seat on Hallaton Parish Council and he subsequently recorded his disappointment in the Parish Magazine:

"I thought that I have established a fair claim to be accounted a good citizen of Hallaton. I have stood entirely alone in the erection of a Parish Room, at considerable cost, in furnishing, heating and lighting it and supplying it with newspapers, etc. as a reading room for two winters..."



*The parish reading room
(Tin Tab).*



*The west platform,
Hallaton Station.
© F. C. Hawke.*

The Parish Room opened from early November till late March. It was constructed of corrugated iron and wood. Such buildings were known as Tin Tabernacles, or 'Tin Tabs'; they were cheap to produce, easily transported and erected, and durable.

Hallaton Station was opened in 1879. There were a variety of small buildings, including signalmen's boxes, but the main station consisted of two platforms. The one on the village side of the line consisted of the porter's room complete with open fire, next along was the waiting room, again with an open fire and with a hatch through to the ticket office. Then there was the men's toilet, complete with blue and white tiled urinals. On the far side was another waiting room and probably the ladies' toilet.

The photograph above of the west platform shows some fascinating detail when enlarged. The poster boards on the wall are headed L&NW Railway

and GN & L&NW joint lines. One is headed Nottingham. The board on the right is advertising weekly circular tours to the West Highlands and special trips to the remote island of St Kilda. The picture may well illustrate one of the village special trips, such as those run by the choir and the temperance society. Omar Neale can just be seen emerging from the door on the right.

Transport and communication centred very much around the station. Trains through the station were operated by the Great Northern and London and North Western Railway. As well as passengers, goods such as coal and animals were brought to the station to be moved on to their final destination. Also, heavy items used in construction projects at the Hall were left at the station from where they had to be moved, not always with the best co-operation of the station workers.

From ROBT. JENKINS & Co., ROTHERHAM. DATE AS POST-MARK.

Dear Sir,

We beg to advise you that we have this day forwarded
 per Great Northern Railway, carriage
paid to Blanchart Esq
Hallaton Hall
Hallaton Station
One No 6 Saddle Body R. & L. W. R.

Order No. B9010 Invoice to follow.

Above: Confirmation of delivery to Hallaton Station of a new boiler for Hallaton Hall.

Right: Letter from Henry Butteriss to Messenger & Co, concerning the difficulty of moving items from Hallaton Station.

Both ROLLR (DE 2121/126/1-7).

MEMORANDUM
 Rec'd JAN 14 1898

FROM H. & W. BUTTERISS, BUILDERS AND CONTRACTORS, HALLATON, UPPINGHAM

To Messengers & Co. Loughborough

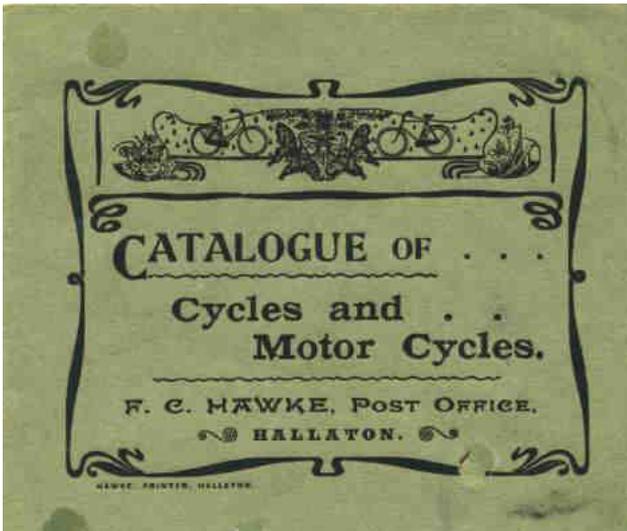
Dear Sir

In reference to yours of Dec 21st I have looked carefully through this account & find that there has been no overcharge. We have simply charged you with the men & horses time. Although the station is only about a quarter of a mile from the site. There is a big hill between & there is no convenience at the station for unloading or loading anything heavy. It has to be done by main strength & the Railway servants give scarcely any assistance. I enclose detailed a/c & shall be glad to receive charge for same.

I remain Yours etc H. Butteriss

From Hallaton there were trains originating in London which arrived at 7.27am, 10.07am, 2.12pm, 3.44pm and 6.45pm. These would take you to Nottingham, and if you wished you could continue to York and to Scarborough, where you would arrive five hours later. In the other direction trains went to Market Harborough and onto Northampton Castle at 9.18am and 4.04pm. You could reach the same destinations on trains that proceeded to London at 12.20pm, 4.57pm and 7.34pm. It would take around two and three-quarter hours to reach London. There were also three trains a day that took you to the no longer used Belgrave Road Station in Leicester. The earliest was at 10.40am and the last one at 20.34pm. The train had opened up the country, effectively shrinking it

in size in terms of travel possibilities. There were a variety of fares available including three different classes, fares for bicycles, and special reduced fares for those working for the railway companies. Once at Market Harborough the rail companies frequently ran special excursion trains. For the August Bank Holiday week of 1913 London and North Western offered trips to Ireland, Skegness, Great Yarmouth and Hunstanton among other places. In September they were offering special excursions of 16 days to Ireland, including Dublin, and other excursions from three to 17 days to places such as Scotland and the Lake District. The Midland Railway Company did likewise, and for the August Bank Holiday of 1913 you could travel with them from Market Harborough to the likes



Front cover of Fred Hawke's catalogue of cycles and motor cycles.

of Blackpool and Matlock Bath. Special trains were also put on for the Easter Monday Bottle Kicking and for days when there was hunting.

As well as travel the station at Hallaton provided a rare communication link to the outside world as it had its own telephone. Frequently news stories would arrive by telephone in the village before newspapers, and in such a way the news of the sinking of the *Titanic* in 1912 reached Hallaton.

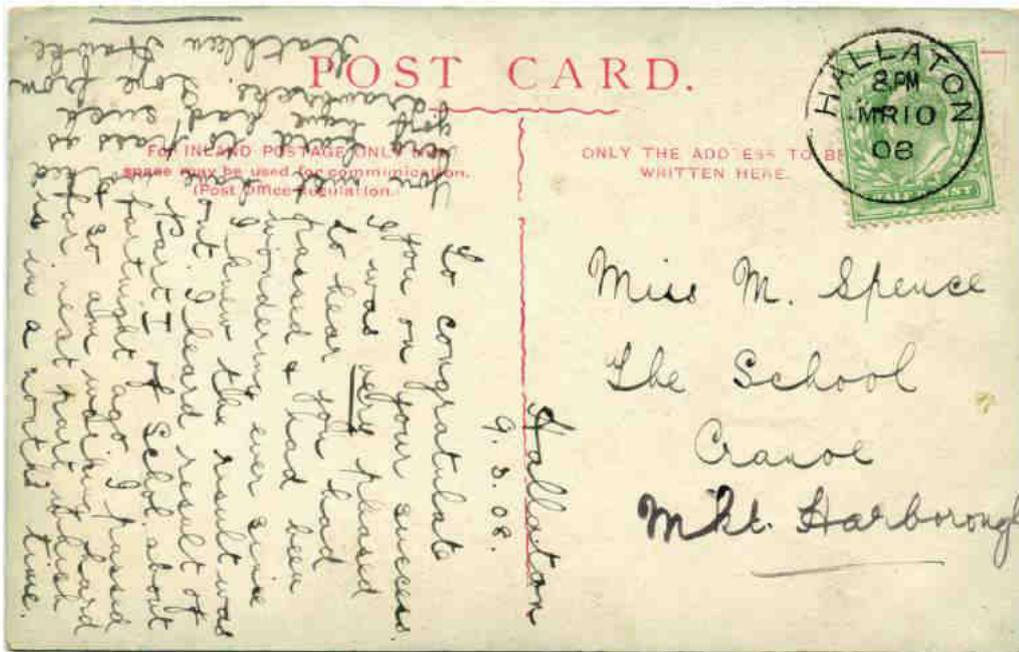
For many getting around was done on foot and there was a good network of public footpaths. Bicycles were popular in Edwardian Britain and were certainly a common sight in Hallaton. Fred Hawke sold them, and they were affordable.

Suddenly, the two and half mile trek to Medbourne could be done on two wheels. Motorcycles were also sold by Hawke and he was the main dealer in the area for Ford motor cars. The motor car, originally really only accessible to the wealthiest, was starting to become more common and there were a few owners of cars in Hallaton. Samuel Nevins Bankart had been a big fan of the motor car and owned several, including the 19th car to be registered in the county of Leicestershire in 1903. On 26th July 1904 he purchased a Rocket Schneider with a Lonsdale body in green and black, and he sold it, or gave it to, his brother-in-law, Herbert Fletcher, on 22nd April 1905. We know Fletcher had a car in Hallaton as he employed a chauffeur at the Hall. Both Doctors Stott and Morrison owned cars. Stott's, registration number AY2980, was a 20hp two-seater Ford in brown. Morrison drove an ash grey, lined with black, 20hp two-seater Ford with dickey, registration AY5322. He registered it for professional use and kept the

car until 13th December 1929. Meanwhile, Edwin James Hawke drove a five-seater 20HP Ford in khaki. The Reverend Preece also owned at least two cars. On 18th December 1915 he acquired a 14hp Darracq in saloon blue; a car he kept until 1925. In 1916 he bought a 10.8hp two-seater De Dion, which he sold to someone in Tur Langton on 28th December 1917. The Fords mentioned here were all the famous Model T, and presumably were supplied by Fred Hawke.

Communication was very restricted in comparison to today. Newspapers were popular and provided a good mix of local and national news, but for personal communication there were two methods for people in Hallaton. The telegraph and the postal service. There was a telegraph cable that ran from the post office in Hallaton to the station and onto the post office in Horninghold. For most people the postal service was the most important part of communicating with people not only far away, but also with friends in local villages and towns to Hallaton. Millions of postcards were sent during this period, such as the one illustrated below depicting the actress Ellaline Terriss.



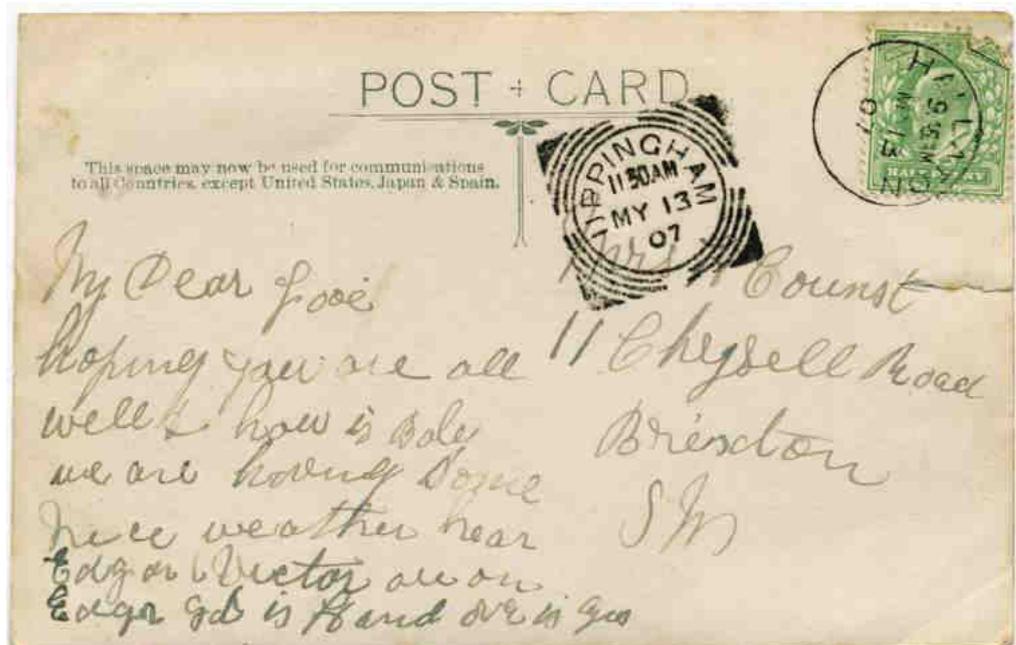


Reverse of postcard sent by Kathleen Hawke to Miss Spence at Cranoe.

It was sent by Kathleen Hawke, the school teacher at Hallaton, to a friend, Miss M. Spence, who was a teacher at nearby Cranoe. Postmarked at 8.00pm on March 10th 1908, a Saturday, the card would have been in Cranoe by the following Monday. Postal services were very efficient and often letters and cards could arrive later on the same day they were posted. The following example from the back of a card posted in Hallaton and destined for Brixton in London, demonstrates this efficiency. Postmarked at 9.45am

on the morning of 13th May 1907, it was in Uppingham by 11.30am the same day and well on its way to London.

On Wednesday 2nd October 1912 the Hallaton Parish Council met to discuss some proposed changes to the postal system. They concluded that a motor service would be the best method of receiving and sending mail to and from the village, which happened twice a day. The postal service soon moved to Market Harborough from Uppingham, at which point the mail was moved by train.



Reverse of postcard showing Hallaton postmark and one in Uppingham two hours later.

Hallaton Work

Work for the men and women in the years immediately before the war really meant work. The hours were long, the holidays few or non-existent, the pay modest or worse. Many did more than one job, always trying to find ways to make ends meet. For many there was a ceiling as to what they could achieve, which meant leaving their place of birth to find better jobs. Though matters were starting to improve, workers received few or no rights and protection. The idea of health and safety at work would have been an anathema to most. Job security was not great, and it was possible for people to move around different jobs far more frequently than we might imagine. The following pie chart is based upon the information given by the census of 1911. It is, of course, unlikely to be a 100% accurate portrayal of the work people were doing at the time. However, it is the best indication we have. The results show that it was in agriculture that the biggest percentage of people worked.

Around 27% of those who responded by giving themselves an occupation could be classified as working in agriculture. This would range from farmers farming many hundreds of acres to

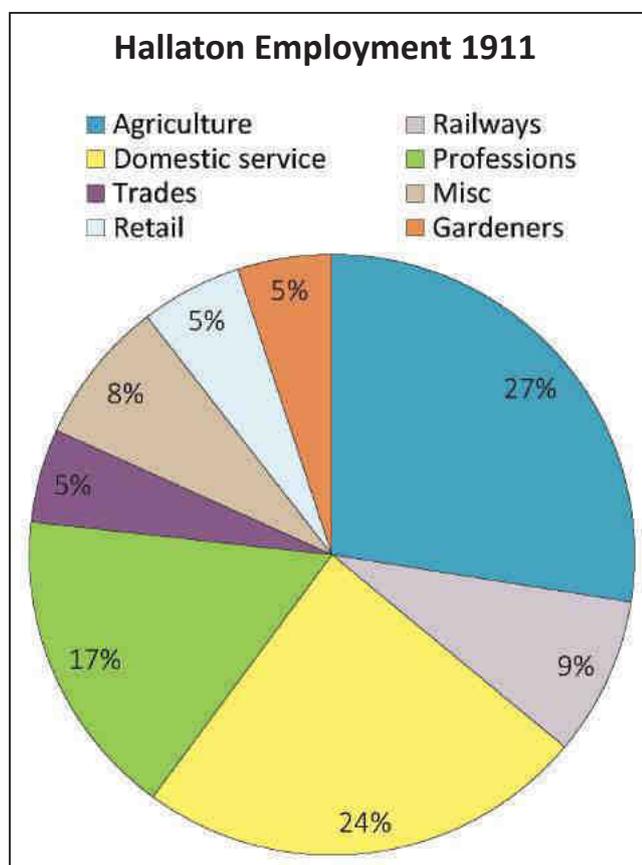
shepherds, graziers and the ubiquitous agricultural labourer. Many people who classified themselves as labourer may well have been involved with agriculture, and on top of that we don't know the numbers of women and children who helped out regularly but were simply not recorded as so doing, or indeed worked at busy times of the year such as harvesting. Of course other jobs in the village, such as blacksmiths and wheelrights, would have depended for much of their work on agriculture with things like repairing carts and tools, whilst the smithy would have been busy shoeing horses, among other things.

Let us start at the top of the tree. There was large scale farming in the area and chief among them was William McTurk. Back as far as 1881 he was farming 454 acres and employing three men and two boys. Over the years he remained one of the most important farmers in the area. However, he did not own the land he farmed. He was a tenant farmer, though on a large scale. Most of the land was in the hands of a few wealthy landowners. In the Hallaton area it was likely to be owned by the Price-Dents, the Bewickes, W. W. Tailby or the Hardcastles. Even some of the more wealthy did not own the land they farmed. Perhaps the best example of this is Cecil Fletcher, who formed a farming business with Frederick George Andrews and later with Frederick Part. Cecil's father, Herbert, owned Hallaton Hall and was a wealthy man, yet his son was not able to buy the farms he worked, but had to rent them. Fortunately, the records of one such lease survives and, although from neighbouring Horninghold, there is little doubt that that it was typical of its time and the area.

In 1904 Fletcher and Andrews entered into an agreement with Thomas Hardcastle, a wealthy local landowner from Blaston Hall, to rent Pastures Farm in the parish of Blaston.

The farm, consisting of a farmhouse and outbuildings, comprised 160 acres, one rood and 32 poles, and they were to rent it on a yearly basis, with 12 months written notice to quit given by either side, for the basic rent of £165 per year, paid in two half-yearly instalments. In addition, an extra £10 per year was paid to cover the landlord maintaining the fences and gates and providing the wood for such repairs. In return he agreed to maintain the outside of the house and outbuildings in good condition, and to insure them against fire. He also agreed to pay the tithe land tax and landlord's property tax.

Fletcher and Andrews had to agree to the landlord, his friends, agents or servants, having the power to enter the buildings to inspect them



Hallaton employment types based on the 1911 census.

at whatever time was convenient to them. The landlord also retained the rights to hunt, course, shoot, kill and take away any game or rabbits on the property. On top of the usual standard stipulations of paying their rent on time, maintaining the inside of the buildings in good condition and not to lop or top any of the timber or other trees, there were some specific requirements of the lease which reveal some interesting farming practices of the time. First, they were not to break up or convert into tillage any of the pasture land without written consent. Nor were they to mow for hay any close of land more

than once in three years and not without properly manuring the land in the first place. It is worth quoting the other stipulations in full. They were to:

“cultivate the arable land in accordance with the best system of husbandry as practiced under the custom in Leicestershire and not to grow any unusual or exhausting crops on said land. To keep clean all said land from weed and roots and to exterminate all hassocks, thistles or other noxious weeds growing thereon.

“To consume on said land all the hay roots and straw grown thereon and to lay and spread where most need shall be and require all the dung compost and manure arising therefrom.

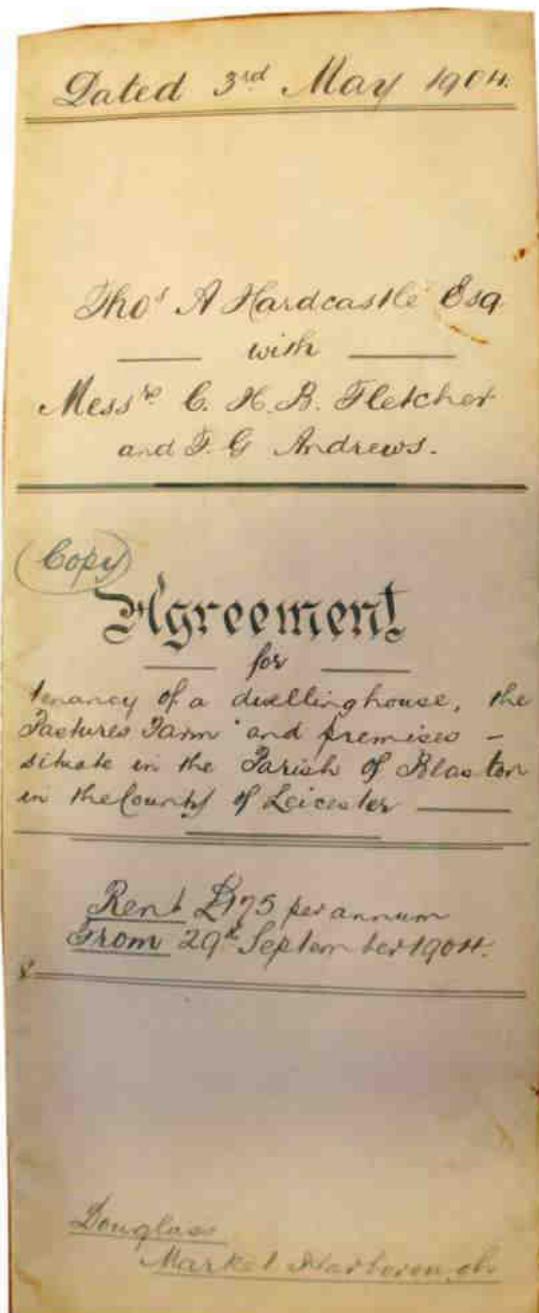
“Not to erect or place any barbed wire or other wire on the said land except as a guard fence clear of the live fence to be protected and to allow the same to be taken down temporarily by the landlord or his agent for hunting purposes between the first day of November and first day of April every year.”

Between 1906 and 1914 the Government introduced various Agricultural Holdings Acts which increased the tenant's freedom to cultivate their farms as they saw fit. There was also the possibility to bring a claim at the end of the tenancy for compensation for any unexhausted value in improvements the tenants may have made to the property or land. Even so, the agreement between Fletcher and Andrews and Hardcastle shows the power rich landowners had over even the wealthiest of their tenants.

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century farming in Britain had gone through a great depression, which only started to improve in the 1890s. By 1913 it was largely recovered, but what sort of farming existed in Hallaton? For any who walk the footpaths around Hallaton today, the fields are often full of rape seed, wheat and beans. If you had walked those same paths in 1913 the picture would have been very different.

Between 1910 and 1912, A. D. Hall travelled the country examining and recording the farming that took place. In 1912 he visited Leicestershire.

“Farther south and east the country falls away a little and along the river valleys in particular in South Leicestershire and Northampton come the famous bullock pastures of the Midlands, where during the summer heavy cattle — Herefords, Devons, Welsh and Irish — can be fattened upon the grass without any artificial aid.” (A. D. Hall,



Agreement to rent Pastures Farm between Thomas Hardcastle and Cecil Fletcher and George Andrews, 1904. ROLLR (DE 3663/185/4).

A Pilgrimage in British farming 1910–1912, p. 421. John Murray, 1914).

Slightly to the north of Hallaton he found the following picture of farming.

“We next moved south into the purely grassland of high Leicestershire, the extensive undulating pastures which form the cream of the English hunting county. The soil is heavy, largely derived from the lias clays... and it grows sound grass of excellent feeding quality and vigorous thorn hedges, by no means so well cared for as they were a generation ago. We saw one or two farms in the neighbourhood of Melton; as a rule they do not run large, from 130 to 200 acres; rented at 20s to 30s an acre, and they are nearly all permanent grass, only from 10 to 20 acres on each farm being given over to roots and oats for winter feeding.” (Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 417).

Hallaton was typical of this sort of farming. Pastoral farming was king. The rental agreement

for Pastures Farm discussed above shows that out of the 160 acres rented only 26 were set aside for arable, the rest was all pasture. Cows and sheep were the order of the day, and what arable farming existed was as used for growing animal feeds and manures, such as mangolds. On Friday 22nd September 1911, Cecil Fletcher and Frederick Andrews decided to dispose of one of their three farms, in this case Belcher’s Lodge Farm at Horninghold. The sale particulars make especially interesting reading, providing a snapshot of what type of farming was going on in the area.

The picture given is of mainly pastoral farming with a small dairy herd, and horse breeding. It appears the farm had an impressive herd of Lincoln Red Shorthorns, which had been in the possession of Fletcher and Andrews. It is also clear they were breeding their own cattle from their own Lincoln Red bulls. As well, there was a small herd of 34 dairy cows, showing that milk production was going on in the area. The sale catalogue makes particular note of the dairy herd.

*14 Barnwell 5
7/10*

HORNINGHOLD,
LEICESTERSHIRE.
2 1/2 miles from Hallaton Station on the G.N. and L. & N.W. Joint Railways.

CATALOGUE of an highly important Agricultural Sale
CONTAINING

336 LONGWOOL SHEEP.
and CROSS-BRED

34 EXCELLENT DAIRY COWS.
A HERD OF REGISTERED

LINCOLN RED SHORTHORNS.

50 Fat and Store BEASTS.

4 Valuable SHIRE MARES.

2 Shire Bred Colt Foals.

2 Active Working Cart Mares.

4 Superior Nag Horses
Including Two Thoroughbred Mares.

12 PIGS. 100 Pure Bred Buff Orpington FOWLS.

An assortment of Agricultural Implements.
CARRIAGES, MACHINES, TOOLS, Etc., Etc.

TEN DOZEN SHEEP HURDLES.
ALSO THE

Milk Float, Dairy Utensils, and Poultry Appliances,
WHICH WILL BE SOLD BY AUCTION BY

MESSRS. ROYCE

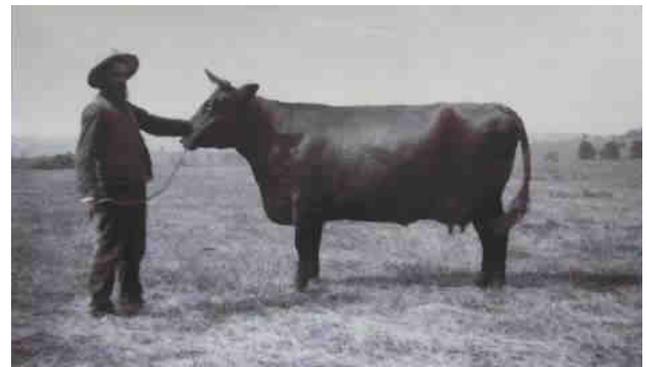
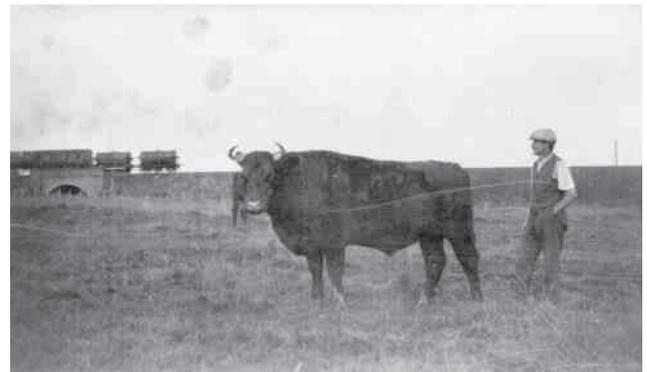
On **FRIDAY, September 22nd, 1911,**
Upon the BELCHER'S LODGE FARM, HORNINGHOLD, by direction of
Messrs. FLETCHER & ANDREWS (who are giving up one of their Farms).

LUNCHEON will be provided at 1/6 each, to be returned
to purchasers of £3 and upwards.

SALE TO COMMENCE AT ELEVEN O'CLOCK.

Auction Office, Oakham, and at Uppingham, Stamford,
Melton Mowbray, on Market Days.

Detail of particulars for sale of Fletcher and Andrews’s farm. ROLLR (DE 3663/112/1).



Top: Bull in field near Hallaton with Sid Plowright, and the only known image of a train on the track outside Hallaton Station.

Bottom: Typical cattle of the time as seen in these fields around Horninghold and Hallaton. © Leicestershire County Council.

“SPECIAL ATTENTION is directed to the dairy cows, which have been selected with very great care from the best milking strains. Complete Milk Records have been kept and can be given if desired. The present Sale includes Cows with records of 800 to over 1000 gallons.”

336 sheep were also sold, described as well-bred and healthy, and finally 100 Buff Orpington fowls were sold as one lot. The farm equipment sold also gives a good picture of some of the tools and machinery in use in the area at the time. There was an ‘Eclipse’ galvanised iron sheep rack on wheels, a set of chain harrows, an iron horse rake by Walter A. Wood and

a ‘Howard’ ridge plough, a ridge turnip drill and manure distributor. For the sheep there were two patent sheep shearing machines; for the dairy side of the farm there was an end-over-end churn made by Wade and a ‘Perfect’ separator, as well as a well-built Vipan and Headly milk float.

Agriculture, despite some technological advances, remained a business where manual labour and horses did most of the work. The accompanying candid photographs were taken in and around Horninghold between 1906 and 1918 and perfectly illustrate the agricultural practices which would have gone on in and around Hallaton in the lead up to the Great War.



Various procedures involved in hay making.

Top left: Horse drawn mower cutting the hay.

Top right: Turning the hay.

Above left: Hay cob being put on special cart.

Above right: Making the hay stack using winch.

Left: Making hay stack using ladders.

All © Leicestershire County Council.

With such a reliance on animals, providing feed for them over the winter was absolutely key, and the hay harvest was one of the most important times of the year. Horse drawn mowers could cut over an acre an hour. The hay was then turned by three or four men using hayforks and left to dry. Once dry they would return and make up a hay cob. The whole of the hay cob was then put onto a special cart with slatted folding ends. The loose hay was

then made into a haystack. These could be very large, and ladders were required to climb them. The hay was either thrown up by men using forks or, as in the case of one of the photographs illustrated here, it was winched up using a simple windlass from a very tall pole, which was set into a pit in the ground and supported by guy-ropes. Finally, the stack was roughly thatched to keep out the rain over the winter. All this work was very labour intensive.



Various farming practices of the time, including harrowing (top left), baling (bottom left) and seed drilling (bottom right).

All © Leicestershire County Council.



Various agricultural practices taking place in and around Horninghold and Hallaton in the years before the war.

Top left: Horse hoe.

Top right: Manual hoe.

Above left: Stacking mangolds or turnips.

Above right: Harvesting mangolds or turnips.

Left: Rolling.

All © Leicestershire County Council.

Priscilla Neal recalled times when, as young girls, she and her sister would walk from Hallaton the two and a half miles to Glooston for work pulling mangolds. For their day's hard work, they were rewarded with two mangolds each. Farming mangolds was labour intensive. The crops were sown towards the end of April, and for the next few months there was a continuous process of singling

and weeding. Much of the latter was done by hand, though horse hoes were also employed.

As we have seen the main animals on the farms were cattle. Bred for their meat these formed the most important part of the local farmer's business. There was a small amount of dairy farming going on. Thomas Simkin, who farmed in Hallaton, had a small dairy herd and he employed his daughter

Elsie May to do the dairy work. Horse breeding was another important aspect of the business of Hallaton's farmers. Fletcher and Andrews were successful Shire horse breeders, and they won several prizes at local shows. William Willey, the village saddler, also bred horses, as did the McTurk family on their extensive farm.

Sheep were historically another important part of the farm make up. The traditional breed was the Leicester, but by 1912

“Leicesters are now but little seen in the county from which they derive. They have been almost entirely displaced by Lincolns and Oxford Downs, indeed there is not much sheep raising in the county, where farmers mostly depend upon flying flocks.” (Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 416).

Sheep were mainly farmed for their meat, though there are many mentions of Hallaton farmers

selling wool at the local wool market in Market Harborough. Sheep were washed either in the streams or in the sheep washes like the one that used to be near the railway station. Those bought into the village would have come via train and unloaded at Hallaton Station. Trains did not merely transport people but also livestock, and the cost of such transportation was always considered to be too high by the farmers. Sheep were sheared using hand clippers or hand cranked machine clippers, or early motorised clippers. There were several shepherds employed in the village before the war and graziers also had small flocks.

Women and young girls were often called upon to help out, especially on family run farms, not only pulling root vegetables but also helping to tend and feed the livestock. The bulk of the work was done by the men. As well as the ubiquitous farm labourer, men were employed in specific roles



Above: Sheep being transported and sheared near Hallaton using hand cranked shears. © Leicestershire County Council.

Left: Hallaton sheep shearing competition 1910, with Omar Neale in the foreground and Harry Neale to his right. Hallaton Museum (PPP031).



Sheep being sheared in Hallaton with motor driven shears. Ted Woolley is in the centre of the picture back left. Note the small barrel of ale in the foreground.

that often required certain skill sets. Some looked after animals. So, in Hallaton we find a good few shepherds, cowmen like Charles Freer and Thomas William Garner, and a poultryman working on one of the local estates who was Tom Lount. Then there were the grooms and stablemen who looked after the horses. There were also men, such as Charles Bettles and Frederick Palmer, who were employed as waggoners. In farming a waggoner looked after the horses under his control and drove them in accordance with whatever work was to be undertaken, for example ploughing, reaping or harrowing. Otherwise he drove a horse-drawn heavy four-wheeled wagon, conveying produce perhaps to the railway station.

Whilst only a handful of men were described as farmers in the 1911 census several more were listed as graziers. These were people who rented smaller acreages but were still farmers in all but name. Some were comparatively well off, and some undertook grazing alongside other work. George Barnett was not just one of the village bakers but a grazier too, whilst George Eaton was both a grazier and a veterinary surgeon. John Redfern Laundon was a grazier but was also noted to be an employer, so these men should not be assumed to all be operating alone.

For the farmers with significant acreage the rise in prices since the turn of the century meant that if you managed your farm properly there was good money to be made, even if you were a tenant farmer, in some cases very good money. The McTurk family farmed one of the biggest farms around Hallaton. In 1911 William McTurk died. His will is most

revealing about his financial position. His personal wealth had a net value of £21278-12s-11d, an impressive figure for the time. He was able to bequeath, free of duty, £1000 to his wife and son David and £2000 to his daughter Marian. The will also reveals that over the years he had been able to buy a small amount of land, around 56 acres in total, including 16 in Hallaton known as 'The Bannells'. He also bequeathed the sum of £10 free of duty to his servant Arthur Neale, providing he was still working for him at the time of his death, and a further £250 was left to Hallaton Chapel. Of course, not all could make such riches from the land, and there is no doubt that farming at the time was hard work. At the other end of the scale to the McTurks were the general farm labourers and those such as shepherds and cowmen. Their wages were pitifully low, and rural poverty was an issue of the time. In Leicestershire just before the war, the average pay of a general farm labourer was around 16 shillings per week, whilst a more skilled man, such as a shepherd, could earn around 18 shillings per week. Some of the luckier ones were afforded a free cottage, perhaps worth between two and five shillings per week. There was also the casual visiting labourer, employed for only a very short time to help with the harvests. Poor old Thomas Ansell is an excellent example, only known to us because he had the misfortune to die in the village, falling from a loft above a stable and fracturing his skull. There was an inquest into his death reported in the *Market Harborough Advertiser* of 4th August 1914. Here we discover that Ansell had been employed by Luck Colston to help with the hay harvest. Up to

his death he had worked for Colston for two weeks commencing on 13th July. For his efforts he was paid 15 shillings per week plus food. The inquest noted he was homeless. The night of his death, Joseph Grant, a pot dealer from Hallaton, had seen Ansell have a pint and a half of beer in one of the village inns before leaving around 10pm. When his body was found by Colston's son the following morning, next to it was a plate of bread and cheese, which had been left for his supper, hardly a feast fit for a king. As we shall see later, though, low wages were not the farm labourer's only problem. Hall gave his opinion on the matter in 1914.

“The third estate of the farming community — the labourer — is perhaps in the worst case. He is by no means the serf that he is represented as being; his wages rose during the depression, and now all over the country are equivalent or rather more than equivalent to a pound a week; but, considering the comparative skilled character of his work, he is much worse paid than his fellows in any other industry. His hours are very long, his holidays few or none.” (Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 443).

If agriculture and farming provided the traditional and most available sources for employment, the railway was a newer and welcome area where people could work. The station itself was run by the station master, Robert Killingrey. By 1914 he was being paid a yearly salary of £120. He had a staff of six, which included a porter, a junior porter and four signalmen. The porter was paid 19 shillings per week, the junior porter 18, and the signalmen between 25 and 26 shillings per week. A study of the 1911 census shows that other railway workers were scattered throughout the village. The railway (in the case of Hallaton, the Great North Western and Midland Railway) employed labourers to maintain the lines. These included general labourers, platelayers, a ganger to oversee the labourers, a signal fitter and signal fitter's assistant, and a clerk and time keeper.

Nearly a quarter of those recorded in the 1911 census as living in Hallaton, and working, were employed in some kind of domestic service. Hallaton Hall had 13 live-in servants and two domestic grooms who lived above a separate stable block. The Manor House had three live-in servants as well as the coachman, Thomas Osborn, who lived in one of the estate cottages. Others of the more well-to-do families employed at least a cook or a housemaid. For the men there were roles as footmen, chauffeurs, domestic grooms and butlers. The greatest number of domestic servants

in Hallaton just before the war were women, including several teenage girls. In village life it had been customary practice for girls to go into service in the more affluent houses. At the beginning of the 20th century the girls were usually taken in when they were around 16 years old. However, all but the privileged left school by 14, and some when they were only 12 years old, so some entered domestic service before the age of 16. The work ranged from domestic cooks to housemaids, and at the top end nurses and even governesses. As in society there were protocol and structure involved in the world of domestic service. A clear definition between roles existed. Even at the Manor House there was a cook, housemaid and a between maid. The latter description indicates a junior female domestic worker one rung below that of housemaid.

If the large houses in Hallaton were responsible for employing the biggest number of domestic servants, then the same is almost certainly true for gardeners. With so few houses in Hallaton having gardens, and those that did mainly small enough to be managed by the occupiers, it seems certain that nearly all those described as gardeners in 1911 must have been employed at one of the large houses, especially the Manor House and the Hall, where there were formal gardens with their elaborate bedding and lawns to maintain, and also greenhouses, carnation houses and conservatories to look after. Whilst there were several gardeners, it was the role of the head gardener which was key and carried the most responsibility and prestige. At that time Henry Kitchen was the head gardener at the Manor House and he lived in the lodge close by. William Sayers was the head gardener at the Hall and he lived opposite it in one of the houses on North End. It was not only their responsibility to maintain the gardens but also the staff, it being hugely unlikely that either the Price-Dents or the Fletchers would have interviewed any prospective gardeners. We know that at the Hall the head gardener was the key person in the construction of the greenhouses and other building projects, such as installing boilers. Correspondence between the companies involved was sent to him rather than to the Fletchers, or the Bankarts before them. Not far short of ten percent of those recorded as working in Hallaton in 1911 were listed as gardeners.

The tradesmen of Hallaton employed rather fewer people, around 5% of the total, but of course were an essential part of the community. As the twentieth century progressed toward the outbreak of war the rural craftsmen were facing stiff competition from mass-produced goods from

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DRESS MATERIALS BLOUSE MATERIALS SILKS JACKETS DRESS SKIRTS RICHESSES CORSETS HOSIERY and GLOVES, Etc.	BLANKETS SHEETS COUNTERPANES CERTINGS TABLE LINEN FLANNELS FLANNELLETTES SHORTINGS, Etc.	GENT'S FLANNEL SHIRTS GENT'S PJAMAS PANTS and VESTS JACKETS and CAPS NECKWEARS GLOVES and HOSIERY READY-MADE CLOTHING SUITS-REMARKABLE.
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Also the whole of our well-assorted stock of Household Linens of every description at Cheating Prices.

THOUSANDS OF REMNANTS

of all kinds at about half usual prices.

J. WOOD,

MARKET HARBOROUGH.

During this, the Last Week,

F. G. Shindler's Stocktaking Sale,

Large Further Reductions



Ladies' Coats and Costumes, Trimmings and Requisites Millinery, Hosiery, Blouses, Corsets, Ribbons, Fur Accessories, and Shoes, Dress Linen, Dressing Gowns, Children's Costumes and Patterns, Lace Curtains, Dress Goods, House Furnishings, Table Linens.

Oddments in every Department MANY AT HALF-PRICE.

Some Hundreds of Useful Remnants
10/- IN THE £ REDUCTION.

It should be remembered that
NO OLD STOCK TO OFFER.
GOODS OF RECENT PURCHASE
EXCEPTIONAL REDUCTIONS.

As the whole Stock is Reduced
Affords a Splendid Opportunity
Replenishing the Household Supplies
A GREAT SAVING.

The Sale closes at 9 o'clock, Saturday, January 26th.

EMPHATICALLY NOT TO BE MISSED

F. G. SHINDLER, Market Harboro'.

Adverts in the Market Harborough Advertiser for Wood's and Shindler's stores.

urban industries, and Hallaton was no exception. The trades to do with clothing and shoes are especially revealing of the decline. Hallaton's 1911 census shows five women employed as dressmakers in the village. There were also six tailors providing their services, at least until the war changed lives. Both occupations had decreased in number since 1851. Drapers, presumably supplying the cloth and haberdashery, had also decreased from four to one. The village had also lost its glove maker and linen weaver. There were three boot and shoe makers in the village in 1911 compared to 12 some sixty years earlier. In 1851 there had also been 11 lace makers in the village. In 1911 this occupation had disappeared from the census. By 1870 every type of handmade lace could be made by machine. During the second half of the 19th century, the coming of the railways and the rapid growth in industrialisation of clothing and fabric production meant that by 1910 the villagers would be used to the availability of ready-made, off the peg garments in shops such as F. G. Shindler and J. Wood in Market Harborough, who sold these alongside dress materials and household textiles. Many of the items of hosiery and gloves would be made in Leicester. Hats could be bought ready trimmed or untrimmed for customising.

In general, for the overwhelming majority of Hallatonians, with little disposable income, and without the influences of modern media, changes would be slow to filter through to village life. Women would wear ankle length gathered skirts, with high collared or round neck blouses that had full, gathered sleeves.

Best clothes would be worn on Sundays. Hair was worn swept up into a soft bun. This sometimes included a centre parting with hair looped around pads or false hair to create a brim of hair around the hairline. This style could then be worn under vast broad brimmed hats with shallow crowns. These would be trimmed with flowers, ribbons and feathers. It would be normal for both Hallaton men and women to always wear hats when leaving the house.

Working men would wear trousers, collarless shirts and waistcoats with suit style jackets. Their usual headgear was the flat cap. The middle-class man had homburgs or trilbies as the hats of choice, and the upstanding starched collars were replaced by the turned down style during this period.

The shoes and boots were made of leather. There was at the time a casual form of footwear called plimsolls, which were made of canvas and rubber. Bespoke boot and shoe makers, such as William Faulkner of Market Harborough, offered their



Above: A fine parade for the Easter Bottle Kicking, circa 1911, with Hallatonians in a variety of 'Sunday best' outfits and hats. Possibly © F. C. Hawke.



Right: A selection of Hallaton men sporting a variety of fashions. George Clarke is on the extreme left of the picture.

services making footwear, from hunting boots to velvet slippers, for the more well off villagers. In the photo above men of the village can be seen sporting the flat clap and bowler hat, together with a Panama style hat, which became popular from 1900s, worn by the gentleman on the front right. All wear waistcoats underneath their single-breasted jackets, which were worn longer than modern day jackets. The gentleman second from the right on the front row wears a starched stand-up collar with corners

pressed over to form wings. These were gradually replaced during the decade by the folded down collars as seen on other members of the group.

He can also be seen wearing protective leather gaiters for riding. Watch chains, securing their pocket watches, are evident on several of the men's waistcoats. Wrist watches began to be worn by military men in the 1880s and came into their own in World War I, when there was a great need for precise synchronisation. With the advent of flying,

pilots too found the wrist watch a great advantage. By the end of the war, almost all enlisted men wore a wrist watch, and after demobilisation the fashion soon caught on. By 1930 wrist watches outnumbered pocket watches by 50:1.

The walrus moustaches on display were typical of the period. The more elaborate facial hair of the 19th century had mostly given way to this easier to maintain style. Men returning from the squalor of the trenches, however, relished the chance to be clean shaven, and gradually even the moustache was to disappear.

Undergarments consisted of drawers, either knee or ankle length, for both men and women. Drawers were combined with vests for men and camisoles for women. These were usually machine knitted in cotton for men, and woven cotton for women. Men's ankle length drawers were superseded by trunks before WW I. Symingtons of Market Harborough were highly successful in producing reasonably priced foundation garments and in 1908 invented the now famous liberty bodice.

At this time only natural fabrics were available, namely linen, cotton and wool, and luxury fabrics in silk. The first manmade fibre, rayon, was invented in 1910, but it would be some years before this became available to the mass market.

Wool has been the most enduring and versatile fibre, in use for over 3000 years. This would be woven into worsted fabrics for suiting etc. or knitted for garments requiring stretch and warmth. By the end of the 19th century home based frame knitting and weaving had practically ceased, in favour of the industrial production of cloth. By 1912 British cotton mills reached their peak, producing eight billion yards of cloth a year and exporting all over

the world. Starved of raw materials and unable to export during the 1st World War, the industry slumped between 1914 and 1918, causing countries to develop their own cotton industries.

All of Hallaton's young girls would learn to sew at school so that they were equipped to make, or at least mend, the family clothes. Many children in the poorer families would wear hand-me-downs or adult clothes recycled to fit.

Some girls would become dressmakers. The coming of the sewing machine was to make a tremendous difference, both in the home and the factories. Many middle-class homes had acquired machines by 1860, and by 1918 Singer were offering hand, treadle and electric machines. As an example, a simple machine-made dress could be completed in about an hour, compared to ten hours of hand stitching, thus freeing women for other employment or, if lucky, more leisure.

There were at least two smithies in the village. George Hill had his blacksmith's workshop near the church. In 1911 George Pick described himself as a master blacksmith. The blacksmith was one of the most important village craftsmen, responsible for making and mending the vast majority of tools used in agriculture and other trades. There was also a separate shoeing smith, Thomas Charles Russell, who would have had his hands full tending to all the horses that worked the land. On Friday 19th April 1907 someone from Hallaton passed an examination under the auspices of the Worshipful Company of Farriers for the diploma as a registered shoeing smith. This was an important achievement at the time revealing them to have a good level of skill. One wonders if Russell was that man. A shoeing smith or farrier should not be confused with a blacksmith.



The Way to Healthy Development

Free and unrestricted exercise is necessary to healthy growth and development. That is why most mothers choose the "Liberty" Bodice for their children. It gives firm yet gentle support, allows perfect bodily freedom, and transfers the weight of underclothing and "pull" of suspenders to the shoulders. The most hygienic garment made. Wears well and washes splendidly.

Ask for "Liberty" Bodice. Every "Liberty" Bodice is made of the very finest materials and is unequalled for quality, value and wear. See the job an old generation "Liberty" Bodice.

"Liberty" Bodice

(Knead Fibre)

"Liberty" Bodices, in white and various, are sold everywhere in all sizes for children and adolescents. Send for Price List and address of nearest retailer to LIBERTYLAND Dept. 54, MARKET HARBOURGH.



Left: Advert from Market Harborough Advertiser for Symington's Liberty Bodice; above: Thomas Charles Russell (on right), shoeing smith.

A shoeing smith worked with horses, but needed training in blacksmithing to enable him to make the shoes properly. A blacksmith worked with iron and may not have had any contact with horses.

The other main traders were builders and those involved in the building trade. Hallaton had two family building firms, the Marlows and the Butterisses. There were several bricklayers, including Charles F. Marlow, Edwin Belton Marlow and Abraham Plowright. The Hawkes, Richard and John Henry, were the village plumbers, whilst if you wanted your house painted then William Wickes, John Joseph Sewell or Thomas Fox were your men. Meanwhile, the Grocock family were the main village carpenters with their workshop at the bottom end of Hunts Lane. Not only were they carpenters, but they also made the coffins and acted as the undertakers for Hallaton. There was Ernest Gilbert, the wheelwright, one of the most skilled of rural craftsmen, and William Willey, the saddler, who also had a store in Kibworth.

One trade which is not so well-known nowadays was the village fellmonger. Ernest Almond was Hallaton's fellmonger. He also described himself as a skin dealer. Ernest Waterfield and Bertie Clowes both worked for him in his premises on the Jitty off Eastgate. It still exists today. The fellmongers job could not be described as pleasant. Essentially, they were dealers in hides and skins, but also processed inedible animal parts into things such as glue, offal and fertilisers. They would acquire the sheep skins from the abattoir, remove the wool, and then sell the pelts to the tanners and the wool to the wool merchants. The word 'skin' was applied to calves, sheep, goats and other small animals such as rabbits, whereas the term 'hide' was used for cattle.

The village also had a laundry. This was not a public laundrette and was worked by the Harrisons. It was owned by Samuel Nevins Bankart in the early twentieth century and passed in ownership to Herbert Fletcher by the outbreak of war. Perhaps not surprisingly it was on North End, and was the building that today is the 'Old Laundry'. Inside were a washing room and a drying room with copper furnaces. There was a large washing tub with a water tap over it. When it was surveyed on 5th May 1913 it was described as being newish and in good condition. In the *Stamford Mercury* of 19th April 1907 the following most interesting advert appeared.

"Laundress wanted. Strong girl as 3rd laundress where three are kept for Gentleman's cottage laundry. 7 in family and 14 servants. Aged 17-20. Apply stating full particulars and wages reqd. House keeper Hallaton Hall."

Was this for the laundry on North End and if so was it only for the use of the Hall itself or were villagers, who could afford to, able to take their clothes and linen there to be washed, a most welcome thing for those working in trades such as fellmongering?

The village traders would have been heavily dependent upon the wealthier members of the community for work. For those involved in the building and house repair business, the Hallaton Rural District and Parish Councils often tendered out for larger jobs but employed the local men on a regular basis for small jobs. So, for example, in February 1913 the Parish Council paid out £1 for the services of blacksmith George Hill. Later in the year they were asking for tenders to fit a new pump to the well in High Street. Their meeting in November that year sanctioned the payment of £15-18s-0d to Messrs Hawke and Son and £4-16s-5d to Messrs Thomas Marlow. The Hallaton Charity, in January 1914, issued the following cheques, £6-0s-9d to Charles Henry Grocock for work he had done at both Fearn Farm and on the Hog Lane cottages, and £21-19s-4d to Hawke and Son for jobs they did at the same locations. Local traders would also pick up work when large scale projects, such as the construction of the greenhouses at Hallaton Hall, were undertaken, often by big outside firms.

Retail played a small but important role in not only providing work but allowing the village to be largely self-sufficient. There were two butchers. One, John Freer, operated from out of his home on Eastgate along with his son, also called John. It does not appear they employed anyone else. The second was Fred Pick. His premises were on High Street and the building still survives to this day.

The shop and neighbouring house had been valued at £750 in 1903 when it was left to him in his father's will. Fred employed people at the shop, and it is likely that both Jesse Hawke and Arthur Bertie Buxton worked for him in 1911. Most of the shops were on High Street. At the bottom was the grocer's and draper's, run by Cecil Grocock. Almost certainly the biggest shop in the village. The grocery part was double fronted, and there was another shopfront for the drapery section.

Cecil lived at the property, of which the ground floor was described in the 1913 survey of it as a very large shop, with two rooms, a passage, and store rooms. Charles Plowright also described himself as a grocer, and he ran a smaller shop further up the High Street. As well as groceries he had one of the few licenses in the district to sell wines and spirits.



*Fred Pick's butcher's shop.
© F. C. Hawke.*



*Village shop where Cecil
Grocock operated. Unknown
date, but two bay windows
and third bay window for
drapery are clear.*



*Charles Plowright's shop on
the High Street, with Ellen
Plowright in the doorway.*



William Plowright's house immediately on the left of this picture looking down Churchgate. You can just make out the sign on the wall advertising his beer sales. © F. C. Hawke.

Emma West also ran a very small one room shop from her tiny cottage, also on High Street. The village post office, where the enigmatic Fred Hawke was postmaster, was also on High Street. Bread was one of the staple foods of the day and Hallaton had two bakers at that time. Fred Barnett was one, who had his bakery on Eastgate where he lived. The ground floor of his house had a shop and what was described as the 'old bake offices'. Over the bakery was a store room. The other baker was William Plowright, whose premises were close to the Market Cross. As well as baking he ran an interesting side-line as an off-licence. His house was noted as having two rooms and a bar on the ground floor. His range was really confined to ale and each year he sold around two barrels a week at ten shillings a week and 60 bottles of beer at 4d each, raising in total around £54 per annum. He is, in fact, fairly typical of most of the retailers in the village in having a second line of work. As we have seen, Cecil Grocock was both a grocer and a draper, Charles Plowright was both a grocer and grazier, and the Barnetts were also graziers as well as bakers.

There can be little doubt that even in those times rural shops were under financial pressure. Just as craftsmen and women faced threats to their business from imported goods, so village shopkeepers saw the choice of goods, available in nearby Market Harborough threaten their livelihood. People from the countryside would travel into the town, either by horse and trap or by train. Shops in Market Harborough would make up orders brought in by carters on market day mornings, who would collect them and take them back on the return journey, often negotiating their own cut. Head servants from the local country houses were important customers,

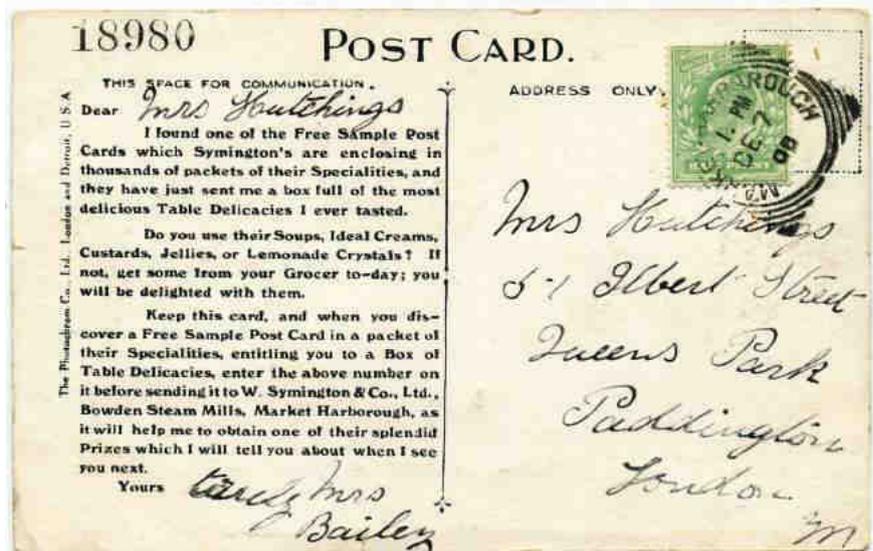
often placing large orders. Many shops in the town even delivered. Symington and Thwaites, the town's leading grocery and provisions merchants (and considered to be the Fortnum and Mason of Market Harborough), not only maintained large trade order accounts with local country houses, but their goods were delivered in liveried horse drawn vans. Even closer to home, a mere short bike ride away, was the recently opened branch of the Co-op in Medbourne. This was open by 1913 and was a general shop concentrating on grocery and provisions, but also selling household goods and bread. It was often used by working and lower middle-class customers, and generally those who could afford to pay cash. The newspapers also carried a plethora of adverts illustrating the extensive range of goods on offer in the shops in Market Harborough. Larger shops also undertook imaginative advertising and enticement to buy campaigns.

The postcard illustrated opposite may, on the surface, look as if it has nothing to do with retail. However, close study of the back reveals this to be an intricate scheme of advertising combined with a competition by Symington & Co. of Market Harborough. The number in the top left was not only the person's entry number to the competition draw, but also shows just how many such cards were distributed. There was no way small local village stores could compete with this kind of approach.

In those days goods were generally paid for in three ways, cash, on account, or by paid instalments into a purchasing club. Before the war hire purchase was restricted to big purchase items such as pianos and sewing machines. Account sales were always a risk for the retailer, if a farm labourer fell just a shilling behind in his payments he would struggle to



Front and reverse of a postcard used as part of an advertising scheme operated by Symingtons of Market Harborough before the First World War



make that up. For rural retailers, debts of this type were a big risk. The Co-op had a dividend system which paid out twice a year. Many people would use this money to pay their rates. It is, perhaps, not surprising that the number of shops in Hallaton had decreased from the nine that were recorded in 1888, or that even Fred Hawke, with the stable income from the Post Office, diversified into other areas.

There were three inns in Hallaton at the time, all employing people and providing decent livings for their licensees. The Bewicke Arms was owned by Mrs Effie Bewicke and the licensee was the redoubtable Mrs Butteriss. She rented the property and its gardens for £58 per year. It had a parlour, bar and tap room. The Fox, run by Frank Hollis, had a tap room, a bar, a smoke room, an old brewhouse and an old skittle alley. There was also a club room, where The Hallaton Friendly Society held their meetings, plus a kitchen, scullery and four upstairs bedrooms. The Royal Oak, on the High Street, no

longer survives today as an inn. Back in those days it was run by John Eaton. It boasted a tap room, dining room, bar, commercial room and was also the meeting place for the Farmer's Delight Lodge, which was Hallaton's branch of the Oddfellow's society.

There was also emerging a small but interesting number of other professions, including some that were developing at the time. Young Vic Cotton worked as a telegraph messenger, presumably running around the streets of Hallaton to convey the telegrams to people as they arrived at the post office. Cyril Grocock was an electrician which, considering that only the Hall was electrified, must have meant working outside the village much of the time. In 1911 Samuel White described himself as a traveller with the boiler corporation, employed to travel around cleaning factory boilers. Henry Taplin Godfrey described himself as an insurance agent. David McTurk was an auctioneer. His sister May McTurk was a dog

fancier. She was one of the foremost breeders in the country of Old English Sheepdogs, with her dogs frequently winning prizes at national shows. The descendants of her dogs would eventually become significant breeding dogs in America.

Without doubt one of the most significant businesses in the village was that of Fred Hawke. As well as being the postmaster he ran a photographic businesses and a printing business, the latter dealing with posters and hand bills for all the village societies and for the Parish Council. He also sold motor cars and bicycles and was the main dealer for Ford in the area. He employed probably around half a dozen men in this line of business just before the war.

If the motor business was new, then one of the oldest and most important occupations in Hallaton was carting. Carters, also known as carmen, were the white van drivers of their day. Driving usually horse drawn vehicles, most typically, but not exclusively, a two-wheeled carriage, they moved goods around both for and to individuals in the area but also on behalf of the railway company, and the Hallaton Rural District and Parish Councils. Each year the District Council would ask for tenders to move goods on their behalf and the carter would be paid by the tonne. In Hallaton there was John Emmot, who was a grocer's carter, so presumably delivering groceries to people in the area but also probably collecting fresh supplies for Hallaton's shops. There was also Fred Driver, who often won tenders with the District Council. However, the main carter in the village was Omar Neale. He was helped out by his sons, John Tom and Fred; the latter would eventually take over the business. They also won business from the District Council, but one of their main jobs was ferrying coal from the station to people's houses. They would also run a weekly service, on a Tuesday, to Market Harborough for market day, and on Saturdays there was a trip to Leicester.

At the top end of the village work pyramid were the professionals. These were people respected in the village and who, outside of their work, were expected to be significant contributors to village society. They generally obliged. Hallaton had two doctors, Morrison and Stott. There was also a nurse employed locally, though this position was not always filled. The church, of course, had the Rector, Thomas Preece. The congregational chapel tended to employ a student from the Nottingham theological college on a part-time basis. Of course, there was the village policeman, who at the time was George Mayes. Finally, there were the school teachers. Hallaton school had four teachers, each working different hours. William Denley was the

head teacher. This type of work provided a good opportunity for women to have decent jobs earning at least regular income, with Grace Barnett, Kathleen Hawke and Elsie Simkin employed at the school.

We can see their salaries at the school from the accompanying illustration.

At the bottom of the illustration you can see that the school not only employed teachers, but Tom Lount was a caretaker and Edith Hill the cleaner, each earning very modest amounts of money for their work. In fact, there were many important methods by which the people of Hallaton could supplement their annual wages. For some it was a necessity, for others a nice add on. For example, the village overseers were paid £20 per year to do their work. One of them was William Denley, the village schoolmaster. The Vestry meeting records show that Cyril Grocock earned £5 per year as clock winder and manager of the church clock and chimes, whilst Mrs Hill could earn £4-7s per year for lighting and maintaining the church lamps, and a further £7-4s a year for cleaning the church.

FORM E. 74. (To be returned before the 7th of the month)

Leicestershire County Council
EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Hallaton
AUG 31 1914

TEACHERS' AND CARETAKERS' SALARIES FOR THE MONTH ENDING

No.	Name of Teacher, Accountant, Caretaker, etc.	Class or Room	Hours per week	Annual Salary (£/s/d)	Rate per hour	Inc. Tax	Adm. Exp.	Inc. Contn.	Signature of Employer
1	Denley William	117	250	12 10 -	18 12 8 9	10			W. Denley
2	Barnett Grace	4 A	20	4 7 6	13 4 6 3	13			G. Barnett
3	Hawke Kathleen	117	250	11 15 10	13 4 14 7	13			K. Hawke
4	Simkin Elsie	5 T	20	2 5 10	13 2 4 7	13			E. Simkin
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
10									
11									
12									
13									
Name of Cleaner				Monthly Salary including Contn.					
Hill Florence				12 -		13	18 9 13		F. Hill
Lount Tom							12 -		Tom Lount
Totals						48	28 4 6 4 3		

Certified correct
W. Denley Head Teacher
FOR INSTRUCTIONS SEE BACK OF FORM

Hallaton school salaries, August 1914.
ROLLR (DE 2144/44).

Hallaton Parish Council records show each year the tendering out for the role of village lamplighter. For the winter season, running from 17th September 1913 to 17th April 1914, the tender was won by young Albert Tyler for £12-15s-0d. For this, not only did he have to light the lamps and put them out, but he had to provide the lamp glasses, and at the end of the season ensure all of them and the burners were thoroughly cleaned and properly stored. Also, that year George Tyler won the contract to keep the cemetery clean and tidy, including removing all hedge clippings; for this he was paid £7-2s-6d. Just a few examples of how the people of Hallaton were able to supplement their earnings through official channels in the village. Sometimes people resorted to other methods. On 16th February 1906 the *Stamford Mercury* carried the following advert.

“Houdan Buff Orpington, finest laying strain in existence: Chickens 5d each, mothers 2s 6d, eggs 2s per dozen guaranteed fertile. Carriage paid up to 50 miles. Order early to save disappointment. Hallaton.”

The person who placed the advert was none other than village policeman George Mayes, showing that even those in solid regular employment were looking at ways to raise extra money.

So how did Hallatonians at the time go about finding work and how did employers in the village find the workers they needed? There can be no doubt that family played a crucial role in this process. Family building firms, for example the Marlows and Butterisses, were true family concerns. Although, of course, they took on non-family members they first and foremost looked after their own family, which could include in-laws. The same was true of the Grocock carpentry business. Even for those employed by companies such as the railway were often from the same family, hence at Hallaton the Driver family were mostly working in some capacity on the railway.

Newspaper small advertisements were a way for both employers and workers to advertise themselves. Percy Plowright did this effectively in 1912, and ended up finding work outside of Hallaton.

Adverts for positions in the village were commonly found in newspapers in the first years of the twentieth century and reveal some interesting facts. Here are just a few typical adverts that appeared in papers from 1900 onwards.

January 1900:

“Labourer — Wanted a good farm labourer — good wages given. Cottage and garden provided. Apply T Simkin, Hallaton Hall.”

May 1905:

“Tailor — wanted, respectable young man as improver. Frisby Bros. Hallaton.”

October 1906:

“Waggoner wanted must understand all kinds of farm work. Cottage and garden provided. Apply T Simkin Hallaton Hall, Uppingham.”

March 1912:

“Wanted, a shepherd (April 6th), for grass farm, 140 acres. Must be able to stack, thatch, cut hedges and do rough carpentering. Good cottage and garden. — J McTurk, Hallaton.”

October 1913:

“Wanted at once handy man for fellmongers yard — apply stating age, wage and references to E Almond Fellmonger Hallaton.”

Apart from the variety of jobs advertised these illustrate that, in the case of farm workers, you were expected to be able to master more than just the job applied for. In return you were provided with a wage and somewhere to live, a tied cottage. Not only did this apply to those employed by Hallaton Hall but also by those employed by the McTurks. The latter is most interesting as the McTurks do not appear to have owned any property, and therefore must have rented a house or houses for those who worked their farm. It is also clear that sometimes references were requested. For the working-class person these were very important, especially if moving out of the area you grew up in where people wouldn't know you.

We are most fortunate that letters of reference for Percy Plowright survive. They illustrate not only the vital importance of a good reference but surprisingly how frequently he moved jobs, and that despite the brevity of some (just four months in one case), good references were still provided. Without these it would have been very difficult for Percy to have found employment.

The two illustrated overleaf are both from Hallaton. The first in 1908 is from William Sayer, the head gardener at Hallaton Hall, and the second is from Fred Hawke in 1915, which was used by Percy to get into the Army Service Corps during the war.

Another interesting case of references comes from the newspapers of May 1907.

“Gardener — Head. Mrs Price Dent wishes to recommend Wm Lewin, where two or three are kept. Manor House, Hallaton near Uppingham.”

It would be nice to know if this helped William Lewin to find employment.

The Gardens
Hallaton Hall
W. Wappingham
March 16 1908.
Mr. F. Knight
Dear Sir I am in receipt
of your letter of today.
The bearer is
Percy Plowright who
I can with confidence
recommend to you.
He has been used
to all sorts of work
inside & out; also assisted
the journeyman Emery
other Sunday will do it.
we have a lot of Gold
here & he has had every
chance of a good insight
of the General work.
I have always found
him honest sober & obliging
& well conducted. A hard
working lad. He belongs
to a highly respectable
family here in Hallaton.
I am sure if you
engage him he will
do every thing in his
power to give you
satisfaction.
I am Dear Sir
Yours faithfully
W. Sayers

Telegrams: "Hawke, Hallaton."
Goods: Hallaton Station, L. & N. W. Railway. Customer's Cars driven at Owner's Risk.

Memo. from **F. C. HAWKE,**
Dealer in "FORD" Cars.
Hallaton, Market Harborough.

1875 1915

Trial Runs by Appointment.
Any make of Car Supplied.

Percy Plowright had had considerable
experience with me on various kinds of
cars during the last two years. I found
him a careful & efficient driver & hard worker
& painstaking in repairs. He is a good all-round
man. He left me, on getting married, for private
service as a chauffeur. He gave me a great satisfaction
while working for me & I should have no
hesitation in re-employing him. I should have no
hesitation in re-employing him. I should have no
hesitation in re-employing him.

F. C. Hawke
W. Sayers

Above: Reference for Percy Plowright written by William Sayers, Head Gardener, Hallaton Hall, 1908.

Left: Reference written by Fred Hawke for Percy Plowright in 1915.

The other main way to find workers was through apprenticeships.

These could vary from the local agreement (illustrated p. 1006) between Willey and West in 1890, to the much more thorough agreement by which Mark Stamp was able to bring John Alfred Moyes to Hallaton from the poverty of London, to be an apprentice tailor in his workshop in Hallaton in 1914. It is one of the most important and interesting social documents we have relating to Hallaton for the period and is illustrated here in full.

The main points of the agreement between Stamp and the board of guardians were that Stamp would receive the sum of £15 spread over the course of the

apprenticeship, which was to last four years. The first £5 of this was in the form of clothes, which young Moyes would take to Hallaton. In return Stamp had to agree to provide lodgings, food, clothing and linen. He was also to 'cause' Moyes to go to church, though not if Moyes's parents objected, or, when he reached 16, if Moyes himself objected. Stamp was also required to pay for any medical treatment required. He also agreed to pay him one shilling per week, rising to four shillings per week, as he progressed through the apprenticeship. Mark Stamp employed two other young men from the poorer areas of London and it is likely they too were originally taken on under such a scheme.

INDENTURE OF APPRENTICESHIP BY GUARDIANS.
(WITH PREMIUM).

This Indenture made this 18th day of December
in the year of our Lord One Thousand Nine Hundred and thirteen
between the Guardians of the Poor of the HAMLET OF MILE END OLD TOWN,
in the County of London (hereinafter called the Guardians) **of the first part :**
And Mark Stamp of Hallaton,
Market Harboro' the County of Leicester being a person
above the age of Twenty-one years, and a Housekeeper, carrying on the Trade of
Ladies and Gents Tailor not as a
Journeyman but on his own Account **of the second part**

Witnesseth, that the said Guardians according to the provisions of the Statute in such case made and provided, and the Order of the Poor Law Board in this behalf, now in force in the said Hamlet, do bind and put out John Moyes of the said HAMLET OF MILE END OLD TOWN, being a Poor Child above the age of Nine Years, that is to say, of the age of Fifteen years, who can read and write his own Name, and now residing at 48, Grove Road, Mile End London, E as an Apprentice to the said Party of the Second part, to learn the trade of a Ladies and Gents Tailor and to work to and live at Hallaton, Market Harboro' aforesaid for the space of four Years from the 14th Oct. 1913 and do agree to give a Premium of the value of £15 Pounds, whereof five Pounds is now given in Clothes with the said Child and the residue thereof one Moiety, that is to say the sum of five Pounds is now paid by the said Guardians to the said Party of the Second Part, the Receipt whereof he doth hereby acknowledge, and the other Moiety thereof is to be paid by the said Guardians to the said Party of the Second part, at the termination of the First Year of the said Binding as next hereinafter provided: and the said Guardians do hereby Covenant for themselves and their successors with the said Party of the Second part, that at the expiration of the First Year of this Binding they will pay the said Party of the Second part the sum of five pounds being the remaining Moiety of the Premium agreed to be paid by the said Guardians as aforesaid, provided that the said Party of the Second part shall have duly and faithfully performed all the Covenants hereafter entered into by him during the First Year of the Binding, so far as they shall be applicable during that time: And the said Party of the Second part, in consideration of the said Premium so paid and to be paid as aforesaid, doth hereby for himself, his Executors and Administrators, covenant with the said Guardians and their Successors as follows: that is to say,

Above and overleaf: Apprenticeship agreement between Mark Stamp and John Moyes 1914.
Courtesy of London Metropolitan Archive (STBG/ME/125/002).

That he will, during the said term, teach the said Child the said Trade of a *Ladies and Gents Tailor* unless the said Guardians shall authorise him to substitute some other Trade, in which case he will teach the said Child the Trade or Business which shall be so substituted:

That he will, during the said Term, maintain the said Child with proper Food and Nourishment:

Thathe will, during the said Term, provide a separate Bed and proper Lodging for the said Child:

Thathe will supply the said Child with proper Clothing during the said Term, together with the necessary provision of Linen: **That**he will, in case the said Child shall, during the said Term, be

afflicted with any Disease or Sickness, or shall meet with any Accident, procure at his own Cost adequate Medicine or Surgical Assistance from some duly qualified Medical Man, for such Child:

Thathe will, once at least on every Sunday, cause the said Child to attend some place of Divine Worship, if there be any such within a reasonable distance of the place where the said Child shall live, according to the *Church of England*

being the Religious Persuasion in which the said Child has been brought up; but that he will not require the said Child to attend any Place of Worship to which the Parent or surviving Parent of such Child shall object, or any place to which the said

Child when above the Age of Sixteen shall object: **That**he will, when the Parents or Parent, or next of kin of such Child shall desire it, allow the said Child to attend a Sunday School, which shall be situate within the Parish of *Hallaton*

or within Two Miles' distance from his Residence on every Sunday, and if there be no such School which the said Child can attend, he will at some reasonable hour on every Sunday, allow any Minister of the Religious Persuasion of the said Child to have access to such Child, for the purpose of imparting

Religious Instruction: **That**he will pay to such Apprentice, for and in respect of every week that such Apprentice shall duly and properly serve him as a remuneration, the sum of *one* Shilling

Two Shillings per Week and every week during the Second Year of the said Term, the sum of

Three Shillings per Week and every week during the Third Year of the said Term, the sum of

Four Shillings per Week and every week during the Fourth Year of the said Term, ~~the sum of~~

~~Shillings per Week and every week during the Fifth Year of the said Term, the sum of~~

~~Shillings per Week and every week during the Sixth Year of the said Term: **That**he~~

will not cause the said Apprentice to work or live more than Ten Miles from *Hallaton, Market Harboro, aforesaid* without the leave

of the said Guardians, to be given under their Common Seal: But it is hereby provided that such Guardians may in such Licence so to be given under their Common Seal, by express

words to that effect, if they think fit, authorize the Master at any time during the residue of the term of the Apprenticeship, to change the Place of the Abode or Service of the Apprentice without any further application to them or their Successors: **That**he will not assign or cancel

the Indenture without the consent of the said Guardians, Parties thereto, under their Common Seal previously obtained; and that at any time he shall assign or Cancel this Indenture, without

the consent of such Guardians under their Common Seal previously obtained, he shall pay to the said Guardians the sum of Fifty Pounds: **That**he will pay to the first mentioned Guardians all

Costs and Expenses that they may incur in consequence of the said Apprentice not being supplied with Medical or Surgical Assistance in case the same shall at any time be requisite: **That**he will

permit and allow the Guardians or some person duly authorized by them to have access to the said Apprentice at all reasonable times during his period of service under this Indenture:

And further that in case the said Party of the Second part shall at any time during the said term take the benefit of any Act for the Relief of Insolvent Debtors, or be discharged under the Provisions of any such Act, this Indenture shall forthwith become of no further force or effect

And further, that if on a conviction of the said Party of the Second part, for a breach of any of the Covenants hereinbefore set forth, before a Justice of the Peace, in pursuance of the Provisions of the Statute in such case made and provided, the said first-mentioned Guardians shall declare by a Resolution that this Indenture shall be determined, and shall transmit a Copy of such Resolution under the hand of their Clerk, or of the person for the time being acting as such, by the post or otherwise, to the said Party of the Second part, this Indenture shall, except in respect of all Rights and Liabilities then accrued, forthwith become of no further force or effect: And it is hereby further Agreed, that in any action by the said Guardians for the Breach of any of the Covenants herein set forth, they shall if entitled to a Judgment therein, recover as Damages at the least the sum of Forty Shillings.

I, Sarah Moyes the Mother
of the above-named John Moyes do hereby express my
Consent to the above Binding.

Signed by the said Sarah Moyes
in my presence Albert Batten
this 14 day of December 1913.
Or the said
made h mark as above in my presence,
this day of 19 .

The Signature or Mark of the Party consenting
to the Binding Sarah Moyes

Signed, Sealed and Delivered by the
said Master Park Stamp
in the presence of Henry Godfrey
this 18 day of Decbr 1913.

Park Stamp 

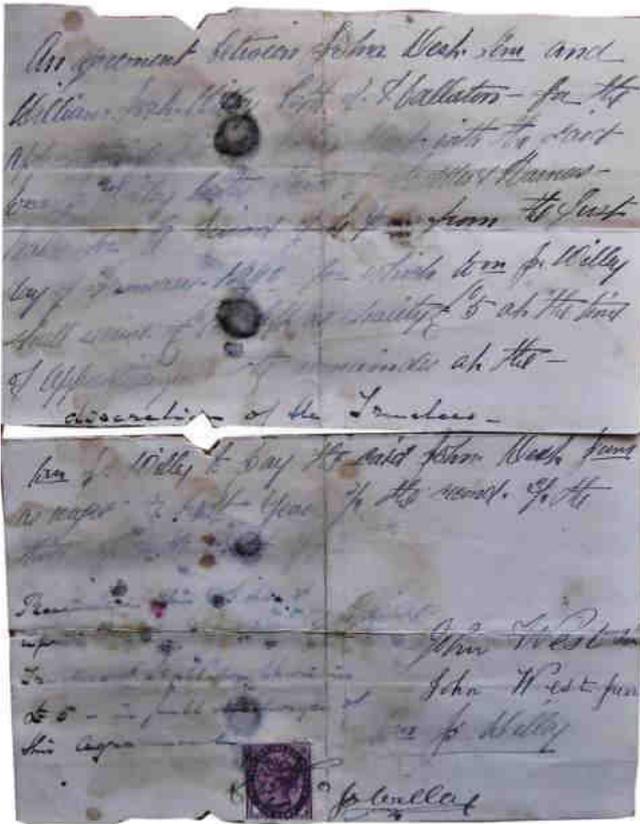
Signed by the said John Moyes without Aid or Assistance
in the presence of Henry Godfrey

Signature or Mark
of the Apprentice } John Moyes

The Common Seal of the Guardians of the
Poor of the Hamlet of Mile End Old Town
was affixed to this Indenture at a Meeting of
the said Guardians, held on the 18th
day of December, 1913, in the
presence of

Baybattun
Clerk to the Guardians.





Apprenticeship agreement between John West and William Willey. ROLLR (DE 1556/10713).

We have seen that even the better off of Hallaton sought ways of getting extra work to supplement their incomes. This was much needed, as between 1900 and 1910 the cost of living had increased around ten percent, whilst wages had only increased by three percent. Though from 1911 to 1914 wages rose the deficit between increased earnings and prices had still not been bridged by the outbreak of war. An investigation just before the war by B. Seebom Rowntree and May Kendall found that the earnings of ordinary workers in Leicestershire was below the poverty line. Another issue was that men were often laid off in very wet or frosty weather, and in the winter workers such as gardeners often had little to do. This was a subject taken up by the Liberal Party's Land Enquiry Committee of 1912–13. This found that among those places investigated 47% of people admitted they suffered a reduction in their basic wages in this manner. One can only imagine the great hardship suffered by the often-poorest families under such circumstances. There was still an element of truth and reality in the old traditional folk song 'Poor Frozen-out Gardeners':

*We're broken-hearted gardeners, scarce
got a bit of shoe;
Like Pilgrims we are wandering and
we don't know what to do.
Our furniture is seized upon, our togs
are up in spout;
Cold Winter it is come at last and we
are all froze out.
Long time have we been seeking
employment for to gain,
And we have suffered sorely all through
the heavy rain;
These times they are so very hard and the
winter winds do blow;
Oh, think upon the poor folk in the
bitter frost and snow.*

The general labourer could not count on regular employment. Even stockmen, usually hired on a six monthly or yearly contract, had little job security. As we have seen some workers in Hallaton were provided with tied cottages and though this might, on the surface, seem a good thing, it meant that if a man lost his job he also lost his home; notice to quit could be as little as seven days. Trade Unions existed and several Hallaton men were members of the various unions associated with the railways, but for those in agriculture the membership of the National Agricultural Labourers' and Rural Workers Union numbered only around 15,000 by 1914. The Liberal Government had started to take a much more interventionist role in the rights of workers and introduced a lot of legislation, which would have impacted on the lives of the people of Hallaton. The National Insurance Act of 1911, interestingly opposed by Hallaton's Dr Stott, had gone some way to improving workers' prospects, by laying down that medical care and sickness benefit be available to labourers when they were ill. However, it was restricted to those earning under £160 per year and was contributory. The employee had to put in 4d per week, the employer 3d per week and the government 2d per week, which resulted in a sickness benefit of 9 shillings per week. Free medical treatment was also offered through various insurance companies. The act also covered unemployment, but this did not cover all professions and paid out only 7 shillings per week for 15 weeks. Other acts included the Workers Compensation act of 1906, which meant that all employees could now receive compensation for diseases or injuries sustained at work. There was also the Shops Act of 1911, which saw shop assistants granted a weekly half-day holiday and restricted the maximum working week to 60 hours.

For the labourers of Hallaton, though, continuous work was far from certain, and the slightest accident could cause problems. In 1912 a particularly interesting case involving the McTurks of Hallaton was brought to court. It is worth looking at in detail.

The case was brought under the 1906 Worker's Compensation Act and the plaintiff in this case was an elderly shepherd, John Charles Osborne, of Kibworth Harcourt. The respondent was William Alexander McTurk of Hallaton. The barrister for Osborne opened proceedings:

“For the past three generations plaintiff's family had lived in the shepherd's house on this farm and they worked for the respondent's family. In April 1907, whilst in the course of his work as shepherd, he was tending some cattle and taking some fodder to them on his shoulder. Getting over an iron hurdle he slipped and hit his ribs against the top of the hurdle. His employer, who lived some 14 miles away, was in the habit of coming over to see him every week or fortnight as to the farm work and plaintiff told him of the accident the first time he came.”

Osborne suffered pain but no serious side effects until August 1907. He went to see his doctor who treated him until October that year. By then the pain was so bad that Osborne was taken to the Royal Infirmary in Leicester where part of his ribs was removed. As a result, he was unable to lift weights and thus unable to earn a living as a labourer. Before the accident he paid the McTurks £7 a year in rent for the cottage. He was the only man employed permanently on the farm. After the accident for two years another man was paid to do the heavy work Osborne could no longer manage. In court Osborne recalled the accident stating:

“That prior to the accident he was shepherd to Mr William Alexander McTurk. Before the accident his wages were 16s a week and firewood from the farm. On the day of the accident he was foddering some cattle. While getting over an iron hurdle with a ‘cage’ of hay, his foot slipped and doubled him on top of the hurdle. He went on with his work afterwards. The hay he was carrying would weigh around 40Lbs. He fixed the date of the accident because the cattle were in this field and were always taken away in May.”

For two years following the accident he did no work at all apart from checking on the animals to see if they were alright. During this time, he was not paid any wages but was allowed to live rent free in his cottage. He and his wife had to live off

the meagre savings they had somehow managed to accrue. In September 1908 William McTurk gave Osborne £6 for him to go to Skegness for three weeks to benefit his health. Then suddenly, without any form of formal agreement, the McTurks commenced paying Osborne the 16 shillings a week he had previously earned. He was now able to do light work and another man was only employed when required. He offered to pay rent, but this was refused by the McTurks, who continued to allow him to live in his cottage rent free. So why after five years did Osborne seek compensation?

“The trouble in this case has arisen because the father of the respondent having died, the respondent was giving up the farm to his brother who said he should not employ Osborne because if he did he had to employ another man to carry the weights around the farm.”

And so, circumstances beyond his control threatened to tear apart Osborne's life. His own unfortunate accident, coupled with the death of another resulted in the real chance that not only would he lose his job but with it his home. Years of working for the same family meant nothing in the cold light of financial reality. So, on 4th April 1912 the Osbornes officially submitted a written claim for compensation against William Alexander McTurk.

Unfortunately, the act of 1906 stipulated that all accidents should be reported in writing to the employer and that all claims should be brought within six months. The Osbornes met neither criteria, and despite lengthy court debates concerning verbal notifications apparently given to the McTurks, the judge found in favour of the respondent. The Osbornes had lost, and presumably with it their home of many years. It is a case which well demonstrates the uncertain nature of employment found in Hallaton in the years immediately preceding the war. Despite improvements there were no guarantees of either work or housing.

For many, the hours were long, the toil was hard, and the security of employment tenuous. For those born in Hallaton opportunities to advance themselves were limited. By the time they were 21, a bright and intelligent worker could probably master the skills required for most jobs. Once they had risen to the level of, say, shepherd on the farms, or ganger on the railway, there was little further outlook and only a small hope of increasing wages. And so many left the village to seek employment. The factories of Leicester provided alternative work to that of farm labourer in Hallaton. But people moved further afield. Overseas emigration to the

Dominion countries of Australia and Canada was on the increase, and several young Hallaton men were tempted away to Canada in the hope of a better and more prosperous life. As we have seen, young men also sought opportunities in the army or navy to escape what they saw as a life with few prospects for betterment. For young women in Hallaton the options were limited and restrictive. Remaining in the village meant, in most cases, a period of domestic service followed by marriage. For those who wanted to get away there were places like Symingtons in Market Harborough, but scattered among the census returns are many examples of young women born in Hallaton working as domestic servants and cooks in well-to-do private households, not only in Leicester but in places all over the country. Professional qualifications enabled some in Hallaton to become teachers and nurses. Mabel Grocock, for example, can be found in Watford in 1911 working as an elementary school assistant, whilst her sister Mildred had become a nurse. Edith Plowright had also gone to London, where she too became a nurse before returning to Hallaton to marry Fred Barnett.

For some who moved to Hallaton to work a few made the move permanent, but many did not stay long. Of course, it is virtually impossible to track



Edith Plowright.

these people. There are no records surviving listing employment at the Hall or the Manor House, and there would have been a number of people who came for seasonal work to help with the harvest. However, the likelihood is that there was a flow of people in and out of the village with some only staying a few months before moving on.

If work took up many hours of their lives in the limited amount of spare time they had, what did they do to entertain themselves?

Leisure, Entertainment and Sport

Suffice to say that in terms of these matters Hallaton was a very great deal different in 1913 to what it is today. No internet, no downloadable music, no television, no radio and indeed no mains electricity. The idea of 40-hour weeks, weekends off and long holidays, or just days off spent around the home, was unheard of for many Hallatonians of the time, who worked long hours, often employed in more than one job, earning just enough money to get by, with little left over for the luxuries of leisure. However, that is not to say they were bereft of entertainment or of the opportunities to indulge in sport. Far from it — as we shall see they enjoyed many activities, and if they had the money there was the opportunity to travel to Market Harborough, or perhaps even Leicester, for further entertainment.

Much of the leisure activities were self-generated. The iPod of the day was sheet music. Sold in their millions, they were the bed rock of home entertainment. It is likely that some Hallaton households had, or had access to, a piano, and there are several newspaper references to men and women being able to play instruments such as the banjo. Singing was cheap and was something all the family could indulge in should they wish to do so. Indeed, Peter Daisley recalled:

“On Sunday nights it was common practice for people to get together for a sing-song around the piano. Often starting with hymns the range of songs was taken from song-books and sheet-music that was sold everywhere. A few houses had gramophones as the first form of packaged entertainment.”

If we survey the years leading up to 1914 we see that there was a real community spirit involved with the organisation of more public entertainments. These were nearly always instigated by the church or chapel, by the Church of England Temperance Society which had a branch in the village, by the school, or by the owners of the Manor House, and especially Hallaton Hall.

The improvement in education had led to increased levels of literacy and like many other places Hallaton had its own village Reading Room, located in the building that is today the museum or 'Tin-Tab', then known as the Parish Room. There you could find the Hallaton Parish Room Reading and Recreation Club. There was a committee which ran it and for a small fee of a shilling, paid in advance, you could join. The rules for 1902, illustrated overleaf, show how it operated.

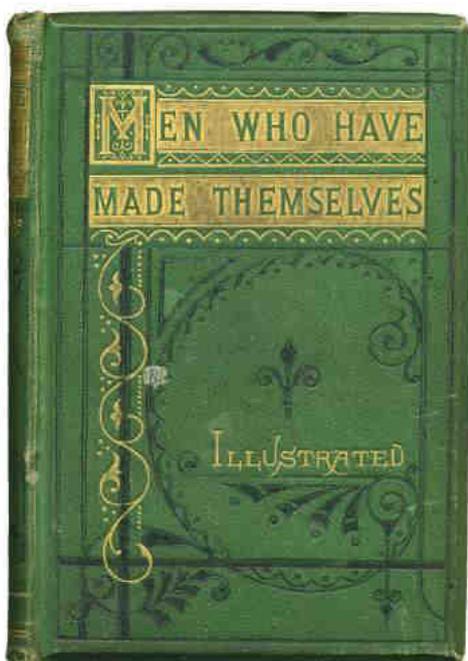
It is interesting that it was open to all parishioners over the age of 16, and that there was a junior membership for sixpence. It functioned in the winter months and was open for senior members from either 7.00 or 7.30pm until 9.30pm every weekday night except Tuesdays. The junior members could attend every Monday and Friday from 6.00 to 7.30pm. Once inside, there was the chance to read daily newspapers and choose from the selection of books or games that were there. One also may have had the chance to play cards, though only whist was permitted.

For those interested in reading there was a 'library' down the road at Blaston. The parish magazine recorded, in some months, the books they had acquired, and it makes for a fascinating insight into the type of books that were prevalent and available for the parishioners to read. It appears that the good folk of Hallaton and Blaston loved a good adventure tale, or one of swashbuckling military history. Among the classics we would recognise today, including *Silas Marner*, by George Elliot, *Uncommon Traveller*, by Charles Dickens, Aesop's *Fables*, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and Charles Kingsley's *The Water Babies*,

were several lesser known (to us) titles, such as *Dove in the Eagles Nest*, a historical novel set in the early Hapsburg empire, Fred Burnaby's classic tale of adventure *Ride to Khiva*, various military stories by James Grant, and William Harrison Ainsworth's tale *Windsor Castle*, about Henry VIII's pursuit of Anne Boleyn. There was also *The Cabin in the Clearing*, a tale of the frontier by Edward S. Ellis, which in 1954 the BBC made into a western, set in Ohio. Perhaps most intriguingly of all was *The Ingoldsby Legends*, by Richard Barham. A book in which, according to the parish magazine

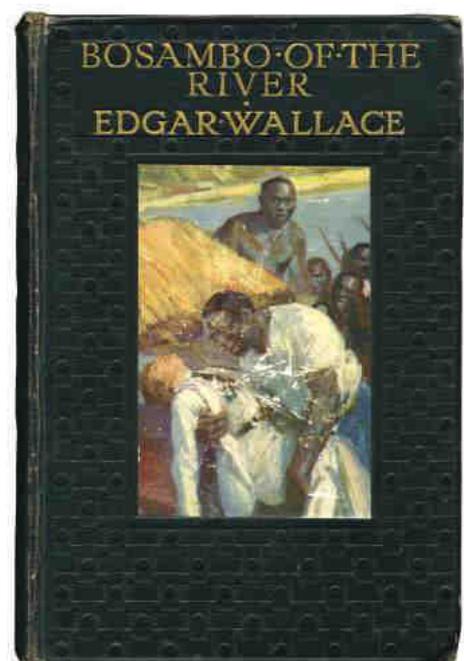
"The various incidents related are always interesting and occasionally rather terrifying, being often worked out by witches, warlocks and others."

For those who preferred to take their entertainment at home the works of P. G. Wodehouse, Arthur Conan Doyle and Jack London were popular. However, one of the most popular novels of the time was *The Riddle of the Sands*, written by Erskine Childers and published in 1903. It was one of the first espionage stories and ironically told the discovery of a German plot to invade Britain. As well as being popular for its story it was considered to be one of the most significant pieces of writing about the unpreparedness of Britain to fight a war with Germany. Of course, books to further the mind were considered worthy and a good read. This copy of *Men Who Have Made Themselves* (shown below), featuring the lives of several worthy self-made men, such as Benjamin Franklin and Robert Peel, was Charles Henry Grocock's personal copy. Children were fed a diet of books seen as educational but



Left: Charles Henry Grocock's copy of 'Men Who Have Made Themselves'.

Right: William Eaton Garner's personal copy of Edgar Wallace's 'Bosambo of the River'.



Hallaton Parish Room.

Reading + Recreation Clubs.

DE 1556/53.

Object:- To promote the welfare, intellectual, moral, + social, of all members: + to provide recreation for the winter evenings.

Rules.

- I The management shall be in the hands of the Rector as President, the Curate as Secretary + Treasurer, + a committee of 12 or more members.
- II. The members of committee for the season 1901-1902 are:-
- | | | |
|----------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Mr G. Barnett | Mr T. Marlow | Mr W. Butteriss |
| " W. Gibbs | " E. Hunter | " Chas Grocock |
| " J. Cotton | " G. Clarke | " W. Denley |
| " A. Broadwell | " G. Hill | " H. Howley |
- Each member of committee shall take his turn + be present from 7 or 7.30 till 9.30 p.m. on the night assigned to him, and shall be responsible for order in the room.
- III.* All parishioners over the age of 16 years shall be eligible as Senior Members, on payment of one shilling + for the season, which shall be in full + in advance.
- All parishioners from the age of 12 to 16 years, + all choir boys, shall be eligible as Junior Members, on payment of sixpence for the season, which shall be in full + in advance.
- IV. The Room shall be open for Senior Members every week-night, except Tuesdays, during the time stated in the rota, unless otherwise ordered.
- The Room shall be open for Junior Members every Monday + Friday from 6 to 7.30 p.m., unless otherwise ordered.

* Note:- Soldiers or Sailors in the army or navy, ^{on furlough} may be admitted free of charge during their temporary residence in Hallaton.

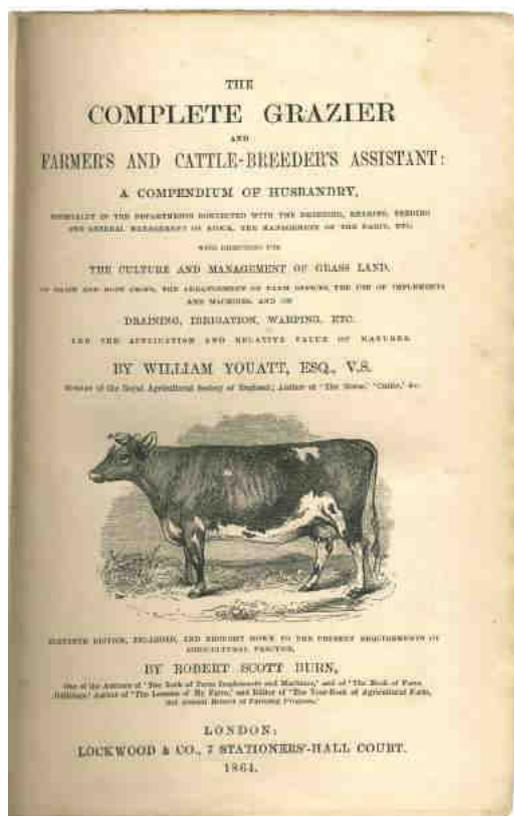
Rules continued.

- V. The members shall be responsible for good behaviour, & the careful use of furniture, books, papers, & genes, belonging to the room. It is strictly forbidden to remove any paper from the room on the day of issue, or any papers of any date without permission of the President.
Penalty for infraction of this rule:- Fine or Expulsion as the committee shall decide.
- VI. All gambling is strictly forbidden. All card playing, except Whist, is strictly forbidden.
Penalty for infraction of this rule:- Expulsion.
- VII. The Room shall be used when required by the President for public meetings, entertainments, & other purposes. It is to be understood that the Room is the property of the Rev. Canon Chetwynd-Stapylton, who has power to close or remove it.
- VIII. That a sub-committee of any five members be empowered to deal with any infractions of these rules.
- IX. Anything not provided for in these rules shall be determined by the committee.

L.P. Field
Secy & Treasurer

+ Note:- Subscriptions may be paid to any member of committee who is present, if the Treasurer be not present. A list of ~~subscribers~~ members is posted up in the room & when a subscription is paid the name of the payer may be added to the list by the member of committee receiving payment. No one is a member until his subscription be paid.

L.P. Field



The Pick family's copy of 'The Complete Grazier'.

for pure escapism adventure stories were the norm. The works of Edgar Wallace were some of the most widely read books in the world and the copy of *Bosambo Of The River*, illustrated above, was the personal reading copy of William Eaton Garner.

Not all books were for mere pleasure. *The Complete Grazier*, illustrated here, was a complete farming manual published in the 1860s covering all aspects of breeding cows, horses and sheep, animal diseases, management of grassland, a whole in depth section on manures and a lengthy part looking at the design of farmhouses and farm buildings.

If music was your thing then 1913 saw Boosey and Hawkes publish the 'Imperial Echoes', by Arnold Safroni, which would later become a famous World War II military march. For those who could afford it, though, the record player, or phonograph as it was then known, was coming into its own. By 1913, 30 million records had been sold worldwide, and it was possible not just to listen to classical music, with the likes of Enrico Caruso, but also songs by contemporary popular singers, such as the great music hall star Harry Lauder, whose song 'It's nicer to stay in bed' was released in 1913. Though perhaps not widely owned, there are several references in the parish magazine to gramophones or phonographs being used as part of public entertainments.

For public events the village would come together in a co-operative spirit when it came to special occasions. Two such events were the coronation celebrations of 1902 and 1911. The 1902 celebrations involved a dinner and sport events, and took place in a field owned by Mr King. There was also supposed to be a firework display, but this was cancelled because the King was taken ill, and his coronation ceremony postponed. Hallaton's celebrations, like elsewhere in the country, went ahead, as the future King had personally expressed his wish they should do exactly that. The sporting prowess of the Hallatonians of the day was tested in several races. The 100 yards handicap for men was won by William Butteriss, whilst the equivalent race for boys under 14 was won by Charles Marlow. Younger children and girls were entered into 50-yard races for boys under eight and under six, won by Fred Neale and Walter Tyler respectively. In the girls' categories the 50 yards for under 14-year olds was won by Florence Hawke, whilst Hilda Payne was successful in the under eight category. There were also some quite interesting sounding races, not perhaps found at similar events today. The splendid sounding Slow Bicycle Race saw Miss M. Neale triumphant, though as no one came second it is possible she was the only entrant, or that all the others fell off. A thread needle race was won by Mrs Cotton. Perhaps the three most unusual events were the pig hunt, in which a Mr Driver (unspecified) was successful (whether this entailed discovering a real pig is not certain); Mr T. Garner beat Enos Frisby to take the title in the bending race (a slalom race involving a line of bamboos); and finally the wonderful sounding saddle and cigar race saw Mr Pullen narrowly overcome Mr J. Payne. Of course, as was the case with all such events at the time, there was a serious religious aspect to the proceedings. The whole day was marked out to celebrate the King's accession to the throne and began at 8.00am with a celebration of the holy communion, and continued at 11.00am with a united service of intercession. Probably due to many in the village making the preparations for the afternoon activities the church was not especially full for the second service, a fact which rankled with the local clergy.

On 20th June 1911 there was a similar celebration organised on a village wide scale for the coronation of George V. The *Market Harborough Advertiser* gave the following description of proceedings:

"Most parts of this village were prettily decorated, and the festoons and archways were particularly effective. Illuminations were provided near the Hall corner. The committees of the festivities ARRANGED A VERY SUITABLE

PROGRAMME FOR THE DAY, BUT OWING TO A DOWNFALL OF RAIN THE SPORTS WERE SOMEWHAT DELAYED.

The memorable day was commenced by the church bells ringing out a merry peal at 7.00am, followed by a service at 8.00am. At 10.30 a procession was formed at the Hall corner, headed by the Sibley Brass Band, members of the Oddfellows and Friendly Society Club in their regalia, Ambulance Corps etc and marched to the church, when a second service was held, the band assisting in the musical portion of the service. After service the band played selects at the Market Cross. At 1.00pm about 250 men and women sat down to a good dinner, provided in a tent erected in Mr G. Plowright's orchard close, kindly lent for the occasion. A comic costume procession was arranged for the afternoon, prizes being awarded to the first three best, and great credit was due to all that took part. Children's sports were arranged and took place after the procession. At 4.30pm the women and children sat down to a good tea, after which the weather cleared, and the children's sports were resumed followed by the sports for adults. During the evening coronation mugs were presented by the Rev. T. J. Preece to children under 14 years of age. Dancing was indulged in, and a large bonfire with fireworks concluded the programme. The arrangements for the day were ably carried out by a committee, of which Mr R. J. Killingrey was the Hon. Sec."

Other major entertainments were put on with the co-operation of several people. One, typical of these, took place on 27th April 1906. It was largely organised through the co-operation of the school with its headteacher William Denley taking the lead role in both the performance and the church choir, from which many of the cast were drawn. The following description of events is taken from the Hallaton Parish Magazine on May 1906.

"Princess Ju-Ju

"This very pretty Japanese operetta was performed on April 27th at 3.00pm and again at 7.30pm. Among those present in the afternoon were the Rev. Canon and Mrs Stapylton, Rev. M. Hassall, of Rearsby (who spoke in very eulogistic terms of the entertainment), Mrs Hassall, Rev C. E. Danby and family, Miss Price Dent, Miss Taylor (the Grange), Rev Mr. Morriss and family, the misses Bankart, Mrs and Misses Duke (Great Easton), Rev. L.P. and Mrs Field and many others.

"In the evening the room was packed with a most enthusiastic audience, who thoroughly appreciated the performer's efforts to entertain them. The Rev L.P. Field complimented the various performers and the promoters of the entertainment on the excellent programme that had been provided, and on the able way in which the arrangements had been carried out. The first part of the programme of songs, etc. Miss and Master Hassall's songs were



Cast of Princess Ju-Ju. © F. C. Hawke.

much appreciated and Miss Love's song, 'My Little Wooden Hut' called forth much applause. The Rev L. P. Field also gave an excellent rendering of the song, 'I Bid my Love'. The second part consisted of the Japanese operetta, 'Princess Ju-Ju', the characters being as follows:- Princess Ju-Ju, Miss Mabel Grocock; La-La, Miss M Neale; Fly-Fly, Miss E. Killingley; Maids of Honour, Mrs Killingley, Miss Millie Grocock, Miss G Barnett, Miss C Hawke and Miss K Hawke; the Emperor Hokipokitippitoptop, Mr Denley; Ching Ching, Dr W. T. Hedley; Prince Shee Ma Guin, Mr Willey; Prince Fu Shu, Mr Killingley; Prince Go Bang, Mr W. Butteriss; Abud Hiram (magician), Mr F. Vendy; The Lord High Executioner, Mr H. Grocock; Spirits of the Night, Courtiers etc, girls in Irish, fairy and Red Indian costumes. The dramatis persona were made up principally of the members of the Church choir. The operetta was a very pretty piece, and was splendidly produced, all the performers doing capitally. The songs 'My Irish Molly O', 'Gay Little Japanese,' and 'My Little Carraboo,' which were excellently sung in costume by the Court Entertainers — twelve little girls, who acted and sang admirably — were much appreciated. The Japanese costumes and dresses, which were all made in the village by some of the performers, were very pretty and effective, and were universally admired. Mr G. Barker, of Leicester, ably led the orchestra, which was made up as follows: — Leader, Mr G. Barker; second violin, Miss Maggie Neal; cello Mr. Tom Fox; piano Miss G. Barnett and Miss Love.

"Part I of the programme was as follows: Selections on gramophone; song, 'I Bid My Love' Rev. L. P. Field; songs, (a) 'Kack's the Boy,' (b) 'Caller Herrin' Miss Hassall; song 'King of the Main,' Mr. Horseman; song, (a) 'The Old Woman's Dream,' (b) musical recitation, Master Hassall; song, 'My Little Wooden Hut,' Miss Love. Very great credit and praise is due to Mr Denley, who was indefatigable in his teaching and instructions to all who took part."

This is a marvellous example of the sort of village wide entertainment that Hallaton could put on when it joined together and there were other such performances over the years. The accompanying photograph of the cast shows the great amount of work that went into the costumes. Of course, such events did not occur all the time, but music was a vital source of entertainment and as well as the Church choir there were frequent smaller musical soirees. There was also a Hallaton Choral

Society. This largely revolved around the choir and would sometimes join up with other choirs from the local area. This became the Hallaton Amateur Operatic Society.

As well as several Hallatonians of the time being accomplished singers many could play musical instruments such as the banjo, guitar, piano, mandolin, cello and so on. One of the other major musical entertainments of Hallaton was the Hallaton Brass Band. The picture opposite illustrates the one of 1912. The band would play at all the major village events, providing marching and processional music as well as dance music. Though we know little of its formation it was undoubtedly a highly 'professional' outfit. The earliest photograph of the band is 1864, whilst the *Leicester Journal* newspaper of 23rd September 1853 records a meeting of the East Norton Oddfellows' Lodge where the Hallaton band played. So, we can assume that the Hallaton band was a long-established tradition. However, it appears that around 1910 they either disbanded for a while or had to be reformed in some way. The Hallaton Parish Magazine for March 1911 recorded the following:

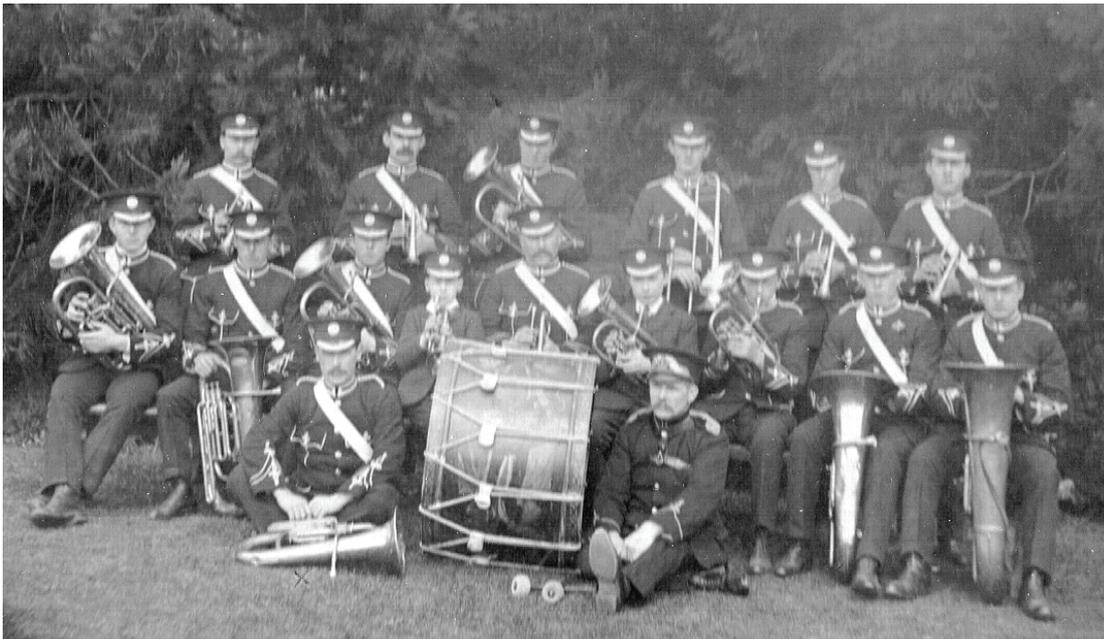
"It is now a well-known fact that the Hallaton brass band has been re-organised, for wherever one goes throughout the village there is the sound of some melodious instrument. The Evenings of Tuesday and Friday of each week have been set apart for the practice in the reading room."

On 17th August that year they played for the Church of England Temperance Society at their annual parade. The parish magazine for September that year noted:

"The Hallaton Brass Band gave their services heading the procession and the progress which they have made by their unwearied exertion and regular practice must have been evident to all."

There was, of course, a social side in being a member of the band and on 14th January 1913 they and their friends were entertained at a social and dance evening put on by the Rector. During the evening a purse of gold was presented on behalf of the band members to J. Watson, the bandmaster, in appreciation for his work. Newspaper reports on the event indicate that the uniform, worn for the first time the previous Easter, had finally been paid for.

They were much in demand, and on 27th July 1913 they were playing an open-air concert at Belton and just over a week later, on Monday 4th August, they were in Hallaton, where they played throughout the day at the annual flower show.



Hallaton Brass Band, Easter 1912.

Hallaton Brass Band in their new uniforms, 1912. Percy Buxton is on the left of the drum.

Some of the bigger entertainments required the involvement of the local dignitaries and well-to-do and were often put on to raise money for good or local causes. One such example took place on 4th April 1913 and was organised by Mrs Fletcher of Hallaton Hall. As the *Market Harborough Advertiser* of 8th April recalled:

“two variety entertainments were given in the schoolroom at Hallaton on Friday afternoon and evening in aid of the Boy Scout movement. Mrs Fletcher, of Hallaton Hall, was fortunate in obtaining performers of undoubted talent, with the gratifying result of packed ‘houses.’”

The entertainment was provided by a mix of local Hallaton talent and outsiders. Once again Mr Denley, the headteacher at Hallaton School, played a significant role in proceedings. Though the area they had to perform in was cramped, their dancing and movement was much appreciated. He was assisted by scholars and by Miss Etta Smith and Miss Elsie Simkin, who looked very charming as Spanish señoritas. The orchestra was composed of Miss Barnett, piano, Miss Neale, Miss Eileen Bates and Master Alec Bates on the violins. Among their offerings were the courtship scene, including the song ‘Subjected to Your Heavenly Gaze’ from Gilbert and Sullivan’s operetta *Utopia Limited*. There was a classical selection, including the highly popular ‘Vals Estudiantina’ by Emile Waldteufel. They also played the rag-time song ‘Everybody’s Doin’ It Now’, written by Irving Berlin in 1911.

From outside the village Mrs Fletcher acquired the services of the Honourable Robert Noel who, according to the paper:

“brought down the house with his songs and recitations — his song ‘Give it to Father’ (a musical hall song made popular by Vesta Tilley) and his imitation of a German speaking down the phone will long be remembered.”

Other performers were a Mrs Chaplin from London, who possessed a charming voice and sang traditional songs, including ‘Who’ll Buy My Lavender’ and ‘Killarney’, and a Mr Lionel French who was highly amusing and

“In his inimitable patter songs raised the audience to a high pitch of enthusiasm.”

His songs included a highly amusing version of the popular old song, ‘The Village Pump’, one easy to adapt to local people and places, and one which will be known to fans of the Archers.

However, according to the paper:

“The ‘star’ performer was Mrs Calverley Bewicke, whose elocutionary powers are so often enlisted and appreciated in the course of charity. She recited ‘The Scout’ by Rudyard Kipling, ‘The Two Glasses’ by Ella Wheeler Wilcox, a scene from ‘The School For Scandal’ and the sleepwalker’s scene from Macbeth.”

Two other events at the beginning of 1913 typify the more formal entertainments that were a regular

feature of Hallaton village life at the time. Both took place in the schoolroom. The first was the annual church social and dance. This was very well attended, and the food was provided by the Rector and other well-off parishioners. It was apparently of excellent quality and was presided over by a committee of the following ladies: Mrs J. Garner, Mrs G. Smith, Mrs C. Plowright, Mrs Willey, Mrs T. Simkin and Mrs Killingley. The room was prettily decorated for the occasion and, as was often the case, the music was provided Mr Denley, ably supported by Miss Grace Barnett and Miss Neale. The dancing went on late into the night.

The second event was the annual ball, sometimes referred to as the tradesman's ball, which was put on to raise money for the Leicester Royal Infirmary on 31st January. Possibly originally conceived in 1883 at a meeting in the grocer's shop on High Street, it was one of the social highlights of the year. Horse drawn carriages and vehicles would arrive at the school carrying well-dressed ladies and gentlemen. Carpets were laid down leading to the school and those attending passed underneath an awning before entering the decorated schoolroom. The committee in 1913, this time all men, comprised E. E. Frisby, G. Smith, Ted Hawke, W. Butteriss, J. Laundon, W. Sayers and Cyril Grocock. On this occasion, perhaps because members of the Hallaton band wished to attend the event, the music was supplied by the Alexandra Quadrille Band from Leicester. According to the *Market Harborough Advertiser*:

“they supplied the music in their usual good style to the strains of which an exceptionally good company kept up the dancing until the early hours and a jolly good time was spent.”

The food was supplied by Mr Andrews from the Wilson's Arms at Allexton. It appears likely he sold the food at the event as he had applied for a licence to do so at the Market Harborough Petty Sessions. The food was apparently excellent, and the event raised £4-7s-6d for the hospital.

The three Hallaton inns, The Bewicke, The Fox and The Royal Oak, were popular and would have been frequented almost certainly exclusively by the men of the village. In 1913 the licensee of the Fox Inn, John Zanker, left and the licence was transferred to Frank Hollis. The inventory and valuation of the trade fixtures and furniture survives and gives us a fascinating insight into what the Hallatonians of the time liked to drink in their inns and a tiny amount of information regarding the inside of the inn. The tap room was a simple affair with two painted seats and a tap table lit by

lamps. The bar, with its three-pull beer engine, had seven Windsor chairs, an arm chair and a couch. There was a hearth rug on the floor, a lamp on the chimney breast, a hanging lamp and shade, and another standing lamp. There were also three iron spittoons.

The drinks available were perhaps of a wider choice than we might imagine. The cellar contained barrels of XXX ale, a mild ale. Breweries produced the ales, generally, in four strengths, designated by the number of Xs, with one X being the weakest. They were dark in colour and brewed to be drunk young, and were much stronger than today. There were bottles of Guinness, Bass ale and Bass stout. For pale ale drinkers there were All Saints light ale and their India Pale Ale. For non-beer drinkers there was Hollands gin, plus various varieties of whisky, cherry brandy, ginger wine, ginger brandy, rum, claret, port and sherry. Perhaps the most unusual drink available to Hallatonians at the time was a bottle of Beevinalt. This was the brand name for Glendenning's own version of a beef and malt ale. Described in their adverts as “*the great energizer for the delicate, invalids and the aged.*” As well as its supposed restorative qualities it was reputedly made containing a large element of port and had a high alcoholic content. All drinks were stored in the cellar, though the bar stocked them all too. You could also buy something to smoke at the bar. Stock at the time included 274 1d cigars, 107 2d cigars, 51 3d cigars, two boxes, and another 40 packets of woodbines, three boxes of Navy Cut cigarettes, a further 18 packets of 3d cigarettes, make unspecified and 3lbs 15½ ounces of tobacco.

The men were not the only ones who apparently knew their way to the inns. On one occasion Thomas Osborne, coachman at Hallaton Manor, was returning from East Norton with both Mr and Mrs Price-Dent, when suddenly the horses turned sharply into the yard of the Fox Inn rather than heading towards the Manor House. Thomas explained they had been distracted by the smell of water when they were very thirsty. Apparently, he got away with his story though it was obvious the horses had called in at the Fox so many times before as they knew exactly where to go.

The inns were, however, not just places for drinking. They provided meeting places for the local Oddfellows societies and were where the Hallaton Whist Club originated. Card games were a useful source of cheap entertainment. Newspapers make frequent references to whist drives taking place in aid of charity and local fundraising, and on 30th August 1909 the Hallaton Whist Club was founded.

A committee was formed, and this would meet on an annual basis at the Fox Inn. On 10th November 1910 the Hallaton Whist League was formed. There were six teams, one representing each of the villages of Medbourne, Cranoe and Slawston, one known as Hallaton Cross Club, and two other teams from Hallaton. It is not known where each match took place, but it seems likely that the schoolroom was used for a modest fee. This was an autumn and winter entertainment and matches were played from the start of October each year to the end of March the following year. By the 1912/13 season there had been some changes to the teams taking place. Horninghold appears to have replaced Medbourne. There were still teams for Cranoe and Slawston and Hallaton still had three teams. They were now Hallaton, Hallaton Cross, and the Royal Oak.

If the inns of Hallaton proved the catalyst for the whist league and other card games, then the church and chapel were the drivers behind other village entertainments. The church choir would have been a source of great enjoyment for those involved. We have already seen that they were involved with village productions and they were also part of the Hallaton Amateur Operatic Society, which was formed in December 1904. There were also local choral festivals, such as the one in June 1908, where choirs from several local churches got together to put on a combined performance. The church choir did not only involve adults, and in 1907 prizes were given to children who took part in the highest number of evensong services. There had also traditionally been a church choir trip. This was undertaken on special trains and had involved trips to the seaside and to London to see the sights. For many children in the choir this provided their first opportunity to see the sea or to visit London. There were also cricket matches and teas, the latter organised by Hallaton Hall. By 1913 the choir had become very popular and the number of members large enough to cause some strategic seating problems in the church. This was resolved at the annual Vestry meeting on 28th March 1913.

“A vote of thanks was then given to the lady members of the choir for their kind and valued assistance in the past. Now that the choir has increased so much of late, so much in numbers, it was decided to ask them in future to sit in the body of the church.”

The ladies' response to this is perhaps not surprisingly not recorded.

Also connected with the church was the Hallaton Bellringers Society. Members paid a

small subscription fee to join and met regularly throughout the year, and of course were responsible for playing the bells at special occasions. This was also a way of combining fun and potentially getting money for it. At the end of each membership year the subscriptions were added up, and once any expenses were deducted a dividend was paid out dependent upon the number of attendances.

Another similar organisation affiliated to the church was the Mothers Meeting and Clothing Club. Clubs affiliated with the church had existed in Hallaton for a long time as this fabulous letter of 24th October, from C. B. Graham to Rev. Chetwynd Stapylton, clearly illustrates (see overleaf).

These clubs were dual purpose, providing not only a very basic savings scheme but also a chance for members of the clubs to meet and socialise. The Mothers Meeting and Clothing Club had meetings when, usually around 40 ladies, would meet for tea, after which there would be entertainment in the form of singing and music, with the event usually concluded with the national anthem. There was a subscription fee involved, and at the end of the year a dividend, usually around 2 shillings in the pound, was paid out to members.

The men of Hallaton could also join the Hallaton Ambulance Corps. Fitted out with smart uniforms they undertook courses in first aid, and by 1914 this was being run by Dr Stott.

One of the activities to which men devoted their spare time was on their allotments. Not only did this enable them to grow food to supplement their family's diet, but it also provided a chance for vigorous exercise and had a social side to it as well. There was the Hallaton and District Horticultural Society which each year, on the August Bank Holiday weekend, put on an annual produce and flower show in Hallaton. The one that took place in 1913 was the tenth. It was open to people from villages all around the area and was a competitive occasion but also an enjoyable one. The wide range of prizes are worth detailing pretty much in full, for they not only show how big an occasion this was, but demonstrate the sheer variety of vegetables, fruit and flowers grown in the village at the time.

Prizes were awarded for the following: peas, broad beans (both short and long pod), runner beans, cauliflowers, cabbages, potatoes (both round and kidney), carrots, spring sown onions and autumn sown onions, French beans, beetroot (both round and long), Cos and cabbage lettuce, tomatoes, turnips, marrows and shallots. Prizes for fruit included red gooseberries, white gooseberries, red currants, white currants, black currants and

21.1556/129/11

c/o Rev. J. H. Eld
 Belbroughton Rectory
 Stourbridge
 Oct 24 - 94

Dear Canon Stapylton

1. Clothing Club
 I think last year Mrs Hayling gave the bonus to the club $\frac{3}{6}$ on 3/9 without any subscription though this was much uncalled for Feb still the lady would do so. Annual subscribers to the club are Mrs Price-Dent, Mrs Bankart, Miss Taylor & the late Rector. Miss Bayler gives $\frac{1}{6}$ the others $\frac{1}{6}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ I forget which, they will know.

2. Coal Club
 The bonus to this club used

2/
 to be given from the money that was given from the charities known as the "Rector's Gift" in 1892 it was £5 & in 1893 with previous years it had been more. Last year Mrs Bewicke's agent sent me £10 to be given away, so I paid the bonus to the coal club from this & gave the rest away in money. I gave too much to the people in the coal club as I was expecting the "Rector's Gift" which was done away last year & consequently I had not quite enough to give to all & there was a little disappointment over it: all the people in

this club had a bonus, if I remember right it was $\frac{5}{6}$ each, I am not certain then, all the people expected something, so it was a very difficult matter to satisfy them.

3. Children's Club
 I do not know in the least what was done: I ended before the late Rector's death, & was in full working order when I took charge of it. Some of the children probably would know what bonus they received & when it came from, I think Gertrude's children might know or the assistant teachers if still at Hallaton. It is all the information I can give you, I am

worry it is not more definite. I am very glad to answer any questions which may turn up: I am getting on fairly well here, & it is a large parish in area with two churches. Thank you so much for asking me over I shall certainly come sometime. I cannot say when the presents will come from you visitation. Mrs Price-Dent asked me to stay at the Manor house sometime. I thought of visiting in the week next summer. Thank you for your letter.
 Yours sincerely
 C. B. Graham
 (Rain, rain, rain today)

Letter from C. B. Graham to Rev. Chetwynd-Stapylton regarding history of Hallaton's clubs.
 ROLLR (DE 1556/129/11).

apples. There were various prizes for collections of fruit and vegetables.

Prizes for flowers were given in the following classes: stocks, carnations, sweet peas and roses. There were also prizes for window plants, window plants in flower, annuals and cut flowers. For children prizes were awarded for best bouquet of wildflowers, best bouquet of wild grasses, best collection of wild grasses, single species of wildflower.

Produce was not neglected. There were prizes for best butter and eggs together, where the butter had to weigh exactly 1lb. Also rewarded were newly laid white eggs, newly laid brown eggs, honey, currant cakes and plain cakes.

In addition, several special prizes were awarded. These were best allotment in Lady Close, best allotment on Holt Hill, best and most attractive flower garden in Horninghold, best cottage window plants in Hallaton, best dish of boiled potatoes, best table decoration, and for children under 15 there were two prizes, one for girls for the best essay on flowers, and one for boys for the best essay on gardening.

Mrs Fletcher awarded a silver rose bowl to be awarded to the person who gained the most prizes. Should the same exhibitor win the bowl in two consecutive years then they would get to keep it. A thoroughly entertaining day was rounded off in the evening with dancing to the accompaniment of the Hallaton Band.

Entertainment for children was officially organised, usually as part of the Sunday School or through the Church of England Temperance Society. Each year there was a Sunday School treat for the children, which usually involved the Rector putting on tea followed by sports and games. For example, the annual treat of 1911 was well described in the parish magazine's October issue.

"In spite of the wind and the rain the children assembled at the Reading Room in time for a 4 o'clock tea, consisting of meat sandwiches, various cakes, pastries etc. It was thought wiser owing to the inclemency of the weather and the danger to the children of taking cold to postpone the sports until the first fine day. This fortunately proved to be the next one, Thursday, when the scholars and others mustered in full numbers in the rectory field.

"Games — football, rounders, races and various others including swinging (the swings having been specially erected for the occasion) were indulged in, packets of sweets being given as prizes. Mr Denley and the teachers were indefatigable in their efforts to make the time pass pleasantly

for all. Toward 7.30pm the children gathered on the lawn where cakes and lemonade were distributed, the children afterwards shewing what splendid lungs Hallatonians possess by their hearty cheering."

Children's events were also incorporated into wider village formal occasions, usually ending up with sports and racing. Where possible, it appears that Hallatonians wanted their children to have fun whilst being educated at the same time. Hence the Church of England Temperance Society would organise scientific exhibitions for the children to take part in, and other such educational entertainment would often include lantern slide shows put on in the Reading Room.

In fact, lantern slides were not confined to children's entertainment. The parish magazine makes frequent references to those put on for adults. Perhaps one of the most popular of these took place on 28th November 1911. This was given on Canada by the Canadian Government's agent, James Millar. There was a good attendance from both Hallaton and surrounding villages. Millar gave interesting descriptions of the land, climate and Canadian life in general. He also showed how to obtain farms at small costs. As we have seen in the biographies of the men and women, it is likely several young Hallaton people were influenced by this talk and emigrated over the following years to Canada.

By 1911 there was an active Boy Scout movement in Hallaton. On 25th May that year there was a boy scout meeting with what was described as cinematograph entertainment in Hallaton school. The meeting put over the general aims of the scout movement and must have met with an enthusiastic response, because after it Mr Denley offered to act as the first scoutmaster. There was a countrywide drive to encourage boys to join the scouts at that time. Founded in 1908 it was, like other similar movements of the time, borne out of the mishaps and shocks provided by the country's mismanagement of the Boer War. Very much seen as an evangelical response to the problems associated with urban poverty, it was part of what might loosely be called a muscular Christian movement. As the Hallaton Parish Magazine stated:

"By joining the scouts he becomes useful to his country and everyone."

The implication being that if he didn't he wouldn't. Of course, there can be no denying the Boy Scouts popularity, and within two years of formation there were over 100,000 members. The boys of Hallaton

showed their enthusiasm and on 11th November 1911, a District Scout Master visited Hallaton to enrol 10 boys as 'tender feet'. Those enrolled were Belton Gilbert, James Horsley, Bertie Stedman, Willie Garner, Manton Willey, Arthur Garfield, Frederick Sayer, Willis Driver, Leonard Neale and Edgar Simkin. All were qualified to wear the uniform. They were joining an organisation that had a message of manliness and preparedness. There must be a fair chance that all of them enjoyed the populist boys' literature of the day. Typified by George Alfred Henty, who produced at least two books a year, all comprising the same formula of a manly hero, lots of adventure and a bit of suspense, they proved wildly popular. The weekly magazine *The Boy's Own Paper* followed a similar formula, and selling for just 1d per issue was a huge hit, and it is highly likely was read by many young boys in Hallaton. Above all, whatever the intentions of its founder the scout movement, just like the *Boy's Own Magazine*, was fun, and that is what it appears the people of Hallaton and their children tried to have in all the things they did to entertain themselves within the confines of Hallaton itself. Fun for children could be found on the streets, which were much quieter then. One of the most popular street games in Hallaton was 'duck stone'. A smaller stone was placed on top of a large stone, and you tried to throw a stone at it to dislodge the small stone. All the while a close eye was kept out for the local policeman, who thought stone throwing in public was dangerous. The Hallaton plantation was a popular area for children to play and Michael Stott once organised an Indian war there. For weeks children collected feathers and sowed them on brown paper headdresses. The battle was an exciting adventure for them. Other activities included scrumping, blackberrying and playing conkers.

Michael Stott told his daughters of a rather more gruesome entertainment enjoyed by Hallaton's children.

"Apparently, on Fridays, a certain farmer Brown, would have a pig slaughtered and the little boys of the village would hear those first squeals and race through the village and over a cattle grid to the farm, to see the poor pigs demise. Daddy said it was a huge highlight of the week for all the little boys."

Outside the village was another world of entertainment. For Hallaton villagers prepared to travel a little further afield than the amenities in the village, Market Harborough would have been reasonably easy to visit, where they would have

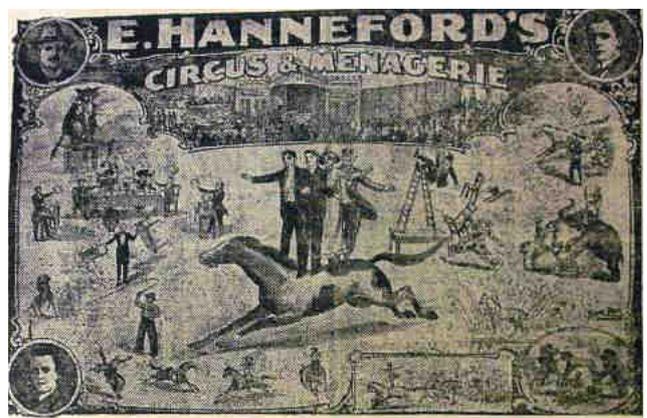
found a picture house and plays being performed. At the Market Harborough Assembly Rooms in January 1914 you could see amateur theatricals in aid of the funds of the Cottage Hospital and St John Ambulance Division. If cinema was your thing, then at the County Electric Palace on The Square in Market Harborough in January 1914 there were six performances nightly at 8.15. The proprietors were the United County Picture Halls Ltd, and the Manger Alfred Guise. Films featured, such as *Strong Man's Burden* (Drama), *Magnetic Maid* (Trick Comic) and the *Largest Boat Ever Launched Sideways* (Coloured Interesting). Also, all the latest news in pictures was shown at the discretion of the management.

For a more educational evening there was the fortnightly Market Harborough Literary and Debating Society, whilst for men who fancied billiards, darts or skittles the Conservative, Liberal and Working Men's Clubs were available to join with league tables published in the *Harborough Advertiser*.

For some outdoor fun on the water you could visit the Boathouse Pleasure Grounds on Leicester Road, Market Harborough, where there was boating, tennis, skittles and bowls. Admission was free, but hot water and crockery could be hired at the cost of 3d per head.

Of course, Leicester provided even more attractions with both the Pavilion Theatre and the Palace Theatre of Varieties on Belgrave Gate.

Every now and then one-off special entertainments came to town. No more so than on 27th April 1914, when there was a return visit of Hannefords Royal Canadian Circus and Menagerie. This included a new act called the four human aeroplanes, jugglers, acrobats, elephants and other animals. There were two shows, one at 2.30pm and the other at 7.30pm and reserved seats for either two or three shillings could be booked.



Newspaper feature on forthcoming Hanneford's Circus.



Hallaton football team, unknown date. Percy Buxton is standing far left back row as we look at it, with Ted Hawke on his left.

For those with an appetite for more active forms of leisure then sport offered some opportunities, even though the number of activities was limited. Three regular sporting activities took place in and around Hallaton. These were football, cricket and hunting. The first two were operated by clubs within the village, whilst hunting was run by Mr Fernie's Hunt, which met regularly throughout the hunting season, though not always at Hallaton. Of course, an annual sporting event which occupied many of the men of the village was the annual Bottle Kicking which took place, as it still does, every Easter.

Football and cricket are known to have gone on in the village as early as the late 1880s, and in the 1890s Evan Huggard, then head gardener to Mr Bankart at Hallaton Hall, is known to have levelled

off a playing field on Mr Bankart's land, which he kindly lent to the village so that football and cricket could take place. The playing field was not where it is today. It was at the top of Church Hill opposite the Manor House.

Cricket is the better documented among the records we have. For football we must rely on snippets which appeared in local newspapers. They seem to have played in the Market Harborough League, but not always with much success. For example, from the limited reports we have, we can see that in November 1910 they lost 4-0 to Kibworth Grammar School and 3-1 to Great Bowden. As well as the main football team there was also a Sunday School Football Club. This appears to have had a fairly nomadic existence. Initially they enjoyed the



Hallaton cricket team.

use of a field supplied by Mr Eaton. The captain was John Luck Colston, other members of the team were Herbert Driver, Herbert Eaton, Vic Cotton, Albert Tyler, George Payne and J. Hawke. They also played matches on fields owned by both Hermas West and Luck Colston. It was apparently difficult to find a field near the village.

Hallaton Cricket Club seems to have had a good social side to it. Each autumn a dinner would be held at The Fox Inn, where the accounts would be read and approved and prizes for batting and bowling would be distributed. The club operated both a first and second eleven, the latter being developed so that younger members would get to play some matches. The season would usually commence around the beginning of May, sometimes with a match between the married and single, and this was followed by a tea and open social evening, usually held at The Fox. For those wishing to play there was an annual membership fee, which in 1905 was two shillings per season. They took part in what was known as the Keith Fraser Cup competition which comprised several local villages. Hallaton was not always that successful. A typical match was that against the village of Ashley, which took place in Hallaton on Saturday 1st June 1912. Set 63 to win Hallaton could only manage a paltry 17 all out with extras being the joint top scorer with three. The side that day consisted of E. Almond, T. Neale, R. Hawke, Dr Morrison, C. Fletcher, F. G. Andrews, H. Hawke, A. Taylor, A. Gilbert, A. Kilbourne and H. Marlow.

If football and cricket were the staple sports of the village then hunting was 'the' sport of the county of

Leicestershire. It not only provided entertainment and exercise for those taking part but also provided employment for those in the local area. In 1913 the local hunt was Mr Fernie's Hunt, and he kept his stables in the neighbouring village of Medbourne. The hunt was originally founded in 1853, when Sir Richard Sutton, finding the Quorn country too large, encouraged his son Richard to hunt an independent pack in South Leicestershire.

When Sir Richard died in 1856 his son retired, and the offer of local squire William Tailby to hunt the country on an independent basis was gratefully accepted by farmers and landowners. For a time, he was also able to hunt much of the present Cottesmore country, west of Oakham. The sport that he continued for the next 22 seasons with a succession of different huntsmen was of a very high order. These were halcyon days for South Leicestershire, with long runs, big fields, a fashionable country and a very popular and well-known Master. When Mr Tailby retired in 1878 the country was reclaimed by the Quorn, but most landowners and farmers wished to remain independent and Sir Bache (pronounced 'Beach') Cunard (of the shipping line and then of Hallaton Hall) offered to take over the hunt and act as its Master. The Quorn hunt would not back down, and the dispute was referred to the Hunting Committee of Boodles Club in London, then generally recognised as the governing body of foxhunting. In a celebrated judgment, which effectively ended this acrimonious dispute, the committee decided that the country was legally part of the Quorn, but that the Quorn should allow it to be operated independently if the landowners



Hunt meeting at Hallaton Hall, 1898. Courtesy National Archives (COPY 1/434/426). © F. C. Hawke.



The Hunt meets at North End just outside Hallaton Hall, circa 1904. © F. C. Hawke.

and farmers in the country wished. Thus, Sir Bache commenced his Mastership of ten years.

When Sir Bache retired in 1888 he was succeeded by Charles Fernie of Keythorpe Hall, who was to remain Master for 31 seasons (although he himself hunted infrequently after a bad hunting accident in 1906). In that period, he employed two celebrated huntsmen. The first was Charles Isaac, huntsman until 1901 and creator of some of the well-known coverts in the country. He was succeeded by Arthur Thatcher, generally reckoned to be one of the three great huntsmen of the time. The hunting in that period, when the country was all grass and there was virtually no wire (at least during the winter), was of a very high order. Market Harborough overtook Melton Mowbray as the centre of the foxhunting world. A Monday or Thursday with the Fernie was certainly a much sought-after day in the hunting calendar. The presence in Great Bowden of John Henry Stokes, the principal horse dealer in Europe, also contributed significantly to the popularity and standing of the hunt.

Many of the famous hunts took place at this time, including the celebrated Hegg Spinney Run from near Hallaton in 1911, ending in a kill near Oakham after a hunt of three hours 20 minutes and 28½ miles with a 9-mile point.

Those taking part would assemble, usually near or at one of the big houses and estates in the area. If not staying at the actual house the railway provided an easy means of access. Hugh Mostyn Pritchard in his hunting journals recalls that

“On Thursday 21st March 1908 Millie and Margorie [editor’s note: he is referring to

Millicent and Marjorie Fletcher, both later of Hallaton Hall] and I went by the breakfast train to Hallaton.” (F. Pallister de Costobadie, *Annals of the Billesdon Hunt*, p. 188. Chapman and Hall, 1914).

It transpires from his diaries that the Fletcher family, who later owned Hallaton Hall, were all keen huntsmen and women. The famous hunt of 1911 is vividly described by Hugh Mostyn Pritchard.

“Saturday 25th February 1911. Mr. Fernie’s at Horninghold. A morning towards the end of February, the sky slightly over-cast, and a warm moist Springy feeling in the air: a hunting morning, indeed, or I am much mistaken.

“The Cottesmore are at Burton, and temptation is strong in that direction, but Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher, Millie, and I went our way to join Mr. Fernie’s pack at Horninghold; Millie on ‘Curling Pin’ and I with a new quad between my knees and ‘Week End’ in reserve.

“Of Horninghold one never expects great things, as the proportions of the field testify this morning, but in February foxes are strong, and you may find a stranger who has come from afar; if so, look out for a bit of fun. Of such calibre undoubtedly was the big sandy fellow, who stood so gallantly before Mr. Fernie’s bitch pack this memorable day. But to my story.

“It is barely a quarter-to-twelve, as in full view of the field our pilot shakes the inhospitable dust of Hegg Spinney from his brush, and sets his mask for the Stockerston Woodlands. Hardly promising,

this! and many of us take our time as Thatcher lays his hounds on the line, and they disappear over the brow to the left of the Uppingham Road. But we're wrong today, though; for, by the time Muckleborough Spinney is behind us, the pack are crossing the brook into Cottesmore territory, and we bustle along on the certainty of catching them in Wardley Wood or Stoke End, as we have done many a time before.

"But no, by jove! they hesitate a moment below Beaumont Chase, and before we have time to make up the ground they are over the brow and heading for Uppingham, with Thatcher and a few lucky ones in close attendance. You cross the Turnpike to the left of the town, and after another mile catch them at Glaston, cursing your stupidity for a run lost. But calm yourself my friend, this is merely the beginning, and you'll be glad of that extra bit in hand before many more miles are put behind. There is no time for a breather yet, for hounds have turned sharp to the left, and there is the road and bottom ahead; a gate leads from the former, and two more fences bring us down to the latter, where for a moment the bitches look like giving us the Slip. A practicable place is quickly found, and Thatcher gives us the office over the rails and water, and then another mile of good going and easy fences bring us up to Preston. So far the pace has been good, and hounds have come along with hardly a check; they pause by the village, but Thatcher lifts them across the road to hunt more slowly down to the brook beyond; two nice fences and the bridge handy give us a good place with the pack as they take up the running on the big pastures below Manton Gorse. That well-known covert affords no shelter for foxes this year, and leaving it to their right, the bitches drive on over the grass as if they had only just started. 'Hullo! here's that belt of trees we see in Giles' picture.' We crawl in over the ruined wall and jump out beyond, getting the worst of the turn as they swing away right-handed over the brow, and come down to the Manton brook at an ugly place; but there is no time to be lost when they run like this. Boore has his nippers out in a twinkling. 'It isn't a picture when you have cut the wire' Massey suggests, and Thatcher, seeing the wisdom of the remark, jumps the fence to the left, and crossing higher up joins his hounds as they set their helm for Orton Park Wood, three good miles ahead. Here's a picture for you now! I'll stake my hat you can't beat this! Eighteen couple of those fleet little ladies racing ahead; plenty of room to gallop and jump, the

pink of Leicestershire before you, and fourteen good miles already behind. This may fall to your lot but once in a life-time!

"There's a scent in covert, too, and the pack drive through so quickly that Thatcher is only just in time to catch them beyond, and some of us who follow his boy down past the right of the wood nearly get left for our pains. Three fields beyond they are at fault, and for a moment it looks as if Lady Wood were the point, when a timely holloa on the brow enables Thatcher to get them going again, and we thank our stars that the pace is easier to Knossington; there is a slight pause by the right of the village, and as they carry the line into the spinnies you have time to look around. Sixteen miles.

"I make it, and a good many have dropped out. Falls have not been very numerous, though young Thatcher has taken a nasty one, luckily without ill-effect. His father has been cutting out the work, riding and handling his hounds in the most brilliant form. Messrs. Gough, Massey and Mason, Major Schofield, Captains Holland and Porter, Messrs. Fletcher, Mawson, Gilillan and several others are there, but of the fair sex only three have come with us to this point, the two Miss Maudslays and Millie, while Mrs. Fernie, Mrs. Fletcher, Mrs. Gough, Mrs. McKenzie and others join in here. For two or three minutes hounds can be heard running the line in covert, and then Boore's cheery holloa brings us all scampering up the centre ride. Mr. Fernie is very anxious not to go on with a fresh fox, but the fellow viewed away from the top end is undoubtedly the hunted one, and, moreover, answers closely the description of our original pilot; so we plod on by Cold Overton, praying for those second horses that don't somehow turn up. Hunting in a right-handed ring, the pack come round to the left of Knossington village, and then settle down to run their hardest. 'Really, this is beyond a joke!' You'd sell your soul for a fresh horse; it's a sheer impossibility to go on with this! Millie pulls 'Curling Pin' up, its twenty miles she has come if it's a yard, and the mare has carried her well; but there is an end to all things, and she turns reluctantly homewards.

"A moment later I get 'Week End,' and push on with Captain Holland to catch them near Owston cross-roads. With the far famed Marfield Vale before him, our gallant pilot looks like going for ever, but the ladies have pushed him hard these last few miles, and one field short of Peek's

covert he doubles to the right for Somerby. Surely the end cannot be far off now! They are actually in the same field with him by the village, but a change has come over the sky, and under the heavy black clouds scent has dwindled to nothing. 'You must handle this fellow' I remark, as I slide off to unfasten a gate for Thatcher, but he doesn't seem any too confident. There are a dozen of us only in attendance now, the lucky ones who got their second horses, but the pack are on their noses as they cross the bottom by the Somerby-Owston Road, and are pulled up altogether on the two big fallows beyond. On the grass again the line is clearer, and they push along merrily over the road and up the hill on the top road there is news of our fox, and we jump out at an easy place (we want them easy now, by jove and keeping along the brow, get a glimpse of him to the right of Cold Overton. A mile further Jack Boore, still on his first horse, has viewed him again, heading for Orton Park Wood; Thatcher lifts the bitches along the road, and hitting off the line they hunt slowly down the left of Lady Wood and forward still till the fork roads, Short of Braunstone, are reached. There is not a murmur to proclaim a line beyond the road, so Thatcher takes them back up the last field to where there is a haystack and a drain. Besides the huntsman and two hunt -servants there are six survivors: Mr. Gough, of Belton; Captains Porter and Holland, young Mr. Greaves, of Quenby; a farmer and your humble servant, while young Mr. Murray-Smith turns up a quarter-of-an-hour later. But the finale is yet to come. Thatcher is standing on the stick-heap by the drain, bitterly disappointed at the disappearance of his beaten fox, when the hounds feather up the furrow; he is off his perch in a second, cheering on the pack on foot, and handles his fox a moment later. And so after all this remarkable hunt ended with blood, and in this respect holds the advantage over the great Waterloo run of the Pytchley, and the Greatwood run with the Duke of Beaufort, with which it has been compared in the papers. I have since talked it over with Thatcher and worked out the points carefully on the map; and not allowing for small deviations I cannot make it less than twenty-eight-and-a-half miles. The distance between the farthest points, i.e., Hegg Spinney and the point where our fox turned short of Peak's covert, is approximately nine miles by crow-fly. A great deal has been said about the change of foxes, for it seems almost incredible that one fox could have stood before hounds for all that distance, but I doubt if they changed in Orton Park Wood, and

it was undoubtedly a hunted fox they took from Knossington. Foxes lie out at this time of year, and they may have picked up a fresh one anywhere, but Thatcher thinks that in all probability he killed the one he started with. Be that as it may, he hunted his hounds in masterly fashion, and may be congratulated on having scored a run, the like of which is not to be found for many years back in the history of fox-hunting. Postscript: the time from start to finish was about 3 hours 20 minutes. It is a curious coincidence that this run began close to the spot where Colonel Anstruther Thompson whipped off his hounds in the dark at the end of the Waterloo run in February 1866." (Pallister de Costobadie, *op. cit.*, pp. 192–95).

Though the sport was good, hunting was not without its fair share of accidents and sometimes fatalities. Horses often fell, and their riders crushed beneath them. Though farmers were usually required by landowners to clear the wire from around their fields in the hunting season this could not always be guaranteed to have been done. Running repairs to bridles and other equipment had to be done during the hunt.

The 1912–13 season was marked by a very wet winter and the ground became very difficult to ride, and good hunts were harder to come by. As 1913 turned towards 1914:

"The weather was so fine and mild that every countryside was daily alive with foot people, anxious to participate in whatever fun there was going, and consequently many a fox 'got headed'. Still, on Thursday November 13th, there was a very fine hunt, embracing an eight-mile point, from Langton Cowdale — as it used to be commonly spelt and pronounced fifty years ago — by way of Glooston and Cranoe and along Hallaton Dingles to Ram's Head at Keythorpe; and thence across the stiffly-fenced Horninghold region to Merevale Holt, where fresh foxes came to the rescue of a toil-worn comrade." (Pallister de Costobadie, *op. cit.*, p. 198).

Hunting also had an important social side and the Fletchers of Hallaton Hall were renowned for the post-hunt entertainment. Herbert Fletcher was renowned for his hospitality and regularly held 'open house' for his friends after a day's hunting. Friends gathered in the front hall around 5.30pm to reminisce on the day's events over a glass of whisky. Mr and Mrs Fletcher were hosts on social occasions, notably of dinner parties which preceded the ball on Friday evening. Fifteen to twenty guests attended

dinner at 7.30pm — the ladies wearing evening gowns and individual jewellery and the gentlemen in hunting coats with individual lapel colours. After dinner the guests left in their cars for the hunt ball in the Assembly Rooms in Market Harborough, or in another of the privately-owned houses.

Lists of guests at these events, which appeared in the local papers, frequently noted the extended Fletcher family of Hallaton to be guests at the hunt balls.

Hunt balls, held between November and March, began around 10.00pm. An orchestra entertained the guests. The Polka, old fashioned waltzes and a set of lancers were popular dances. Supper was served at midnight. A typical menu included soup, three fish dishes (salmon, lobster and prawn), six meat and poultry dishes, salads, sandwiches and eight different desserts. The menu was often printed on whimsical cards, and champagne, the favourite drink of the period, flowed, with the dancing continuing until 6.00am. The ball ended with the traditional gallop to the tune of 'John Peel' and the blowing of a hunting horn. Breakfast of bacon, eggs and beer or coffee was served, and guests departed for home to have a brief rest and bath.

If hunting was the glamorous regular sporting activity, then the big annual sporting event in Hallaton was the Bottle Kicking and Scrambling which took place every Easter Monday. It is not the place of this book to recount the history of this event, which goes back many years, and the reader is directed to the thorough book on the subject *Hallaton Hare Pie Scrambling & Bottle Kicking* by John Morison and Peter Daisley.

Needless to say, that by the beginning of the twentieth century the Bottle Kicking had developed into an event which was part of the wider Easter festivities, and which did not always end on Easter Monday. The Bottle Kicking and the preceding events of the day were very much, though, the focus of the festivities. The event was not only well known in the immediate vicinity but county wide, and indeed nationally, and many national papers had carried reports of what took place. Transport to Hallaton was enhanced by the provision of special excursion trains which ran to Market Harborough and Leicester, and places further afield in the county. It was doubtless an occasion for which family members who had left the village would return to swell the numbers and to enjoy the drinking, dancing and general revelry. The numbers of people attending were huge and though no official numbers were ever collated one only has to look at the photographs of the time to see the vast crowds which thronged the streets. It was also a time when people dressed up. Women wore their best hats and dresses and men wore jackets. There have been a few tweaks over the years but the event that occurs today is not too dissimilar to that which occurred at the beginning of the twentieth century and in the run up to the First World War. One of the main differences is the involvement of two of Hallaton's Friendly Societies. They do not exist today but at the start of the twentieth century were a big part of Hallaton life. There were two main ones, the Old Hallaton Friendly Society, which met at the Royal Oak inn and the Local Farmers Delight Lodge of the Order of Oddfellows, which met at The Fox



Cutting the hare pie.
© F. C. Hawke.



*Posing for a photograph,
perhaps after the first bottle?*
© F. C. Hawke.

*To the victor the spoils. You can
see the shops on High Street in the
background. Another Hallaton win
is celebrated.* © F. C. Hawke.



Inn. The day would begin with a Vestry meeting at around 9.30am. At 11.30 there was a service in the church. It appears that both friendly societies hired a band for the day (the Hallaton band was possibly not always used perhaps because its members wanted to take part in the bottle kicking), and these bands would play at the service in accompaniment to the hundredth psalm, which appears to have been always sung. The offertories collected at the service were split between the two societies. The two societies then adjourned for their annual feast which took place at their respective inns. After this, by which time large crowds had gathered, a small delegation went to the Rector's house to collect the bottles and the hare pie, which at the time the

Rector was responsible for paying for and having made. The Rector cut the first pieces and the rest of the pie was divided up and put into a sack. This, along with the bottles, was taken to the top of the village where a procession was formed, headed by the band, or bands formed into one band.

This then proceeded through the village and up to Hare Pie Bank, where the hare pie was scrambled for. After this the serious business of the bottle kicking could begin.

Though the competition was tough it appears that Hallaton had, up to 1913, always won the contest by two barrels to nil. After the contest was over the victors would go back into the village, accompanied by the band, and celebrate.

At the end of the nineteenth century festivities did not end on Easter Monday. The Hallaton Parish Magazine for 1895 recalled:

“On Easter Tuesday, mainly through the efforts of Messrs T Butteriss, G Hawke and C Hawke, some capital races and other sports engaged the attention of the younger people.”

Two years later the Parish Magazine reported:

“On Easter Tuesday sports were organised, which provided exercise and amusement for the younger people, and were brought to a close in the evening by the Town race, which was won by H Hawke in capital time; A Gilbert being second.”

It is not known if this Easter Tuesday tradition of sports continued into the new century. The Easter Monday traditions were well covered by local newspapers, though not with the same yearly consistency. The following description from the *Market Harborough Advertiser* of Tuesday 25th April 1911 is both typical of the better coverage and also interesting as it names certain participants, some of whom feature in this book.

“Easter Monday saw Hallaton as usual crowded with sightseers whose main object was to witness the curious customs of the Bottle Kicking and the Hare Pie Scrambling for which Hallaton is famous. The only thing that might vary in the usual programme is the weather, and this on Easter Monday left nothing to be desired. First in the day’s programme was a service at the church, attended by members of the local Lodge of Oddfellows and the Old Hallaton Friendly Society, each club being headed by a brass band. After service, conducted by the Rector (Rev. T. J. Preece) the members partook of dinner at

their headquarters, and subsequently the rectory was visited, where the Rector had, in accordance with custom, provided the large hare pie, which was duly cut up and placed in sacks by the rector and conveyed, together with the gaudily-decorated bottles of ale to the top of the village. Here a procession, headed by the bands, was formed, and marched by way of the High Street to the famous ‘Hare Pie Bank’. The band playing the time-honoured tune ‘Easter Monday is the Day at Hallaton for fun’. On reaching the field the combatants entered the arena to the march ‘Cheerful in Duty.’ Following this the hare pie was scrambled with the attendant good-natured fun and then came the tussle for the bottles, in which thanks to the efforts of worthy Hallatonians, including among others the brothers Ern and Ted Hawke, Geo and Harry Neale, Ted Wooley, Butcher Marlow, Tom Cort, Plowright and Fred Tyrrel, Hallaton once again proved victorious after a particularly hard time. Victory gained, a move was made to the Market Cross for the purpose of drinking the ale in the bottles. The band playing ‘See the Conquering Hero.’ We are pleased to see Mr Omar Neale so far recovered from his recent accident as to be able to take some part in proceedings.”

For the more genteel and family orientated sports, those with the ground to spare could indulge in some croquet as illustrated below by the Rev. Preece and his family on the lawn in front of the rectory. Tennis was another sport widely played and it is known that both Frederick George Andrews and Cecil Fletcher played golf at the Leicestershire Golf Club.

To be able to enjoy some of these entertainments it was necessary to have at least a basic level of education, and it is there we turn next.



Playing croquet on the rectory lawn.

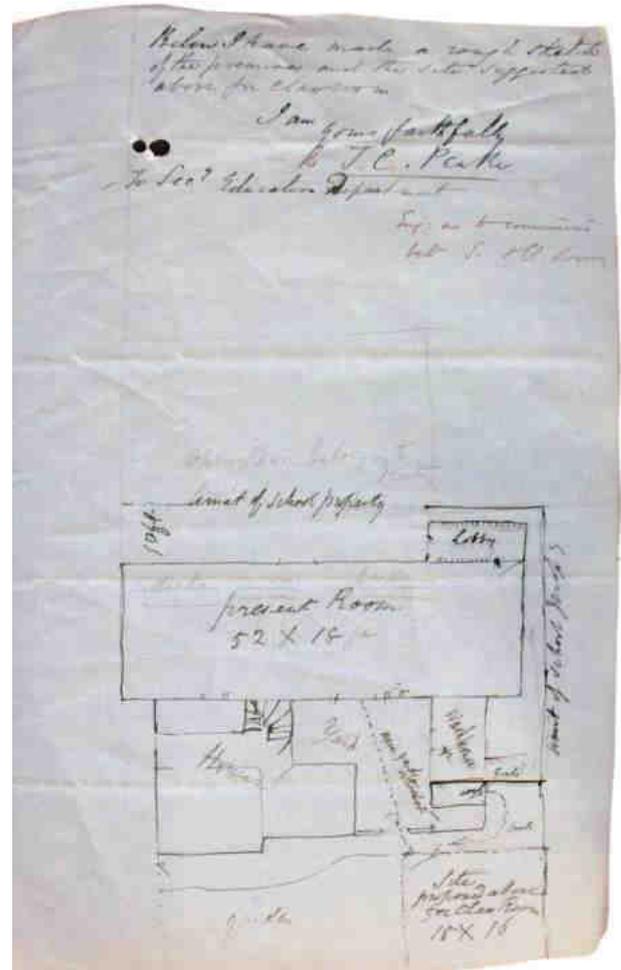
Education

For the vast majority of children in Hallaton formal education centred around the village school. Built in 1864 it initially served only Hallaton and could cater for around 130–150 children in mixed classes. Then in 1871 a school inspector for the area found that educational services were deficient. This came on the back of the decision to include children from both Blaston and Horninghold in the school. The 1871 report concluded that improvements in the existing Church of England school alongside a staff of efficient teachers was needed. The report was especially condemnatory of the head teacher, Mr Crane. The report estimated that 36 children from Horninghold needed to be accommodated alongside 20 from Blaston. The suggestion was that an additional classroom measuring 20 × 16 feet should be added to the existing room. The proposals were vehemently opposed by the rector at the time, Reverend Peake, who wrote several letters explaining that due to the move to more grazing land the population of the area was likely to fall as fewer workers were required. Eventually he submitted a sketch plan, illustrated here, suggesting where the new classroom could go.

The problem was though, that it was not connected to the old room, which was a concern. Eventually the authorities gave way and, what really was a much-needed new building was shelved in favour of expanding the old one. The inspector's report made an interesting suggestion in relation to the children from Blaston.

“It would be well if the children could be taken to school, at least in wet weather, in a covered van.”

The facilities at the school were originally what can only be described as basic. In 1901, though, there were some improvements made when new closets were constructed further away from the main school building. These were also connected to the newly installed Hallaton sewerage system



*Above: Reverend Peake's rough sketch for a potential new school room.
© National Archives (ED 21/10284).*

Left: The school with adjacent haysack.

and had running water. The rooms were heated by open fires but in the harsh cold of winter the school was considered to be unsatisfactorily cold for the children. The fires were also inadequately protected and there was a great concern that the wooden floor was liable to catch fire. As well as the school room there was an outside yard area which functioned as the playground. By 1913 this was not considered to be in very good condition. The 1913 report on the school also stated that it was meagrely equipped with maps and charts and that:

"The premises are somewhat dull and cheerless. There is not a single picture on the walls of the main room."

In 1910 the school was set to accommodate 178 children but that year this number was reduced to 145. The head teacher at the time was William Denley and he was supported in the main room by Grace Barnett, whilst Kathleen Hawke was the main teacher of the infants' class, supported by

Elsie Simkin. Barnett, Hawke and Simkin were all local Hallatonians but William Denley was originally from South Knighton, and is something of a puzzle. In 1891 he was a visitor at the Lewes Union Workhouse where he was an organist. He certainly played the organ in Hallaton Church. How or when he became a teacher isn't known. He arrived in Hallaton in 1894 and would eventually leave the village in 1923.

Pupils entered the school around the age of four or five and left at around the age of 12. There were two sessions on schooldays, one in the morning, and another in the afternoon. Attendance was supposedly compulsory but often children were taken out of school to help at home or in the fields at harvest time. There were two classes, one for infants and one for the rest of the school. Children were all taught together, girls and boys were not taught separately. The education act of 1902 gave control of schools for the first time to local county education authorities. Lessons in reading, writing

I beg to report that the above School was visited by
 me
 Mr. Ellicock in accordance with my directions,
 on 7th May, 1913.
 and to submit the following observations:—
Mad. J.
 Warming is not satisfactory in really cold weather. There is a risk of fire to the floor, owing to the fire-places not being well protected.
 The premises are somewhat dull & cheerless. There is not a single picture on the walls of the main room.
 The school is rather meagrely equipped with maps, charts, &c.
 There is a good tone in the school, & the children receive a valuable training in habits of attention, obedience, & industry.
 The school is well taught, & the work, as a whole, quite efficient. The upper classes, especially, show much interest in their lessons, & apply themselves diligently to their tasks, & do their own work on their own resources.
 The instruction in the elementary subjects is sound, & the paper work neat & well arranged.
 Needlework is carefully taught, but too much time should not be given to "working mere specimens".
 The methods of teaching drawing need further consideration. Drawing from copies should be abandoned.

An extract from the school's report, 13th May 1913. © National Archives (ED 49/4328).



*Junior Class,
Hallaton School
1902.*

and arithmetic became compulsory. Most days, however, would start with around 40 minutes of scripture. Arithmetic would follow on and this would be basic level, enough to give children a grasp of money calculations and other simple mathematical sums. Reading basically involved standing up one by one and reading to the teacher. During the rest of the lesson you did nothing of note. Though it did mean all children who left the school could theoretically read, in reality many came away with not much more than the ability to stumble with tolerable correctness through printed matter of moderate difficulty. Writing lessons were almost entirely confined to handwriting and spelling; the lower classes were taught simple sentence construction by copying out sentences written on the board by the teacher. History, geography and elementary science were all taught orally, there were no text books. History and geography focussed on the British Empire and British history and espoused and encouraged support for celebrating Empire Day. The children of Hallaton appear to have responded well to the teaching and were especially interested in nature work and geography, though it was considered desirable that the school should acquire a map of Leicestershire.

The report on Hallaton school in 1913 thought that the teaching of the elementary subjects was good, and that the children's paperwork was neat and tidy. They had a generally favourable impression of the school:

“There is a good tone in the school and the children receive a valuable training in habits of attention, obedience and industry. The school is well taught and the work as a whole quite efficient. The upper classes especially show much interest in their lessons when thrown on their own resources.”

The last part of that sentence is especially relevant. Since the introduction of local education boards, critics of the education system in England had been particularly critical about the heavy reliance on teaching by rote, and the lack of opportunities in their opinion for a child to show initiative and self-development, in favour of a demand for servile obedience and mechanical work.

This was especially to be found in drawing lessons. These were carried out by the slavish reproduction of copies. A picture of a familiar object was hung in front of the class and the children copied it stroke by stroke and then put in shading and sometimes colour. The education boards of the day strove fervently to eliminate this method of teaching which was certainly employed in Hallaton. The 1913 report noted:

“The methods of teaching drawing need further consideration. Drawing from Copies should be abandoned.”

The education reforms of 1902 stemmed from a Government concern and belief that as a country

Great Britain was lagging behind the world in educating her children and in giving them some basic preparation for later life. To that effect sewing and needlework classes were undertaken. At Hallaton there was a rota for women of the village to go to the school to teach needlework to the young girls.

Once again, the 1913 report concluded that:

“Needlework is carefully taught but too much time should not be given to working mere specimens.”

One of the other subjects taught was drill, or physical education in other words. There had long been a realisation that the physical fitness of the country was not as good as it should be. It involved a series of formal exercises such as marching on the spot, arm swinging, trunk bending, skipping, etc. It was thought to help children follow instructions, improve coordination and health, and prepare them for work and military service. The lesson was led by the class teacher. *The Syllabus of Physical Exercises for Public Elementary Schools* was published in 1909 and is described in the preface as a “new

and revised edition”. Building on earlier works of the late Victorian era, it had a print-run of 80,000 hardback copies, priced at 9d (ninepence) each, for purchase by schools and individual teachers. The drill lesson was conducted by the teacher in three parts. Each exercise was repeated until the teacher was satisfied with the performance of the children. At the end of each exercise, the teacher gave the command “Attention!”, “Stand easy” or “Hips – firm”, returning the children to one of the preliminary positions in readiness for the next exercise. These included breathing exercises, head exercises, feet exercises, lunge exercises, trunk bending exercises, arm bending and stretching exercises, balance exercises, arm swinging exercises and hopping exercises.

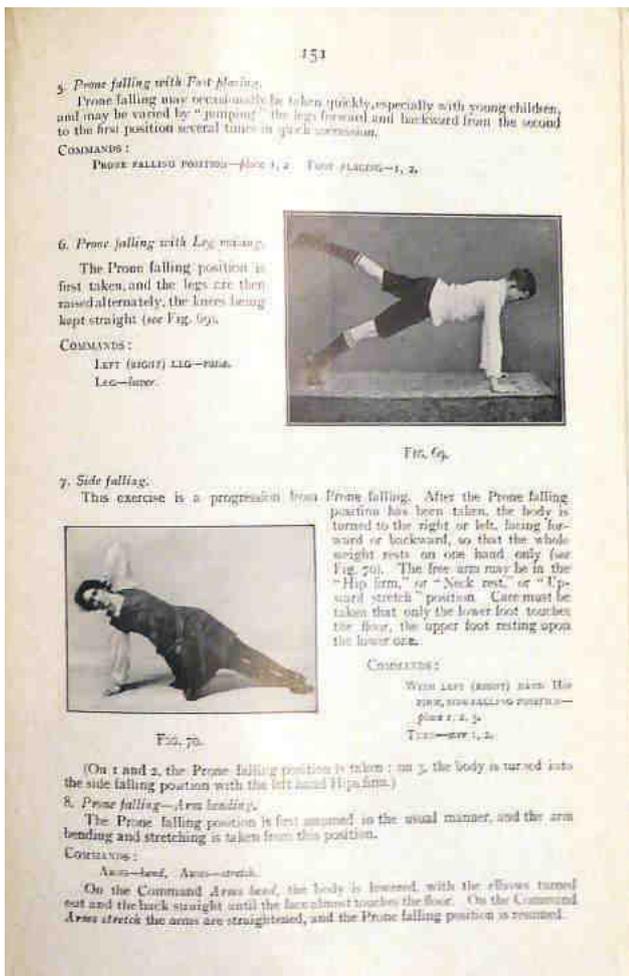
At Hallaton school the drill lessons were usually done in the yard, though sometimes it must have been done inside as the 1913 report requested that drill should be taken outdoors whenever the weather was suitable.

Most children left school aged 12. However, brighter pupils were able to take local education board exams, and if successful could attain scholarships to attend schools in Leicester. There are several examples of parents requesting that the Hallaton Charity help them fund the travel and other costs, and most times the sum of £5 per annum was awarded but would only be renewed once the charity had received favourable reports on the child’s progress. After that, further education was for the rich and privileged, though Francis William Cotton did make it all the way to Oxford University, a unique achievement at the time for a pupil who began his educational career at Hallaton School. Another of note was Frank Marlow whose drawing skills enabled him to attend the Royal Academy of Arts in London.

There were other formal opportunities for practical education with day trade schools. One example was known to have visited Hallaton. On 12th April 1913 the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries in London wrote to the Leicestershire County Council Education Committee informing them:

“The next location of the Travelling Dairy School will be in the Parish Room, Hallaton and it is desired to include a few girls, who are over 11 years of age, and who would now be among those now attending the public elementary school. The course begins on Tuesday next.”

One wonders if Ivy Butteriss attended such a course as Peter Daisley records that his mother was one



A typical page from 'The syllabus on Physical Exercises'.



Mrs Pateman with the children of her Dame School.

of half a dozen young girls taken into training in dairy-work. As well as butter-churning and cheese making to modern hygienic standards the girls were trained in advanced milking methods and tending to the wellbeing of the cows and their calves. Though it was never her trade after the war, in her later life Ivy would still proudly display her certificate of competence in dairy-work.

There had been a Dame School in the village run by Mrs Pateman. These were small private schools for young children, usually run by working class women in their own homes. Often regarded as a cheap form of day-care, they were the precursor to the modern infant nurseries. Children were usually taught the alphabet and little else. They generally had a poor reputation nationwide and it is not known for certain if the one in Hallaton still existed by the outbreak of war.

One of the bedrocks of education at the time was the village Sunday School. This had two sessions each week. In the morning it was open from 9.30 to 10.15am and from 2.00pm to 3.00pm in the afternoon. The emphasis was very much on spiritual education along with reading and writing, and teachers were found from among those living in the village. Indeed, religion was a key component of life in those days, and, in some ways, education continued for some through the auspices of the church with things like bible classes.

Religion

Religion was a very important part of society in the run up to the Great War. The role it carried went beyond that of services and deeper into the psyche of the community. All Hallatonians followed similar paths through their spiritual life. After birth there would be baptism, usually in the church, then at age around 13 both boys and girls could pass through the process of confirmation, culminating in the actual service either in Hallaton Church or in one of the neighbouring parishes. Young children were also encouraged to enter Sunday School, which further reinforced Christian teachings. The usual next step would be to become a communicant, that is someone who receives holy communion at the appropriate service. Most people would marry in church, though registry office weddings were available, and finally, of course, most people would be buried in the village cemetery, following a religious service. In Hallaton there were two basic choices. You were either a member of the Church of England and attended the church of St Michael and All Angels, or you were a non-conformist and attended the Hallaton Congregational Chapel. Let us begin with the church.

Hallaton's church of St Michael and All Angels has been established for many hundreds of years and this is not the place for a history of it. Pevsner noted it to be one of Leicestershire's most imposing churches. It has always played a significant role in village life and this was no less the case in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Though there is a fine rectory to go with the church it is fair to say that Hallaton was not an especially rich parish. Whilst the population was on the whole pious and believing it is worth examining just how deep and widespread this conviction ran.

In 1894 Canon William Chetwynd-Stapylton became the Rector in Hallaton. A Merton College graduate he had spent a long and successful career in the parish of St John the Baptist in Old Malden, Surrey, where he had been for 44 years. He was enthusiastic in his role, and one of the first things he did was to introduce a Hallaton Parish Magazine. As well as providing practical information, such as service times and lists of churchwardens and other officials, it not only reported on social activities to do with church organisations such as the church choir and Hallaton's branch of the Church of England Temperance Society, but also gave him a vehicle to get over his strong religious viewpoints, and he was a vociferous writer.

A quick look through the magazine reveals that the number of church services were far more than



Inside Hallaton Church.
© F. C. Hawke.

today's numbers. Holy Communion occurred every Sunday. It also took place at 11.00am on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month and on Holy Days as announced. Matins would occur at 11.00am on Sundays and at 9.00am weekdays, except Wednesdays and Fridays. Litany would be conducted on the 2nd and 4th Sunday after matins and at 9.00am on Wednesdays and Fridays. There was an evensong service and sermon at 6.00pm each Sunday and at 7.15pm on a Thursday. Additionally, there were special services such as the 3.20pm children's service/evensong and address on a Sunday and Intercessions took place at the 7.15pm evensong service on a Thursday as follows: there were preparations for Holy Communion before the first Sunday each month, devotions for Sunday School teachers on the 2nd Thursday of the month, and Intercessions for Foreign Missions during the third week. The fourth week was for parochial and general matters. Those attending services would normally sit at their usual pews, but there were obviously some issues surrounding seat allocation because at the vestry meeting of April 1911 it was felt necessary to reinforce a declaration originally made at a similar meeting in 1898 that:

"The bell ceases to ring two minutes before the time of the service, and that on the stoppage of the bell all seats vacant be free. This applies to morning and evening services."

Lanterns provided the only illumination in the church and during services, once the rector had announced the hymn, the sound of people striking

matches to light the lanterns so they could better see their hymn books, was often heard. In addition to the services there were plenty of other church related activities, men's and women's bible classes, Sunday school for the children, mothers' meetings, Church of England Temperance Society lectures, and coal and clothing clubs. Without a doubt this list proves that religion and the church were central to life in Hallaton at the time. Yet just how committed to it were the people?

It is worth going back in time a few years to Chetwynd-Stapylton's sermon on Sunday evening 28th March 1897. It was both powerful and condemnatory, and it was reprinted in full in the parish magazine so that:

"many who were not in church might read it, and that none may receive a wrong impression of what was said." (Hallaton Parish Magazine 1897).

The whole text can be read there, but certain sections are quoted in full as they give a wonderful insight into the true depth of religious feeling as interpreted by Chetwynd-Stapylton as the village approached the new century. In his sermon he was especially concerned with the aspect of Christian life revolving around the giving of alms, and in particular, the amount given in each offertory at the church services in the village.

"On coming to Hallaton, I was much attracted by the quiet homeliness, the gentleness and willingness of the cottagers, and by several features of character among the Parishioners, for which I thanked God."

There is so much that is loveable in Hallaton, so much they shew that the inner heart of our people is in its right place, that one feels that many only require the matter to be plainly put before them, to take a nobler and truer view of the great Christian Grace and practice of Almsgiving. They have allowed their better instincts to be choked, and this I fear, from want of outspokenness in the pulpit. Our text seems by some to have been read backwards as if our Lord had said 'it is more blessed to receive than to give.'"

Of course, in a relatively poor parish such as Hallaton, he was careful not to completely condemn those who could not afford to contribute:

"We must be careful how we stigmatise anyone as mean and parsimonious. There may be many claims of distress."

He went on to stress that the matter must be a choice between one's conscience and one's duty to God. That money was not their own but entrusted to them by God and that they should think about what they ought to give rather than what they can afford to give. He also acknowledged that people might have been giving to other charitable causes in the village:

"A large part should be given to the treasury of God, through the weekly offertory in Church, as a solemn act of worship. Every worshipper should feel that the adequate maintenance of the House of God should be a first case... I remember that when I first came to Hallaton, more than one person said to me that it would be desirable to give up the offertory at every Service because many did not like 'having the bag pushed in front of them.' Coming from a parish where the offertory was the joy and delight of a willing congregation, the words grated harshly on my ear."

He continued over the course of the sermon to compare Hallaton with his old parish. As much as this sermon was an appeal to improve the church funds, he believed that many in the congregation that day were ignorant of the true state of them, it also continued to reveal yet more insights into the thoughts of Hallaton people at that time.

"We at Hallaton have not yet got over the danger and evil of reckoning too much on the benefactions of our forefathers. When I first came to Hallaton I was surprised to hear more than once, when any trifling sum was needed, the suggestion 'Cannot we get it out of the Charity?' as if we were to look to the generosity of our forefathers as a 'cloak for our own covetousness.'"

He went on to say that several of these old charities, though well administered, had now started to run out of money. The church had been recently refurbished, but that had been mainly through the donations of a few wealthy benefactors. The money currently being raised was insufficient to meet the costs of lighting, warming and cleaning the church.

"I could hardly believe my eyes when I saw from the offertory book on my return, how scanty had been the amount received, and how few the givers of anything! I will take the winter months of December, January and February; and you will see how impossible it is that the church can be maintained on such unworthy receipts."

Two things are worth pointing out here. The winter was a tough time for the poorer parishioners, who would have been able to give the smallest amount in any case. Many agricultural labourers would have seen their wages decrease over this period and there was general recession in the agricultural economy in those years before the start of the twentieth century. The most poignant part of the quote, though, is that it wasn't just the amount of money given which was a concern, but the apparent small number of those who had donated.

He then gave some very interesting figures for the amounts donated and the running costs of the church. Not all the money given at the services went to the church and its upkeep. The Christmas Day offerings of £2-2s-2½d were given to the local alms fund. On February 14th there had been a special collection for the Indian Famine which raised £5-5s-2½d. On the other twelve Sundays they were given to the Church Expenses Fund, a total of £5-19s-3½d.

"There was no gold except for Christmas and Indian Famine. Of the other Sundays, on one time alone was there so large a coin as half a crown; only four times so large a coin as a florin; ten times one shilling was the largest coin; twice. On December 27th and Jan. 17th, one penny was the largest coin placed in God's Treasury in Hallaton Church! Thus the total result for the Church expenses, the most expensive quarter of the year, was £5-19s-3½d. The expenses for the simplest needs of the church — lighting, warming, cleaning, officials and the organist — may be set at £70 a year of which lighting alone last year appears to have cost £12-18s-0d."

Apart from the practical problems raised of how to afford to run the church, the other implication given is that the people of Hallaton were not as

totally committed to practising religion as perhaps we might believe. Certainly, when coming to putting their hands in their pockets to help, there appears to have been some reluctance, perhaps because many could not afford to give, perhaps because their religious conviction to do so was not that strong, or perhaps because they believed that the local charities were there to provide this sort of assistance as opposed to the individual so doing.

If the level of donations to the church is one crude measure of the depth of religious feeling, then church attendance levels and the number of communicants is perhaps a stronger one. Of course, the church would have been well attended at key times of the year, especially at Christmas and for the Harvest Festival. However, by far the busiest time of year for Hallaton Church was Easter. The annual Bottle Kicking not only brought in large numbers of visitors and returning family members to swell the numbers attending church, but the two Hallaton Friendly Societies had their annual meetings that day and one of the services was for them. Hallaton's population around the end of the nineteenth century was around 600. In 1897 the number of communicants at all three of the relevant services at Easter totalled just 86. Of course, not everyone would wish to take Holy Communion, but the figure seems remarkably low for a time when attendance at church was seen as near obligatory by some people. This matter was again raised in a letter to his parishioners by Chetwynd-Stapylton, which appeared in the December issue of the Hallaton Parish News.

"Now it is a grief and constant sorrow to me, that Church people here do not yet realise the true position of the Sacrament of Holy Communion as one of the greatest, most special, and most imperative act of worship by our Lord's own command of love. Three years ago, I felt very hopeful when there was so large an increase, some 400 per cent, between Easter 1894 and Easter 1895. But since then progress has been far too slow. And to me, perhaps, the most distressing part of all had been the sadly small number of male communicants. I am very proud in many respects of the excellence of our men in Hallaton, and their backwardness in the fulfilment of this duty is very discouraging. I hear in many Parishes of the large number of working men who come regularly to the early Communion. Will it ever be so in Hallaton?"

There is real evidence here of the people of Hallaton's deep conviction to some of what was considered the duty of real Christian devotion,

and especially among the working men, was not as strong or as deeply held as the church might have wanted or that we may have perceived to be the case, though whether the working men of Hallaton were indeed that different from the working men of other village parishes is impossible to say. That the number of communicants numbered only 86 over Easter shows how few must have done so just three years before. In fact, the total for 1894 was just 18.

Though Chetwynd-Stapylton's first few years did indeed see an increase in the numbers of communicants the parish magazine for June 1904 gives a true picture. That year, despite record numbers taking Holy Communion over the Easter festival, the facts were that:

"In 1902 there were 1695 acts of communion in the Church, and in 1903, 1447, and yet that the numbers attending the greater festival had increased. This plainly shows that the average regular attendance has fallen; in a similar way the average attendance on Thursday evenings and at bible classes has fallen."

Sunday 29th September 1904 was observed as Dedication Sunday with services throughout the day, where special anthems were sung, and, in the afternoon, there was a flower service for the children. The evening service was especially interesting:

"At the evening service the Hallaton Brass band accompanied the singing and considering their numerical strength they managed to subdue themselves very well. We sincerely hope that the very large congregation in the evening was not drawn thither solely to hear the music. The congregation was the largest we have seen for many years."

It is almost certain that their hopes were not fulfilled. It seems that in Hallaton there was a tendency to observe one's faith at the great festivals, such as Easter and Christmas, and at times like Harvest Festival, but that ordinary regular services were largely neglected by all except the most pious. None of this should detract from the key role that religion played in the lives of Hallatonians in the lead up to the war. After all, not only was their education at school based heavily upon Christian traditions, but as young children they were encouraged to have Lenten saving boxes at Easter, with the money collected being allocated to good causes. That this was something viewed with some pride can be seen by the listing each year in the parish magazine of the totals each child or group of children raised. The great set piece occasion such

as the annual Bottle Kicking and the celebrations of royal coronations and jubilees always contained a strong religious element for those who wished to take part. However, the idea that everyone went to church and actively practised religion all the time is not an accurate portrayal of Hallaton society. Judged on its own, church attendance and numbers of communicants can provide only a crude measure of 'popular religion'. There was an ideal of Christian behaviour, which was widely expected and shared. Hallaton was far from a post Christian place by 1914, though, it appears that some practices and beliefs were changing, and that attending services and participating in communion was no longer a pre-condition of respectability.

However, the role of the church, as opposed to the role of religion, was crucial, and it was the church and those involved in it regularly which provided the portal through which so much of what was considered good and widely beneficial to the people in Hallaton at the time could emerge. Hallaton had a strong branch of the Church of England Temperance Society.

Whilst this might not sound like a lot of fun to us today, the abuse of alcohol was considered a great sin by a significant minority of people at the time, and whilst it is clear what the underlying message was the society in Hallaton did far more than preach about abstinence. They organised an annual trip to places like Yarmouth, put on exhibitions for children of the village to take part in, and had other social functions. Connected to this adult temperance movement was a local Band of Hope. This was a temperance organisation for working-class children. All members took a pledge of total abstinence and



Eric Butteriss's Band of Hope membership certificate, signed by William McTurk.

were taught the 'evils of drink'. Members were enrolled from the age of six and met once a week to listen to lectures and participate in activities.

Other organisations attached to the church included, of course, a local bell ringers association, of which both men and women could join after paying a small annual fee. The Hallaton Church Choir was not only an important part of church life itself but played a wider role in the village, the members of it taking part in village productions, and were the



A Hallaton Church of England Temperance Society procession moving along High Street. © Possibly F. C. Hawke.

foundation for the Hallaton Choral Society, or the Hallaton Amateur Operatic Society as it was known by the outbreak of war. The choir also had a social side to it, with dances and concerts to raise money, and with funds raised from subscriptions and the concerts an annual choir trip was funded. This had included trips to the seaside but in 1910 saw them go to London to visit the Japanese Exhibition.

The fact that subscriptions were required to join the choir, the bell ringers and the choral society may have deterred the very poorest parishioners from joining, of course. However, the church played a crucial charitable role. Firstly, with the Parker Charity, through which it ran and maintained the Bede houses opposite the church and donated money to the occupants. The expenditure over 1909–10 amount to £114-7s-10d. As well as this the church also facilitated the mothers' and women's clothing clubs.

Also active in Hallaton was the Congregational Chapel, which provided a place for those villagers who were non-conformists to worship. It had its own cemetery and conducted baptisms and weddings, as well its own regular services. The history of non-conformism, or dissenting as it was originally known, goes back to at least 1723 in Hallaton. Then, a dissenting meeting-house was licensed in the house of William Gibbins. Another was licensed in the house of John Grocock in 1791. In 1822 a congregation of Protestant dissenters was known to be using a building in Hallaton occupied by Thomas Barnes. It was in that year that the chapel in Hallaton was built. Some chapel records survive. They show, despite the keen devotion to the chapel

by a few families, that numbers were always fewer than the church, and that it was always a struggle to raise enough money to buy hymn books and to maintain the building.

There were regular meetings and services twice on a Sunday, and throughout the winter there were week night services, which took place at 7.30pm. At a meeting in 1910 there was a long discussion on the format of the Sunday services, after which it was decided that they would comprise the following order of service: in the morning there would be opening prayers, followed by the 1st hymn then the 1st Lesson. After this there would be a children's address, followed by a 2nd hymn, then the 2nd Lesson, then a third hymn, followed by the sermon, and then a last hymn, before the service ended with the benediction. The evening service followed a similar pattern, except in place of the children's address there was an extra hymn and another prayer.

They worked together with the chapel at Slawston, and the Hallaton worshippers would use the Slawston Chapel when their own was unavailable, for example when it was being repaired or decorated. There was an attached Sunday school, and they did consider bible classes, though not before they had consulted the younger members of the congregation. Their reply is not recorded.

Despite the fewer number of worshippers they were committed people, and made special efforts at times like the Harvest Festival to decorate the chapel. As we shall see they continued to be active throughout the war.

Closely associated with the church were the Hallaton charities. Those in the village brought up



Inside the Chapel at Harvest Festival, circa 1910.

in the Victorian period would have been well used to the concept of charity and it is worth looking briefly at those operating in Hallaton at that time.

Charities

Hallaton was well provided for by a variety of several different charities, which by 1913 had been simplified into the following three main ones.

The Goodman's Charity was founded in 1685 by a gift of £800, not solely for the use of Hallaton but also for Blaston, Medbourne and other neighbouring villages. The money was instructed to be laid out in land and the profits there from were to be given to the "*most indigent, poorest, aged, decrepit, miserabilist paupers*" of the area, including four from Hallaton. There was an interesting caveat which stated that if the money was not used in the intent of the testator then the gift would cease, and the money employed for the redemption of Turkish captives. It obviously was spent, as on 14th May 1912 the charity had come under the administration of the Charity Commission scheme. The charity's annual income amounted to around £100, a quarter of which was given to Hallaton each year.

The Parker Charity originated in 1747 with a bequest of £500 from Katherine Parker, left in trust of the then rector, George Fenwick. He invested it in a farm at Tur Langton and reinvested the profits from this farm. There were quite specific conditions attached to the original bequest. It was to provide assistance to six poor widows or single women over the age of 50 and of excellent spiritual character; if there were not sufficient numbers of these to assist then poor single men of similar good character over the age of 65 were to benefit. In Hallaton, Bede houses were bought by George Fenwick and given in trust to succeeding rectors of Hallaton. These formed parts of the charity, and still exist to this day opposite the church. By 1913 the revenue of this charity amounted to around £52 per annum, which was split up equally between the three occupiers of the cottages. Each of them was paid £4-6s-8d per quarter from the fund and the cottages were provided rent free. The Rector chose the women to be admitted to the charity. However, it is fair to say that by then it was struggling financially to support the elderly residents, and even more to cope with the upkeep of the house. The parish magazine for October 1910 gives an insight into how bad conditions in the houses might have been.

The houses had fallen into a dilapidated state and the repairs had been slow to materialise, and with no funds for renovations the Rector was struggling to:

"make these three dirty, damp and insanitary dwellings fit for human habitation."

The Hallaton Charity, also known as the Free School Charity, was an amalgamation of the Town Estates, George Fenwick's gift and the charities of two William Dents, as well as various other smaller gifts. It was now regulated under a Charity Commission scheme implemented on 12th June 1896 and run by a group of trustees. The first William Dent charity stemmed from a gift of £35 in 1740. This was to buy land within two years, or the gift would become void. The profits from the land were to be used to buy sixpenny loaves of wheaten bread to be distributed on Christmas Day afternoon to poor widows and housekeepers of the village. The second William Dent gift was in 1773, when the sum of £125 was left in trust to the church warden, an overseer of Hallaton, to provide bread and to distribute each Saturday to the poor of the village.

By 1913 the Hallaton Charity had an income each year of between £160 and £200. This was derived mainly from the rent from Fearn Farm and other properties. Under the rules of the scheme this was apportioned between the poor of Hallaton, the church and education for Hallaton's children. Help for the poor was in the form of money and subsidised accommodation. Around £50 to £60 was paid out each year in the form of doles awarded to poor members of the village, who applied to the trustees for the money. The charity also owned several small cottages on Hog Lane, which were rented out to selected poor tenants at 6d per week. Fortunately, the records of the regular trustee meetings survive.

Running the charity was a responsibility and it is not surprising to find among the trustees Herbert Fletcher of Hallaton Hall, the Rev. T. J. Preece, Harry Butteriss, G. J. Frisby and John Redfearn Laundon. They met three times a year in the Parish Room. As well as discussing the accounts they dealt with matters arising from Fearn Farm, whether it be a request from the tenant, the repair of the property, or the state of the roads around it. A similar discussion often took place regarding the charity cottages on Hog Lane. Each meeting reconsidered those who were eligible to receive the payment of 2s-6d per week for the following quarter. Full permanent residency in Hallaton was one of the conditions. Education matters were discussed when they arose. This usually resulted from an approach by a parent, usually the father, to help with their child's secondary education. One such case in 1913 was that of Hallaton Hall's head gardener,

William Sayers, whose son had gained a place at a local, unstipulated, secondary school. There was some discussion and William was interviewed, but as his son had not decided what to do in the future the decision as to whether to award a grant was suspended until 1914. At the meeting on 4th April 1913, J. S. Cotton approached the trustees seeking financial help with his son Frank's education at St John's College, Oxford. It was decided to award a grant of £10 for 1913.

As we shall see later they also discussed some health matters affecting Hallaton, and at some meetings specific requests concerning their property were raised. So, in April 1913 Fred Hawke applied for the tenancy of the ground occupied by the stable and shed in the occupancy of 'Postman Brown.' Hawke's request was granted.

Of course, charity did not lie merely with the recognised charities. Each Easter the children of the village would collect money for waifs and strays in their Lenten boxes. As the accompanying picture shows, gifts were made to local people at times like Christmas by the wealthier of society. Illustrated is the list of Christmas gifts given in 1890 to the needy women of the village in the form of clothin by Mrs Bewicke.

Though we have no such examples of direct giving by the Bankarts or the Fletchers there is plenty of circumstantial evidence in the parish magazine and local newspapers to suggest that both families gave freely of their time and money in investing in local

charitable causes. Offertories in the church were sometimes assigned to good causes, and at times when the village needed money for things like repairing the church clock, fundraising took place among the whole village.

The charities were an important part of village society, not only in providing money and subsidised housing for the local needy, but providing money for street lighting, and employing local people to maintain the property, which helped to support the local micro economy.

Buildings, roads and other parts of village infrastructure required a system of local government and people to run, and many of the things that went on in the village could not have done so without some form of local government, which is where we now turn our attention.

Governance

Whilst central government provided its customary umbrella of governance over the country, Hallaton was essentially run by two local government organisations, the Hallaton Rural District Council and the Hallaton Parish Council.

It is worth stepping back, for a moment, some 20 years in time to 1895. Then, local government was the responsibility of local sanitary district authorities connected to the local board of guardians of local poor houses. These were responsible for the implementation of the Poor Law, and the

Quantity	Gift Category	Quantity	Recipient
4	Warm petticoats	1	Widow Atkin
		2	Widow Sarah Marlans
		3	Widow Lucy Bennett
		4	M ^{rs} George Tyrell
6	Chemises	1	Lizzie Payne
		2	M ^{rs} Eli Lount
		3	M ^{rs} Buxton
		4	M ^{rs} Tyrell
		5	M ^{rs} Abbott
		6	M ^{rs} Licquorice
4	Nightgowns	1	M ^{rs} Russell
		2	M ^{rs} Barbara Curtis
		3	Widow Harves
		4	M ^{rs} Robbin Lount
2	Childrens Warm petticoats	1	M ^{rs} Eli Lount
		2	M ^{rs} Buxton

Mrs Bewicke's Christmas gifts to the needy of Hallaton, 1890. ROLLR (DE 1556/129/7).

appointment of local health officers. The situation was unsatisfactory, and there was a will in central government to make changes to create a more democratic system.

Following the 1892 general election the Liberals made the introduction of district and parish councils a priority, and in 1894 passed the Local Government Act. A report in Hansard on 21st March 1893 set out the then current system of local government, clearly showing the need for reform. It reported that England and Wales were divided into:

“62 counties, 302 municipal boroughs, 31 improvement act districts, 686 local government districts, 574 rural sanitary districts, 58 post sanitary districts, 2302 school board districts... 1052 burial board districts, 648 poor law unions, 13,773 ecclesiastical parishes and nearly 15,000 civil parishes.”

Meanwhile 28,000 authorities taxed English taxpayers, all leading to a multiplicity of local authority. The Government chose the civil parish as the basic unit of local government in rural areas. 13,000 rural parishes, each with 300 plus people, would each have a parish council, which would be limited in its expenditure and confined to charging rates of one penny in the pound, unless it had the consent of both the parish meeting and district council.

Rural authorities also saw changes. The union was the administrative area they had to deal with and each union was an aggregation of parishes. As stated, there were 648 in total. They were administered by guardians elected or *ex officio* based upon property qualifications, often elected by people with plural voting rights, or who voted by proxy. The idea was to abolish all *ex-officio* and non-elective guardians, and to disallow plural and proxy voting. Separate highway authorities in rural districts were dissolved and their powers given to local rural district councils. County councils were to oversee the reorganisation.

Each parish was to have its own parish meeting, at which those on the electoral roll had a single vote on all matters raised. The parish council was to consist of a chairman and councillors and they were to meet, free of charge, in a state supported public elementary school. Parish councils were to assume all powers exercised by parish vestries, except those dealing with church or ecclesiastical charities. For example, they were now tasked with the maintenance of closed burial grounds, issues around the ownership of the village green and recreation grounds, and the operation of

fire engines. The parish councils were also given the power relating to street lighting and burials. Hallaton Parish Council was formed in 1894.

District councils were elected on the one man one vote system, with councillors elected for a three-year term. Women could also be elected. In 1894 Hallaton Rural District Council was established, comprising the villages of Blaston, Bringhurst, Drayton, Great Easton, Hallaton, Horninghold, Medbourne, Nevill Holt and Stockerston.

The Hallaton Rural District Council met on a monthly basis at the Parish Reading Room (today the museum) in Hallaton. The Reverend Preece was Hallaton's councillor. The minutes of these meetings survive, and whilst being a fairly dry and limited account, do give an insight into the work they performed.

Looking at the minutes it is easy to see that much of their work consisted of two main things, the upkeep of the local roads, water courses and footpaths, and the overview of matters concerning health. So, they were often in correspondence with the County Council medical and sanitary officers. Each year they would also tender out the contracts for supply of granite. This was used to maintain the roads and was delivered to Hallaton Station where it was kept. They also dealt with the yearly contracts for local carting. Typical of what went on was the meeting of 28th June 1912, when they received a letter from Mr S. N. Bankart about the state of a piece of his private road, dealt with the matter of steam rolling the road in Horninghold, and the proposed improvement of the road leading from Hallaton to Cranoe opposite Hallaton Rectory, which was to be carried out at the cost of £5. The meeting of September 1912 saw them dealing with an application from the post office telegraph authorities for consent to erect an overhead wire from Horninghold post office to Hallaton Hall. After some discussion this was granted, providing the posts were erected to the satisfaction of the council's surveyor. November saw them deal with a notice from HM Inspector of Factories requiring the limewashing of the premises of Messrs J. Hawke and Son at Hallaton.

In 1913 the Hallaton Rural District Council met on eight occasions. Much of the meetings usually involved salary payments to the district surveyor, J. Gray from East Norton, the council clerk, and the local medical officer. The latter's wages were half met by the Leicestershire County Council. Other payments were made to the Oxford Rolling Company for the work they had done on the roads, and to Mountsorrel Granite Company, who provided the stone used in the roads, and which they delivered

to local stations, Hallaton among them. After the standard monthly business exceptional items were raised. This would often concern correspondence between the clerk and the Leicestershire County Health Department, as it did in January where they discussed the arrangement required under the new tuberculosis regulations of 1912.

Typical of the letters they received were ones from Mrs Fletcher of Hallaton Hall complaining about the untidy state of Hallaton streets. The surveyor was instructed to attend to the matter and to ensure that the situation did not reoccur. In April James Driver wrote to them giving his intention to quit his occupation of the disused gravel pit in Hallaton on 10th October. The Council resolved that they would advertise the position. They obviously had some difficulty getting anyone else to take it on, because in June a further letter from James Driver was received in which he asked to continue his

tenancy at a reduced rent, a request to which the Council speedily acquiesced.

Not all requests received a positive reply. When in June they received a letter from Mr S. Bankart requesting payment for a gate he had installed at the bottom of the hill leading onto his lane, the Council quite rightly refused, stating it was not a matter for them.

Each year the meeting of March was the most important one. At this they decided the financial programme for the following fiscal year, considered tenders for local carting, contracts for delivering granite for road repairs, issued petroleum licences and received the county medical officer's annual report. In 1913 two Hallaton men won carting tenders. James Driver was awarded the one for Hallaton itself, for which he would be paid one shilling for every ton moved, and he also won the tender for Horninghold, at two shillings per ton,

55

Resolved that cheque orders be drawn on the Treasurer's a/c as under - £. s. d.

Hallaton A/c	15. 8. 2
Honorary Grants to A/c	1. 11. 6
J. O. Miller	33. 11. 11
Crabby Granite Co. Ltd	9. 13. 5
W. W. Dealwood & Sons	
Indemnities A/c	
Exp. of Steam Plough & Rolling A/c	31. 7. 6
Hallaton A/c	
J. Gray, Highway	2. 0. 0
Stantary	10. 0
Insurance	7. 10. 0
Designated Officer	10. 0. 0
J. E. O. Connor, Medical Officer	11. 11. 1
J. L. Douglas, Clerk	20. 0. 0
Highway Surveyors A/c	
J. Gray	50. 0. 0

Resolved that Licenses to keep petrol cars be issued to -
 Mr Cecil Crockett Hallaton
 Mr Frank Boulton Medbourne
 to expire 31st March 1915.

The Designated Officer's report for the past year was read.

The Estimates for the year ending 31st March 1915 were made as under:-

Highway - Stantary Surveyor	1100. 0. 0
County Council (Small Tax)	25. 0. 0
Forward	£ 1125. 0. 0

56

Forward £ 1125. 0. 0

Salaries Medical Officer	20. 0. 0
Surveyor	50. 0. 0
Clerk	40. 0. 0
Designated Officer	10. 0. 0
Establishment Expenses	150. 0. 0
Contingencies	40. 0. 0
	50. 0. 0
Total	£ 1345. 0. 0

Exp.

Leicestershire County Council	
Medical Officer - Inspector	25. 0. 0
Salaries	
Agricultural Rate Fund	200. 0. 0
Private Owners	90. 0. 0
Total	£ 1050. 0. 0

Resolved that the estimates for the year be adopted and precepts issued on the Overseers for the several parishes hereunder at the rate of 1/11 in the £ payable by four equal instalments as follows:-

Parish	Assessable Value	Total Tax	Payable			
			1 May	Aug	Nov	Feb
Blaxton	1349	92	23	23	23	23
Brighthelm	678	44	11	11	11	11
Graylow	860	56	14	14	14	14
Easton Magna	2809	188	47	47	47	47
Hallaton	4209	280	70	70	70	70
Holt	1011	68	17	17	17	17
Horninghold	1280	88	22	22	22	22
Medbourne	2824	188	47	47	47	47
Stockerston	1115	76	19	19	19	19
Total	16135	1080	270	270	270	270

An extract from the minutes of Hallaton Rural District Council for March 1913. ROLLR (DE 8506).

whilst Omar Neale was given the contract for Blaston at the same rate. The contract for supplying granite for the immediate Hallaton area was awarded to the Mountsorrell Granite Company, who would deliver to Hallaton Station four grades of granite, receiving between 5s-6d and 9s-4d per tonne. The licences for storing petroleum were given to Cecil Grocock of Hallaton and Frank Boulton of Medbourne.

The District Council played a key role in administering much of what went on in Hallaton. They liaised with, and were to a certain extent governed by, Leicestershire County Council, and were responsible in ensuring that certain laws were put into place. It is clear from their minutes that they also worked closely at times with Hallaton Parish Council.

In 1913 the Hallaton Parish Council met on ten occasions. It was in many ways a typical year. They dealt with the running of the minutiae of village life, things like the upkeep of the cemetery, the organising of the street lighting, and the maintenance of wells and pumps providing the water supply around the village. They were also responsible for recommending men to become the local parish constables. At the start of the year the six members of the Council were H. Butteriss, the chairman, G. Eaton and J. Eaton, G. Norman, F. Pick and the Reverend Preece. At the meeting on 24th February they nominated the following to be parish constables for the following year: Joseph Watson, a bricklayer, Charles Russell, a blacksmith, Walter Plowright, a baker, and the bricklayer, Charles Marlow. Two items on the agenda typify the workings of the Parish Council. The first involved a request to James Driver to give a price for cleaning up the gravel pit close. The other was in response to some complaints about hand gates opposite the cottages owned by Herbert Fletcher and Mr Taylor. Apparently, these had been fixed so they now opened outwards onto the street and this was considered a danger to the public, so a request was sent to rectify the matter.

The meeting of March 17th saw the election for the six Council positions for the next three years. The successful candidates were Ernest John Almond, Henry Butteriss, George Eaton, the Reverend Preece and Alexander McTurk. The new Council met for the first time on 16th April, when much of the meeting was spent swearing in the new Council members and choosing the chairman and vice-chairman, who were Harry Butteriss and Alexander McTurk respectively. Alexander McTurk, George Eaton and George William Butteriss were chosen as the trustees of the Hallaton Charities, whilst George Pick and John Eaton were once more

chosen as the parish overseers. Captain Maudsley was appointed school manager and Alexander McTurk and George William Butteriss were appointed to act as the cemetery committee.

In April they wrote the following letter to the Rural District Council:

“The above council [the Parish council] have been informed by the auditor, that they are not allowed to spend any money for scavenging and that the same must be done by the district council. They therefore place the matter entirely in the hands of your council.”

A scavenger in those days was a dustman or street cleaner. Keeping the streets of Hallaton clean was an ongoing problem and over the years the Parish Council had received several complaints about the matter. The resolution lay in opening up an old disused gravel pit off North End to be used as the village rubbish dump.

In April the business of sorting out who would be responsible for the upkeep of the cemetery was resolved with the acceptance of George Tyler's tender of £7-2s-6d, for which he would have to keep it neat and in credible order, and be responsible for removing all the hedge clippings from the cemetery. There was then a gap until the next meeting in August, when tenders were invited for a new pump for the well on the High Street. Also discussed and approved was James Driver's tender for £2-5s-0d for carting gravel, and for spreading and rolling the gravel onto the cemetery walks. Sixteen tons of it was ordered for the purpose.

One of the Parish Council's main jobs was to ensure that the street lights were lit during the autumn and winter months. This was tendered out and the most competitive offer was usually accepted. The lights were oil lamps and the job was not straightforward. The Council would provide the oil, but the successful person was responsible for ensuring the lights were lit between 17th September 1913 and 17th April 1914. The person contracted was to provide the lamp glasses, and at the end of the season have all the lamps, burners and lamp glasses thoroughly cleaned and stored safely away. The ladder provided for lighting the lamps was to be put away each time, and the lamps were not to be lit for three nights before a full moon and for one night after, even if it was cloudy presumably.

At the following meeting on 10th September Albert Tyler's tender of £12-15s-0d was accepted. Despite the mundane sounding work, the Parish Council was an important cog in village life, ensuring important jobs were undertaken at a

reasonable cost, and also providing much useful income for local tradesmen. The minutes of each meeting usually give detail of some payment or another for work done. For example, in November they paid Messrs Hawke and Son £15-18s-0d for unspecified work, and Thomas Marlow received £4-16s-5d.

A big part of governance was, of course, law and order. George Mayes was Hallaton's local policeman and he was helped in his role by four unpaid Parish Constables. Supervising in the district was Inspector Charles Henry Freer. Fortunately for Hallaton serious crime was rare, but there were a great many laws and regulations to which people could fall foul. Most cases were dealt with locally at the Petty Sessions, which took place each month at East Norton. More serious cases were sent to Leicester. A look at the records of the East Norton Petty Session reveals the plethora of infringements and law breaking that went on in the district, which included Hallaton. Typical of the period were people summoned for allowing animals to stray onto the roads. If found guilty they would be fined a few shillings. Also typical was Allen Nesbit, a grazier from East Norton, who owned eight beasts found straying on the roads at Hallaton. PC Mayes stated the case against him. He pleaded guilty but claimed someone had left the gate open; he was fined seven shillings. Commonly people were brought up for driving vehicles, carts, and waggons, or riding bicycles without lights, and were fined small sums. Dogs had to be licensed and it was fairly common for people to be charged with not having a licence. As well as petty crimes such as these, more serious cases involved issues such as larceny. Here anyone found guilty could be sentenced locally. Harry Burdett received 21 days hard labour in December 1913 for such a crime. Sometimes the magistrates were more lenient, as they were in a case involving Frank Terry, a 14-year-old errand boy from Blaston. Unfortunately for defendants the sessions were covered in all the local papers and this case was reported. Frank was summoned

“For stealing a motor box cylinder, of the value of £1-10s, the property of William Harle Stott of Hallaton, on 8th September (1913) — Fred Cardbonne, rag-gatherer of Sutton Bassett, stated that he bought the cylinder among some old iron and rubbish from the defendant, who said that Mr Stott had told him to get rid of it. PC Mayes stated that after Mr Stott had reported the loss of the cylinder to him he saw Terry in the presence of his mother and he said he had sold it to a rag-gatherer.”

Terry was sentenced to six months' probation and Cardbonne warned to be more careful.

Another interesting matter that was dealt with was bastardy. More common than one might think. Women had the chance to come to court to state their case against the alleged father of their child or children and request financial support. If successful, they were awarded costs and a regular payment from the father. In most cases at East Norton the award would amount to 2s-6d per week from birth, so presumably back-dated in some cases, to be paid until the child reached the age of 14. The man also usually had to pay £1 in costs.

The sessions also dealt with a variety of what might be called trading laws, which were often of a technical nature. One interesting one in 1913 involved a milk farmer from Tugby. He was charged with *“not selling milk of the nature demanded.”*

This was obviously something beyond the expertise of the court, and samples of his milk were sent away for testing, where it was found to be deficient in the required amount of milk fat by around 20 percent. These technical types of laws also affected bread. Frederick Barnett, the Hallaton baker, had been out in Great Easton selling his bread when a local policeman challenged the weight of the loaves. An investigation showed that nine loaves were of the incorrect weight, all short of what they should weigh. Four loaves were two and a half ounces short, three one and a half ounces short, one was one ounce short and another half an ounce short. Barnett admitted the offence and was fined £1.

Sometimes cases came up which are not only different but also interesting because they reveal details about the way people lived and worked. One such case was in February 1913 and involved George Barnett, a grazier from Hallaton. On 18th February Barnett had been to Market Harborough to purchase some bullocks. After purchasing them he was warned by the local RSPCA inspector that one of them was lame and should be left where it was until a float could be organised for it to be transported. After the inspector had gone Barnett looked at the animal himself, decided the case was not so bad after all and decided to drive the animals back to Hallaton. Subsequently he was charged by the RSPCA inspector with cruelty to animals. In court PC Mayes spoke first:

“On 18th February I proceeded along the Harborough Road, and met the defendant on the Slawston road driving 17 bullocks, one of which was lame on the near foreleg and appeared to be in a very exhausted state.”

Barnett admitted he had driven the bullocks seven miles from Market Harborough market, but he had made the lame bullock walk on the grassed areas wherever possible. He had not wanted to leave the beast behind, and in his own words "*never thought about sending it by train*".

He was cleared of the charge, with the magistrate firmly blaming the dealer for selling him a beast in poor condition.

The East Norton Petty Session did not just deal with criminal cases. They were also responsible for the issuing of licenses to those wishing to sell alcohol. In the case of Hallaton this involved the three inns, Walter Plowright's beer off licence, and Charles Plowright's High Street shop. The licenses were issued every February and were renewed annually, though their award could be contested. The February meeting to deal with this was known as the Brewster sessions. At these, the local divisional inspector, Charles Henry Freer, would give a summary of the previous year. His report for 1913 shows that at the last census the population of the district, including Hallaton, was 4416. At that time there were 28 licences in force. 23 full, three for beer houses where consumption was off the premises, and two for the sale of wine and spirits. So, there was an average of 157.71 people for each licence. Remarkably, he reported that only two people had been proceeded against for being drunk and disorderly in the district in 1912.

Hallaton, The People

We can trace our fingers over their names on the cemetery headstones, we can read their names on the census returns, a snippet in a local paper will give us a clue or perhaps flag up a misdemeanour, and it is straightforward enough to write about what they did, but much harder, if not impossible, to say what they were like or what they thought.

They were certainly smaller in stature than we are today. The army records show that a man over the height of 5ft 10ins was not a common sight in Hallaton. Life expectancy was around 50–55. Though there were a goodly number of elderly inhabitants, many died young and death in childbirth was not uncommon. Children frequently died young with outbreaks of measles, scarlet fever and diphtheria, all responsible for temporarily closing the school at some point.

There was, of course, no national health service, and the two doctors in Hallaton, Stott and Morrison, would have charged for seeing and attending to patients in the village. There was a nurse

employed, though they were not always qualified. Traditionally this was especially so with midwives, who were often someone local with experience in childbirth. By 1913 though, the situation was on a more formal setting, and was largely run by the Hallaton Cottage Nursing Association. In January 1913 the committee of the Hallaton Charity met, and part of their meeting was given over to a letter sent by Mrs Fletcher from Hallaton Hall on behalf of the association, asking if a grant could be awarded to help it. The initial discussion went against the request pointing out that the association covered both Blaston and Horninghold as well as Hallaton. However, as the debate continued, it was pointed out that the poor of Hallaton also stood to benefit from any grant awarded. As such, it was decided to set aside a sum of £5 to pay for the nursing of the needy and their children residing in Hallaton. Each case was to be assessed by a sub-committee.

Though diseases and illnesses we easily treat today were common, and harder to deal with, the news for Hallaton was not all bad.

By the outbreak of war health had, for some years, been overseen by the Leicestershire County Council. Each year a district health inspector wrote a report on the area, which was sent to the Hallaton Rural District Council to read and to put into place any required measures. Their minutes remark on this report, which dealt with a wide number of issues from sanitation, to numbers and causes of death, and especial attention was paid to notifiable diseases such as tuberculosis (TB). By 1913 the Hallaton Rural District Council could read the report, if not with a certain amount of smugness, then certainly with a good deal of satisfaction and relief on matters relating to health. Infant deaths had long been a problem, but in the 1913 report the inspector could state (Hallaton refers to the district including the village, and not just the village):

"Hallaton is to be congratulated on not having a single death under one year of age."

There had been three cases reported of diphtheria the previous year, but no deaths, whilst there had been three notifications of TB, resulting in two people dying. Measles and whooping cough were also present, but not as bad as previous years. The news on scarlet fever was even better.

"In the Hallaton district no cases came under observation. This is the third year in succession that this district had had the distinction of producing a clean sheet as far as this disease is concerned."

Of course, if you became ill there was not only the cost of seeing the doctor to contend with, but local facilities did not exist. Hallaton district, for example, had no isolation hospital and the nearest one in Market Harborough hardly sounds enticing.

“The buildings cannot be said to come up in any way to modern requirements. All buildings are really makeshift — no discharge block and sewage either percolates into the soil or is dug in on a small confined site. All wards sadly overcrowded.”

Serious illnesses and anything requiring an operation meant a trip to the Leicester Infirmary, and it is apposite that Hallaton put on several fundraising events to raise money for donations to the hospital. 1913 saw five Hallatonians admitted as in-patients to the Leicester Infirmary whilst a further nine were outpatients. In December 1913 the committee of the Hallaton Charity had another health matter to discuss. Mrs Harry Neale had been taken ill and had to undergo what was described as a “severe operation.” Not only did this put considerable mental strain on the family, but they also incurred a financial hit with both fees for the doctor and payment to the local nurse for help with care. After some deliberation it was decided to award a grant of £5 to go towards the payment of the doctor’s bill. The committee also decided that a sum of 19s-6d should be paid for the nurses’ services from the fund they had set up in January that year.

It appears that it was not just for immediate treatment that Hallatonians went out of the village to receive care. At the December meeting of the Hallaton Charity committee there was a proposal to take out a subscription of £2-2s-0d with a convalescent home in Felixstowe, or indeed such other similar institution that they could agree upon. At the same time, they agreed to fund a third-class rail ticket to allow a Hallaton resident to attend such a home.

Illness could also mean a potential loss of employment with all that would imply. Though, as we have seen, the 1911 National Insurance Act gave some limited protection to some workers, the traditional method of having some security in the case of illness or unemployment had for many years lain with the local friendly societies. Hallaton was well supplied with them and in 1913 had three. Friendly societies were nationwide, and they provided financial support at times of sickness and paid out a sum of money on the death of the member. To benefit, members had to contribute a small amount of money on a regular agreed timescale. The friendly society would attempt to

build up funds from the contributions, from which it would pay out the required benefits. Some built local halls and lent money. The Oddfellows of Hallaton bought two houses on the High Street. Possibly the most prominent of these in Hallaton by 1913 was the one known as The Loyal Farmers Delight. This was a lodge, number 2278, affiliated to the Order of The Oddfellows, and in particular the Manchester Unity. The Hallaton lodge was founded in June 1860 by thirteen Hallatonians. The first Grand Master was Thomas Sewell and the lodge met in The Fox Inn, which at the time was run by his family.

Like all such lodges that of Hallaton conducted its business alongside no little pomp and ceremony. There was regalia and large banners to carry through the village on important days.

At the end of the nineteenth century the Fox Inn was run by Charles Eaton and his family and the lodge continued to meet there. As we have seen Easter Monday was the day for the annual meeting and the lodge played a significant role in the Bottle Kicking proceedings.

At some point they moved their headquarters from the Fox to the Royal Oak. The parish magazine for 1910 recounts a special dinner held there in celebration of the centenary of the founding of



Dispensation for founding the Hallaton Lodge, in its original frame.



*A typical Oddfellows parade down High Street, circa 1907.
© F. C. Hawke.*

the Oddfellows movement. The hosts that evening were pub landlord John Eaton and his wife.

“Dr. Morrison, in his usual affable manner, took the chair, and in a very able speech outlined the progress of the society, showing that in 1810 twelve or fifteen men met together to consider the best means of providing for themselves and their wives and families in times of sickness... The Lodge at Hallaton was founded in June 1860, and many of the members must have a feeling of gratitude for the step the thirteen Hallatonians took to found a Lodge in the village, which has done such admirable work for so many years. Four of these thirteen men are still alive, and although very advanced in years, they were present at the dinner. Six years later Bros. Joseph Simkin and George Simpson were initiated into the Order, and the latter has carried on faithfully as secretary for 41 years. When he commenced his duties there were 43 members, and the funds amounted to £100. At the present time there are 167 members, and close upon £1000 in the sick fund alone. During the last 15 years contributions to the funds amounted to over £3,414, and total receipts for sick pay, £1955-10s-0d.”

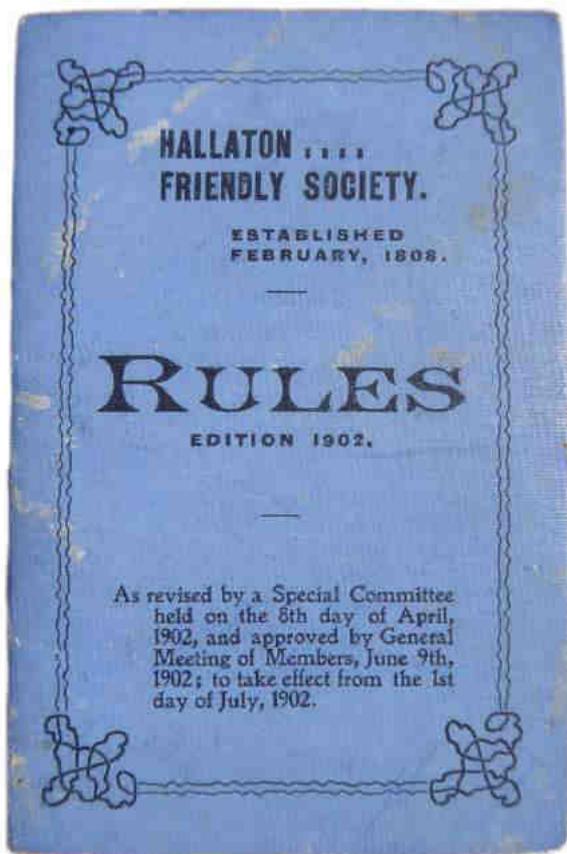
One especially interesting thing to emerge from this article in the parish magazine is that not only was there an adult society but also a junior one.

“On Saturday, October 15th, the juvenile members also celebrated the auspicious event, meeting in the Reading Room, which was lent

by the Rector for the purpose. They no doubt felt the importance of the occasion by the manner in which they did justice to the tea provided by Mr and Mrs Eaton. The chair was taken by Dr Saunderson Morrison, and the evening proved one of real enjoyment to the boys, who showed their appreciation of songs and music and occasional refreshments. A gramophone was lent and well manipulated by Mr Bird, and proved a great source of amusement. Bros. Simpson, Cort, Simkin and other adult members made every effort to make the evening one much to be remembered by the juveniles. Statement of accounts showed a balance in hand of £73-3s-8d which must give great satisfaction.”

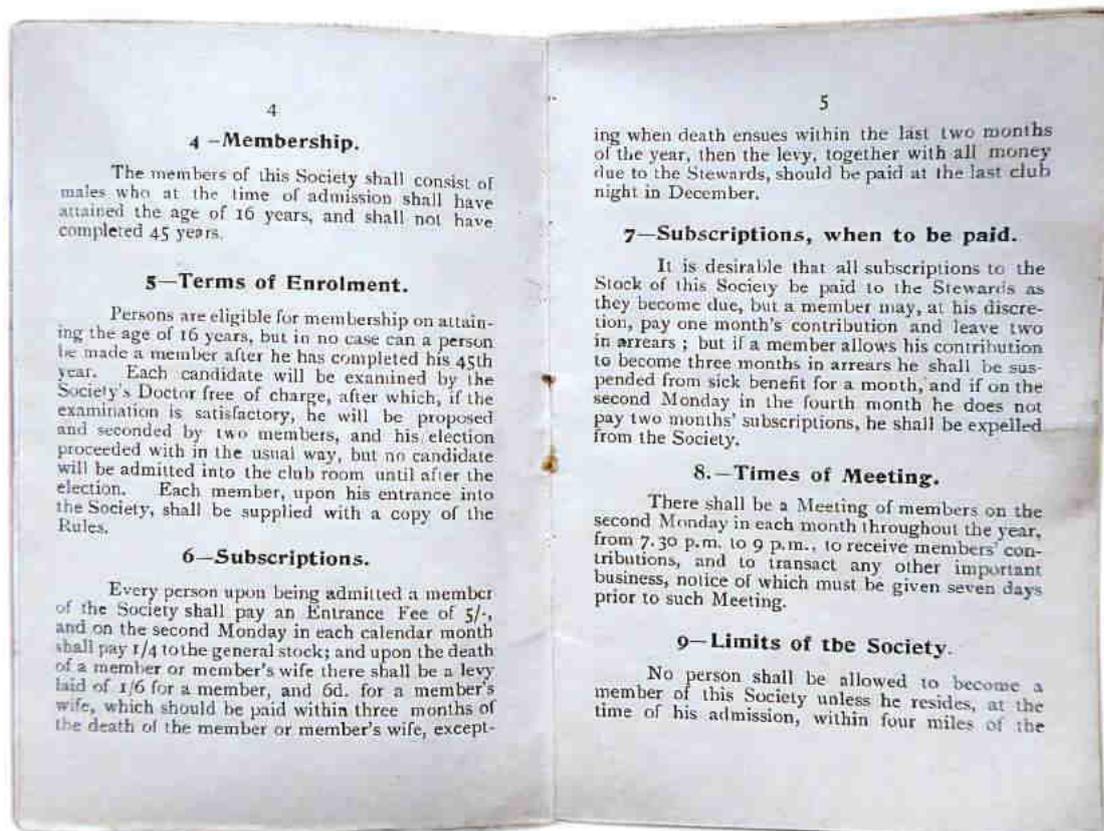
The foundation of this society actually appears to date back to February 1808 and probably saw many changes over the years. In 1902 they reissued their rules as can be seen in the illustrations below.

As can be seen there were stringent membership rules for the society and all members had to reside within four miles of the parish of Hallaton, though dispensation was allowed for natives of the village who were temporarily absent from the parish. By 1902 its office was in the club room of the Fox Inn. They met on the second Monday of each month between the hours of 7.30 and 9.30pm. The anniversary meeting of the society took place each Easter Monday and members were asked to pay one shilling each towards the costs. There was a committee comprising a chairman, treasurer, secretary, two stewards and six members over the



Above: The 1902 revised rules for the Hallaton Friendly Society.

Below: Inside the Hallaton Friendly Society 1902 rules, showing details of membership.



4

4—Membership.

The members of this Society shall consist of males who at the time of admission shall have attained the age of 16 years, and shall not have completed 45 years.

5—Terms of Enrolment.

Persons are eligible for membership on attaining the age of 16 years, but in no case can a person be made a member after he has completed his 45th year. Each candidate will be examined by the Society's Doctor free of charge, after which, if the examination is satisfactory, he will be proposed and seconded by two members, and his election proceeded with in the usual way, but no candidate will be admitted into the club room until after the election. Each member, upon his entrance into the Society, shall be supplied with a copy of the Rules.

6—Subscriptions.

Every person upon being admitted a member of the Society shall pay an Entrance Fee of 5/-, and on the second Monday in each calendar month shall pay 1/4 to the general stock; and upon the death of a member or member's wife there shall be a levy laid of 1/6 for a member, and 6d. for a member's wife, which should be paid within three months of the death of the member or member's wife, except-

5

ing when death ensues within the last two months of the year, then the levy, together with all money due to the Stewards, should be paid at the last club night in December.

7—Subscriptions, when to be paid.

It is desirable that all subscriptions to the Stock of this Society be paid to the Stewards as they become due, but a member may, at his discretion, pay one month's contribution and leave two in arrears; but if a member allows his contribution to become three months in arrears he shall be suspended from sick benefit for a month, and if on the second Monday in the fourth month he does not pay two months' subscriptions, he shall be expelled from the Society.

8.—Times of Meeting.

There shall be a Meeting of members on the second Monday in each month throughout the year, from 7.30 p.m. to 9 p.m. to receive members' contributions, and to transact any other important business, notice of which must be given seven days prior to such Meeting.

9—Limits of the Society.

No person shall be allowed to become a member of this Society unless he resides, at the time of his admission, within four miles of the

age of 21. It was the role of the stewards to collect all the money which was owed locally and to liaise with the treasurer. They were elected every year and were duty bound to attend every meeting or face a fine of 6d per meeting missed. Of special interest is a long rule, quoted below in full, concerning general behaviour at meetings. The imposition of such a broad rule must, at least suggest, that such behaviours were not an unknown occurrence in meetings in the past.

“Striking a member in the Club Room during a meeting, expelled for the night and 1 shilling. For being intoxicated in the Club Room at any meetings, or for cursing or swearing or using any opprobrious language, or challenging any member to fight, or gaming, or offering to lay wagers, or for any species of misbehaviour in the Club Room; for each offence, if thought proper, to be expelled from the room that night and 6d.”

Indeed, there was quite a range of fines applied to breaches of membership rules. Failing to be silent at meetings when asked three times by the chairman to do so resulted in a 2d fine as did non-attendance at a specially summoned meeting without good cause.

The benefits members could expect to receive were a sick allowance of ten shillings per week for the first 26 weeks followed by five shillings per week for the following 26 weeks. To qualify members



The Hallaton Friendly Society and band outside The Fox Inn, circa 1910. Note the junior members on the right of the picture.

were expected to inform the society within three days in writing and to produce a signed doctor's certificate. They were also not allowed out after 6.00pm between 25th September and 25th March, or after 8.00pm between 26th March and 24th September without the written consent of a doctor. Death benefit was also paid at the rate of £6 for a husband and £2 for a member's wife, though the £6 payment would be reduced by £2 if the man had already received the benefit for his wife. His death benefit would be paid to his widow, children or parents, unless his will specifically said otherwise.

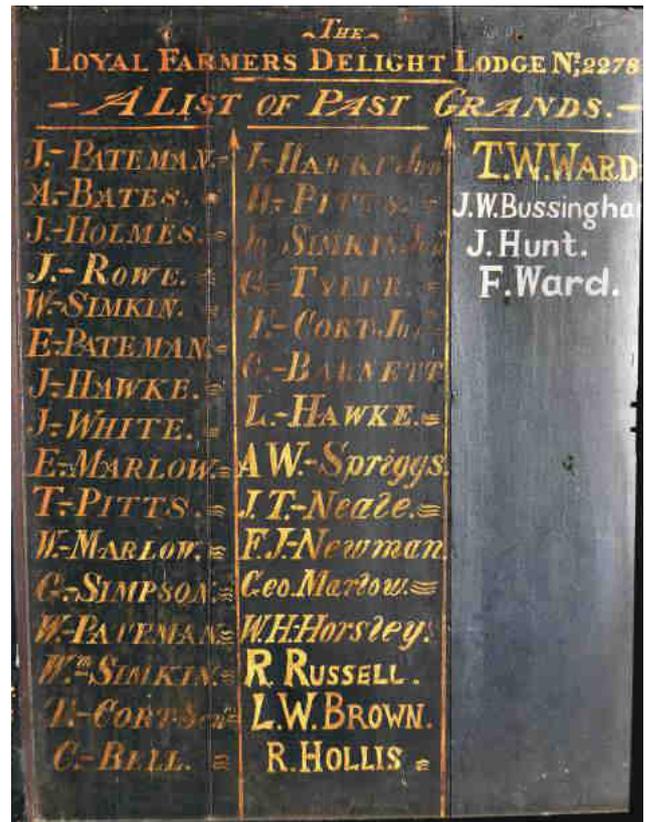
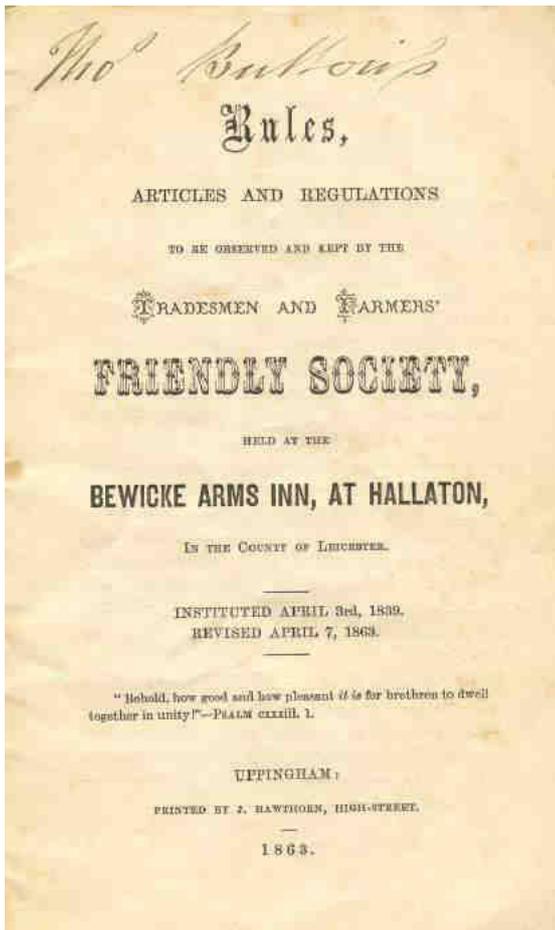
In 1902 the officers of the Society were, George Clarke, chairman, Charles Hawke, secretary, and the two stewards were Eli Lount and Edward Hunter.

The Oddfellows of Hallaton were at their most popular between 1880 and 1920, when the greatest number of new members joined. The lodge covered Horninghold as well as Hallaton, and most people who joined were working class labourers such as farm workers, fellmongers, builders and bricklayers. They paid in around 1s-9d per week and the benefits paid out were 10s per week for 52½ weeks followed by 5s per week. The death benefit ranged from £10 to £20 and perhaps £5 to £10 for the man's wife.

We know very little about the other two societies. The Hallaton Friendly Society was perhaps the earliest and was formed in 1808. Like the Oddfellows they met in one of the village hostelrys. In their case they initially met in the Royal Oak



An official meeting of the Hallaton Friendly Society outside the back of The Fox Inn. Date unknown, but back row far right is Ted Hawke. Ted Woolley is also on the back row, 4th from the left, and seated on the front row far right as we view it is Abraham Plowright.



Above: Farmer's Delight board listing the Grand Masters of the lodge; Left: Thomas Butteriss's copy of the rules of Hallaton's Tradesmen and Farmer's Friendly Society, 1863.

but eventually relocated to the Fox. They too had their annual meeting on Easter Monday and paraded along with the Oddfellows at the annual Bottle Kicking.

The third society is something of a mystery. Morison and Daisley state that it was at some time called the Tuxford Club, and later became the United Brothers Friendly Society, holding its meetings at the Bewicke Arms. The rules of the Traders and Farmers Friendly Society illustrated above are from 1863, and show they met at the Bewicke Arms.

Sadly, we know virtually nothing about them until 1914, when the following snippet appeared in the *Midland Mail* on 3rd January that year.

"The annual dinner of the Hallaton Sick and Dividend Friendly Society was held on Monday 29th ult, at the Bewicke Arms. The excellent dinner, provided by the hostess, Mrs Butteriss, being greatly enjoyed by upwards of 40 members and friends. The secretary's report showed a small balance in hand, in spite of a heavy sickness record in the early part of the year. After dinner a pleasant evening was spent in songs etc. under the genial chairmanship of Mr J Garner."

It is clear that the friendly societies not only provided a financial benefit to Hallatonians but were also an opportunity for social functions and a chance for working class men to hold some form of public office. The clubs were almost certainly the preserve of men. There would have been a certain amount of pride involved in becoming an officer of one of the societies and probably a degree of rivalry between the three. How one decided which to join is not known, but family ties almost certainly played a part. From the surviving records we know that the three brothers, George, Charles and Herbert Payne, all joined the Farmers Delight, as did George, Leonard and Herbert Cort. Leonard and Herbert enrolled on the very same day. Their father, Tom Cort, is known to have been involved with the Farmers Delight Lodge.

Family was very important in those days. Hallaton possessed a certain number of long established village families. There were the Hawkes, the Paynes, the Marlows, the Simkins, the Plowrights, the Tyrrells and the Tylers, to name but a few. A great many of them have already cropped up in the various biographies, but other Hallatonians, who were prominent members of society, warrant a brief note.



Left: Robert Hinrich Price-Dent.

Above: Rev. and Mrs Preece on the Rectory steps.

The two main land-owning families were the Bewickes and the Price-Dents. The Bewicke estate was run by agents and the family had long been absent from the village, though Effie Bewicke certainly kept a close eye on matters, and as we have seen returned to Hallaton to take part in events for charity. The Price-Dents lived at the Manor House.

Robert Hinrich Price-Dent was lord of the manor in 1913. His family came to Hallaton as long ago as the 16th century. In 1856 the Reverend John Henry Dent bought Hallaton Manor from Thomas Vowe and the family had lived there ever since. Robert was the eldest son of Major-General Robert Havard Price-Dent and his wife Charlotte, who in her turn was the second daughter of Sir Henry Bromley Hinrich of Hallaton. Robert was born in Delhi, India, on 11th October 1862. As a young boy in Hallaton he got to know the countryside and could be found trying to encourage young bullocks to play with him by sounding notes on a little tin trumpet he had at the time. After leaving school he joined the navy aged 15, and served alongside the future King George V on the ship *Britannia*. He did not stay long in the navy, preferring the country life instead, and he joined the Militia 3rd Battalion, Leicestershire Regiment, receiving his commission with them in 1882. In 1895 he married Edith Ansted, and a few days after the wedding the couple left to live in California, where they remained until 1905, when they returned to England. In 1910 his mother died, and he became the owner of Hallaton Manor. The family motto was 'Pietas in Fine

Coronat', or 'humility triumphs in the end'. He was a man who certainly espoused that principle. Known as a kind and sympathetic employer, he was a quiet and unaffected country gentleman. A shy retiring man by nature, he shunned rather than courted acquaintance, but there was nobody readier to assist in times of trouble. He certainly played a full part in village life, working with the Parish Council and Hallaton Charities.

The other main family in Hallaton at the time were the Fletchers, who lived at Hallaton Hall. Herbert and Sarah were important members of Hallaton society, with Herbert serving on the Parish Council, and the hall grounds being used for several occasions. Sarah was also fully involved in all the women's clubs and nursing associations.

One of the most important and influential people in Hallaton was the Reverend Thomas James Preece. He not only gave the village its spiritual lead, but was a member of the Hallaton Rural District Council, the Hallaton Parish Council and was a trustee of the Hallaton Charity, as well as administering the Parker Charity and the houses which went with it. He was instituted as Rector of Hallaton on 23rd July 1907. Previously he had been at St Catherine's College, Cambridge University, in 1883, had become a deacon in 1887, and been ordained as a priest in Liverpool in 1889. He was curate at St Mark's Church, St Helens, from 1887 to 1890, and then at Kirkby in Lancashire until 1892. After that he was appointed chaplain at the Fazakerley Cottage Homes, and on

17th January 1894 married 18-year-old Flora Pegg Sewell in Sheffield. Flora's background is uncertain. The marriage record states her father was Thomas Pegg, gentleman deceased, but records suggest he was still alive and was a locomotive fitter. In 1891 Flora was living in Sheffield with 60-year-old William and Mary Sewell, and was described as their daughter. In 1897, Thomas and Flora's daughter, Edith, was born and all three moved to Hallaton in 1907, occupying the Rectory and all becoming notable members of the community.

Without doubt one of the most enterprising Hallatonians of the time was Frederick Charles Hawke. The eldest of shoemaker William Charles Hawke and his wife Elizabeth's eight children, he was to become one of the most enigmatic and talented people Hallaton produced. As well as being the village postmaster, a position of some repute and importance on its own by 1913, he had his own garage, from which he operated the first Ford dealership in the area. As such, he was at the forefront of technological developments. Not content with selling cars he also sold motorbikes and bicycles. He was a member of the Church choir and one of Hallaton's bell ringers. However, though there is little left today to remember these skills, it is his photography which provides his greatest legacy. By the time he was 19 he had set up as a professional photographer. Moving into 13 and 15 High Street he took many different photographs, from the official posed images of groups such as the church choir of 1907, the village performances, and of course the iconic images of the Bottle Kicking. He photographed fancy dress parades, the fancy dress cricket match of 1908, and also took some images of cattle killed in the great storm of 1901. He also took portraits. As well as his photography business he printed leaflets for all the village activities, and turned his photographs into postcards that survive to this day. By the outbreak of war, he and his wife Annie were living in Hallaton with their daughter, Elizabeth Winifred, who was born on 28th August 1912. Shortly after the end of the Great War he broadened his interests into the new field of radio, and had an aerial fitted to the roof of his house.

Henry Butteriss was another significant Hallaton figure of the time. Born in Hallaton in 1867 he was the son of Thomas Butteriss, a builder, and his wife Ellen. By 1891 he was working as a bricklayer for his father's building firm, which he took over on his father's death in 1894. Eventually, he passed this business to his brother George William, and settled down to life as a grazier. He was heavily involved with the running of the congregational chapel in

the village and was chairman of the Parish Council, a position he would hold throughout the war. He and his wife Amelia had two children, Ivy and Eric.

One of the master tailors in the village was Mark Stamp. Born in the Lincolnshire village of Ulceby in 1876 he was the son of Robert Stamp, a tailor, and his wife Elizabeth, who was also a tailor and draper. Mark's father died when he was four years old. Like his parents he became a tailor and was trained by Tautz of Oxford Street, London. In 1900 he left Lincolnshire in search of better wages and ended up in Hallaton. Arriving by train he was not encouraged by the size of the station, and immediately asked the porter the time of the next train back to London. There was no train that day and the porter suggested he go to the Fox Inn for the night. Mark never left Hallaton after that. Three years after arriving he married Mary Ann Butteriss, and they went on to have six boys and four girls.

Others of note included William Sayers, the head gardener at Hallaton Hall, whose wife also worked there as a cook. His position was an important one, carrying much prestige and responsibility. The village policeman was George Mayes, who had moved to Hallaton around 1904. George Hill was one of the village blacksmiths, operating from his smithy opposite the school. He was born in Hallaton in 1863 and had taken over the blacksmith's workshop and business from his father, Henry. George was one of the main participants in the annual Bottle Kicking. He married Florence Annie Stevens, and they and their daughter, Eva Florence Edeline, lived near the church not far from George's smithy.

It is, of course, easy to give the bare facts about the Hallatonians of the time, but nigh on impossible to say much about their thoughts and their beliefs. At the time everyone was brought up to be God fearing citizens and if, as we have seen, participation in religious services fell short of what the local clergy would have liked, there can be no doubt that most people believed in God and that religious creeds governed much of their spiritual and moral behaviours. Sex outside of marriage was frowned on, though it certainly happened, and Hallaton had its fair share of illegitimate children. However, most Hallatonians of the time believed in the sanctity of marriage, though a number of the village doctors ended up getting divorced. The notion of King, country and empire, watched over by an approving God, was firmly reinforced whilst at school and both Trafalgar Day (21st October) and Empire Day (24th May) were celebrated. The idea of patriotism was well established and it is likely that a good many Hallatonians supported

it, believing in the right and might of the British Empire, and firmly supporting the monarchy.

That is not to say that all Hallatonians were compliant, non-questioning citizens. As the twentieth century passed its infancy, the Liberal Government of 1906 passed several laws which helped the working-class people. The old age pension was introduced, and several Hallatonians benefitted. Whilst the national insurance act gave a certain degree of certainty to some workers others looked to the nascent trade union movement to offer other ways of negotiating working conditions. We know that several Hallaton men joined the various railway unions that were in existence. There is no doubt that some Hallatonians were taking a firm interest in their working conditions and in politics in general. Nationwide, the seeds of long term political change were starting to grow. In 1893 the Independent Labour Party was formed and in 1900 the Labour Representative Committee was founded, which soon became the Labour Party. Politics was starting to move away from the established order. In 1906 Ramsey Macdonald was elected as the MP for Leicester. He was, of course, leader of the Labour Party. Leicester, indeed, was quite a hot bed of radicalism at the time. Not only was there a well-established Secular Society but in 1905 on 5th June, 450 men set off from Leicester on an unemployment march to London. On their way they passed through Market Harborough. The news of these events cannot have failed to reach Hallaton.

There was a literary and debating society in the village, though it is not known if this was still in existence by 1913. The parish magazine for 1908 reported on several meetings, stating they continued to be well attended. Of particular interest are three of the meetings in November that year. On 5th November Cecil Grocock read a paper on socialism, after which there was much discussion. Then a week later Enos Frisby read another paper and the subject of socialism once again occupied the attention of those present. On 19th November Mr Godfrey read an excellent paper in favour of small holdings. The magazine notes that he was strongly supported by Arthur Broadwell, Henry Butteriss, Mark Stamp and George Mayes. This latter meeting was directly concerned with efforts made by national government at the time to give labourers a stake in the soil by extending the legislation relating to allotments and small holdings, culminating in an Act of 1907, which required county councils to prepare schemes for the consideration of the Board of Agriculture. This included assessing the number of small holdings required and the amount of land

needed to be acquired to implement the Act. It was immensely successful and, between 1908 and 1914, nationwide 200,000 acres were acquired for over 14,000 small holdings.

Of course, we should not assume that Hallaton was a centre of radical politics. Many people, including all women, could not vote at a general election where the local MP was a Liberal. Locally, newspaper reports suggest that the Parish Council was split evenly between liberals and conservatives. However, the fact that topics such as socialism were being discussed shows Hallatonians of the time were aware of the politics of the day. One of the big political issues of the time was the Women's Suffrage movement. There were many suffragists and suffragettes in Leicester, but sadly we have not been able to establish if there were any in Hallaton, though among the women of the village there must have been some supporters of the cause. In his memoirs, told to his son, Frederick Inchley recalls that the daughter of George Edward Clifton Morris, rector of Horninghold, was a suffragette. Morris had two daughters, Vera and Gladys. In 1911 Vera was 21 and Gladys 18. Vera was listed as a student and Gladys as a musical student. Unfortunately, Inchley does not state which sister was the suffragette. Maybe they both were?

On 5th August 1913 the *Market Harborough Advertiser* ran an editorial column under the heading 'Village Life'. It is worth quoting in some detail.

"We may note a growing demand for brighter conditions of life in every direction. Nowhere is this demand more insistent than in rural districts and colliery villages.

"In the towns there is a plethora of amusement. What with theatres, picture palaces, free libraries, institutes and clubs, bowling, cricket and tennis organisations and so on, there is no means of lack of recreation for the youth of our towns... On the other hand in rural districts, existence is mainly one dreary round of bed and work, varied by nothing more exciting than an occasional visit to a show or fair. For the most part the labourers have to live a life of privation and self-denial. The surroundings are meagre and the prospects uneventful. In the circumstances it is not surprising if many of the most enterprising young men forsake the villages for towns where they swell the ranks of the unskilled labour... The fact is there are too few bright spots in the lives of toilers on the land. The Bishop of Southwell urges the formation of bands, the establishment of institutions and the

provisions of other rational means of amusement-in order to keep the men out of public houses and to render them increasingly contented. Together with the provision of allotments and gardens, there must be some colour introduced into the lives of the people who are daily struggling for the necessities of existence...

“Politicians may discuss the way to deal with the land problem and argue relative merits of land purchase and a minimum wage for agricultural labourers, but no scheme will be complete or successful, which does not take account of the people’s desire for something apart from the deadly seriousness of the struggle for a living. The aspirations of the toiling population for reasonable home comforts, and a decent subsistence are, of course of prime importance, but it must be remembered that they also desire some leisure time and facilities for spending it in a way that affords some interest in life.”

In some ways, as we have seen, Hallaton was ahead of the curve. There were clubs, a band, allotments and village entertainments that were put on with aplomb, and were hugely successful. Yet so much of the paper’s editorial is true for Hallaton. For many it was not a totally inclusive society. There was a strict social hierarchy, which prevented many

from rising to positions of importance within the village. The houses and land were owned by the few, and much of the housing was in poor condition. For many, especially agricultural labourers, pay was low and there would not have been much spare money available for things such as leisure. Like many other rural villages, prospects for young people were limited, and some left to try their luck in the towns and cities of Britain, and a few ventured to Canada.

As the country passed from 1913 to 1914 and started the inexorable march to war, not all was bad in Hallaton. Education was better and more inclusive than ever before, there was some good news on people’s health, and the rights and needs of the ordinary working class Hallatonian were being addressed to a certain extent. In the coming pages we will examine, chronologically, the immediate effects of the war on Hallaton, and follow the trials and tribulations of its people as the war progressed to its conclusion. We will try to see how, or if, life could continue as normal, and finally attempt to see how the Hallaton of 1914 stood up to the tests it endured. Hallaton and its inhabitants would endure its toughest test for many years before peace finally came. How did Hallaton fare? Did the pre-war society of 1914 survive unscathed or did something rather different emerge?

Hallaton

1914–1919

1914: A Year of Hope

On Friday 9th January, the trustees of the Hallaton Charity met for the first time that year. Present were, Samuel Nevins Bankart, Reverend Preece, Herbert Fletcher, Henry Butteriss, George William Butteriss, John Redfearn Laundon and Alexander McTurk. Their meeting began with a discussion concerning the death of W. W. Tailby of Skeffington Hall, a renowned local figure, and a co-opted member of the trustees of the charity. It was decided to call a special meeting to discuss who his replacement would be before the next scheduled meeting in April.

Afterwards, the meeting took its usual course. The accounts for the previous year were read and passed and the doles to be given for the next quarter were allocated to Mrs Abllett, Mrs Simkin, Mrs Garner, Mrs Bussingham, Mrs Abraham Plowright, Mrs Tinkler, J. Hales and Mrs Tyler. They also discussed requests for help with some children's education costs and a grant of £10 was given to Frank Cotton for 1914, and £5 was awarded to William Sayers for his son's education at a local secondary school.

When it came to the property they owned, bills were paid for repairs done to Fearn Farm and to the Hog Lane cottages. There were three applications to take on the garden ground, which had been occupied by J. Russell, and it was decided that Mark Stamp should have it on a six-month tenancy at five shillings per year. The poor condition of the Hog Lane cottages was highlighted by the local sanitary inspector who requested that each should be fitted with a sink and that the windows at the back of some of the houses, should be converted so they could be opened.

A final discussion took place, which would later prove to be significant. Herbert Fletcher raised the prospect of taking out a loan which could be used to erect a village hall, and it was decided to write to

the Charity Commission to see if this would be a correct way to proceed.

The Hallaton Rural District Council met for the first time on 30th January. It was very much a standard meeting. Some bills were paid, and accounts verified. A letter was read out from the county council concerning leaflets or cards issued to the public that pointed out the danger of spitting in public places. They also had to reply to notices of neglect in relation to the limewashing of two flour stores in the area. The one was at the co-op store in Medbourne, and the other at William Plowright's premises in Hallaton. Both had already been resolved by the time of the meeting.

Meanwhile for the village, life was proceeding as it always did. By mid-January Mr Fernie's Hunt was operating as usual. On 25th January, two Hallaton men — Thomas Bridges, a waggoner, and Alfred Scotton, a farm labourer — were out hunting in the fields around Fearn Farm. Unfortunately for them they were unlawfully using guns and a dog, and to make matters worse it was a Sunday. They were apprehended by PC George Mayes, and summoned to appear at the East Norton Sessions. PC Mayes, supported by Robert Grocock, gave evidence against the men, both saying they had seen Bridges carrying a gun and firing at a hare. Bridges claimed it was a rabbit. Scotton was also seen carrying a gun. The chairman declared that shooting on a Sunday was a serious case, and fined both men £1 including costs.

Hallaton Parish Council had its first meeting of the year on 24th February, with Henry Butteriss in the chair. Also present were Reverend Preece, Ernest Almond, George William Butteriss and George Eaton. It wasn't a long meeting. The following Hallaton men were nominated to serve as constables for the following twelve months: Thomas Charles Russell, Charles Frederick Marlow, William Percy Buxton and Ernest Gilbert. There was some discussion regarding the postal service from

Market Harborough, and the clerk was instructed to write to the postmaster there to request that the day's second postal delivery should be sent on the 3.30pm train instead of the 2.00pm train.

Meanwhile the village football team was in action, although not successfully, with a 3-0 defeat by Uppingham. On 27th February Mr Fernie's Hunt was back in Hallaton, this time on a grand scale. Among those present were Mr and Mrs Fernie, Sir Bache Cunard, Countess Wrangle and Count Hochburg. The redoubtable Arthur Thatcher was doing the driving. Among those from Hallaton were Cyril Fletcher, Samuel Nevins Bankart, Hugh Mostyn-Pritchard and Dr Stott.

“Outlying foxes were sought in vain over Fletcher's land around Hallaton Hall, and a hayrick having failed to provide a fox known to frequent its shelter, a move was made to Stopps' Spinney.”

Eventually a fox was spotted, and chase given. For the following 90 minutes, the fox led them on a merry dance all around the Slawston and Hallaton area. After crossing the railway line close to Hallaton, the fox made its way towards Horninghold and eventually to safety.

With March came the first thought of summer. On 17th, the annual general meeting of the Fraser Cup competition, the local cricket contest, met at the Crown Inn at Medbourne to discuss the forthcoming season. Representatives of Great Easton, Hallaton, Medbourne, Blaston & Horninghold and Ashley & Weston clubs, attended, and the latter two were admitted to the competition for the forth-coming season.

On 20th, Hallaton Rural District Council met for their most important meeting of the year. This involved the setting of the budget for the following twelve months. It was decided that Hallaton's contribution would be £280 split into four quarterly payments and, on top of that, Hallaton would need to pay £60 for what was known as special payments, almost certainly regarding sanitary issues. The yearly petroleum licence for Cecil Grocock was renewed, and the local carting tenders for council business were awarded to Omar Neale at a rate of 2s-6d per ton, for the Blaston area, and to Fred Driver for the Hallaton, Holt and Horninghold areas at 1s-3d, 2s-6d and 2s-3d respectively. There was also some discussion about the sharp bend at the foot of Hallaton Hill, opposite the rectory, which was causing some concern but they would not undertake to spend any more money.

March also saw Hallaton's first death of the year, when 65-year-old William Fox passed away. He was

buried in the cemetery on 28th March. The year may have started quietly, but April was to prove a contentious month in Hallaton.

On 3rd April the trustees of the Hallaton Charity met. Their initial business was to choose a new co-opted trustee. Their choice lay between the adopted son of W. W. Tailby, Captain Jones Tailby, and Robert Price-Dent. The trustees opted for Captain Tailby and wrote to invite him to the position. There followed the usual quarterly meeting. Since the previous one, Harry Butteriss had met the surveyor at the Hog Lane cottages. He had been under the impression that the field behind the cottages belonged to the charity, and when informed that it was part of the Bewicke estate he seemed to drop his demand for sinks to be fitted in all the properties. The trustees decided to do nothing. As for the required ventilation, they decided to install air bricks rather than converting the windows but they did acquiesce to the surveyor's request to install hand rails on staircases where required.

The most interesting part of the meeting was left until the end. The correspondence from the Charity Commission concerning the possible construction of a village hall was discussed. Afterwards Herbert Fletcher strongly advocated the trustees borrow the money to build it. There followed a lengthy and, at times, heated debate. The Rector spoke strongly against it, as did John Redfern Laundon. It was finally proposed:

“That the chairman of the parish council [who was present at this meeting] be asked to call a meeting of ratepayers to decide as to whether the ratepayers wished to have a village hall. If the decision were in the affirmative the trustees would go into the matter to assist to the best of their ability.”

The proposal was put to the vote, and was carried narrowly by 5 to 3 votes.

Before the meeting could take place, the village celebrated Easter in its customary fashion. The Good Friday services of 11th April was well attended, and the choir excelled themselves. In the afternoon service they performed 'Olivet to Calvary.' This especially tricky piece was much appreciated by the congregation and Mr Denley, the choirmaster, was much praised for enabling the choir to perform such difficult music. The soloists were young Jim Horsley, Dr Stott, Harry Grocock, George Cotton, Frank Cotton and W. Butteriss, who managed to perform despite having suffered a recent painful accident to his knee that made it hard for him to stand. They performed the same

piece, to an equally appreciative audience, in the evening service.

Easter Sunday saw the choir sing Lloyd's 'Nunc Dimittis', the 'Magnificat' and Caleb Simpers' Easter anthem, 'Let us Keep the Feast'. The congregation enjoyed it all. Easter Monday saw the usual big crowd. The day was splendidly, if not always correctly, covered by the *Midland Mail* newspaper.

"Hallaton people themselves are loyal to the old custom and we doubt many of the village residents go away from the place on Easter Bank Holiday. And that the event still has an attraction outside is proved by the throngs of people in and about the village last Monday. Some of the older inhabitants, when asked for an opinion, said the crowd was nothing to what it used to be and our impression was that it was much less than ten or twenty years ago or so. But whether the crowd was smaller or not there was quite as much enthusiasm and excitement as ever and the struggle for the bottle could hardly have been more strenuous.

Service at the church followed, conducted by the Rector, this being attended by the members of the local sick clubs. Then followed dinner, the Oddfellows dining together at the Royal Oak and the members of the Old Village Club at the Bewicke Arms. A brass band was in attendance at each place. It was getting on towards three o'clock before this part of the proceedings was completed and by that time the High Street

presented a spectacle which it only affords on this one day of the year. Crowds of people from all around the district had congregated and these followed the two bands in their way to the top of the village near the Fox Inn where the time-honoured procession was formed for the march to Hare Pie Bank. The two bands joined forces for this. 'One! Two! three!' and they were off to the martial strains of 'The Mighty Duke of York He had Ten Thousand Men.' Crowds of people preceded the band and others followed it. The musicians threatened to be swamped by the surging people in the narrow street. But it was noticeable that however hampered and pressed the men with the cornets and such like were the men with the big drums always had plenty of room. These drummers displayed such energy and vigour that the adjacent spectators were extremely careful that their well-timed strikes should have no chance of falling anywhere but where they intended to go — namely on the drums.

At the foot of the hill below the church the musicians took a breather — and they had well earned it. But with the big hills surmounted and Hare Pie Bank in sight the music broke out afresh and 'Cheers boys cheer' aroused again the enthusiasm which up the long hill had been suffering from shortness of breath. Hare Pie Bank was now reached in a minute or two, The hare pie which was neatly conveyed in a sack was scattered around the waiting multitude. Small boys and others who were not so small seized



Original picture from the Midland Mail showing Easter Monday Bottle Kicking procession, 1914.

pieces and threw them at anybody who afforded a smirk. A particularly good shot being greeted with roars of laughter by everybody except the victim. But this soon came to an end — the hare pie had vanished and scarcely a crumb remained to bear witness that it had ever been. What had become of it nobody knew and nobody cared — the only thing they could be unanimous about however, was that it had not been eaten.

Then the bottles — the ribboned bottles which had been held aloft in the procession during the greater part of the journey to the Bank became absorbing objects of attention. For these were the bottles of contention. These are not half bottles or even pint bottles but wooden affairs capable of containing a gallon of water or beer. Whether they contained either or neither we know not, but their appearance was such that one could wager that however ferocious a bottle kicker engaged in this game and whatever football rules he had been used to he would not so far forget himself on this occasion to head the ball.

The first bottle with due solemnity was dropped into a shallow hole at the top of the bank and instantly a score of men dropped on it or as near on it as they could get and for ten minutes it was a case of 'pull devil, pull baker' — (with no personal references intended. At length the bottle was squeezed out on the Medbourne side, one intrepid warrior grabbed it and pitched it over the adjacent hedge into the road. Here it was pounced on and put over the next hedge and quite a spirited run took place in the big field below Hallaton Manor House. This three-quarter, or whatever he was, was brought down very abruptly and then followed a lengthy series of scrums which were carried out under no rules whatsoever. The bottle was to be got at any cost and by and by out it came from one of the scrums to be neatly picked up by a man from the Medbourne side who made the run of the day — over the road and two or three fences and across a big field. He was stopped in the pleasant effectual way that men were often stopped in this encounter and gradually the bottle began to be worked towards Hallaton, where it always inevitably gets owing to the superior strength or tactics of the representatives of that village. It was finally got over the brook within a short distance of the railway, and the combatants, such of them as remained 'in at the death' so to speak calmly collected themselves on the bank to be photographed. And so ended the struggle for the first bottle.

The second bottle had a comparatively easy journey, and this having been satisfactorily dealt with, the band played once more down to the cross, where there was the usual cheering and cheerful wind-up. The strugglers for the bottle and spectators alike no doubt agreed that they had a very good time. The weather was perfect — brilliant sunshine almost throughout."

Hallaton, of course, were victorious, but the tussle for the first bottle took over three hours to resolve.

The annual Vestry meeting took place on 7th April. Herbert Fletcher and Dr Morrison were chosen as churchwardens. The meeting also discussed the parlous state of the church bells. It was decided to ask John Taylor of Loughborough to examine them. At a further meeting, on 25th April, it was resolved to start a collection and Mr Fletcher starting things off with a donation of £10.

A Cricket Club dance in the schoolroom saw only four members of the team able to attend. There was music from the piano of Grace Barnett and the violin of Miss M. Neale. A great time was had by all, and £2-15s-0d was raised for the club. The joys of the Bottle Kicking were soon forgotten. On Tuesday 14th, Benjamin Burditt, a platelayer on the railway, returned home from work around midday feeling unwell. His condition did not improve, and Dr Stott was summoned. Burditt was sent to the Leicester Infirmary the following morning, where an operation was performed but his life could not be saved. He had been a member of the chapel congregation and a Sunday School teacher in Hallaton for many years, and a large congregation gathered for his funeral in the chapel on Sunday 19th April followed by a committal in Hallaton cemetery.

On Monday 21st April, May McTurk and her dog Hallaton Country Lad, took first prize in the open sheep dog class at the Leicester Kennel Club Show. Later that same day, at 7.15pm, Hallaton Parish Council met for its standard meeting. George Pick and John Eaton were appointed overseers for the following 12 months but there was little else to detain the council and business conclude promptly at 8.00pm. There then followed a public meeting to discuss the potential building of a village hall. Harry Butteriss took the chair. The Parish Council minutes give a very brief account.

"After a lengthy discussion, H Fletcher proposed that a village hall be built."

As no amendments to his proposal were put forward it went to a vote, which resulted with 27 votes in favour and 19 against.

The basic parish Council minutes reveal nothing of what really occurred, nor do they suggest any of the divisions within the community which followed. The *Market Harborough Advertiser* did, however, give some more detail.

“A meeting was held in the schoolroom on Monday night under the chairmanship of the Parish Council, to consider the desirability of building a village hall. The chairman in opening the meeting read a letter from the clerk of the charity trustees asking the chairman to call this meeting and promising the help of the trustees if a hall be found to be required by the village. The chairman also briefly quoted from the charity scheme to show that the trustees have the power under the Town Estate part of the scheme to assist financially and otherwise in this matter. A long discussion followed, in which at times some strong feeling was shown. Among those taking part in addition to Mr H Butteriss (chairman) whose duties were anything but light, were Mr H Fletcher, Mr S N Bankart, the Rev. T J Preece, Dr Stott, Dr Morrison, Mr W Willey, Mr A McTurk and Mr R Price-Dent. After the fullest discussion, a vote of parochial electors resulted in the decision that a village hall was necessary. The trustees will now proceed to draw up a scheme to provide the same and submit it to a further meeting.”

The ill feeling in the village would not go away, and it was not helped by the May edition of the parish magazine. Unfortunately, we do not currently have an extant copy, but it certainly riled one member of the community, Dr Stott, who wrote a typically lengthy and forthright letter to the *Market Harborough Advertiser*. In this letter, he not only deals with the issue of the magazine, but gives a fascinating insight into the raging debate about the village hall, and glimpses into wider life in Hallaton at the time.

“May I be allowed to trespass on your space in connection with the proposed village hall at Hallaton. At a representative meeting held in the Rectory, it was proposed and seconded, with two dissenting, that a committee should be formed to put forward a scheme and report to a subsequent meeting. At that meeting H Fletcher esq. of Hallaton Hall, who was in the chair, read a letter from the charity commissions, in which they stated that the Town Estate portion of the Fearn Farm Charity might be utilized in negotiating a loan towards the building of a village hall and for the repayment to extend over a period of thirty years.

The money obtained from the Fearn Farm Estate, left for the benefit of the inhabitants of Hallaton — specifically and clearly divides the Charity into distinct portions — one part for the poor, another for the education of the children and a third for town improvements etc. Each account is kept separate and cannot be used for the payment of another. In the deed the maintenance of a social club is especially mentioned, by which the money might be utilized.

At a meeting of the trustees of the charity it was decided to ask the chairman of the parish council to call a meeting of the ratepayers and this was done. That the proposed scheme created interest was shown by the large attendance — especially the young men of the district, for whose benefit that hall and social club would chiefly be used. As was expected, the idea — though false — that the borrowing of the money from the Town Estate portion of the charity would rob the poor was predominant in the minds of a few.

One or two opponents of the scheme waxed wroth, made rambling statements, became reminiscent and spoke about what had been done for the people of Hallaton, and with what result. Another became personal, refused to obey the ruling of the chairman but like the jackdaw of Rheims, ‘nobody seemed a penny the worse.’ There was opposition to the scheme by a few well-known agriculturalists, chiefly through a fear of burdening the rates — although these fears are groundless, their opinions are to be respected. In the end the proposition was carried. The majority of the younger members of the meeting, who are unanimous about the scheme — not being on the list of voters were not eligible to vote.

I now come to the object of this letter. We are in Hallaton the proud possessors of a parish magazine, and occasionally the subscribers are treated to little items of interest in connection with the parish, such as results of the vestry meetings, where churchwardens are unanimously elected, the amount of the Sunday collections, and the births, marriages and death announcements etc. In the May edition, the local editor — has written an account and views of the meeting. An editor is certainly entitled to his views he holds upon a question. But his readers do insist upon a fair and accurate account of what has taken place. S N Bankart esq. late of Hallaton Hall — who still maintains his interest in all the various organisations in connection with the village,

was put down in the account as an opponent of the scheme. I have his statement in writing, and which I am at liberty to publish, that he is in favour of a village hall. His criticism at the meeting being entirely in connection with the methods of raising the loan. R H Price Dent esq. of the Manor House Hallaton, also is strongly in favour of a village hall, which he distinctly stated at the meeting. Yet in the magazine account he is put down as an opponent to the scheme. There were several other inaccuracies which I need not mention. The promoters of the scheme desired to answer and refute these various inaccuracies, and to put before the inhabitants their view in the June edition, but this privilege was denied them. The local editor stated that the village hall question has been spoken about for the last twenty years. Does not that in itself show that it is a long felt want? The Rectory Room is useful for what it was meant for, and no one denies the fact that it is always available for any laudable or worthy object, but It is totally inadequate for the purposes for which a hall could be used. The schoolroom is not the proper place for the various concerts, whist drives, dances and entertainments which are so very numerous in Hallaton, and especially when the only available time (except at holiday time) is limited to one night a week. The farmers in the district deplore the paucity of young men to work the land — the cry 'back to the land' is always being dinned in our ears. How can we expect young fellows to live in our village when no one caters for their healthy enjoyment, when their day's work is done. Other and smaller villages have their halls, which do a good work in relieving the tedium of the long winter night. Why not Hallaton?"

The arguments would rumble on for a few more weeks. By May, summer was starting to emerge, and the new cricket season began on 2nd May at Hallaton with the visit of the East and West Langton club. The outcome was not a happy one for the Hallaton men. The Langtons batted first, and were dismissed for 85 with the wickets shared between Frank Hollis, Harry Hawke and Richard Hawke. Hallaton's reply was a disaster. No player made double figures, and the side was dismissed for a rather paltry 37.

There was a spot of bother in the village on 18th May. Harry Neale, a sheep worker from Hallaton was called to the East Norton Petty Sessions to answer a charge, made by John Plowright, a farmer from Blaston, of using abusive language. Neale's

retort was that Plowright had used bad language to him first. Not surprisingly, the case was dismissed. At the same session, Thomas Neale, also from Hallaton, was charged with riding a bicycle without lights on 9th May. He was ordered to pay 10s-6d including costs.

Whit Monday fell on the 1st June in 1914 and, with it came an incident that was not on major news in Hallaton, but caused outrage in the area. Whit Monday night saw a determined attempt to set fire to Nevill Holt Hall. The building had been unoccupied for a few weeks whilst workmen were getting the house ready for the new owner, Mr Neville Peake. Some of them, alongside the head gardener, claimed to have seen two women wandering around the grounds and occasionally peering into the windows. Though it was not uncommon for people to wander in the grounds, these women also aroused the suspicion of the game keeper who watched them for some time until they headed off in the direction of Medbourne. One of the under gardeners, who was temporarily staying at the hall, returned from Medbourne at 11.00pm that night. He found a big fire blazing on the main stair case. Fortunately, just the previous week, 'mini max' fire extinguishers had been installed, and these were quickly used to put out the fire.

The alarm was raised, but the search for the suffragettes proved futile. However, in the church were discovered some fire lighters. Not, as the papers pointed out, the type you would buy in a shop, but roll shaped objects of a considerable size made from boxes of matches, pieces of candle, and other combustible material. It appears the women had entered the hall through a back entrance, and left by a front window which remained open. About the lawn was found a quantity of literature advocating votes for women. All efforts to trace the women failed, and it has never been discovered who they were. The police were not perhaps helped by the rather vague descriptions given by the witnesses. One of the women, thought to be around 28, was described as rather tall and of a somewhat unprepossessing appearance, whilst the second woman was said to be about 24, shorter and wearing a blue dress.

Local newspapers reported that people were shocked that suffragettes had been in the area. Whilst it is not known if any Hallaton women were actively involved in the campaigns by the suffragettes and suffragists, it is hard not to think that there were some sympathetic to their aims.

Meanwhile, as summer progressed, life continued as normal as it had for many years. The newspapers



Newspaper headline dealing with the attempted arson attack at Nevill Holt.

carried adverts from William Willey for harness, cart, tackle and saddlery of every description, both new and second-hand. For the graziers, June was a busy month with the Market Harborough wool sale attracting decent prices. There, George Barnett, Thomas Simkin, George William Butteriss, William Willey, Omar Neale all sold fleeces, as did the Fletcher and Andrews business, and Mrs Butteriss from the Bewicke.

On Sunday 28th June, the Market Harborough Territorial band gave an open-air concert at the cross. Little did the Hallatonians who attended the concert know that the day before, in a place many would never have heard of, Archduke Ferdinand and his wife were assassinated in Sarajevo. The event would set off a chain of events that, almost before they knew it, would engulf them in a conflict that would dominate their lives for the next few years. The event was covered in the local newspapers, but the big issue of the day was Ireland. The question of home rule dominated the political spectrum, and if war was feared then it was in Ireland that people thought it most likely to occur, and not in Europe.

June was a busy month for Hallaton's cricketers. An impressive victory over Belton on 6th was followed by a rather feeble display, a week later, when they lost to Ashley. The crunch local derby against Medbourne followed and was played at the Medbourne ground. Medbourne were dismissed for 55, with Richard Hawke taking an impressive

seven wickets for ten runs in just over seven overs. The pitch, however, was tricky and the Medbourne bowling aggressive, and in reply Hallaton could only muster 28 runs. Fred Neale, batting at number 11, top scored with 9. The season's nadir was reached on 27th June, at Hallaton, in the match against an eleven from Uppingham. The latter put up a creditable total of 94 whilst Hallaton were dismissed for just 15. The batsmen received the ignominy of extras being the top scorer with four.

July 17th saw two meetings of the charity trustees. Commencing with a special meeting, they had been forced to return to the question of finding a new co-opted trustee after Captain Tailby had declined their offer, stating that he was not going to be taking up residence at Skeffington Hall. It was decided to offer the position to Mr Price-Dent, who accepted. An ordinary meeting followed in which, as usual, doles were discussed. As Mrs Plowright was about to take up one of the Bede cottages she no longer required the charity's help and her place was taken by Mrs Fox. Meanwhile J. Almond was to occupy Mrs Plowright's cottage at a rent of 6d per week. Education grants of £5 were given to J. H. Garner for the education of both his son and daughter, whilst an application from George Clarke for his son for the same amount was held in reserve pending a satisfactory report on his schooling from Mr Denley and would not be paid until the boy started at secondary school. The most interesting part of the meeting revolved around a statement made by the chairman, Henry Butteriss. Reporting on the village meeting to consider the building of a village hall he stated:

"The voting was in favour of the hall by 27 to 19. Those only voting who were on the register of electors, and he stated that there seemed to be a larger majority of persons over 21 years of age who were not electors who were in favour of the hall."

After some discussion, the general opinion seems to be that as there was not an overwhelming majority in favour of the hall, it was undesirable to proceed with it at this time. This proposal was put to the vote, proposed, perhaps not surprisingly, by John Redfearn Laundon, and seconded by Alexander McTurk. It was agreed to let the matter of the village hall 'lie on the table' for the time being. And there it would remain for several years. The war put paid to any chance of it being erected even if the decision had been to proceed. There must have been a significant amount of disappointment, not only among those who strongly supported it, but

also among the young people of the village, who quite clearly wanted it but who were not allowed to vote, and who had seen a similar building opened in Medbourne just the year before.

At the end of July, tragedy struck the village when itinerant farm labourer, Thomas Ansell, was found dead on the floor of the stable belonging to Luck Colston. The man had seemingly been asleep in the loft above the stable, and had fallen down and broken his neck. An inquest was held in the Bewicke Arms to establish the cause, and he was buried in Hallaton Cemetery on 29th July.

As July passed into August, the weather became unsettled, and the talk in the papers was no longer just about Ireland, but about the deepening situation in continental Europe. War was looking far more likely, and there was an air of trepidation and excitement in the country. For Hallaton, the bank holiday was dominated by the annual village flower and produce show. The weather had been dry and growing conditions difficult, but, nevertheless, there was the usual wonderful range of exhibits put together on Monday 3rd August. In addition to the show there were several attractions, including a programme of athletic sports, and the Hallaton Band played selections all through the afternoon. There were also guessing games. Whilst the name of the doll was not guessed, three people managed to get the weight of a cake correct. Among those winning prizes the name of George Mayes was prominent. There were categories for children, and produce categories included butter and eggs, currant cakes, plain cakes, and honey. There were the customary special prizes awarded, with Tom Payne taking the spoils for the best allotment in Lady Close. George Mayes won the prize for best window plants in Hallaton, whilst Mrs Killingrey almost took a clean sweep in the prize list for best table decorations. Most importantly of all, though, Mrs Godfrey took the plaudits for the tastiest dish of boiled potatoes.

The same day, Germany declared war on France. The following day, the British Government sent an ultimatum to the German Government requesting they guarantee Belgian neutrality. They were given until midnight Central European time, 11.00pm in Britain, to reply. The clock ticked on inexorably, but the Germans did not reply. Britain, and Hallaton, were at war. The news would not have reached Hallaton immediately, and it is likely that the vast majority of Hallatonians retired to their beds that night unaware of what was happening. Village memory recalls that the news of war was received via the telephone at the station. From there it would have quickly been dispersed around the village. Among

the sounds of dogs barking and children playing would have been that of chatter, in the inns, in the shops, and on the streets, and probably a mix of excitement among the young and concern amongst others. Mary Ann Payne, as the only mother in the village that had experienced the loss of a son in conflict knew what war was; she knew the price that could be paid, she knew it was bloody hell, and that there was no certainty of return. During the first hours of stunned awareness, many may not have agreed with any such feelings. For many, their only recollection of war was of the Boer War, and though several men from the area had gone and fought, it was all so far away. Some may have recalled their grandparent's memories of the Battle of Waterloo, but none could foresee the horrors of the twentieth century conflict that would follow. Over the next four years, they would slowly and painfully come to know exactly what war meant.

The Hallaton Rural District Council met at 10.30am on 4th August. It agreed to get the district surveyor, Mr Gray, to undertake a classification of the local road network by carrying out a traffic census.

On 3rd August, the Leicester Daily Post had warned of the consequences of war:

“Risen and rising prices for the necessities of life and their multiplying evils already constitute the stormy petrels of European conflict.”

Nationally, and locally the facts seem to bear this warning out. There was a rush on food, and people began to hoard it. Prices rocketed, but this was just a temporary situation and food supply soon settled down. On 5th August, general mobilisation of the reservists began and the train network was soon chock-a-block with troops. That this affected train services through Hallaton is confirmed by the diary of district police inspector Charles Henry Freer who, on 18th August noted he was:

“Watching East Norton tunnel and viaduct during the movement of troops.”

On 8th August, the Government passed the widely-encompassing Defence of the Realm Act. Initially giving the government the ability to court-martial any citizen found to be assisting the enemy, it also gave them the right to secure the safety of various means of communication, such as the railway, the ports, and the docks. It was a far-reaching act that, over the war years, would be extended to involve many aspects of daily life.

Like all rural areas, Hallaton would have suffered from the loss of horses, which were commandeered

in very significant numbers in the early stages of the war. The local army remount centre in Market Harborough would have sent out men to the surrounding farms to purchase horses. There are no records of how many were taken or from where, but we cannot doubt that Hallaton would have played its part.

We cannot say for certain what Hallatonians really thought of war. Sadly, we have no written records from people who were in the village at the time. Local newspapers report that by November, 30 men from Hallaton were serving. But what does that really mean? It does not mean that there was a huge rush to the recruiting centres by the men of the village. A study of the list of men serving, which appeared in the Shindler's list published monthly in the *Market Harborough Advertiser*, requires some scrutiny. The list published in November has 31 names under the heading Hallaton. Of those seven were full time servicemen at the outbreak of war and were not in Hallaton at the time. Several others were reservists, and had no choice in the matter, they were among the first to be mobilised. These included Dr Stott, whose practice, and other work was taken over by Dr Morrison. Others, such as William Driver, were no longer resident in Hallaton. It would appear that the number enlisting in those enthusiastic first few months totalled around 10 men from Hallaton. All except one were single, and most were working on the land. This was just the beginning of the gradual reduction in available manpower, which would continue and escalate as the war progressed. At this stage there was still an optimism that the war would be short, but the loss of several young men from the village would have made a significant impact aspects of village life. Several were members of the Hallaton Band which must have started to struggle almost immediately to find enough musicians to keep going.

However much the Government wanted things to go on as normal, by September the war was starting to have an impact at local levels. August saw two more deaths in the village. Henry Jessen Simkin, aged 50, and tragically 12-year-old Dorothy Mary Sayers the latter buried on 31st August.

On 1st September the *Market Harborough Advertiser* ran the following announcement concerning Mr Fernie's Hunt:

"An extraordinary meeting of Mr Fernie's Hunt committee, called on account of the war, was held on Tuesday and the following resolution was unanimously carried.

As it will not be possible to collect from the usual subscribers to Mr Fernie's Hunt the £3,000 required to defer the cost of the poultry and damage, and to take the wire down. The committee is reluctantly obliged to realise that it cannot be held responsible for the fund necessary to hunt the country as usual this winter. They would desire also to suggest to the Master that he should at once allow his hounds to kill as many foxes as possible; and so prevent loss to the country of an important source of food."

Hunting continued, but not on the pre-war scale.

Cricket continued for a while, but we have no obvious evidence that it continued after the beginning of September and the last dateable match for which we have evidence appears to have taken place between Hallaton and Ashley at Ashley on 5th September.

Another example of the local effects of the war came at the meeting of the Hallaton Rural District Council on Friday 18th September. They dealt with a request from the local Road Board that due to the war the planned traffic census should be postponed. The council agreed to this request, and it was cancelled.

The Hallaton Parish Council met on 3rd September, when they discussed a replacement councillor for Ernest Almond, who had put his house and fellmongers up for sale on 25th June. It was sold to Mrs Fletcher, of Hallaton Hall, for £310. George Clarke was invited to take his place. At the same meeting, George Tyler's tender of £12-15s-0d for the contract for Hallaton street lighting was accepted for the following six months. There was no mention of the war in the minutes.

On a personal level, Gladys Emmott had done well at school and was rewarded with a free place at the Market Harborough County Grammar School. The Harvest Festival went ahead as usual on 27th September. The chapel was decorated with flowers and fruit given by many friends of the chapel. A collection was made, and the produce sold raising a combined £9-1s-0d, which was donated to the Leicester Infirmary.

The charity trustees met for their final meeting of the year on 2nd October. There was no mention of the war, and normal business was discussed. C. Grocock received £8-17s-0d, and J. West £5-16s-6d, for repairs they had carried out to the Hog Lane cottages. They agreed to pay R. Tyrrel £1 per year for cleaning the closets, and to be responsible for keeping them in good order. Mr Denley reported back favourably on the scholarly efforts of Leslie

Clarke who had a place at Alderman Newton's School in Leicester and the £5 grant promised on these conditions at the last meeting was paid to his father. They also made their annual payments of £20 to the parish council in respect of both the lighting and the Town Estate. Finally, Henry Butteriss said that at the next meeting, he would raise the matter of the charity building a store house for the parish council tools and implements and the parish bier. He explained that there was nowhere to keep the lamps and barrow, or ladder required to add the oil to the village street lights. It seems possible this is the building which later became the old Hallaton Museum on Hog Lane.

PC George Mayes found himself a busy man at the start of October, when he was instructed to make enquiries concerning some wood, which had gone missing from Moor Hill Farm. A farmer, Arthur Holman, and his family had recently occupied it but had since moved to Burton Overy. Mayes, accompanied by two other men, went to Burton Overy where they found both Holman and the missing wood. Appearing at the East Norton sessions, Holman pleaded guilty, offering as his defence that he had taken the wood as a form of repayment for the rent on the house, which he described, probably correctly, as "practically uninhabitable". He was fined £20, and only let off a prison sentence because of the very large size of his family.

Life continued as normally as possible. By 21st October, the Hallaton Whist Club and the Hallaton District Whist League were operating fully and continued to meet regularly for the rest of the year. On 17th November, George Plowright put up for sale a modern cottage known as The Rosary, with its accompanying good orchard, garden, stable with granary over, and other outbuildings. However, all around were signs of war. Belgian refugees had first arrived in Market Harborough in September and some were now being sheltered in Hallaton. Their story is told elsewhere in this book (p. 1117), and is not repeated here. In town, men in khaki were a common sight and posters were everywhere encouraging men to enlist and do their bit. On 24th November, in Market Harborough, you could attend a lecture entitled 'War and Patriotism' by W. A. Brockington, Director of Education for Leicestershire. The newspapers were full of stories from the front, and the casualty lists were starting to grow.

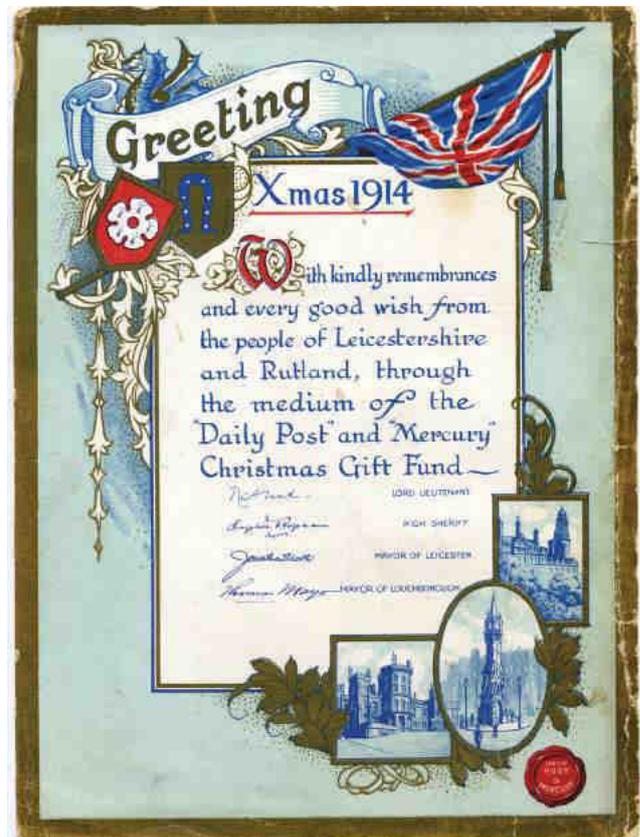
But war was really brought home to Hallaton on, or around, 14th November, for it was then that news reached Leicester of the death in action of Frederick George Andrews. He was the first

man who was living in Hallaton at the outbreak of war to be killed in action. Wartime Hallaton was quickly becoming a village of lost illusions. The idea that the war was something that would happen far away, with little immediate impact on Hallaton had taken its first blow.

Death was not confined to the front. On 11th December, retired platelayer Frederick Bodsworth died. He was buried in Hallaton Cemetery three days later. The war made its mark once more with his son being unable to attend the funeral because he was serving in France. Frederick Bodsworth was not a rich man, but he still left a will. His estate totalled just £45-7s-0d. He willed all his personal property and money to his daughter Fanny Elizabeth Howard Jarvis, with the exception of his proudest possession, his watch and chain, which he bequeathed to his granddaughter Georgina May Bodsworth Jarvis. To his son he left nothing.

With soldiers from the county fighting overseas, there was a concerted local effort to raise money to send parcels containing food, and clothes, and other presents to the soldiers. Hallaton was no different raising money to provide parcels for around thirty local men known to be serving.

Despite the war, Christmas was celebrated with gusto. The shops in Market Harborough were full of



Christmas card 1914, that was sent to local soldiers.

goods for those that could afford them. Symington's was awash with various fruits, chocolates, and sweets in artistic boxes, prime York ham, prime Stilton Cheese and a selection of "fun creating, mirth producing crackers" among many other items. Belton's market also provided a wide range of foods at affordable prices, whilst the butcher's shops were equally well stocked.

A trip to the County Electric Palace cinema in Market Harborough gave one the chance to see a strong vintage drama called the *Passing of Diana*. If comedy was your thing, there was a choice between *Widow of Red Rock* and *A Box of Real Turkish*. For children there was *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*, described as a triumph of colour cinematography. Other entertainments included an excellent and exciting detective drama called *Night Hawke* or, for those wishing to follow the news, there was *Scenes in and around the Belgian Capital*. All could be seen for 3d or 4d in the stalls, and 6d or 9d on the balcony. For the intellectually minded, the year saw the publication of Robert Tressall's classic novel of the working class, *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*. Whilst popular music of the year included the songs 'Are we downhearted? No', 'Fido is a hot dog now,' and Irving Berlin's classic 'Alexander's rag time band', and perhaps most famous of all, Ivor Novello's 'Keep the home fires burning.'

Back in Hallaton there were the usual Christmas services. The war that was supposed to be over by Christmas was clearly not but there were still grounds for optimism.

1915: Hope Extinguished

If 1914 had been a gentle introduction to modern warfare, then 1915 would leave the Hallatonians in no doubt as to the seriousness of what was before them; no longer could there be hope of a short, sweet victory. As the year progressed the war would start to infiltrate more and more aspects of society, putting pressure on those left at home as they struggled to come to terms with events overseas.

The first week of January gave the villagers a chance of hearing first-hand about the fighting in France. Following the death of his father James Bodsworth returned to the village on a short period of leave. He had been in the front-lines and no doubt had stories to share.

On 15th January, the Hallaton Charity trustees met for their first meeting of the year. It was a standard meeting, with some discussion on the allocation of doles and payment of bills. There were also

applications for education grants to deal with, and £10 was awarded to J. S. Cotton for the continued education of his son Frank at Oxford University, £5 was awarded to William Sayers, whilst £10 was held over for J. H. Garner for his son and daughter on the condition they were continuing at their respective schools. As was customary, £5 was given to Reverend Preece to provide prizes for the schoolchildren. Henry Butteriss announced his resignation as the representative trustee from the Parish Council but as promised in the final meeting of the previous year, proposed the building of a storehouse on the vacant ground near the cottages. He was told to get the specifications and draw up a plan, and a sub-committee was set up with the authority to award him the work if they were happy with his estimates.

The usual annual subscription to the Felixstowe Convalescent Hospital was withdrawn, as it was now being used as a military hospital.

On Friday 13th, Emma West, one of the village's oldest citizens, died. She would be the first of several elderly Hallaton widows to pass away in 1915. She was buried in Hallaton Cemetery on 16th February. On 26th the Hallaton Rural District Council met for the first time that year. The meeting went through the finances as usual, but otherwise discussed nothing of note. A similar Hallaton Parish Council meeting was held on 22nd when they nominated Thomas Charles Russell, James Brown, John Henry Freer and Charles F. Marlow to be the year's parish constables.

The war was not long from Hallaton's doorsteps when the village received official notification that Frederick Charles Morrison, the eldest son of Dr Morrison, had been killed in action on 7th February. On the evening of 24th a memorial service was held in the church and led by Reverend Preece. It would not be the last time his services would be required. Around a week later a meeting was held in the schoolroom, where it was decided to form the Hallaton and District Volunteer Training Corps. It was to be affiliated with the Central and Leicestershire Volunteer Association. Lieutenant-Colonel Sharman Goward attended the meeting to explain the objectives of the movement. 36 men from the district gave their names. The Reverend Preece was elected as president; Reverend Murray, from Blaston, vice-president; Mr Denley as honorary treasurer; and Mr Godfrey as honorary secretary. Drills were to commence at once.

One of the key events for Hallaton in 1915 did not happen in the village, but some miles away in Brighton where, on 26th February, Isabella Stenning passed away. She was born on 27th November 1839,

and was the daughter of Henry Bromley Hinrich and his wife Eliza (née Dent), who was originally from Hallaton. After her father's death the family settled in Hallaton, initially at Hallaton Hall, and then at the Manor House. On 22nd October 1863, Isabella married Thomas Hicks and left the village. After her husband died she married again, this time to Henry Edward Stenning. Isabella ran the finances as her husband had no money of his own. After her death, her simple and straightforward will was revealed. As well as wishing to be interned at Hallaton, she bequeathed £100 to her niece Charlotte Lousia Lyon Bennett, £50 to her goddaughter Eva Mary Siddall, and provided her husband with an annuity of £150. She also desired that:

“The sum of my disposing power in my late mother, Lady Hinrich's will should come into my estate and all the rest of my property real or personal and also the funds provided for the annuity when it falls in for purchasing a plot of land for the erection of alms-houses at Hallaton for the aged widows or married couples not being able to work with an allowance of £20 a year or more as the case might be.”

On the surface a generous and most needed bequest, and one that would go a small way to improve the standard of housing for the poorer members of the village. However, in developments which would drag on for years, the will was contested, and the results would have profound outcomes for future Hallatonians. Isabella Stenning was buried in Hallaton cemetery on 2nd March 1915, the same day as 92-year-old Eliza Almond. It would be some months before matters arising from Isabella's will came to a head.

By this point in the year, the Hallaton Whist Club and league were usually in full swing. However, the last recorded match took place on 17th February, between Slawston and Cranoe and shortly afterwards both the club and the league were wound up for the duration of the war. With Zeppelin raids starting to become a common phenomenon on the eastern side of the country, the war was really starting to be felt on the home front.

The meeting of the Hallaton Rural District Council on 30th March had to consider a letter from Leicestershire County Council regarding cases of cerebro-spinal fever. This is a type of meningitis caused by bacterial infection and is often fatal even now. It had been a compulsory notifiable disease by 1912 in England and Wales. In 1915, the occurrence of the disease increased more than elevenfold with 2,343 civilian cases and 1,136

military cases in England and Wales. In February, the outbreak assumed a very worrying level with 228 cases being reported in a single week. There was added alarm due to the very high mortality rates, and the fact that the serum treatment, which had previously worked well, seemed, in these new cases, to have little or no effect. The increase in cases was almost certainly exacerbated by the war, which saw thousands of young men quartered in overcrowded conditions and was added to by new and virulent strains of meningococcus that arrived with the Canadian troops in 1914. It was not surprising the council took the threat seriously and fully agreed that if any local case should occur, the person would be isolated, and the county council notified of their address who would then conduct the necessary bacteriological tests at a cost of 50 shillings per case.

The same meeting saw the council cancel all steam rolling for the forthcoming year, so as to be able to maintain the rate at 1s-4d in the pound, and thus enable Hallaton's contribution to remain at £280 for the year plus the one off special sanitary payment of £70. The carting tenders for the following year were decided. Omar Neale again won the tender for Blaston, and Fred Driver picked up the tenders for Holt, Horninghold, Stockerston and Hallaton.

As usual the annual Bottle Kicking took place on Easter Monday, 5th April. It was, again, well covered in the local papers, and their report makes for interesting reading.

“Although this year there were no cheap fares on the railway and consequently fewer people from outside the immediate district than usual, there was still a big concourse when the procession started from the village to Hare Pie Bank...”

So far as the general proceedings of the day were concerned they differed from previous years in that there were no club feasts. Many of the club members are away on active service or otherwise on business connected with the war and the meetings, if they had been held, would have lacked their usual festive character. They were therefore dispensed with altogether. The club members however, went to church where a service was conducted by the rector Rev. T J Preece... The ceremony of cutting up the pie was carried out and soon after two o'clock the Hallaton Brass band paraded the village up to the Fox Inn where the procession was formed to proceed to the famous bank. The band took the lead, and following came the bearers of the pie, likewise the bearers of the bottles, numerous prospective bottle kickers and more spectators.”



The procession to Hare Pie Bank, Easter Monday Bottle Kicking 1915. From the Midland Mail. Note the soldier in uniform in the front of picture.

Normally there were two bands, but this time just the Hallaton band was involved. As usual 'The Mighty Duke of York' was played and, as was the custom, 'Cheer Boys Cheer' sounded out once the steep ascent to the bank had been negotiated. As to the contest itself, Hallaton won. The first bottle was hotly contested taking around an hour and a half to reach the Hallaton boundary. The second was somewhat quicker.

Hallaton Parish Council met on 15th April. Business was light. George Pick and John Eaton were again re-appointed as overseers, and George Tyler was once more tasked with keeping the cemetery clean and tidy for the next twelve months, receiving £7-2s-6d for his troubles. The quarterly meeting of the Hallaton Charity trustees was the very next day. The meeting commenced with a discussion of another family of Belgian refugees in the village. They decided to allow them to occupy the charity house which had been lately occupied by Mrs Plowright. They let it on a special at 6d per week, subject to a month's notice. The usual grant of £20 towards the village lighting was paid to the parish council. They also dealt with a letter from Mrs Ablett, in which she requested a reduction in rent. The chairman of the meeting supported her case explaining that it would be a great help to her if the rent were remitted until she was in receipt of her old age pension, and the trustees agreed.

Meanwhile, the Hallaton District Volunteer Training Corps was keenly getting on with regular

drilling, and apparently enjoying it. Recruitment seemed not to be an issue for them which was more than could be said for the county. There can be no getting away from the fact that by the summer of 1915, Leicestershire had one of the worst recruitment rates in the country and Hallaton does not seem to be that different. The situation in Leicester itself was of great embarrassment to the civic leaders. At one large meeting at the De Montfort Hall only nine pledges to sign up were acquired. Of these, only four later showed up to enlist of which two were deemed unfit to serve. By the end of March, only 2.6% of those eligible had joined. It was not for lack of trying, but the local leadership on the matter was clearly failing. The local recruiting committee for Leicestershire met 25 times, but 13 members of the committee failed to attend a single meeting, and 22 only attended one. The committee were desperate and sent out 438 letters to local clergy requesting that a patriotic sermon be preached. Hallaton's rector would have received one. 180 replied that they would but another 38 declined, and the rest didn't bother to reply. By the summer of 1915, there were estimated to be 60,000 men of military age in Leicestershire and Rutland who could serve but were not doing so for whatever reason. It is impossible to be definite about the situation in Hallaton, but a study of the various Shindler's lists published in the local paper would seem to reinforce the idea that Hallaton was following a similar pattern of recruitment as

the rest of the county. We must, of course, add the proviso that the list was only as up to date as the information actively supplied to it, though quite why a relative would not want the names of those serving to appear on the list is unclear. At the beginning of 1915, 34 names from Hallaton appear on the list. As already discussed, not all were actually resident in Hallaton. One month later, the number has increased by only one and that was James Bodsworth, who had been serving since early in 1914 and had clearly just been left off the list. By 1st March, there was an increase of three names. An encouraging sign until one examines matters more closely. The three new names were John Henry Tyler, living in Loughborough and already serving; Frank Henry Driver, who had emigrated to Canada and was now returning as a soldier in the Canadian forces; and Albert Tyler who had already enlisted in Loughborough on 14th September the previous year. Finally, by the end of March, three genuinely new recruits from Hallaton stepped forward. Edwin James Hawke had actually enlisted back in January. In addition to him was Harold Hawke and the mysterious R. L. Hardwick, about whom we know virtually nothing. Between the end of March and the end of May, no new names from Hallaton were listed. This does not mean that no one signed

up but does seem to suggest that the lethargy in enlisting that enveloped Leicestershire in the first half of 1915 also enveloped Hallaton. Not even the sinking of the Lusitania on 7th May seems to have made an impact.

One of the other major national topics was alcohol. The Prime Minister urged restraint, and on 5th April, the King prohibited the use of any alcoholic drinks in all the royal palaces until the end of the war. It appears that Thomas Ward didn't concur, and on 11th May he was fined 5 shillings, including costs, for being drunk and disorderly.

The Voluntary Training Corps was going from strength to strength. On Sunday 16th May they had their first march and church parade. Members assembled and, at 3.15pm, marched to Cranoe and back under the command of Sub-commandant Dr Morrison. They were then dismissed until 5.30pm when, after falling in, they paraded in the village, headed by the Hallaton band, they then proceeded to the church, where the rector preached an appropriate sermon. After the service they paraded, once more led by the band, to the village cross where they were dismissed. On 14th September, they joined other corps from the area at Market Harborough. It was the first opportunity they had to wear their new uniforms, which were

An early photograph of the Hallaton Volunteer Defence Force. Dr Morrison is seated second from left as we look at the image, with the grey hair and bowler hat.



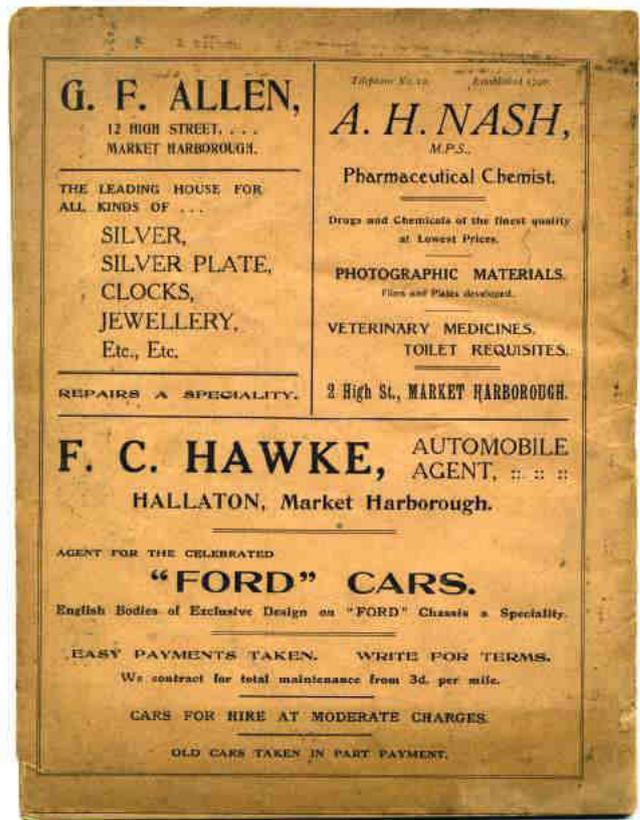
green-grey with a green band around the collar. All wore their distinctive red armlet. Throughout the rest of the year there was training, but there were also shooting matches against other local corps, with some taking place at what was known as the Hallaton range, believed to have been somewhere near the Manor House. They competed for the Price-Dent cup which had been presented by Mrs Price-Dent of Hallaton Manor.

Hallaton had always been reliable at putting on shows, and fêtes, and whist drives for local good causes, and now they were fully engaged in trying to assist the war in whatever way they could. There were regular collections for Belgian refugees. There were also one-off events. On 2nd August, a garden fête and rummage sale were put on by the Fletchers in the grounds of Hallaton Hall. The weather was terrible, with thunderstorms and incessant rain. Nevertheless, over 500 people attended throughout the day and outdoor activities such as sports, which had been arranged by a local committee, were still enthusiastically carried out. There was dancing which continued, accompanied by the Hallaton Band, until 9.00pm. Several worthy causes were helped by the days takings, which amounted to £55 after costs, and this was split among the Hallaton

Cottage Nursing Association, St Giles Church Blaston, Hallaton Church Restoration fund, the Red Cross at Uppingham, and a contribution towards the upkeep of Mr Fernie's Hunt ambulance at the front among others.

1915 also saw a big effort to collect eggs and send them to help wounded soldiers in hospitals. This was done under the auspices of the National Egg Collection. Hallaton, Horninghold, and Slawston were all involved. Once collected, they were taken or sent to the depot of the national egg collection in Hallaton, which was located at Hallaton Hall, from where they were packed up and despatched to various hospitals, including the local Leicester ones. Between 7th April and 19th May, 1,525 were collected and that number was bettered between 2nd June and 11th August when 1,606 were sent from Hallaton. There had also been an appeal by Mrs Preece for books and magazines to send to wounded soldiers. It was so successful that two cases were sent to the 5th Base General Hospital in Leicester. So many books were donated, that a later third case was required.

What could be thought of as normal life was, of course, continuing. The church and chapel continued services as usual and the parish magazine was still being published.



Front and back covers for the September 1915 issue of the Parish Magazine. Note the fascinating advert placed by Fred Hawke on the back cover.

On 29th April George Smith of the Walnuts saw his daughter, Kathleen, marry John Johnson from Fulbeck in Lincolnshire. The bride wore a navy-blue costume and matching hat whilst the bridesmaid, her sister Etta, wore an electric blue outfit. On 29th June there was a 'Naval Wedding' when Ada Hawke married Arthur Mitchell, who was serving as a civilian in the Navy. He gave her a sewing machine for a present, whilst her gift to him was a silver cigarette case. The list of wedding gifts was extensive and included many items the couple required to set up home, although that would have to wait until after the war. Throughout the summer, May McTurk and her dog, Hallaton Country Lad, continued to take the dog world by storm winning four first places and becoming champion dog at the Richmond show in July, and then, in September, winning first prize in the Southern Counties Canine Association championship in Hastings.

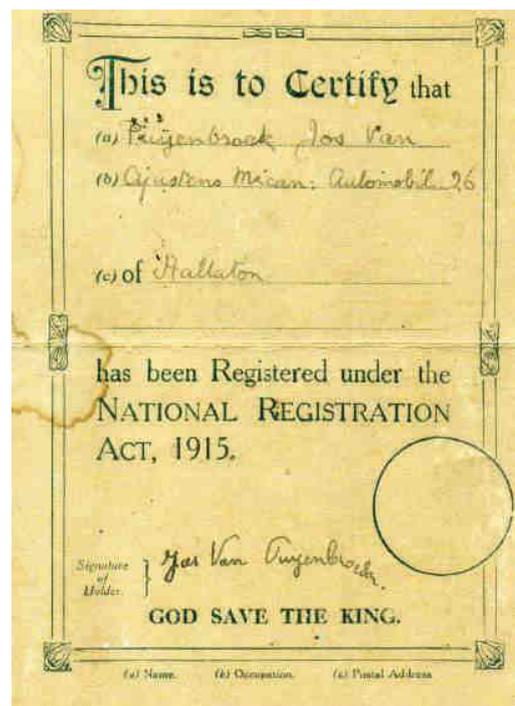
The work for farmers and graziers continued as normal, and the Market Harborough Wool Fair in June saw record prices. Among those from Hallaton selling their fleeces were Cecil Fletcher, now listed with Frederick Part, George Barnett and Omar Neale. As usual the *Market Harborough Advertiser* covered the event in detail. Its introduction to the event contained the following revealing snippet!

"Owing to the general shortage of labour in the country fears were expressed at one time that a good deal of wool would be unwashed this season but happily this did not prove to be the case."

The loss of available agricultural labour was starting to be a concern. Given the apparent slowness of enlistment in Leicestershire, it is hard to say how much Hallaton would have been affected. As we have seen, the early rush to the recruiting offices saw a number of young men leave the agricultural and farming world of Hallaton for the army and, for an industry that relied a lot upon seasonal itinerant labour from outside the area, there is bound to have been some impact in the village. Throughout 1915, the Government started to take a serious interest in the concerns of farmers and leaders of rural communities about the loss of labour due, not only to military requirements directly, but also to those who sought more reliable and better paid employment in the industries supplying the armed forces. By January, it had been estimated that around 16% of farm labourers in England had left the farming industry for other employment. It is an issue which would not go away throughout the year.

By the middle of the year, it was becoming apparent that recruitment drives were not working.

Posters were urging men to do their bit, but many were obviously not. In an attempt to maximise the country's manpower potential, the recently formed coalition Government passed the National Register Bill on 15th July. Everyone aged between 15 and 65 had to carry a registration card which, along with their name, carried details about where they lived, their age, and their employment details. Anyone not registering could face a fine of £20 and three months in prison with hard labour. The actual register was taken on 15th August and was administered by the Hallaton Rural District Council. At their meeting on 30th July, they not only dealt with a letter from the Leicestershire County Council requesting the disinfection of all schools in the district, declined due to costs, but also discussed the National Registration Act. The council clerk then explained the effects of the Act to the councillors and read out a local board circular on the matter. He was instructed to carry out the requirements of the act forthwith. Using a network of local volunteers, the work was done on time and, within a month, the national statistics were issued. Part of the registration allowed for certain professions to become starred. In other words, they were seen as crucial to a properly functioning home front. For Hallaton, and other rural communities, this would mean that those workers engaged in skilled areas of agriculture, such as shepherds, cowmen and bailiffs were to become starred, and,



Jos Puyenbroeck's registration card.

as such, should neither be accepted as volunteers for military service nor solicited for it. There was a serious weakness in the scheme. For example, a small farm might employ one man who could turn his hand to everything and was thus essential to the running of that farm. However, he would be seen as an unskilled labourer, and thus not eligible to be included in the starring system. After taking into account those in starred professions, and married men, thought less likely to volunteer, there were found to be around 1.5 million men available for the armed forces.

The question was how to get them to enlist. The first attempt fell to Lord Derby who, on 11th October, became Director General of Recruiting and, just five days later, introduced what became known as the Derby Scheme. This allowed for men aged between 18 and 41 to enlist voluntarily with immediate effect, or to attest and defer their enlistment until actually called upon. The latter group was split into groups dependent upon age and marital status. The evidence for Hallaton suggests that quite a few Hallaton men opted for the attesting with the deferral option. The scheme closed on 15th December, and the local papers report busy scenes at the recruiting depot, on the Coventry Road in Market Harborough, during the last few days for attesting with the Friday being especially busy. In a ploy to get more people to at least attest, men were assured that all single men would be dealt with first. As it transpires this did not happen. The scheme had not reversed the downward trend in recruitment, and by the end of the year serious talk of conscription was in the air. To aid matters recruiting or local tribunals were established. Again, responsibility fell upon the Hallaton Rural District Council, who met at a special meeting on 9th November to appoint the members of what would become then Hallaton Rural District Tribunal. Those chosen were Reverend Preece from Hallaton, W. Starbuck from Horninghold, and J. S. Clarke from Bringhurst. The work of this tribunal is covered in its own chapter and not dealt with here. Suffice to say it would play a vital role in Hallaton in the years to come.

This national move to encourage more men to enlist ties in nicely with a day of fundraising and recruitment drives, which took place in Hallaton on 21st October. The proceedings were organised by Dr Morrison, who had obtained the help of the Leicester Sea Scouts. They arrived at Hallaton Station at 2.00pm, where they were met by young women from the area who had agreed to sell flags to raise money for wounded soldiers. There were

many other interested parties who came to the station to greet the scouts, and all marched into the village. The flag vendors had well stocked baskets, which were tastefully decorated. They proceeded to visit every house in the village. Mrs Laundon and May McTurk volunteered to visit the outlying farms and houses. In Hallaton, a total of £8-7s-1d was raised. Flag sales also took place in other local villages, raising the total to £23-4s-1/2d. During the afternoon more scouts arrived, and there was a procession through the village to the beat of the scout's band. In the evening, Councillor C. J. Pearse, from Leicester, gave an address apparently pointing out the aims of the Germans and stressing the urgent need for new recruits for both the Army and the Navy. Other speakers followed suit. The day finished with a musical torchlight procession by the scouts. It is not known if any Hallaton man joined up as a result.

In the meantime, the Trustees of the Hallaton Charity and the Hallaton Parish Council had continued to meet as normal. The trustees met on 16th July. Then they approved a grant of £5 to Mrs Emmott in reply to her application to assist her daughter Gladys, who was attending Harborough Grammar School. Payments for work done were made to Messrs Hawke and Sons of £4-15s-3d for work done on Fearn Farm and a further 11s for similar repairs to the cottages. Harry Neale was paid £2-4s-6d for thatching work he'd performed on the cottages. Meanwhile, the storehouse was complete, with Henry Butteriss's bill amounting to £51-2s-6d. They also discussed the case of John Hales who had obviously fallen on tough times. They agreed that his half years rent due in October be remitted and awarded him a grant of £2 to be taken from the money in the nursing fund, and he was to be paid 2s-6d per week. Their final meeting of the year took place on 1st October. The new storehouse was officially handed over to the parish council for 1s per year rent, though the council had to pay the rates. On the subject of doles, it was noted that Mrs Tinkler was about to get married (to Joseph Burnham) and, therefore, her name was removed from those in receipt of payments and replaced by Mrs Payne. Education awards were also dealt with, and Mr Clarke's request was not renewed whilst the application of Mr A. Kilbourne, for his son who had a place at Market Harborough Grammar School was deferred to a future meeting.

Hallaton Parish Council met on 7th September to discuss the next tender for street lighting. The meeting was adjourned until 17th September, at which they were able to consider two identical

tenders for £13-10s-0d from both George Tyler and Mark Stamp. As Tyler was the present incumbent, it was awarded to him with the following interesting proviso.

“The above to be subject to any alterations in lighting restrictions by the authorities.”

Village entertainments also continued and on 4th September an open-air concert by members of the Kibworth Male Voice Choir took place on the green. The war was never far away and on 8th October news reached the village of the death of yet another Hallatonian in action. This time it was Herbert Elsdon (Dick) Neale who had been killed. As was becoming customary in these situations, an impressive memorial service was held in the church on the Sunday following.

As Autumn settled upon Hallaton, so the thorny issue of Isabella Stenning's will came to the forefront once more. With the will contested the matter now lay with the Attorney General of the Royal Courts of Justice in London. The courts had obviously written to members of the Hallaton community asking for details of any opposition to the building of alms-houses requested in the will, and at the same time to give a general outline of Hallaton, and its charitable organisations, so as best to assess alternative schemes for which the money might be allocated in the future, if the objections to the will were upheld. These replies were both in the form of letters and sworn affidavits. They are worth quoting and illustrating in some detail, as they give fascinating details into the Hallaton of the time. First to write was the clerk of the Hallaton Charity whose letter was dated 25th October.

“Part of the charity property consists of about 9 houses 3 of which are very old thatched buildings and the remainder brick and slate cottages erected 30 or 40 years ago. All the cottages are let to old couples or widows at a nominal rent of 6d per week, and although there is no difficulty in filling up a vacant cottage, yet there is no list of waiting people eager to have a cottage.

Out of another part of charity funds, the trustees make doles to old people of 2/6 a week, and there is a good deal more demand on this fund than there is for the cottages.

From what little I know of the village of Hallaton; I should think that endowed alms hoses would not meet the class whom the testatrix evidently wished to benefit, as from what I have already said you will see there is no special demand by aged and

poor people needing house accommodation. If Alms houses were built with an endowment for the occupiers, it would probably have the result of bringing in an undesirable class of persons into Hallaton to qualify for such bounty. We have seen this to be the case in other villages.”

Next to write in was the Reverend T. J. Preece who wrote a letter on 27th October. In it he goes over much of the history of the Hallaton charities already covered in these pages, so the following extracts are from his affidavit sworn at Market Harborough on 27th October.

“The village of Hallaton contains a total population of about 600 persons. Approximately 58 families or households now comfortably situated or fairly so may be said to be a class likely to require relief at some point of their lives. From these families or households I should estimate the couples over the age of sixty years at about eight and the single men or widowers over the same age at about fourteen and the spinsters or widows over the same age at about 11 or about about 40 souls all told, the majority of whom are in receipt of old age pensions or charity or both. The other inhabitants of the village are gentry, farmers, master tradesmen or shopkeepers... From my experience as a trustee of the administration of the Charity I am able to say the wants of any aged widows or married couples not able to work resident in Hallaton or the immediate neighbourhood are sufficiently met by the funds of this Charity though no doubt some accession of funds to the said existing charities would be advantageous.

There are about 10 cottages in the village belonging to this charity which are let at 6d a week to selected poorer tenants. One at least is occupied by a Belgian family having been unoccupied for some time and another is let at 1/- double rent as no poor person applied. [he goes on to detail the Parker Charity and associated Bede Houses]

One old lady who has occupied one of the cottages for about 30 years has recently died. I appointed two women in succession in her place but both shortly afterwards died. The other two occupants one man and one woman have been nominated by me in the last few years. I had quite difficulty in filling the vacancies and if more occur I do not know what residents of Hallaton I could specify as suitable occupants of the cottages or recipients

R

Dear Sir Isabella Stenning Oct 27 1915

I am very sorry for delay in replying to your letter. In some way it has been mislaid but I give you an outline of Hallaton which be pleased if you will think say if you wish to know anything further. Population of Hallaton is about 600. There are about 53 families or houses now in comfortable circumstances paid by weekly wages. Some of these may require help at some period of their lives. There are about 8 couples over 60 years of age. about 14 single men & women over the same age & about 14 spinners or widows. The majority of these are in receipt of old age pensions or Charity or both.

There are at present in connection with Hallaton the following Charities.

The school & other Charities including the Town Relief & George Smith Gift & one of William Whit. now regulated by scheme of the Charity Commission dated June 13 1876.

Income from Mrs. Joan Lane & Mrs. Carpenter = 160 £ to 200 £ yearly. The poor portion = about 56 £ per year paid in 10 sh. 7d weekly to poor people. There are about 10 Cottages at 62 per week.

Godman Charity founded 1685. Hallaton portion £24 yearly

Parker Charity dated 1747 for 3 single women or men over 60 years both 3 Cottages or 60 houses rent free with 6-8 garden to each. There are many ways in which the money may be spent in Hallaton & a great

Rev. Preece's letter stating his opinions on Isabella Stenning's will. © National Archives (TS18/1009).

of relief under the charity. When I last had to fill a vacancy I had three refusals.

If Alms houses are to be built at Hallaton for the accommodation of persons mentioned in the will of the late Isabella Stenning I have difficulty seeing where the occupants are to come from without pauperising such few individuals as may now answer the description in the will. I consider that the alms houses would be of no benefit to Hallaton but the reverse as they would necessarily bring candidates for admission from neighbouring districts and deteriorate the character of the inhabitants.

Should a charitable intention be shewn by the will for the benefit of Hallaton generally I consider that there are many other ways in which the village and its inhabitants might be benefitted and that it is more important to improve and extend existing charities or repair or rebuild the houses or cottages connected with them than to build new alms houses which if used at all could only be so to the detriment of charities doing good work in the village now."

3

Advantage to the Parish. In my opinion if Alms houses are built at Hallaton for the accommodation of persons mentioned in the Will of Isabella Stenning, they would do more harm than good

Yours truly
J. Preece
(Rector)

The next to make his sworn affidavit was Herbert Fletcher of Hallaton Hall, who did so at Lincoln's Inn Fields in London on 1st November. The following extracts are taken from it. He had read Preece's affidavit.

"I entirely concur in the vicar's view that there is no call for any further alms houses in Hallaton and that it would be no benefit to the parish if any more were provided and that suitable inmates for any more alms houses could not be found in the parish.

In case it should be held that the property given for alms houses by the testatrix may be applied for other charitable purposes the following are objects to which in my opinion such property might be usefully applied.

1. Much needed improvements to some existing cottages in Hallaton by purchasing and rebuilding them and letting to suitable tenants at reasonable rents.
2. Building and endowing a village hall for use of the community.
3. Extending the schools
4. A recreation ground.
5. Repairing and renewing some of the church bells which at present are in rather a dangerous condition."

Following on the campaign was Henry Butteriss, who wrote the letter shown here on 2nd November.

Right and below: Henry Butteriss' letter concerning the Stenning bequest. © National Archives (TS 18/1009).

Hallaton
Mr. Harborough
Nov. 2nd 1915

Isabella Stenning Esq

Sir

In reply to your letter of Oct. 28th. There are at present several Charity Houses in the Village & in my opinion any extensive building of Almshouses would be a detriment rather than a benefit to the village as I understand that only old people unable to work

would be eligible to live in them. However some of the present Charity Houses are very badly built & if these could be pulled down & the ground used as gardens for the benefit of the others & about the same quantity of Houses built on a new site on the lines of Mrs Stenning's Will I think that suitable tenants could be found from amongst the Village to occupy them. But any further building of

Almshouses there this would in my opinion be a waste of money. I am making an Affidavit in the matter which I expect will be forwarded to you

I Remain Sir
Yours Faithfully
H Butteriss
Chairman Hallaton Parish Council

The Attorney General
Royal Courts of Justice
London W.C.

He then made his sworn affidavit in Market Harborough on 9th November. Once again, the following extracts are taken from it:

“I agree in the main with the views expressed in paragraphs 5 and 6 of the said affidavit [he is referring here to that of Preece.]

In particular I agree that there is no need for new almshouses in the parish (other than as suggested below) and that any extensive building of alms houses would be a detriment rather than a benefit to the parish and be a waste of money.

If the court should be of opinion that the funds intended by the testatrix for the erection of alms houses in Hallaton ought to be devoted to some other local charitable purpose then I suggest the following objects to which the funds could usefully be applied namely:

- 1. Improve or rebuild the present very poorly built alms houses and extend the gardens.*
- 2. Purchase some of the old cottages in Hallaton. Pull down same and build good working men’s cottages and let same at reasonable rent.*
- 3. Provide a good recreation ground for the village.*
- 4. Build a village hall.”*

A closer examination of all this is interesting. Hallaton obviously required better housing, and Preece’s bemoaning of the difficulty in filling the current accommodation could easily be attributed to the fact that, in some cases, they were close to uninhabitable. The same could be said for some of the privately-owned houses. It seems farfetched that building new charity homes would have an adverse effect on the current charities, though it might have forced them to up their game, and actually spend money on properly improving the properties they already owned. Of course, all three are fully acknowledging the need for better housing, but just not for the type of people Isabella Stenning wished to help. The case for the building of a village hall is, of course, not new either. However, it is interesting it is raised by Fletcher and Butteriss, both known supporters of the previous campaign to build one, which was thwarted by opponents some of whom were concerned about diverting charity money away from benefiting the poor of the community. By readjusting the exact terms of the will to account for more general worthy causes, beneficial to Hallaton’s needy, some of the major opposition to the erection of a village hall would in effect be cancelled.

It is, however, hard to see any justifiable reason why repairing the church bells would constitute a proper use of Stenning’s bequest. However, as well as Fletcher’s statement about their state of repair, we find that in the vestry minutes of 1915 there is reference to a bank account held by the London City and Midland bank that was allocated specifically for the Bells Fund which stood with a balance of £20. Whilst a reasonable figure, this would have been well short of the amount required. It would probably not have been proper for Preece to suggest this himself, but Fletcher, as a respected member of society, and as an elected churchwarden could do so. Could they persuade the court to allow the will to be changed, whilst still maintaining an element of its basic principles and aims to help the poor and needy of Hallaton? The legal wheels of motion turn slowly and deliberately, and it would be some time before an answer was forthcoming.

The Volunteer Training Corps continued to be enthusiastically supported and there were parades followed by services at both Blaston Church and in the chapel in Hallaton. The latter was also attended by the East Norton Corps and numbers were too big for the chapel and people had to also sit in the connected school room. As well as a service they heard what was described as “an intellectual and eloquent sermon” by the pastor E. E. Johnson of Nottingham. He took as his text the book of Jeremiah V.I.

“Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem and see if you can find a man.”

There followed the most extraordinary sermon espousing all the attributes of muscular Christianity, and demonstrating the necessary characteristics of healthy Christian manhood. Apparently the secret of true manhood was a healthy body and strong character. Johnson split his sermon into three sections.

1. Physical strength in which he stated that early Christians had looked away from this but now it was considered that the body might contain forces of good and power for true manhood to evolve.
2. Intellectual strength. Here he talked about the dynamic of thought and that what a nation thinks to do it will practice tomorrow, citing the example of Nietzsche who he claimed had taught the superman theory through the 1880s and today they had the harvest of Prussian Militarism to deal with as a consequence.
3. Spiritual strength. Here it is worth quoting him directly:

"It was obvious that man had placed emphasis upon the wrong forces. Evolution and culture waves had brought forthwith a form of civilization but not an ideal manhood... The religion of Jesus was still the hope of the race. Civilization was in the melting pot and spiritual forces must have their place."

Apparently, this was listened too with great interest by the large congregation, most of whom would have appreciated at least a bit of Germany knocking, even if they hadn't a clue who Nietzsche was. During the service Mr Billings sang 'When wilt thou save the people', and to conclude, the organist played both the Russian and British National Anthems.

On 17th November, one of the village blacksmiths, George Hill, was buried. Before his death he had also carried out the role of village gravedigger, and, at their final meeting of the year, the Hallaton Parish Council appointed James Driver to replace him, and sanctioned the payment of 16s-2d to Charles Grocock for a new barrow for the cemetery.

At the end of November, a concert to raise money for the Volunteer Training Corps took place in the schoolroom before a packed and enthusiastic audience. Miss Scott from Cranoe possessed a most beautiful voice, and she sang 'She is Far From Land', which was rapturously received. Elsie Simkin performed 'Boys in Khaki' to much applause, whilst Mr Denley and the schoolchildren were as competent as ever, performing a Japanese scene, as well as singing 'the Willow Pattern Plate' and finishing the concert with the popular song 'Are We Downhearted?'. Mr R. Ward performed the humorous songs 'A Travelling Menagerie' and 'Mary Ann She's After Me', and both garnered much laughter among the appreciative audience. Despite the dark times Hallaton had not forgotten how to have fun, and some aspects of normality continued, for example Mr Fernie's Hunt.

1915 saw wages eroded by rising prices. Government calculations estimated that at least 20% of a family's income was now spent on the bare necessities. Compared with 1914, wheat prices had risen 72%, barley, 40% and oats, 34%. There had been no failure in the supply of meat, but prices had increased and especially so for the poorer quality cuts. Neck of mutton, previously costing 21/2d to 3d per pound had risen to 41/2d to 6d per pound. The recruitment of large numbers of miners had also affected the supply of coal and prices had increased as a result. The Government was being forced to act. Food prices were helped by a bumper wheat

MR. FERNIE'S HUNT. 1915-1916.

Committee:

C. W. B. FERNIE, Esq. COL. F. O. MURRAY-BAILLIE. F. A. BELLVILLE, Esq. VISCOUNT CHURCHILL, G.C.V.O. GORDON CUNARD, Esq. SIR A. G. HAZLERIGG, BART. J. W. LOGAN, Esq. H. T. MILLS, Esq. (Chairman).	G. ALLURRAY-SMITH, Esq. T. GUY PAGET, Esq. O. PETRE, Esq. COL. SCHOFIELD, V.C. C. E. DE TRAFFORD, Esq. MR. F. HORTON. MR. T. MOULD. MR. W. H. KENDALL. MR. T. S. WATSON.
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Secretary:
MR. T. N. GRAHAM.

Bankers:
BARCLAY & COMPANY, LTD., MARKET HARBOROUGH.

At a Meeting of the Committee held on December 12th, 1913, it was unanimously decided to adopt the following scale for Subscriptions and to Cap:—

<i>For Gentlemen:</i>			
The Minimum subscription	...	...	£25 0 0
Two days a week	...	...	£35 0 0
<i>For Ladies:</i>			
The Minimum subscription	...	...	£15 0 0
Two days a week	...	...	£25 0 0
<i>For Officers in His Majesty's Service quartered at Glen Parva Barracks or spending their leave in Mr. Fernie's country or in a neighbouring Country.</i>			
The Minimum subscription	...	...	£10 0 0
Two days a week	...	...	£20 0 0

CAPPING RESOLUTION.

Ladies and Gentlemen hunting with Mr. Fernie's Hounds, who are not Subscribers shall be "Capped" £2 each day for the first three days hunting, but after that they must become subscribers, with the following exceptions:—

- (1) An occasional Guest staying with a Landowner of 200 acres or upwards, or occupier of land, or with an individual subscriber of £60 or over whose subscription has been paid.
Any such Guest ~~also~~ hunting twice during the season, must subscribe the minimum £25 or pay the "Cap."
- (2) Landowners of 200 acres or upwards, or occupiers of land within five miles of Mr. Fernie's country for their first two days.

(Signed),
H. T. MILLS.

Chairman of the Committee.

Subscriptions are due on November 1st, and should be paid without fail on or before January 1st, in each year to Messrs. Barclay & Co., Market Harborough, or to the Secretary, Mr. T. N. Graham, East Farndon Hall, Market Harborough.

*Subscription rates for Mr Fernie's Hunt 1915-1916.
Note the rates were set in 1913.*

harvest, which brought prices back down, but more direct action was required to help the country's less well-off, and, in November, legislation was passed that fixed the rents of working-class housing to their pre-war levels. This was just one of the hits that the better-off were taking on their finances. The budget of September had been far reaching in raising more money. New taxes were introduced, including a 50% tax on excessive profits and on certain luxury imports. Income tax was raised by 40%, and the amount exempt was limited to £130 per annum. Also the scale of abatements on higher incomes was reduced. Government, at both local and national levels, was becoming more interventionist.

At the final meeting of the Hallaton Rural District Council on 31st December, the councillors had not only to deal with localised issues, such as finding a new tenant for one of the villages' disused gravel pits, but also had to respond to the Leicestershire County Council's letter regarding both measles and German measles. From 1st January 1916, it would become

beholden on any parents, guardians, or any other person, becoming aware or even suspicious that a person in their charge was suffering from either disease to notify the medical officer for the district and give the name and full address of patient. It was the responsibility of the district council to make sure everyone knew about this.

They also discussed a letter from the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries on the maintenance of Live Stock Order of 1915. At the same time they were facing the issue of insufficient farm labour in the district. A letter from the county council was read, and the surveyor was able to inform the council that arrangements had already been made for the roadmen to assist farmers wherever possible.

In the village, spirits were further saddened, with the death of young Montague Percy Killingrey. He had finally succumbed to meningitis and was buried on 12th December. Just 24, he had, until July, been a serving soldier, but his health had not been good for a while. As expected, his funeral was well attended.

The year in Hallaton ended with a meeting of the Vestry on 27th December. There, the matter of the church bells was discussed. Their condition had been raised in 1914, but the war had stopped any progress. One of the smaller bells was broken, and another too thin and worn to harmonise with the others. It was proposed that they rehang the five church bells in a completely new fitting, in a new iron framework made for six bells and to get a sixth bell made. At the same meeting, it was decided that a new belfry door was also required, and proposals were made for a brass memorial plaque to hang on the south wall in honour of Frederick George Andrews, who had been killed in action in 1914, and for another memorial plaque, on the north wall, for those parishioners who fell in the war. All proposals were agreed unanimously with the total cost amounting to around £350. It was agreed to ask for a Faculty from the Bishop of Peterborough to approve the work.

1915 was a tough year, one in which the public's mood changed to anger. An anger combined with no shortage of jingoistic patriotism, and a developing dislike of all things German. It is hard to think that Hallaton could have been immune. Whilst today we think of war poets in terms of men like Owen and Sassoon, at the time far more popular was Leicester born Jessie Pope, whose poems appeared in the Daily Mail. Typical of her overly patriotic poetry was her poem, 'The Call', published in a collection of her war poems in 1915. It is perhaps her best-known example of her jingoistic war poems, in

which she exhorts young men to enlist and save England or be labelled cowards. Her reputation was such that Wilfred Owen originally entitled 'Dulce et Decorum Est' as 'To Jessie Pope'.

*Who's for the trench –
Are you, my laddie?
Who'll follow French –
Will you, my laddie?
Who's fretting to begin,
Who's going out to win?
And who wants to save his skin –
Do you, my laddie?
Who's for the khaki suit –
Are you, my laddie?
Who longs to charge and shoot –
Do you, my laddie?
Who's keen on getting fit,
Who means to show his grit,
And who'd rather wait a bit –
Would you, my laddie?
Who'll earn the Empire's thanks –
Will you, my laddie?
Who'll swell the victor's ranks –
Will you, my laddie?
When that procession comes,
Banners and rolling drums –
Who'll stand and bite his thumbs –
Will you, my laddie?*

Anti-German feeling was epitomised by the highly respected writer Rudyard Kipling. In a speech in Southport, in June 1915 he said

*"However, the world pretends to divide itself,
there are only two divisions in the world today –
human beings and Germans."*

This was followed just three months later with the publication of his short story *Mary Postgate* in Nash's and Pall Mall Magazine. A short story considered so shocking, even at that time of heightened anti-German feeling, that Stanley Baldwin's son considered it to be the "*wickedest story ever written*". In the story the character Mary Postgate happily watches, with mounting pleasure, a German pilot dying in pain whilst she calmly burns some belongings.

For some light relief a trip to the cinema was still popular, with one of the big releases being *The Tramp* with Charlie Chaplin. For those who liked a good sing-song, the year saw the appearance of the now famous war song 'Pack Up Your Troubles In Your Old Kit Bag And Smile, Smile, Smile'. If you wanted a great espionage story, then you had to look no further than John Buchan's now classic novel, *The Thirty Nine Steps*.

Christmas was celebrated as usual. The shops in Market Harborough were still full of food and goods, but the tone must have been flatter than the year before. The year had not gone well on the battlefield, and life at home was starting to get more difficult. Boxing day bore witness to tremendous thunderstorms and incessant heavy rain. How many saw it as a portent of the year to follow?

1916: The Lights Go Out

At the start of 1916 the predominant topic on everyone's mind was conscription. Whatever people thought, there wasn't long to wait before the Government passed the Military Services Bill on 24th January. The bill effectively conscripted all single men who were not in starred professions, with immediate effect as one was deemed to have enlisted once you were of a suitable age for service. The impact on Hallaton was huge. Suddenly, men who were gainfully employed in various village businesses were liable to be called up. Every Month the military tribunal was busy dealing with those that appealed against their call up.

1916 would be a difficult year for Hallaton. With more men called away, it was becoming harder to keep up any aspect of normality in daily life. There remained the great hope of a breakthrough on the Western Front, but when this was not forthcoming, and the national and local casualty lists grew, and kept growing it must have been hard to maintain morale.

The charity trustees met on 7th January. It was very much a standard meeting, with the decision to continue paying the doles to Mrs Ablett, Mrs Kitchen, Mrs Almond, John Hales, Mrs Fox, Mrs Burditt, Mrs Bowler and Mrs Payne. It was also agreed to add 81-year-old Thomas Tyler to the list. A grant of £5 was awarded to the Hallaton Nursing Association, and the usual £5 was given to Reverend Preece to provide prizes for the school children.

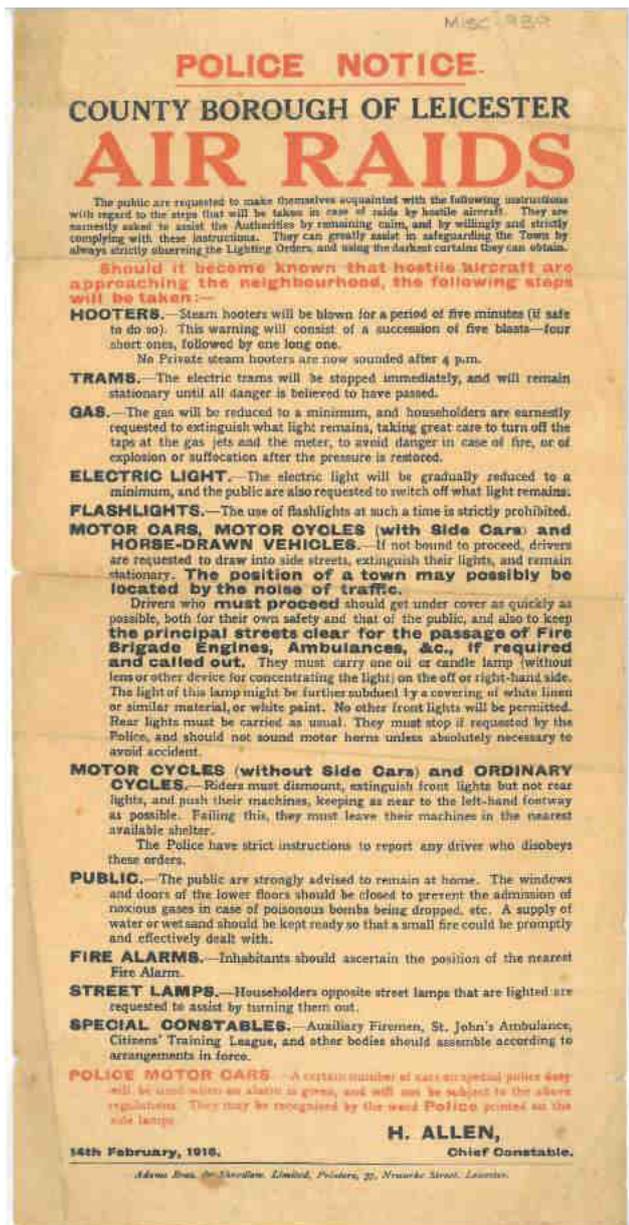
For Hallaton Rural District Council, the main preoccupation was dealing with the establishment of local tribunals. Initially three members, this was increased to five on 11th January. This was updated at a meeting on 8th February, when they met with the specific purpose of appointing a local tribunal under the new Military Services Act. There had been a standard council meeting in between, on 28th January. At that meeting they had to deal with the early death of Captain Maudsley, who needed to be replaced on the council. After drafting a letter of sympathy to his family, it was decided to

offer Arthur Broadwell of Lodge Farm, Blaston the vacant place on the council. A decision was also needed on the new tenant for the lower disused gravel pit in Hallaton, which they decided to rent to Mark Stamp for a yearly rental of £2, subject to a six-month notice period for either party.

On 7th February, the Vestry Committee received good news that their Faculty, requested from the Bishop of Peterborough the previous December, had been granted. However, the work on the church bells would not happen for a few years.

Hallaton Parish Council first met for the year on 8th February. It was a long meeting. First point of business came from the Rector who requested that the council provide webbings for burials. They also invited members of the Hallaton Volunteer Corps to a meeting, on 15th February, to discuss a scheme to deal with fires that might break out in the village. Quite a bit of the meeting was taken up with the issue of lighting. After some discussion, it was decided that from then on, with immediate effect, the street lights would not be lit for the rest of the season. George Tyler was to be instructed to take them down, for which he was to be paid an additional 2 s. He was also paid up to the date for the work he had already done, amounting to £5-10s-0d. This loss of income to George must have been a big blow. The council also moved to put up posters in the village requesting inhabitants to darken all windows and glass doors etc, at night time by the use of curtains, shutters, and dark blinds. Any person failing to comply after due notice would be reported, and further action taken. It seems that as the year passed, some Hallatonians did not heed these warnings or simply forgot them. Between 15th and 24th October John Freer, Harry Horsley and Charles Ward, all of Hallaton, were arrested for breaching the lighting order. They were summoned to the East Norton Petty Sessions where they either had their wives plead guilty, in the cases of Horsley and Ward, or were found guilty, in the case of Freer. Horsley and Freer were fined ten shillings each, and Ward five shillings.

On 22nd February, they met again with the members of the volunteer corps to discuss the proposed scheme for dealing with fires. The response was to split up members of the firefighting team into small sections. It appears the scheme must have made use of the existing underground water supply that Hallaton had. One section was to deal with the water supply, and was led by George W. Butteriss. The store room section was monitored by the Frisbys. Henry Butteriss was to take charge of the ladder section, whilst Dr Morrison was to



Poster issued in the Borough of Leicester advising people what to do in the event of an air raid. ROLLR (M 939).

control traffic and keep discipline. The actual working of the fire hose was down to Mr J. Garfield and Cyril Grocock. The final part of the scheme involved ringing the parish bell to warn people of the approach of hostile aircraft.

Various pieces of equipment needed to be acquired, including six red buckets, one long pipe, a dozen cords, irons for the manholes, and valves and plugs for the drains as required. All was to be stored in the new parish storeroom.

It seems highly likely that this fire scheme, the darkening of windows, and the turning off the street lights, was a response not only to Government legislation, but also an attempt to deal with any zeppelin attack which might happen. They were

becoming far more common, and 5th March saw an extensive zeppelin raid over Hull, the East Riding, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire and Rutland. Zeppelins were seen over Hallaton. Peter Daisley recalled a story concerning Priscilla Neal. When seeing Zeppelins over the village, she was apparently heard to remark “*Oh my goodness this war is getting serious*”. This is reported to have happened in 1917, though by then the zeppelin threat had largely abated, and 1916 would seem a better fit. The diary of Inspector Charles Freer, of the East Norton area, would seem to support this, showing a number of dates throughout the year when he needed to alert the special constables about an air raid.

Jack Stamp, in his memoir, recalled the following experiences of zeppelins over Hallaton.

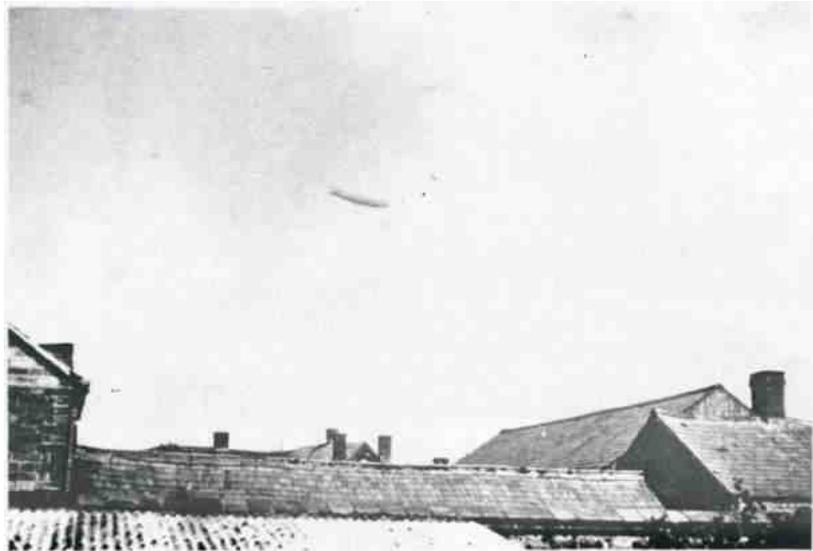
“During the First World War, Mr Simkin had the job of going around the village warning people when zeppelins were overhead. Those days are now far away but the memory of them still excites me. The slow droning noise of those cigar shaped airships passed overhead. The village constable warned father once about the sound of his voice being likely to attract the zeppelin’s attention. Lamps had been extinguished and the constable was satisfied that all such means of identification had been obliterated. But he was troubled about the noise of father’s voice and he was quite convinced that the crew of the airship could hear it. Possibly a coincidence but a zeppelin did in fact drop bombs an East Norton in an open field.” (Jack Stamp, *Step by Step*, p. 47. Wellandside (Photographics) Ltd., 1971).

The threat of Zeppelins was very real, and the RFC set up landing grounds in Leicestershire for use by the 38(Home Defence) Squadron. Initially, there was a site of about 35 acres around a mile outside the village of Welham, on the left-hand side of the Welham to Slawston Road. Occupation of the site was very brief, and it soon was relocated to the Hallaton District in late 1916. The area covered 70 acres and, as such, was the largest of 38 Squadron’s landing grounds in Leicestershire. It was situated one and half miles from the village of Blaston, in the north-east, south-east quadrant, formed by the cross-roads on what is today the B664, about one-mile south-west of Stockerston. Designated as a night landing ground, it remained in care of 38 Squadron until May 1918 when the squadron left for France, thereafter it was maintained as part of the newly formed 90 Squadron. It is not known if anyone was stationed there permanently, though it

1916	1916
May 2 nd Received Air raid warnings and warned Special Constables.	Sept 2 nd Air raid, Warned Special Constables
June 8 th Posted up Army reserve notices	Sept 23 rd Air raid. Warned Special Constables
June 13 th & 14 th Attended the Assizes at Leicester for escort and to give evidence against Charles Bibby Work House master Billerdon charged with Forgery. He was sentenced to three months H.L.	Oct 1 st Air raid. Warned Special Constables
July 29 th & 31 st Received air raid warnings and warned Special Constables.	Nov 27 th Air raid. Warned Special Constables
Aug 9 th Received air raid warnings and Warned Special Constables	1917
	April 22 nd Aeroplane came down at Rolleston and was guarded by the V.F.C.
	June 16 th Air raid Warned Special Constables.
	Sept 24 th Air raid. Warned Special Constables

Above: Extract from diary of Inspector Charles Freer, East Norton, 1916. ROLLR (DE 3831/119).

Right: A Zeppelin passes over Hopes Yard, Uppingham, 1916.



was customary for two or three men to be on hand to guard fuel supplies and assist any planes that landed. The facilities were what might be described as basic. There was a fully furnished and fitted wooden hut, measuring 17 feet by 7 feet; a wooden toilet and a concrete crusher.

A measure one could take to protect one's property against the effects of air raids was to

take out insurance. In 1915 the government had introduced the idea of a war risks insurance scheme and an aircraft insurance committee presented a detailed report to both houses of parliament. No documents are known to survive for Hallaton but the one illustrated here was taken out by Charles Hudson of Preston (near Uppingham) and would have been similar.

Policy No. A 64221

Premium £ 1 : 15 : 0

This Policy is issued through the agency of the ALLIANCE ASSURANCE COMPANY, LIMITED. Head Office: Bartholomew Lane, London, E.C.

GOVERNMENT AIRCRAFT INSURANCE.



THIS POLICY OF INSURANCE made the twentieth day of October 1916, WITNESSETH that in consideration of Jr Charles Jackson of Preston, Wppingham

(hereinafter called the Insured) paying to HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT (hereinafter called the Government) the premium above mentioned, for insuring, as hereinafter mentioned, the following property, viz. :-

On the property or several items of property described, and each of the matters specified, in the Fire Policies Nos 5428-37 and 5428-38 effected by the Insured with the ALLIANCE ASSURANCE COMPANY, LIMITED for... .. £1200 the sum or several sums thereby insured thereon.

The GOVERNMENT agree with the Insured (subject to the Terms and Conditions printed on the back hereof or otherwise expressed hereon, which are to be taken as part of this Policy) that if after payment of the premium the above-mentioned property or any part thereof, shall be destroyed or damaged directly or indirectly by AERIAL CRAFT (hostile or otherwise), or Shots, Shells, Bombs or Missiles from or used against Aerial Craft, at any time before four o'clock in the afternoon of the twentieth day of October 1917 the Government will pay or make good all such Loss or Damage within 30 days after it has been adjusted to an amount not exceeding in respect of the several matters the subject of this Insurance the sums hereby insured thereon respectively, and not exceeding in the whole the sum of

One thousand two hundred pounds.

IN WITNESS whereof I, being an Official of the ALLIANCE ASSURANCE COMPANY, LIMITED, have hereunto set my hand.

Edward Hook
For His Majesty's Government.

An insurance policy taken out in nearby Preston, Rutland, in 1916.

Zeppelin raids would continue over England for most of the year, but by the end of 1916 they were starting to decrease in number and were eventually replaced by Gotha aeroplane raids. None of those, however, are believed to have come near Hallaton.

Hallaton Rural District Council met on 24th March when they renewed the petroleum licence of Cecil Grocock, and awarded the carting tenders for the forthcoming year to Omar Neale for Blaston, and to Fred Driver for Hallaton, Horninghold and Stockerston. That year they chose not to ask for any tenders for granite for road repair, instead instructing the surveyor to acquire materials at his discretion.

A few days later, as if there wasn't enough to contend with, the weather turned cold. On the night of Monday 27th, and through Tuesday 28th,

there was a great blizzard. In fact, it was the worst snowstorm to hit the area for over 40 years. It caused untold damage to telegram and telephone lines, completely disrupted all rail travel, and closed many roads. On top of any inconvenience, the local farmers suffered heavy losses to sheep and lambs. The *Midland Mail* especially noted how bad the snow had been at Cranoe, where farmers Roe and Johnson both suffered many lost lambs. Roads remained closed for five days in places, and there was very considerable drifting.

The weather had cleared by 11th April, in time for the next meeting of Hallaton Parish Council. The meeting had little to discuss, but re-appointed George Tyler as cemetery keeper until 1st April 1917, with a salary of £7-2s-6d. Five days later

the charity trustees met but, likewise, had little to discuss though they did approve further educational grants to both Mr Sayers and Mr Garner.

The annual Easter Monday Bottle Kicking took place on 24th April. Following the previous year's precedent, there were no club feasts, but there was the usual procession to Hare Pie Bank, accompanied by the Hallaton Band. Although there was a good attendance, numbers were not up to the average.

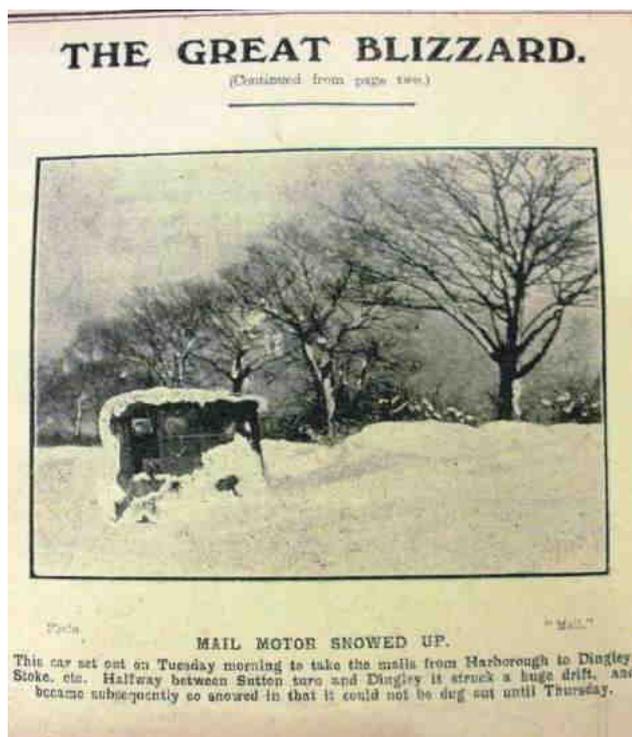
April also saw the death of Walter Hubert Hawke, who perished in his submarine along with all other hands. On 4th April, the budget inflicted yet more financial woe on the people of Britain. New taxes were imposed on amusements, matches, and mineral water. Income tax varied, now reaching up to 5s in the pound, whilst there was a 50-60% increase in taxes on sugar, cocoa, coffee, motor cars, and excess profits. At the end of the month, trouble broke out in Ireland. Everywhere you looked the picture was bleak.

Morale cannot have improved when, on 16th May, the Government extended the Military Service Bill to include married men. The drain on men for jobs on the home front was becoming severe, especially in the crucial sector of agriculture. On 30th May, adverts from the Leicestershire County Agriculture War Committee started to appear in local newspapers urging women to volunteer to work on the land in the summer months. They were to be paid, and possibly trained further in farming, if they were interested.

On 21st May, the Government introduced the Daylight Saving Bill. This was the first time that British Summer Time hours were established.

On June 6th, the *Market Harborough Advertiser* reported on the law suit over the will of Isabella Stenning, which had now reached the High Court in London. There the justice was asked to decide if he considered the bequest to be good and charitable. At the end of the hearing, the matter was allowed to stand over in the hope that an amicable arrangement could be made between the two parties. The case would rumble on for some time yet.

In the meantime, there was good news for the village with the amazing achievements of May Mc Turk and her old English sheepdogs. At the Ladies Kennel Association Open Show at Ranelagh she dominated proceedings. Her champion dog, 'Hallaton Country Lad', stormed to success. He not only won 1st prize in the open class, but also was victorious in the challenge certificate and the Queen Alexandra's Silver Cup, the Old English Sheepdog Club's Ten Guinea Cup for the best dog, and the Dixon Challenge Cup (value 10 guineas) for the best dog or bitch. He also came 1st in the best stud dog class. He became the first old English sheepdog to win the Queen Alexandra's Cup. In both the graduate and special limit classes one of May's other dogs, 'Shepton Victor' was awarded 2nd and 3rd places respectively. Another of her dogs, 'Clara', was awarded 1st prize in the brood bitch class, and also won the Wall 8 guinea challenge cup for best brood bitch.



Left: photograph of the great blizzard, March 1916, from the *Midland Mail*.

Above: *Hallaton Country Lad*. From the *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 1915. Courtesy Mary Evans Picture Library.

May was obviously a top breeder and was exporting dogs to America, a remarkable achievement at the time.

Of course, with conscription in full flow, it must have been a very worrying time for those left behind waiting anxiously for news. As well as new recruitment measures taking more men away, by 1916 the new battalions raised in the autumn of 1914 were fully trained and operating on the various front-lines. From 31st May to 1st June there was the Battle of Jutland. There was much relief in Hallaton when Arthur Ward, whose ship had been sunk, returned safely home on leave. The Congregational Chapel, of which Ward was a member, put on a special service of thanksgiving. In the weeks to come, others would not be so fortunate. Towards the end of June there was hope of a major breakthrough on the Western Front. The attack on 1st July, when it came, was to prove anything but successful. Initial reports disguised the truth of what happened, but soon the casualty lists started to come in, and they were long, very long. July 1916 was to be one of the worst months of the war for Hallaton. Reverend Preece was kept a busy man, with memorial services for the fallen becoming commonplace. Harold Simkin, killed 1st July; Frederick Palmer, 4th July; Charles Marlow, 5th July; Albert Tyler, 14th July; Frederick Russell and Calverley George Bewicke, 26th July; Emer Coleman Driver, 1st August. Seven men, all well known in the village, dead in a month. The memorial services that took place were all supported by men of the Local Volunteer Training Corps and were well attended.

Nearer to home, there was another concern for Hallatonians. Back in February, the justices at the East Norton Petty Sessions had not automatically renewed the licence for the Bewicke Arms. Following a report that it was not required, they had decided to refer the matter to the annual meeting of the County Compensation Committee, which met on 26th June. Sir Dylan Atkins MP applied on behalf of both the owner (Mrs E. Bewicke,) and the tenant (Mrs M. Butteriss,) for the renewal of the licence. He urged that the licence had been in the family of the holder for generations, and that the inn had been associated with the Bewicke family for hundreds of years. A lot of evidence was produced including that given by the police regarding the requirements for licensed premises in neighbourhood. At the end of the hearing the licence was renewed, but Hallaton came close to losing one of its most famous landmarks.

The effects of the war were everywhere now. Back in May, the meeting of Hallaton Rural District Council had reported that one of the carting contractors had joined the forces (possibly Fred Driver) and the clerk was instructed to arrange for the work to be done by any other carrier and to apply the same process should it happen again in the future. The council was also tasked with distributing the 1916 new Maintenance of Livestock Order, and the meeting further announced new powers for councillors in relation to the National Register. Each councillor, accompanied by a police constable, now had the authority to visit any house in his area and request the certificates of registration from any person, living in the house, who was both known to have registered, or believed not to have registered. They could inspect any document, and take copies if required. By their meeting on 30th June, all councillors were happy that all people who should have registered had done so.

Despite the continuous sad news, in August a garden fête and sale of work still went ahead in the gardens of Hallaton Hall to raise money for the local district nursing fund. It was most successful with many people attending, including a sizable number from Market Harborough.

Hallaton Rural District Council met twice more that year. On 29th September, Thomas Simkin of Hallaton was appointed to the military tribunal in place of T. B. Mould. They also came to an agreement that they would accept Mr Price-Dent's offer of £30 for a piece of land called Stone Pit. At their final yearly meeting on 24th November, they chose Reverend Preece to represent the council on the local sub-committee to discuss the War Pensions Act. They were also informed that, under the Election Act of 1916, the election of new councillors would be postponed for one year. This was the second year running this occurred, yet another effect of the war.

At a local level, Samuel Nevins Bankart wrote to them to say he had sold Norton Hill Farm, including the piece of private road owned by him, to Robert Fisher.

Despite the war people tried to carry on as normal, though now operating much more within central government restrictions. In July, a case reached the courts which gives a small insight into the practicalities within the farming world. A claim was made by the London & North Western Railway Company against Mr John Langham in respect of the sum of £3-7s-2d, which was the money he still owed them for the cost of carriage of cattle from Shrewsbury to East Norton and Hallaton. The

REGISTER OF LICENSES granted in the *East Norton Division*

No.	Date.	Particulars of License.	Name and Situation of Premises.	Annual Value of Premises.	Name and Address of Owner of Premises.	Name of Holder of License.
16	¹⁹¹¹ July 3	Alcouse.	See Hallaton	£20.	Sam ^l A. Bauhart Wagelons/Struggles Leicester	Arthur Jace
	2 FEB 1912	Renewed				
	7 FEB 1913	do				
	6 FEB 1914	do				
	5 FEB 1915	do				
4 FEB 1916	do					
17	¹⁹¹¹ July 3	Alcouse.	Royal Oak Hallaton	£20.	R. H. Puce Dent Hallaton	John Eaton
	2 FEB 1912	Renewed				
	7 FEB 1913	do				
	6 FEB 1914	do				
	5 FEB 1915	do				
4 FEB 1916	do					
18	¹⁹¹¹ July 3	Alcouse.	Bewicke Arms Hallaton	£20	M ^{rs} Effie Bewicke Deerons Arms Mansions London	Mary Ann Batters
	2 FEB 1912	Renewed				
	7 FEB 1913	do				
	6 FEB 1914	do				
	5 FEB 1915	do				
4 FEB 1916	do					
19	¹⁹¹¹ July 3	Beer (off)	House at Hallaton	£13	R. H. Puce Dent M ^{rs} Effie Bewicke	Walter Howright
	2 FEB 1912	Renewed				
	7 FEB 1913	do				
	6 FEB 1914	do				
	5 FEB 1915	do				
4 FEB 1916	do					
20	¹⁹¹¹ July 3	Wine & Spirit (off)	Shop at Hallaton	£12	M ^{rs} Effie Bewicke	Charles Howright
	2 FEB 1912	Renewed				
	7 FEB 1913	do				
	6 FEB 1914	do				
	5 FEB 1915	do				
4 FEB 1916	do					

in the County of LEICESTER.

Licensing V. (10-191) London: Shaw & Son, Printers, Ltd.

Transfers, New Tenant, or Occupier.	Date of Transfer.	Forfeitures of Licences.	Disqualifications of Premises.	Record of Convictions.
John Zanker Bank Hall	¹⁹¹² Mar 29 1913 April 11			
		4 th February 1916	Renewed provisionally and referred to Compensation Committee under Licensing (Consolidation) Act 1910	

Records of East Norton Petty Sessions showing records of alcohol licences issued in Hallaton and referral of the Bewicke Arms to County Compensation Committee. ROLLR (DE 822/2).

dispute arose over whether the cattle should have been transported in small or medium sized trucks. The defendant said he thought it should have been small ones, which would have meant a lower rate of carriage for him to pay. However, two railway loaders testified that the cattle were properly sent

in medium sized trucks, in accordance with the instructions of the drovers. The court found in favour of the railway company.

Evidence that money to undertake repairs to buildings was being restricted can be seen in a letter written to the Charity Commission by the clerk to

the Hallaton Charity on 18th October, concerning the poor state of the school playground. Presumably the local county council could not or did not want to find the necessary money.

"I am instructed by the trustees to ask whether your board will allow them to expend the sum of £20, or such sum as may be necessary, part of the balance standing on the Education Account for the repair and improvement of the playground of the school. At present, after rain, a great deal of water remains on the playground, and it would be for the benefit and in the interests of the children for this to be remedied."

It didn't take long for the Commission to reply, stating that they could not approve such expenditure as it did not fall within the terms of the scheme for the charity, and so the school playground would remain unrepaired for the duration of the war.

People still wanted to visit the cinema and the music halls, but this was the year the Government

introduced an entertainment tax, which made it more expensive for people to attend such events. The following advert for the cinema in Market Harborough makes the implications of the tax clear to prospective visitors.

Not that the new tax stopped people flooding to the nation's cinemas, in their millions, to witness the biggest film of the year, *The Battle of The Somme*. The film, shot by two official cinematographers, showed real situations, although the famous scene of men going over the top was staged. By September, the film was on general release and was watched by 20 million people in Britain in the film's first six weeks of showing. In Market Harborough, the *Midland Mail* newspaper published a very positive review in its 8th September edition, under the headline, "*The Battle of the Somme. Marvellous Pictures*". For readers 1916 saw the publication of one the greatest novels of the war, H. G. Wells's epic *Mr Britling Sees it Through*. Musically, two songs stand out, Harry Lauder singing 'Keep right

COUNTY ELECTRIC PALACE,
THE SQUARE, MARKET HARBOROUGH.

Proprietors The United County Picture Hall, Limited.
Manager G. Martinengo.

The Management reserve the right to refuse Admission. No Goods must be supplied without a written order from the Management.

NOTE—ENTERTAINMENT TAX

Tax on Prices of Admission to all Seats as follows:—

PRICES: 3d., 4d., 6d. ENTERTAINMENT TAX 1d.
PRICES: 9d. and 1s. ENTERTAINMENT TAX 2d.

Special Matinee on Saturdays for children only. ADMISSION 1d. No Adult except in charge of children will be allowed admission to this Performance. NO HALF PRICE TICKETS to 3d. and 4d. Seats at Evening Performances.

6-30 Two Performances Nightly 8-45

NOTE.—ALTERATION TIME OF PERFORMANCES.

TWICE NIGHTLY, Commencing at 6.30 and 8.45. MATINEE, SATURDAY at 3.0.
Entire Change of Programme every Monday and Thursday.

SPECIAL ATTRACTIONS FOR WHIT-WEEK.

MONDAY, TUESDAY, and WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY, FRIDAY, and SATURDAY,
June 19th, 20th, and 21st, 1916. June 22nd, 23rd, and 24th.

Great New Trans-Atlantic Serial:
THE BROKEN COIN,
Episode No. 14: "ON THE BATTLEFIELD."
Serial Photo Play of Thrilling Adventure and Beautiful Romance.

THE MOMENT BEFORE DEATH (Drama).
TOO MANY SMITHS (Comedy).
'GRACE'S ORDEAL' (Comic).
NEARLY A NIGHTMARE (Comic).
PLAYING IN TOUGH LUCK (Comedy).
H.R.H. PRINCE OF WALES IN FRONT LINE (War Topical).

NOE.—OWING TO THE WAR TAX BOOKING FEE 3d.

NOTE.—Owing to Tax there will be an advance in Booking Fee. Seats may be booked at any time for any Performance, at an extra charge of 3d.

A DRAMA OF CIRCUS LIFE:
The Flying Twins
A Thriller Big Production in Three Acts.
Featuring the Famous Thanhouser Twins.

ONE LAW BREAKER (Drama).
AND HIS WIFE KNEW ABOUT IT (Vitagraph Comedy).
AND THE PARROT SAID— (Comic).
BRITISH SPORTS NO. 3 (Educational).
YPIRES (War Topical).
THE GAUMONT GRAPHIC.
The recognised foremost Topical Film Events Bi-weekly.

Next week: THE NIGHTBIRDS OF LONDON.

Notice in Midland Mail newspaper regarding performances at cinema in Market Harborough showing impact of new Entertainment Tax.

on till the end of the road', and the release of 'If you were the only girl in the world'. Meanwhile, poetess Jessie Pope was aptly summing up the changing face of work on the home front, with her poem, 'War Girls'.

*There's the girl who clips your ticket for the train,
And the girl who speeds the lift from floor to floor,
There's the girl who does a milk-round in the rain,
And the girl who calls for orders at your door.
Strong, sensible, and fit,
They're out to show their grit,
And tackle jobs with energy and knack.
No longer caged and penned up,
They're going to keep their end up
'Til the khaki soldier boys come marching back.*

*There's the motor girl who drives a heavy van,
There's the butcher girl who brings your joint of meat,
There's the girl who calls 'All fares please!' like a man,
And the girl who whistles taxis up the street.
Beneath each uniform
Beats a heart that's soft and warm,
Though of canny mother-wit they show no lack;
But a solemn statement this is,
They've no time for love and kisses
Till the khaki soldier boys come marching back.*

1916 was the year when food production was becoming a key topic. Farmers were under pressure to plough up land to cultivate crops but were reluctant to move to arable farming unless the government imposed minimum prices. The need for the British public to take the food issue seriously emerged almost from nowhere in the autumn. In October, Lord Crawford, head of the wheat commission, circulated a cabinet memorandum. This detailed decreasing British harvest yields, which had declined by 8% even on pre-war levels. A bad potato harvest led to a 25% shrinkage in yield, milk supplies were down 13%, and there was 8% less meat available in the retailers. The country's fish catch had also dropped 33% due to the Admiralty requisitioning around 80% of the country's trawler fleet. Production of 'fat stock' meats from cattle, sheep, and pigs was threatened by a shortage of agricultural labourers. This is supported by figures showing public consumption of meat was falling, and the situation with other fats and proteins was even worse. Butter was at nearly half the level of consumption of the start of the year, bacon a third less, and cheese around the same. The outlook was made worse by serious shortfalls in the North

American wheat harvest, which was down 24.5 million tonnes in 1916 as German U-boat actions started to seriously affect supplies.

Fixed pricing, to encourage increased production, seemed the only way forward, but by 27th November only milk had come under this umbrella. However, the Government was at least starting to take the matter more seriously. Under the terms of the Defence of the Realm Act, powers were taken to decide upon land usage. Small executive committees were formed by each of the county agricultural committees. Recruitment for these committees was confined to practical farmers, reinforced by a few land owners and agents. At local levels, they were to be assisted by district committees and sometimes parish representatives. As the winter approached, they could only really ensure that farmers were cultivating their land efficiently.

Once again, parcels were sent out by the people of Hallaton to their soldiers at Christmas. But the festive season was now a much melancholier affair. Rising prices were a constant irritant, and food expenditure now consumed two-thirds of a working-class family's average income, with prices of cheaper foods tending to rise more quickly than more expensive items. 1917 promised to be another challenging year.

1917: Hunger and Despair

Food. This was the one predominant feature of 1917 on the home front. The worrying statistics reported at the end of 1916, and the declining supplies of certain foodstuffs, would lead the Government to make decisions that would have profound effects on the people of Hallaton. Local government was tasked with not only getting more people to grow their own food but also with encouraging, and eventually forcing farmers to plough up land for cultivation.

On 3rd January, Hallaton Parish Council met for their first meeting of the year. On its agenda was one item, potatoes. A circular from the Leicestershire County Council Agricultural Committee about the supply of seed potatoes was discussed and a further meeting was called for 9th January before which councillors were to go around the village and canvas the people to see how many potatoes should be ordered under the war agricultural scheme. At that meeting, orders for three tons of seed potatoes were taken and sent for processing. Other business included correspondence, with the postmaster at Market Harborough, requesting a meeting to discuss the possibility of a more satisfactory delivery

of letters to Hallaton. The detail is not recorded anywhere, but the postmaster was happy to arrange a meeting for the 26th January. Harry Butteriss and Alexander McTurk were to attend on behalf of Hallaton. Sadly, no report back on the meeting exists. The council was very busy, and met again on 23rd January when it was agreed to increase the grave digging rates for James Driver by 1s-6d for an eight-foot grave, and 1s for a six-foot-deep grave, until the end of the war.

The Parish Council met again on Monday 26th February. Charles Russell, Charles Marlow, Frederick Barnett and Frederick Pick were nominated as Parish Constables. There followed a parish meeting, where a communication was read from the war agricultural committee stating that no early potatoes could be supplied, and it was unanimously decided by the meeting to order scotch seed potatoes, which were sold at a price fixed by central government. There can be no doubt that the food crisis, which was enveloping the country, was also affecting life in Hallaton.

Hallaton Rural District Council didn't meet for the first time of the year until they convened a special meeting at the clerk's office in Market Harborough, on 13th March, to discuss the suggestions by the director general for national service. That month, the Ministry of National Service began its work. National Service, in this instance, was a scheme intended to find an army of half a million industrial volunteers to fill the places left vacant by those being conscripted, or volunteering, into the armed forces. The idea was not a success. By the end of April 163,000 had come forwards, but by August only 20,000 were placed. But this meeting set the pattern for much of the year to come when the district council were as much concerned with central government instructions regarding the war on the home front as they were with maintaining the roads.

Ten days later, on 23rd, Hallaton Rural District Council had its customary March meeting in Hallaton. The meeting went through the usual financial payments, including one of £3-7s-3d to Omar Neale for carting, they appointed a new member of the council for Brighthurst, and renewed the licence for storing petroleum to Cecil Grocock of Hallaton. The financial estimates for the year were discussed and finalised, with Hallaton's contribution being £212 for the year plus a special sanitary rate payment of £50. Locally, the sale of the land known as 'Stone Pits' to Mr Price-Dent was confirmed.

Once again, the effects of the war can be seen in the minutes for the meeting. A circular letter from the local government board, intending to help

increase food supply, was read, its contents being about keeping pigs. A letter from the Leicestershire Agricultural Committee, asking the district council to refrain from carting stone during the months of April and May, was also discussed. Once again, the District Surveyor was not allowed to get quotes for supplying granite, but was to get supplies if and when he required. For the first year the carting tenders for several areas, including Hallaton, Horninghold, Blaston and Stockerston, were not awarded. The surveyor was instructed to arrange for carting services as and when required. By now Fred Driver was serving, and Omar Neale was operating by himself. An interesting example of how the loss of local men to the services was starting to take effect.

Meanwhile in Hallaton itself, Fred Barnett, the baker, was beginning to get complaints about his bread. Poor Fred was hampered by a new order issued by the national food controller regarding the manufacture of flour for bread. Because of the shortage of wheat, bread flour was to be milled from rice, barley, maize, or oats. As a nation, white bread was preferred over brown, but as this used more flour than wholemeal bread, economies had to be made. Advertisements in the press promoted the making of homemade and wholemeal bread, rather than white, in an attempt to redress the problem of shortages. Whether for homemade bread, or that of the commercial bakery, bread flour could be bulked out using alternative non-wheat ingredients, such as cooked rice, potato, and rye. To maximise production from the limited wheat resources available, 'standard flour' was introduced by the Wheat Commission in Britain, which included more of the coarser husk that was extracted from the grain. Fred would be further hampered in May by the Bread Order of 1917. This made it illegal to sell bread until it was more than 12 hours old. Less appetizing, and easier to slice thinly when stale, the Bread Order enabled limited resources to be stretched further.

The end of 1916, and the very start of 1917, had seen Dr Stott home on leave. His exploits were already well-known in the village, and he was afforded an open-top carriage procession from his house to the church, and a general celebration of his wartime achievements. Just two weeks later, on 16th January, 74-year-old Mrs Sharman died. For many years she had been the treasurer for the Congregational Chapel in the village, and her death made a significant impact on the chapel community. The day before Annie Marie Hawke, the wife of postmaster and village entrepreneur Fred Hawke, had been buried in Hallaton Cemetery. It was not only on the battlefield that the news was grim.

However, there was an attempt to keep the social aspects of the village alive. On 2nd January, a social evening was held by the Hallaton Volunteer Training Corps, where members were accompanied by their wives and friends. Songs were interspersed with dancing. The main event of the evening was the presentation of a rifle by Dr Morrison to Sergeant Norman in recognition of his unabated attention and untiring efforts on behalf of the corps since its foundation. Every member of the corps had made a financial contribution to the fund to acquire the rifle. The evening was a happy one but tinged with some regret as local papers noted that five members of the corps were leaving the following day to "help their country". It is not clear if this meant military service, or leaving the area to work on nationally important matters, such as munitions work. However, it is more evidence that the area was being drained of manpower.

The Hallaton Volunteer Training Corps continued to function throughout the year, and men appealing against military service at the local tribunal were often required to serve in it as a condition of not being called up. In February, the corps held its second annual meeting. The treasurer, Mr Godfrey, revealed a healthy bank balance of £19-9s-1d. He was also able to inform members that the corps was still working enthusiastically, despite the fact that many men had been called to the colours. The average attendance at drill was 19, though this number was well down on the initial days of the corps. Shooting matches against other local volunteer corps continued throughout the year, and the Price-Dent Cup was keenly contested in March.

The annual Hallaton Ball was not held this year but was replaced by a social and dance held in the village schoolroom. Mrs E. Simkin, Miss Smith, Mr Denley, Mr W. Butteriss performed musical entertainments, with Mrs Usher playing the piano.

Meanwhile, the news from the front continued to be bleak. There was a service for Tom Neale held in Hallaton Church on Sunday 18th February. As usual, a good attendance was recorded, as well as the presence of the local Hallaton Volunteer Corps. Just a month later, on 14th March, George Clarke was killed in action. On Sunday 1st April the, by now customary, memorial service was held in Hallaton Church. Of especial interest in the newspaper report which covered the service was a sentence, easily overlooked, which states the parent's normal thanks for those attending, only on this occasion this was extended to the members of the Army Service Corps now billeted in the village. Currently, this tiny snippet from a news

report is the only evidence we have that troops were actually billeted in the village during the war. The significance of this is crucial in understanding that the lack of manpower, affecting the running of communities, was almost certainly now starting to bite in Hallaton. It seems highly likely that these soldiers were involved in helping out on the land in and around Hallaton. Photographs, taken during the war, of the area clearly show soldiers working on local farms. Although they could have been taken in 1918. Soldiers were employed nationwide on farms prior to 1917, but the arrangements were haphazard and there were often conflicts between local men and the soldiers. In January 1917, this changed with the creation of the Food Production Department and serious consideration was given to creating a coherent scheme for the deployment of soldiers to work on the land.

Pressure on farmers to produce more food was intense. But equally so was the pressure on people to voluntarily reduce their intake of certain foods. Government ministers implored the public to have meatless days, to consume less bread, and the Public Meals Order, issued in December 1916, restricted diners in public restaurants to two courses at lunch, and three at dinner. The government pooled ideas with the National War Savings Committee and in March 1917 a campaign was launched through the churches, where local clergy gave sermons on economising. New laws leading to convictions for those wasting food were introduced and advertising posters appeared all over the place. The campaign was supported by over a thousand local food committees, which were created to implement orders and restrictions conferred on local authorities. Hallaton would have been no different. At the meeting of the Hallaton Rural District Council on 25th May, a letter was read out from the Leicestershire War Savings Local Central Committee concerning the food control campaign. The councillors instructed the clerk to reply that the area was a small agricultural district and that economy was now being practiced widely, and there would therefore be no need for a public meeting, though they were quite happy to distribute leaflets. There was also discussion surrounding an order, dated 8th May, made by the local Food Controller under the defence of the Realm Act, authorising local authorities to prosecute offences against said regulations, and it was decided to appoint local surveyor, John Gray, to the role of carrying out any prosecutions.

The focus of much of village life was centred around food production and helping the war effort, although some things continued as normally as

they could. Mr Fernie's Hunt continued to meet throughout the year, and the annual Bottle Kicking contest with Medbourne proceeded as usual. The newspapers carried the following, shorter than normal, report.

"The Bottle Kicking and Hare Pie Scrambling were duly observed. Members of the friendly societies attended church and subsequently the Hallaton band led a procession to Hare Pie Bank where the programme followed its usual course. There were more people than one could have expected but of course nothing like the numbers who attend the event in normal times."

Even the village weddings were taking on a more war influenced appearance. Easter Tuesday saw the marriage of Private Jack (John Tom) Neale to Elsie Simkin. Making the most of families being around for the usual Easter festivities, the church was full and beautifully decorated for the happy occasion. April also saw the wedding of Lance Corporal Ernest Johnson to May Darwent. Both were performed in uniform.

The bad news from the front continued to pile up, with the death of Alfred Tebbutt Simkin on 26th April. One more memorial service for the rector to perform. The mood was darkened further by the funeral, on 27th April, for a stillborn child of Albert Driver. And further gloom was cast over the village by the unexpected death of Charles Bettles. For ten years he had been a waggoner for the McTurk family. His funeral took place on 2nd May, and by the end of the month one of the village characters, William Lount, a gallant old soldier, was dead, and he was buried in Hallaton Cemetery on 4th June.

For those wanting to drown their woes in a good pint of ale, the situation was not much better. Since the outbreak of war, opening hours were restricted, and by 1st April 1917 the amount of duty raised on a barrel of beer had shot up from 7s-9d per barrel to 25s per barrel. At the same time 'treating' or buying drinks for friends was banned, and in 1917 the government ordered the amount of beer produced to be cut and the strength to be reduced. The result was more expensive beer of not such good quality. The illustration here is interesting as

MITCHELLS & BUTLERS
"Good Honest Beer"

M Bot. of **J. EATON,** 1917
"Old Royal Oak," HALLATON, near Market Harboro'.

Family Trade Price List.

ALES AND STOUTS IN CASKS.

OUR CASKS ARE NOT MEASURED, BUT EVERY CASK IS TAKEN THAT THEY CONTAIN NOT LESS THAN THEIR REPORTED QUANTITIES.	BRAND OR MARK.	BARRELS REQUIRED QUANTITY IN HALLS.	COBBLER QUANTITY IN HALLS.	STEWART QUANTITY IN HALLS.
Standard Shilling Family Ale	B.	36/-	18/-	9/-
Golden Guinea Light Bitter Ale	G.A.	42/-	21/-	10/6
Mild Ale	B.B.	48/-	24/-	12/-
Do.	C.C.	54/-	27/-	13/6
Pale Ale	P.A.	48/-	24/-	12/-
India Pale Ale	I.P.A.	54/-	27/-	13/6
Strong Ale	S.A.	72/-	36/-	18/-
Porter	P.	36/-	18/-	9/-
Double Stout	S.S.	48/-	24/-	12/-

Subject to 1/- per Kilderkin and 6d. per Firkin Discount, to be paid within 28 days from date of invoice.

BOTTLED ALES AND STOUTS.

QUANTITIES.	IN BOTTLES AS UNDER.		
Extra Stout	Small	Large	—
Nourishing Stout	—	Large	Magnums
Strong Ale	Small	—	—
Export Ale	Small	—	—
Guinea Ale	Small	Large	—
All-Bright Ale	—	—	Magnums
Family Ale	—	—	Magnums
"Cape" Beer	—	—	Magnums

PRICES WHICH ARE STRICTLY NETT MAY BE OBTAINED FROM AGENTS.

Dr. BOSTOCK HILL Reports:—"The Water supplied from the Artesian Well at your Brewery is the purest I have ever examined and the sample of Ale submitted to me is Perfectly pure, Light and free from Acidity."

The order form for John Eaton, clearly showing the effects of the war with the information on prices and tax.

it shows an order form for John Eaton at the Royal Oak, with the implications of tax increases clearly over stamped across it.

The Church and Chapel were sorely needed by many during these dark times, and they continued to operate as usual. The Chapel was to indirectly benefit from one of the distant effects of the war. They usually acquired students from a college in Nottingham, but early in 1917 the decision was taken to close the college for the duration of the war, and Victor Watson was invited by the Hallaton Chapel to become its Lay Pastor until the war ended and the college re-opened. He duly accepted the offer, and a welcome meeting was organised for 15th March. He was to prove a most successful and invigorating appointment. The chapel was active in the community and, after the meeting in March, Harry Butteriss proposed that they form a league of young worshippers. It was also decided to hold a concert in the chapel on Easter Tuesday. As well as Sunday services, there were weeknight services each and every Thursday, which commenced at 7.30pm and each Tuesday, at 7.00pm there was a young people's service. During the summer months, it was decided to move back the Sunday evening service by half an hour from 6.00pm to 6.30pm. Later in the year the chapel's plans for the Harvest Festival would go ahead as usual. Both Mr Fernie and Mr Hardcastle were written to, and Mr Fletcher provided £3 to buy new hymn books for the occasion.

We must return however, to agriculture and food production, and for a moment step outside Hallaton. The Government was changing its approach to farming in response to the poor wheat harvest of 1916. The non-interventionist approach could not continue and, with the appointment of David Lloyd George as Prime Minister, urgency was finally injected into proceedings. Under the terms of the Defence of the Realm Act, powers were taken to decide upon suitable land usage, and to designate which crops should be grown in the best national interest. To carry out this work, small local executive committees were to be formed from County War Agricultural Committees. At the start of the 1916/17 winter, they mainly ensured that farmers were cultivating their land efficiently. Where necessary, this could mean the compulsory conversion of grazing land to arable. The intention was to create, nationally, three million extra acres of arable land. In January 1917, under the Cultivation of Lands Order, powers were given to the committees to enter and survey land, to waive restrictive covenants on its cultivation imposed by landowners, to issue instructions on what crops to

grow, and to draw up schemes to till waste land. This was an unprecedented interference into private property rights, and was reinforced by the fact that any farmer who refused to comply could be fined or sent to prison. To the farmers of Hallaton, who were used to tilling their holdings as they saw fit (subject only to their landlord's restrictions), and used almost entirely to pastoral farming, these initiatives must have come as something of a shock. However, the evidence that they took place comes from the minutes of the Hallaton Charity trustees. At their meeting on 26th October, the correspondence with the War Agricultural Committee was read, and Mr McTurk was able to inform the other trustees that in respect to Fearn Farm, the greater part of ploughing, required to convert the land to arable cropping, had been carried out. Fearn Farm would not have been the only farm in the area required to perform such a task.

Concerns over food did not just lie with central authorities. The people of Hallaton would have been feeling a financial squeeze. By February 1917, average retail food prices were 89% above the level of July 1914, with potatoes especially scarce following the bad harvest of 1916. Wages, on the other hand, were around 60-70% above the 1914 level. Nationally, there was a growing resentment towards those seen as profiteering on the back of the war. Farmers were seen as one example. Not just from the money they were making, but also from the fact that many believed they were often winning exemptions from military service for their sons, in preference to the sons of local people who had to go in their place. During the first two years of the war, paying little tax, and free to raise crops, or, in the case of Hallaton, livestock, whichever paid them best, they had seen their incomes rise and, in fact, rise sharply. The last two years of the war would see this position shift. To rectify the situation, wage increases were required for rural workers, and maximum prices needed to be imposed on certain goods. In return for converting their land to arable usage, farmers were to be given government price guarantees for wheat and oats for at least four years. Barley was excluded, in deference to views of the temperance movement. In February 1917, the Corn Production Bill was introduced to Parliament. There followed several lengthy discussions before it became law in August. Part I of the Act dealt with the guaranteed prices for wheat and oats, which were set at 60 shillings and 38s-6d per quarter respectively for 1917, but would fall over the next five years. In reality this was just a gesture, as market prices were still applied and they never fell below the government's guaranteed rates. Part II of

the Act dealt with worker's wages. An immediate increase, to 25 shillings per week, for agricultural labourers would have come as welcome news to some of the poorest paid workers in Hallaton. Any employer not paying the rate could be fined up to £20, plus an additional £1 per day if the offence continued. Part III of the Act dealt with the issue of farm rentals. Tenants were to be protected from all increases in rent, which were attributed to the introduction of guaranteed prices, and any tenant faced with a rent increase could seek arbitration to assess if the rise was fair.

Of course, all the changes depended upon the supply of labour and the lack of male workers



Three images of the changing face of agricultural labour in 1917. Top shows German POWs, middle shows women helping at hay making time, bottom shows British soldiers helping out on a local farm. © Leicestershire County Council.

for the farms around Hallaton was dealt with in two ways. First this very grainy shot from near Horninghold appears to show German POWs working on the land. There was a POW camp in Uppingham, so not too far for them to travel. The other two shots show women working at harvest time. We know that in 1917, local women were helping out because at the first meeting of the Hallaton District Women's Institute, Mrs Fletcher handed out certificates and armlets to women who had been working on the land.

Despite all the efforts at self-rationing, some foodstuffs remained very difficult to get. The supply of sugar was especially erratic, and small towns and rural areas frequently received few or no supplies for weeks and weeks. Butter also suffered similar shortages. A scheme was devised to alleviate the sugar shortage, and disparities in regional availabilities. In the Spring of 1917, families were required to register with a local supplier, who in turn would draw supplies from a central wholesaler who, then, informed the Sugar Commission, so that supplies were distributed in line with existing stocks. However, in September, the Government changed the scheme from being family orientated to an individual based scheme. This resulted in new forms being required, and a good deal of confusion from people who either simply didn't know of the changes or couldn't understand them. Competition between retailers to acquire the registrations was fierce and, on 4th September the Market Harborough Co-operative Society placed an advert in the *Market Harborough Advertiser* encouraging people to register for sugar with them, reassuring potential customers that they would be getting as much sugar from central government as any other retailer.

By the start of August, the food situation was continuing to be a problem. On 4th August, the *Market Harborough Advertiser* carried the notice from the Board of Agriculture authorising the killing of certain migratory birds to help increase food supplies. This meant bad news for the Curlew, Knot, Whimbrel, Golden Plover, Red Shank, Godwit, Snipe, Woodcock, Teal, Widgeon, Mallard, Shoveller, Pochard, Pintail, Brent Goose, Barnacle Goose, Pink Footed Goose, white Fronted Goose, and Grey Lag Goose.

On 14th August, Hallaton Rural District Council convened a special meeting in Market Harborough to appoint the local district Food Control Committee. The usual councillors were to sit on it, alongside a representative of the labour movement, and a woman was also to be a committee member. A Miss Percy was initially their choice, with Mrs Fletcher,

Hallaton Rural District Council.

Retail Coal Prices Order, 1917.

THE HALLATON RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL, under the powers conferred upon them by the Retail Coal Prices Order, 1917, hereby announce that the following Schedule of Prices has been drawn up by them (after consultation with the local Coal Merchants as to their costs) as the maximum prices chargeable for the sale of coal by retail for domestic purposes in the parishes within their District including delivery.

	Derbyshire Hard.	Whitwick Large Deep	Ibstock Main Best.	Domathorpe Best.	Pinxton H.P. Best Hard.	Whitwick Deep Spires Ellistown H.P. Coal & Ellistown Main Cobbles.
Blaston and Horninghold	33/6	33/-	31/-			
Bringhurst			30/6	36/-	33/-	29/6
Drayton			32/-	37/6	34/6	31/-
Easton Magna			30/-	35/6	32/6	29/-
Hallaton	32/3	31/8	29/8			
Holt	34/-	33/6	31/6			
Medbourne	32/3	31/9	29/9			
Stockerston	35/-	31/6	32/6			

The above prices are for sales of one ton or more, and for cash within one month.
Sales of quantities less than one ton from road vehicles may exceed the above prices by 1d. per cwt.
Sales to consumers at merchants' depots or wharves or railway sidings will be less than the above prices by sums varying from 1s. 8d. to 5s. per ton, according to the amount added for cartage.

40, High Street,
Market Harborough,
20th October, 1917.

J. L. DOUGLASS,
Clerk to the Council.

*HRDC coal price list 1917.
ROLLR (DE 8506).*

of Hallaton Hall, on standby. By 17th September, Eliza Colston, of Hallaton, was co-opted onto the committee. In the few months they existed, they were to be kept busy. The Food Control Committee meeting would follow on after the standard district council meetings. Shortages of food was not the only concern of the district council. As we have seen coal was vital to heating, lighting, and to producing power and by 1917 there were shortages and prices were rising. There was a Retail Coal Prices Order, issued by the Government, in an attempt to secure supplies and stabilise rising costs. After allowing an increase of 2s-6d per ton at the mine head, in order to pay increased wages demanded by miners, the costs needed to be passed on and in late October the Hallaton Rural District Council met to decide on the prices for the District and the maximum price to be charged for domestic purposes are shown in the accompanying illustration.

On 27th November, another special meeting of the Hallaton Rural District Council was required. This time, it was to discuss the proposed appointment of one Food Control Committee for the combined districts of Hallaton, Market Harborough Urban District, Market Harborough Rural District, and the Oxendon Rural District. The committee was supposed to start its work on 23rd November and was to comprise of 12 members, four appointed by the Market Harborough Urban District, three

by their rural district, two by Oxendon, and one for Hallaton. There were also to be a representative of the labour movement and one lady member. However, petty squabbling over the make-up of the committee resulted in its formation being postponed until the start of 1918. In the meantime, the Food Control Committee for Hallaton had to deal with milk pricing. At the end of October under the Milk Prices Order, it was decided to set the maximum price of milk delivered in the district, at 5d per quart until 30th November. There followed another meeting, at which the price for a quart was increased slightly to 5 1/4d per quart.

Hallaton Parish Council had continued to meet and perform its usual business. On 18th May, George Tyler was again awarded the contract to maintain the cemetery, at a figure of £7-10s-0d, until 31st March 1918. The council did state, however, that they could not guarantee this appointment in the future. At the same meeting, they also authorised the weedkilling of the walks in the cemetery and the village, and instructed Mrs Driver to perform the task for 3d per hour. They then didn't meet again until 3rd July. It was at this meeting that Mrs Calverley Bewicke's letter was read out, requesting permission to erect a war memorial in the village. The council decided quickly in favour, and the story of Hallaton's war memorial began. It is covered in detail elsewhere in these pages and is not repeated here.

It is noticeable that village entertainments were now put on not just for the benefit of Hallatonians, but were done to raise money for causes associated with the war. On 6th August, a large village fête was organised by the Fletchers, and took place in the grounds of Hallaton Hall. It was done in aid of the Hallaton Cottage Nursing Association and other wartime charities. It was a great success, with over 900 people reported as attending throughout the day. They came not just from Hallaton, but from neighbouring villages, and thoroughly enjoyed the sports and other amusements. The numbers included some wounded soldiers from Uppingham, though their numbers were restricted due to the shortage of petrol. The organising was done largely by Mrs Fletcher and her daughter, now Mrs Peacock, Mrs Preece, and Mrs and Miss Neil. Among the food on offer were grapes, cheese, eggs, and apples. There was also a jumble sale and prizes on offer included a pig, which was donated by Mr Hays of Somerby, and was won by Hallaton's policeman George Mayes. Ducks, donated by Mrs Fletcher, were won by the landlord of the Fox Inn, Robert Hollis. The event finished at 9.30pm, with a hearty rendition of the National Anthem.

In November, the local papers recorded a successful concert, which took place in the schoolroom. The indefatigable Mr Denley, with his wonderful chorus of schoolchildren, formed the nucleus of the entertainment. Their performances were interwoven with those of people from outside the village. One of the most enthusiastic receptions was afforded to Mona Bankart, who played several pieces on her cello accompanied by her mother on the piano. During the time that the Bankart family owned Hallaton Hall, concert parties, held in the music room, were a regular feature of village life, all the family being talented musicians. The event finished at 10.30pm, and £20 was raised for St Dunstan's Hospital for blind soldiers and sailors. On 30th November, there was a village whist drive in aid of King George's fund for sailors. Mr G. Frisby acted as MC, and refreshments were provided by Mrs Gadsby. Mrs Fletcher attended the event, giving a talk about the aims of the fund and the evening raised a total of £11.

There can be no doubt that 1917 was a grim year and Hallaton, like everywhere else, needed a lift. This came in the form of two new societies. The Congregational Chapel had received a welcome shot in the arm with the arrival of Victor Watson in March. It was at his instigation that, on 17th September, The Hallaton Mutual Improvement Society was formed. Its object was the religious,

moral, and intellectual improvement of its members. Importantly, it was to be non-denominational. Over the coming months, it would organise talks and put on entertainments for the benefit of those wanting to join, and who could do so by simply giving their name to the secretary. You had to be over 12 years old to attend. If you did not attend for four consecutive weeks, without good cause, your membership was considered to have lapsed. The first meeting, on 29th October, saw Victor Watson give a talk about the work of the YMCA in Egypt. On 5th November, he gave a short paper on the subject; 'Will Village Life Be Better After The War?' This was from an economic, social, and religious standpoint. There followed a lively debate, which ended in the members coming down on the side of a yes. On Monday 12th November, there was a well-attended musical evening. And so, the society continued to meet weekly throughout the rest of the year. Other talks included 'Moses, Statesman and Strategist', and one on old Hallaton by Henry Butteriss. At the start of December, entertainment was the name of the game, with a recital of Charles Dickens's Christmas Carol being given by Edith and Alice Hammond from Market Harborough.

The other innovation, and one that has continued to this day, was the creation of the Hallaton District Women's Institute (WI). This was, perhaps, the most significant development for female members of Hallaton's community to emerge during the war. It gave an opportunity for all women in the village to meet, to discuss common problems, and to manage their own affairs on a non-religious basis. Hallaton's women finally had a vehicle on which they could express their interests and ideas. Of course, to begin with, there was a heavy involvement on matters concerning food, but as we shall see this soon evolved. Its inaugural meeting was held in Hallaton Hall on 14th November. Mrs Fletcher was elected President and 47 women from Hallaton, and four from both Horninghold and Blaston, expressed an interest in becoming members. A committee was formed, and the first general meeting arranged for 5.00pm on 12th December. At their first committee meeting, the committee members copied down directions for knitting soldier's woollen waistcoats to be given out.

At the first general meeting, 50 women attended to see Mrs Fletcher present certificates and armlets to those who had worked on the land. Children had brought along berries and grasses to exhibit and were awarded prizes. There was a demonstration on making bread and rolls, and Mrs Elton dictated a recipe for curing ham. The first meeting may seem

extract from the 'Gautthaus Journal' giving an account of a meeting at Bateham at which Lady Loudonberry & Mrs Watts spoke. This was read to the meeting by Mrs Keill.

The following gave in their names for introduction as members:-

Mrs Keill Mrs J. Parwell.	
1. Butters Mrs W.	14 Gilbert, Mrs pd
2. Burnham, Mrs - pd	15 Crocker, Mrs pd
3. Boodle, Mrs - pd	16 Hawke, Mrs G.
4. Francis, Miss - pd	17 Hawke, Mrs H.
5. Prockwell, Mrs - pd	18 Hawke, Mrs J.
6. Press, May - pd	19 Horsley, Mrs H.
7. Cotton, Mrs - pd	20 Judd, Mrs pd
8. Dwyer, Mrs - pd	21 Kidd, Mrs pd
9. Dwyer, Northcote	22 Lignish, Mrs pd
x Mrs Keill	23 Morgan, Mrs pd
10. Sheely Mrs - pd	24 Keill, Mrs pd
11. Fox Mrs - pd	25 Neale, Mrs pd
12. Gabley, Mrs - pd	26 Norman, Mrs x
13. Garner, Mrs J. pd	27 Osborn, Mrs pd
Low, Nurse p.	Harlow Mrs pd

The original members of Hallaton's Women's Institute.

low-key, but the institute was up and running, and the Date of 1918's first meeting was fixed.

The meeting of the Hallaton Rural District Council on 30th November covered a very intriguing item. It revolved around the closing of local roads. The clerk read out a letter from the Major-General in charge of the administration of Northern Command, York. It stated that certain parts of the road between Hallaton and Medbourne, and between Medbourne and Great Easton, would be closed under the Defence of the Realm Act during the progress of what was described as "certain experimental operations". The council decided that no action needed to be taken by them, not that they were likely to have been able to do anything anyway. What the experimental operations were remains a mystery.

Their final meeting of the year, on 29th December, covered much of the usual business to do with finance but also raised was the fact that both R. Fisher and George Plowright, of Hallaton, had failed to pay their private road contributions, which had been due since May. Perhaps a sign of financial difficulties in the village?

Meanwhile, the local Food Control Committee had met to set the maximum retail price for butter

for the district. From 1st December it was to be 2s-5d per pound.

For Hallaton Parish Council the year ended as it had begun, with the issue of potatoes. On 20th November, the meeting was read a letter from the Leicestershire War Agricultural Committee concerning the supply of seed potatoes for 1918. Two days later, a public meeting took place in the schoolroom to discuss the order.

Food was not the only shortage. Newspapers were printing shorter editions, and publishers were forced to produce fewer books. A growing trend in fiction was the genre of home-front novels as the public started to tire of the constant diet of war and death and bad news from the front. Typical of these were May Sinclair's *The Tree of Heaven* and Howard Keble's *The Smiths in Wartime*. For music lovers the year saw the first complete recording of Gilbert and Sullivan's comic opera, *The Mikado* whilst for those still purchasing sheet music one of the big hits was 'Paddy McGinty's Goat'.

Christmas 1917 was not celebrated with the same aplomb of previous years. The disastrous campaign at Passchendaele had merely reinforced the continuous shocking news from the front. Certain foodstuffs were scarce, and rationing seemed a strong probability. With so many men connected to Hallaton away on service, those left behind had the constant worry of receiving unwelcome news. The industrial scale of death that was continuing to occur made for grim reading, and the publication of the casualty lists can only have reinforced this without providing much release even if your loved one's name did not appear. The year also saw state intervention into the lives of ordinary Hallatonians at a level never before experienced.

With no apparent end to the war in sight the people of Hallaton had to fall back on their stoicism, and in many ways search deeper within themselves than perhaps ever before. It was a stoicism which would be sorely tested in the first part of 1918.

1918: From Downhearted to Delirious?

1917 had finished on a glum note, and 1918 did not start any better. January saw eight inches of snow settle over Hallaton, and then thaw almost as quickly as it came, which, combined with heavy continuous rain, led to severe flooding in the Welland Valley area. The primary focus of people remained food, and in particular the potato crisis. The local newspapers ran features urging people to dig up land to grow potatoes. Their campaign was

supported by some stark figures. 1917 had seen the county of Leicestershire consume 46,000 tons of potatoes, but as a county it had only produced 15,900 tons, a deficit of 30,000 tons. Urgent action was needed.

In Hallaton, the Parish Council was active early in the year, dealing with this very matter. On 7th February, there was a public meeting in the schoolroom to consider a communication from the Rural League in reference to growing more potatoes. The outcome of the meeting was that several people were prepared to try but land was required. It was decided that they would communicate with the Leicestershire War Agricultural Committee over acquiring around five acres of land, and to see what steps they should take. It was arranged for parish Council Chairman Henry Butteriss to meet with them on 8th February. The following day, 9th, the public meeting was reconvened to hear what he had to say. The advice was to choose a bit of land deemed suitable, and to approach the landlord and tenant to obtain the land by mutual agreement. The area chosen was a small field of around five acres near the railway station known as 'The Seeds'. There were 14 men at the meeting, keen to get going. The land was owned by Mrs Calverley (Effie) Bewicke and considering the reciprocated generosity over the planned war memorial the parish council must have felt confident of success. The following letter was sent to Mrs Bewicke.

"The above council have received an urgent letter from the Board of Agriculture asking them to call a meeting and lay before them the great necessity of growing more potatoes in the parish, and to ask everyone who could possibly help to grow as many potatoes over and above what were grown last year as they possibly could.

A parish meeting was held in the schoolroom on Thursday feb. 7th at 7pm when a large number of parishioners signified their willingness to grow extra potatoes this year provided a suitable field near the village could be obtained. And it was unanimously agreed to ask for the small field near the railway station belonging to you called 'The Seeds' at present in the occupation of Geo Plowright.

The council would be very glad if you would let them now have this field as a permanent allotment, and they would be responsible for the rent and management of same, as the matter is urgent an early reply will greatly oblige."

It does not appear that giving over a field, to grow potatoes for the war effort, held as much appeal to Mrs Bewicke as the erection of a memorial to her nephew because a further meeting of the parish council took place on 27th February. At this meeting, it was decided to request a man from the food production department be despatched to Hallaton to meet the Parish Council to help acquire the land. The same meeting also appointed William Grocock, Charles Marlow, Fred Barnett and Fred Pick to be parish constables.

A fortnight later, yet another meeting of the parish council was required to deal with the allotment issue. At this meeting, the following resolution was passed.

"That we the Hallaton Parish Council desire to compulsorily acquire seven acres of land for allotments under the cultivation of lands order, in a field known locally as Sandybrook, belonging to Mrs Bewicke, and in the occupation of Mr W A McTurk, who occupies about 600 acres in and around the parish of Hallaton.

The inspector from the Food Production Department of the Board of Agriculture recommended this land as the most suitable which he inspected here for allotments and the Council will be glad if the Leicestershire War Agricultural Executive Committee will take the necessary steps under the above-named order to enable the Council to take possession of said land without delay. The Council may mention that the land in question is not dairy land but purely feeding land."

This was a serious escalation, and the fact that the land had to be compulsorily acquired must surely indicate that Mrs Bewicke was not a willing participant in this deal. Indeed, the council itself was split over the resolution. Henry Butteriss, G. W. Butteriss and George Clarke were all in favour whilst, perhaps not surprisingly, W. A. McTurk was against. Reverend Preece merely sat on the fence. Shortly afterwards, McTurk offered his resignation from the council, and this was accepted at their next meeting on 9th April when Thomas Simkin was appointed in his place.

The meeting of the Hallaton Rural District Council on 22nd March, shows that they were awash with money, having £1220-16s-1d on hand. They paid some money for work done by Marlow and Sons of Hallaton, (£6-9s-5d,) a further £3-9s-0d to Henry Butteriss, and Omar Neale received a payment of £9-6s-3d. Cecil Grocock's licence

to store petroleum was renewed for a further 12 months. With so much money in the bank they were able to reduce the rates to 9d in the pound, and Hallaton's contribution was reduced to £160 for the following fiscal year. Once again, no tenders were awarded for carting or for granite supply, with the surveyor being put in charge of acquiring such items when they were needed. They also considered a letter from the Food Production Department in relation to increasing the provision of allotments in the district, in order to increase the amount of potatoes grown. The clerk also reported that, once again, the Local Election Act resulted in a further one-year delay to elections for councillors to District Council. Of particular interest to Hallatonians was the decision that the money acquired from Mr Price Dent, totalling £30-13s-9d for the purchase of 'Stone Pits,' had to be reinvested for the benefit of Hallaton parish, or spent on some permanent improvement in the parish. It was decided to come back to this at a later date.

Meanwhile in Hallaton, the recently formed WI and Mutual Improvement Societies were in full swing. The latter had an evening of entertainments in the Grange Coach House on 10th January. There were vocal solos, duets, competitions and games. Refreshments included cakes ordered from Wests in Market Harborough. The evening finished quite late, with the singing of Auld Lang Syne. On 21st January, Mr Godfrey gave a paper, 'Is The World Growing Better?' At this point in the war, it would have been easy to say no and, in fact, Godfrey came down on the negative but after some discussion it was found that the rest of the meeting did not agree with his sentiment. A week later there was a talk given on 'The Reformation and The Labour Movement'. The local paper noted that there was a considerable number of men attending this talk, which apparently reflected the growing interest in labour among Hallatonians. There was a concert organised at the Grange Coach House for 21st February. This was a ticketed event, and a lot of effort was put into the organisation. Victor Watson arranged for the concert to be exempt from entertainment tax. The coach house was decorated, and entertainers brought in from Market Harborough. Omar Neale agreed to lend the society his waggonette to take back the guests after the concert, and Hermas West lent his horse, presumably to pull the waggonette. The evening was a success and raised £4-2s for the YMCA hut fund. The society had its final meeting of the season in March, coinciding with Watson going to Italy for six months to work with the YMCA.

The Hallaton District WI took no such break. The first meeting of the year was well attended and saw Nurse Lowe give a demonstration on home nursing. On 6th February at an even better attended meeting, members enjoyed a talk on insect friends and foes in the garden, and a recitation by Mrs Calverley Bewicke. On 13th March Mr Beers, from Hallaton Hall, lectured on bee keeping, whilst there was also a display of garments made from old clothes which was well received.

Away from their regular meetings, they were also running two soup kitchens a week from Hallaton Hall. Though the soup was sold, these show just how difficult life was becoming, especially for those struggling to survive on diminished incomes, and were extremely helpful to the more needy and less well-off members of the community. Jack Stamp recalled them, not quite correctly, in his memoir.

"How well I remember going to the Hallaton Hall kitchens for a gift of soup during the war years. This was a daily walk but also a daily necessity as was the trip to the nearby farm for skimmed milk. Half-a-gallon from Mrs L Colston, who had the milk available after butter making, cost 2d. Free soup and skimmed milk makes one think that the family sustenance was of a very low level as far as liquid support was involved. For fresh milk relied on father's goats." (Stamp, op. cit., p. 12).

Food supplies remained a major concern for all, and a scan through the local newspapers soon brings one across examples of what was being done. The plough up campaign of 1917 had been a success, and local papers were able to report that in the East Norton District of which Hallaton was a part, 262 $\frac{3}{4}$ acres had voluntarily been ploughed. However, a further 1,411 $\frac{1}{4}$ acres had required enforcement orders. Not all local farmers complied. In the February sessions at East Norton, John Langham was charged with failing to plough land in Skeffington as he had been required to do. He was found guilty, and fined £50 and £5-5s costs.

Just a few examples from the *Market Harborough Advertiser* illustrate the ongoing food supply problems. On 19th March, the paper reported the ration for the following week would be a mere 4oz of butter or margarine and 2 ounces per head of cheese or bacon. This was so meagre that the following defence was necessary.

"The supply of butter and margarine in the town and district is so small that the Food Control Committee telegraphed to London for a supply of 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tons of margarine to supplement supplies."

FOR HOME AND COUNTRY.

Hallaton and District Women's Institute.

PROGRAMME FOR 1918.

President : Vice-President :
Mrs. FLETCHER. Mrs. PRICE-DENT.
Hon. Treasurer : Hon. Secretary :
Mrs. GEORGE PICK. Mrs. KILLINGREY.

Committee :
Miss PREECE, Mrs. LYON BENNETT,
Mrs. ARCHIBALD NEILL, Mrs. ELTON,
Mrs. WILLEY, Mrs. H. BUTTERESS,
Mrs. J. EATON, Mrs. JACK NEAL.

"Punctuality is the politeness of Kings."

RULES, Etc.

1. The Annual Membership fee to Women's Institute is 2/-.
2. Girls over 14 are eligible.
3. Those wishing to join, please send their names to any Member of the Committee.

3

Programme for January 9, 1918.

"Your King and Country need you."

1. Opening.
2. Demonstration on Home Nursing, Bedmaking, Poultries, Bandaging, with various hints.
3. Roll Call.
4. Signing Membership Cards.
5. Duologue—"The Crystal Gazer." Mrs. Hamilton-Thompson and Miss Nevinson.
6. Clint on various subjects.

Programme, February 6th.

"The stout heart wins the victory, but never dark despair."

1. Opening.
 2. Royal Horticultural Society Lecture by the Rev. Hugh Parry, illustrated by lantern slides—"Insect friends and foes of the garden."
 3. Roll Call.
 4. Recitations by Mrs. Calverly Bewicke. Refreshments.
- A Soup Kitchen was started on February 21st. Soup is sold twice weekly.

Programme, March 6th.

"Honey catches more flies than vinegar."

1. Instruction on Bee Keeping, by Mr. Beers.
2. Roll Call. Exchange of Pudding Recipes.
3. Paper—"How to get rid of flies."
4. Music and recitations—Miss Brierley, Miss Emmott, and Children.

Hint—Kitchen paper dipped in milk is a good substitute for parchment.

Programme, April 3rd.

"What is worth doing at all, is worth doing well."

1. Instruction on Soft Toy-making.
 2. Show. Vest made from an old stocking.
 3. Competition. Button-hole worked on white calico with red cotton.
 4. Games and Impromptu Charades.
- Economy hint*—One egg mixed with a desert spoonful of vinegar, takes the place of three eggs in cake-making.

Programme, May 1st.

"Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm."

1. Demonstration—Laundry work, Jerseys, Collars, etc., at Laundry, 5.30.
 2. Address—"What to do in the garden in May and June."
 3. Recipes given out.
- Hint*—Dandelion leaves, gathered young and well salted over night, may be cooked as spinach.

Programme, June 5th.

"Great works are performed not by Strength but by Perseverance."

1. Demonstration. Economical cookery. Use of Hay-box.
 2. Recipes. Salads.
 3. Address on Braille Work (writing for the Blind), given and demonstrated by Miss Neill.
- Hint*—To keep butter firm in hot weather, place in a marmalade jar filled with cold water, add a teaspoonful of salt.

Programme, July 3rd.

"The best way to attain happiness ones-self is to endeavour to promote the happiness of others."

1. Demonstration. Jam making and fruit bottling. Pickling Walnuts, by Mrs. Kidd.
 2. Members bring knitting and work in the garden.
 3. Roll Call. What I give the School Children for dinner.
- Hint*—To take ink stains out of linen, spread with made mustard, leave all night and wash in cold water.

Programme, August 5th.

"Happy be the issue of this day, and of this generous meeting."

1. Garden Fete at Hallaton Hall.
 2. Address—"Value of Co-operative village undertakings."
 3. Tea (if possible).
- Hint*—One egg well beaten is worth two not beaten.

Programme, September 4th.

"Be true to your word, your work, and your friend."

1. Business.
 2. Demonstration—Home-made Pickles and Sauces.
 3. Demonstration—First Aid.
 4. Music and Games.
- Hint*—Use splinters of wood dipped in paraffin for spills.

Programme, October 2nd.

"Our God teaches us good things by our own hands."

1. Show. Fruit and Vegetables.
 2. Short talk on Storing fruits and vegetables, by Mr. Beers.
- Hint*—Put rampbor in any place frequented by mice. They dislike the smell and disappear.
Invitation meeting for men.

Programme, November 6th.

"Don't speak of what you are going to do, do it."

1. Competition—Stocking darning.
 2. Demonstration—Boot repairing.
 3. Recipes—Soups from vegetables.
 4. Roll Call. What has the Women's Institute done for me?
- Hint*—A little salt placed in the reservoir of a paraffin lamp improves the light.

Programme, December 4th.

"A little non-sense now and then is relished by the wisest men."

1. Exhibit—Xmas Cards. Products of village industries.
2. Play—"Britannia," by School Children. Refreshments if possible.

During the Winter months give to the hungry birds anything allowed, also water.
A Suggestion Box is available at all meetings. Note books will be found helpful at all meetings.

"God Save the King!"

Even with this extra amount, the ration could still not exceed four ounces. The following week the paper announced that meat rationing would be postponed until 7th April. Two articles appeared on 14th May, each reinforcing the poor food supply issue. First was an announcement that households which had supplies of bacon, or were self-sufficient in bacon, were forbidden to use their ration coupons to purchase more bacon. To do so would be a breach of the Food Hoarding order. Meanwhile the Market Harborough District Food Control Committee (which covered Hallaton) instructed bakers, under the Bread (use of potato) Order, to cut down on the amount of flour used in baking loaves. With immediate effect for every 280 pounds of flour used not less than 20 pounds, and not more than 28 pounds, of raw potatoes was to be used in bread manufacture.

It wasn't just food that was in short supply. On 8th January, retailers were advising customer to start placing orders for the following winter's garments on the back of a stark warning that supplies of wool, cotton, and linen were becoming extremely difficult to procure.

In Hallaton, some aspects of normal life continued, and Mr Fernie's Hunt met in the village on 25th January. The Hallaton Charity trustees met as normal for the year's first meeting on 11th January. Business was typical. Doles to the needy were confirmed, and the Rector suggested that Mrs Lount would be a suitable candidate to receive their help. It was agreed to pay her 2s-6d per week for her to buy milk and groceries. There was work to be done at Fearn Farm, where the drains and paths needed attention. The cost was to be £25, though the tenant was expected to find 25% of this. The standard £5 was also given to Reverend Preece for school prizes.

There was also tragedy. On 24th February, Mrs Dwyer was at home enjoying her evening meal when somehow, she construed to swallow her false teeth. Dr Morrison was summoned at once but failed to extract them, and the good lady was rushed to Leicester Infirmary in a car owned by Mr Fletcher. Once there, she was successfully operated upon but surprisingly died the following Friday. Her funeral took place on 5th March.

Easter Monday fell on April 1st in 1918. As usual a service was held in the church. According to a very brief report in the *Market Harborough Advertiser*,

"Subsequently the Bottle Kicking took place from Hare Pie Bank. There were very few visitors compared with pre-war times."

On 25th March 1932, the *Market Harborough Advertiser & Midland Mail* ran a very long article about the Bottle Kicking. Within it were buried the following lines.

"In proof of the true Hallatonian's pride in their birth right it is said that in the Great War sooner than risk the custom to die out, the women determined to keep it up themselves. In place of the usual pie, one of barley meal, turnips and scraps of edibles was made. Then with truly Spartan courage these patriotic women, whose slogan evidently was to keep the bottle rolling till the boys come home, flung themselves into the breach created by the absence of the men."

If this indeed happened, surprisingly no contemporary account has come to light, then 1918 was surely the year most likely. With food short, and many men away fighting or serving elsewhere in the country, the perfect conditions for such an event were all in place.

The annual Vestry meeting took place on 5th April. It was revealed that the accounts now showed a deficit of £38-14s-9d, which had built up during the war. The offertories had been decreasing throughout the war. For the year 1917-18, they amounted to only £61-19s-1d a fall from the 1914-15 figure of £77-4s-7d. With the dangerous condition of the church bells, pointed out in 1914, still not resolved, and this deficit, Hallaton church finances were in a bit of a mess. It was decided to organise a sale of work and jumble for Whit Monday to raise funds for the church. This took place and, as well as the sale of work there was a social side to the occasion with music provided by Miss G. Barnett and Miss M. Neale. Around £26 was raised, greatly enhanced by a draw for a pig, donated by Mrs Fletcher.

It is, in fact, puzzling how the economy of Hallaton can have continued to function in any meaningful manner. In the first six months of the year, the Parish Council only cashed two cheques, one for £4 for petty cash for the clerk, and one in January for five shillings for Charles Henry Grocock. Jack Stamp recalled his families troubles due to the war.

"I had the great disadvantage of having my formative years shrouded by that tragic 1914-18 war. The war was also a disadvantage for the family interests. The making of hunting clothes declined to such an extent that the need for father's prowess as a tailor was hardly noticeable. Little opportunity for tailoring led father to seek

another avenue of activity to provide the income necessary to support the family and he took on the job of looking after Hallaton Grange. We moved into the Grange and living there was an experience I shall never forget. The passages were long and spooky. So frightening to my very young eyes that I would not venture to bed unless mother took me there with candle and candlestick.”
(Stamp, *op. cit.*, p. 4).

The Hallaton Charity, also usually a regular employer, didn't agree to any repairs to the village cottages until their meeting on 4th October, at which some small repairs were sanctioned, and Grocock and Son was asked to undertake them. At the same meeting, the trustees dealt with a complaint by Mrs Driver concerning water leaking into her home. The trustees inspected and concluded that if the roof could be repaired without much cost, then they would agree to it being done. Otherwise, they considered that the cottage and the adjoining one were not worth spending much money on. Work on public buildings, such as the school, also came pretty much to a stop. The county health officer's report for 1919, looking back at work done in the Hallaton district on schools stated,

“During the latter years of the war only the most urgent sanitary defects could be rectified.”

Spring 1918 must have seemed a truly hopeless time in Hallaton. With food shortages and widescale rationing appearing highly likely, more men than ever being away on war business, and the news from the front terrible, spirits must surely have been very low, and war weariness creeping in. One of the worst days for Hallaton occurred on 22nd March when William Fox and Arthur Plowright were both killed, and both Leonard Cort and Ernest Kitchen captured. Over the coming months news would trickle through about them and other men taken prisoner. The waiting must have been close to intolerable for a population now wearied by years of war, and still with little prospect of the end in sight. On top of this, there were now a plethora of new laws of which local traders could fall foul. At the start of the year, local newspapers reported on the East Norton Petty Sessions where Hermas West, described as a grazier from Hallaton, was fined £2 for an “unjust counter scale”. Meanwhile Charles Plowright, shopkeeper of Hallaton, was up before the bench on two charges, and was fined £5 for each breach. First, for having an unstamped yard measure in use for trade and, secondly for selling two ounces of grade I tea above the price fixed by the Tea Order of 1917.

On 3rd April, Hallaton's war memorial was unveiled with as much ceremony as could be mustered. Quite what effect (if any) this had on village morale is unknown, but later the very same day, 42 members of Hallaton's WI met at Hallaton Hall to see a demonstration of toy making by a Mrs Barrow. There was also a keen competition in working button holes, with prizes given to Mrs Cotton, West and Freestone. There were games and impromptu charades by the children, and coffee was served afterwards.

On 1st May, there was another meeting, this time at the laundry where Mrs Harrison ably demonstrated laundering collars and techniques for washing jerseys. Perhaps though, the most significant part of the meeting was the address, read out by Mrs Fletcher, stressing to the women of Hallaton the importance of rightly using the new powers given to them by their enfranchisement. The character of the British voting public was dramatically changed by the Representation of the People Act, which was passed in February 1918. The electorate expanded from eight million to 21 million. The Act will always be known for extending votes to women. However, female enfranchisement was just a clause in an act dealing primarily with male suffrage. Existing residency requirements were reduced to six months, and the Act also enfranchised a group of men whose efforts had contributed significantly to the war effort. Men aged 19 or 20 who were on active service were included, though the voting age for other men remained 21. Plural voting was reduced to two constituencies only. The franchise was extended to women over 30 who were ratepayers or were married to a ratepayer. The age, property, and marriage restrictions addressed fears that women would become the majority of the electorate especially in view of the dreadful losses on the battlefield. Yet it was a start, and for the first time a sizable number of Hallaton women would have the chance to vote in a general election when one came towards the end of the year.

As well as the war, the matter of food production was still on everyone's mind. On 15th June at 8.00pm, there was a meeting at the new allotments by the allotment holders. John Eaton, Arthur Neale, and George Clarke were elected as the committee and were joined by two Parish Council members, George Eaton, and G. W. Butteriss. The Parish Council had, in the meantime, asked the Hallaton Charity for a loan to erect fencing around the new allotments. After seeking approval from the Charity Commission, the Hallaton Charity agreed a loan to the Parish Council of £50. Later in the year, the rents for the new allotments were set at 2s-2d

per 100 square yards, payable half yearly on 6th April and 10th October. Meanwhile, people were still required to work in the fields, and in the May meeting of the Hallaton WI Mrs Fletcher had urged more women to get involved. Her efforts paid off as the WI meeting of July was poorly attended because of holidays, and also because a considerable number of their members were helping with the hay harvest.

1918 saw the beginning of large scale land sales across the country. Hallaton, whilst not seeing a radical shift in land ownership, did witness some sales as the financial situation, especially regarding higher tax levels, began to affect some people. In March, Hermas West put up 98 Acres for sale in 6 lots, and a shepherd would be provided for the successful bidder. On 7th November, West put up more items for auction. This time a selection of farming stock including 49 cattle, 58 sheep, and two horses, along with a wide selection of agricultural implements. Also for sale was a quantity of household furniture, and 135 acres of winter feeding in ten enclosures (all farmed in accordance with government regulations). According to the

auctioneer, the area was very full of grass as much of the land had not been stocked since June.

The start of April saw two sales of Hallaton land. On 3rd, following instruction from Herbert Fletcher, 34 acres were put up for auction. It was good grass keeping land close to the village and known as Goodmans.

The next day 90 acres of grassland were sold, following instructions by George Barnett, Mrs Maudsley and A. Cross. This consisted of five acres at Barley Hill, 21 acres at Mill Field, 4 acres at cottage field and Glebe, 32 acres at Hill Close and, among the rest, was five acres at Chapel Yard.

The biggest sale occurred on 1st October. We are fortunate that the particulars survived, and extracts are illustrated here. Though the sale involved land around Welham and Slawston, for our purposes we will concentrate on the lots affecting Hallaton, of which there were six.

The results of the auction were published in the *Market Harborough Advertiser*, which reflected on keen bidding and excellent results. Lot 1 was knocked down to H. C. Ashton for £76 per acre.

HALLATON AND BLASTON, LEICESTERSHIRE.

LOT 1.

AN EXCELLENT AND ATTRACTIVE
FIRST-CLASS FEEDING FARM

In the Parishes of Hallaton and Blaston, with
HOUSE AND FARM BUILDINGS
and
TWO COTTAGES

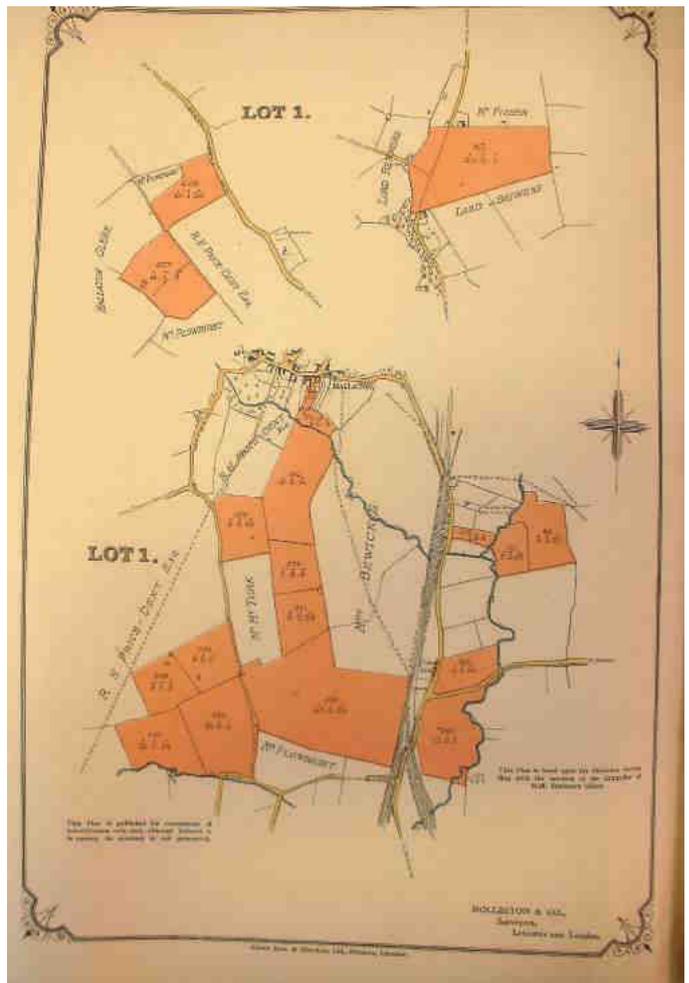
In the Villages of Hallaton, now in the occupation of Mr. W. A. McCurtin on a yearly tenancy (1st October), and containing an area of

238A. 3R. 8P.

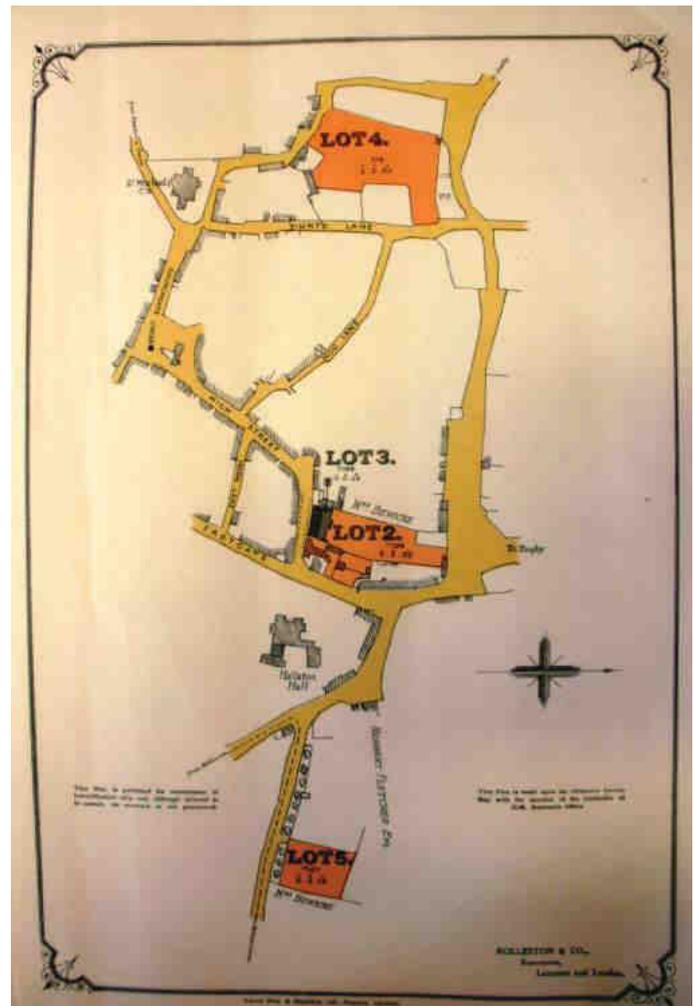
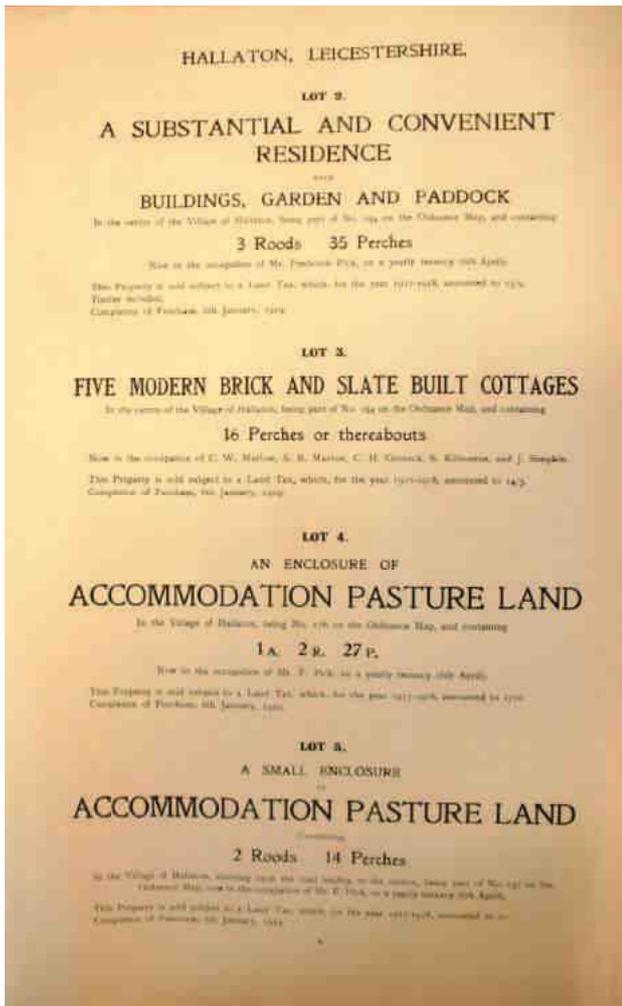
SCHEDULE OF PROPERTY.

HALLATON.							
Acres	Description	Cultivation	A	R	P		
446	Top Field	Pasture	10	1	10		
447	Top Field	Pasture	10	1	10		
448	Hay Crop	Pasture	8	2	2		
449	Hill Close	Pasture	8	2	5		
450	The Way	Pasture	12	0	20		
451	Johnson's Farm Hills	Pasture	8	1	1		
452	Talbot's Close	Pasture	12	1	1		
453	The Home Close	Pasture	12	1	14		
454	The Paddock	Pasture	4	0	14		
455	The Little Meadow	Pasture	1	1	0		
456	Top Barn Hills	Pasture	7	1	8		
457	Dunton Barn Hills	Pasture	5	1	24		
458	Plantation	Plantation			20		
459	Open Bodge	Arable	6	0	00		
460	Far Backy Hill	Pasture	12	0	2		
461	Big Backy Hill	Pasture	24	0	00		
462	Far Far Backy Hill	Pasture	4	1	1		
463	House, Two Cottages, Buildings and Fences				1		
464	Moor Hill	Arable	30	1	1		
BLASTON.							
465	Hop Ground	Pasture	10	1	11		
466	Hop Ground	Pasture	5	1	10		
						471 1 0	

This Property is subject to a Land Tax, which, for the year 1917-1918, amounted to £71 17s. 6d.
The House portion is subject to a Commuted Title Rent Charge of £3 10s. 4d. (present value) £3 10s. 4d. (value included).
Completion of Particulars, 24th January, 1919.



Left: Extract from land and property sale particulars, 1st October 1918; Right: Map showing location of lot 1. ROLLR (L 333).

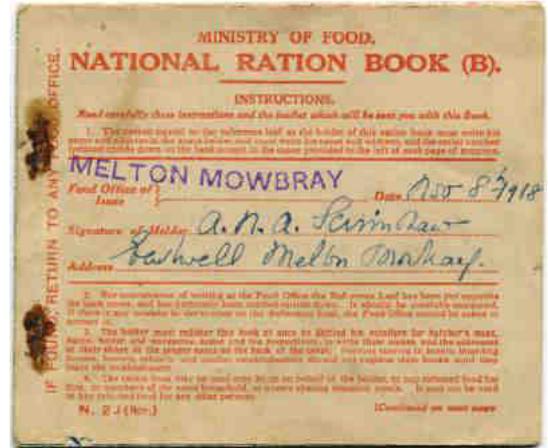
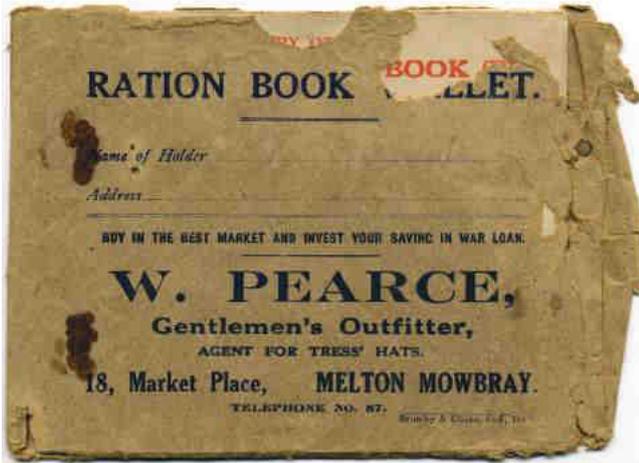


Left: Extract from land and property sale particulars, 1st October 1918; Right: Map showing the location of lots 2-5. ROLLR (L 333).

The same newspaper report noted that a gratifying feature of the sale was the successful bidding of the tenants, which was strong evidence of a growing determination of farmers to own the land they cultivate wherever possible. In the cases of the Hallaton lots this is not quite true. Lot 1 was farmed by the McTurks, who did not buy the land. Lots 2-5 were all purchased by Fred Pick, who did actually occupy the substantial house on High Street and the small pasture field behind it. However, the five terrace houses on High Street were not purchased by their tenants, who presumably could not have afforded them. It is interesting to note that Fred Pick spent £1440 on the lots he purchased. His own house cost £520; the five terrace houses, £500; the pasture field behind his house, £350; and the smaller field a further £70. This was quite an investment for one of the village butchers. The property for sale had been owned by William Ward Tailby of Skeffington Hall, who died in January 1914. On his death, his adopted son Captain Thomas Morral

Jones Tailby had succeeded to the estates. Initially he had indicated, as we have seen, that he would not be living at Skeffington, but during the war he did so. On 22nd October 1916, he was getting dressed at Skeffington Hall when he had a seizure and died. His son George William Alan Tailby was a Lieutenant in the 11th Hussars at the time. Captain Tailby's will was a complicated affair, with several bequests to his butler, The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, his wife Beatrice, and substantial sums towards the upkeep of Skeffington Church, among others. Beatrice died in 1919, and was living in London at the time. Her husband's will went to probate in March 1917. It would appear that some of the estate may have been sold, perhaps done to fulfil her late husband final wishes.

By the summer, nationwide rationing was fully in place. From 15th July, ration books had succeeded the cumbersome mix of cards for butter, tickets or coupons for sugar, and tickets for cheese. Each man, woman, and child had their own ration book,



A typical ration book of the period.



which were designed to last for 16 weeks. There was a different coloured page for each rationed food. Each person had to be registered with the same local supplier who had supplied them with the rationed items under previous schemes. There was a lot of justice and equality in rationing. On 8th April 1918, the Mark Lane Express, the newspaper of the National Farmer' Union, welcomed the introduction of meat rationing pointing out the problems in rural areas where people often relied upon visits by the local butcher's cart for their supply.

"When meat became scarce the cart stopped, the labourer's supply of meat was cut off, and, being a long way from butcher's shops and meat queues, very little flesh had been eaten in many cottage homes for several months."

Though Hallaton had its own butchers, the final point will have born resonance with the poorer of the community for shortages were not the only problem. High prices inhibited those with little money from purchasing even the items to

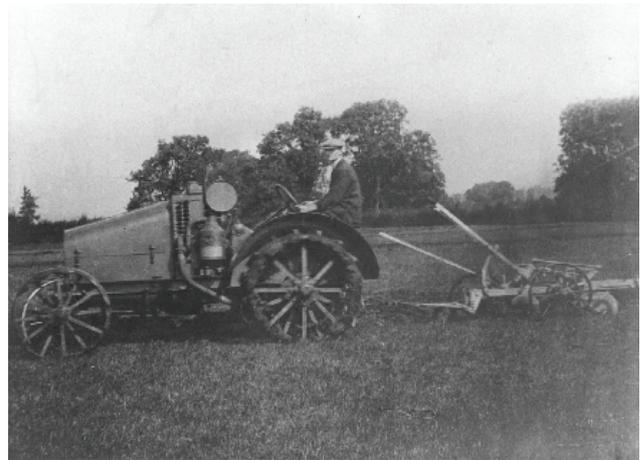
which they were entitled. A national survey for the Agricultural Wages Board taken in April and May, confirmed that many households were unable to purchase the meats or fats permitted for their ration and some meat and bacon coupons remained unused. The survey showed that, on average, meat consumption was at 80% of the 1912 level, whilst less than half the amount of cheese was being eaten, and only around 75% of the necessary fats required to sustain a decent calorie intake were being consumed.

As well as a decent national system of rationing, agricultural workers in Hallaton would have benefitted from a second successive yearly rise in income. In the summer, the minimum agricultural labourer's wage for those over 18 was set at 31 shillings for a 54-hour week in the summer, and for a 48-hour week in the winter. Agricultural wages for young people were also set at the same time, for the same hours: for 17-18-year olds, 26 shillings; for 16-17-year olds, 22 shillings; for 15-16 year olds, 18 shillings; for 14-15 year olds, 14 shillings; and for those under 14, just 10 shillings per week.

Though the war was starting to turn in the allies' favour there were still devastating losses, and, at the end of July, Alfred Lount was added to the list of those Hallaton had lost. Closer to home, there was tragedy. On 16th July, the *Market Harborough Advertiser* ran a small article entitled, "*Death of Hallaton Porter*".

Harry Taplin Godfrey had lived in Hallaton with his wife and daughter for several years. He was a member of the Hallaton District Volunteer Corps and, according to Dr Morrison, was "*one of the most useful men in Hallaton*". He had, for a few weeks, been working as a porter at East Norton Station, where one of his duties was to oil the points. At 11.50am, on the morning of Friday 12th July, he was seen walking along the line towards the end points in the direction of the viaduct. At 11.58, the scheduled goods train whistled as it passed through the station at around 20MPH. Seven minutes later, John Elliott, the foreman platelayer at the station, came across Godfrey's body. One boot was torn off, Godfrey's cap was 30 feet, and his oil kettle 20 feet away from his body. Dr Morrison was summoned to the scene. He confirmed that death would have been instantaneous, and it appears he was knocked down by the goods train whilst stooping down to oil the points. His right hip was dislocated, and his right leg from ankle to knee was quite smashed in. He also suffered a fractured skull. He was buried in Hallaton cemetery on 16th July.

Losing a valuable member of the community in such a way would have been a terrible blow. It



Tractor near Horninghold 1917. Courtesy Market Harborough Museum (MH54_1996_3_0).

seems likely that there were already fewer men in the village than were required. Whilst on the land, the situation was alleviated not just through the efforts of local women, soldiers and POWs, as we have seen, but also by the arrival of mechanisation. Tractors were now becoming commonplace on farms in England and were certainly employed locally as we can see from the above photograph.

Meanwhile, at the meeting of the Hallaton Charity trustees on 9th August there is further evidence of a lack of workers in the village. At the meeting, a letter was read out from Frederick Walter Groom. He had been an employee in a Market Harborough corset factory. But having been required to do work of national importance, he had obtained work at Hallaton railway station. He claimed that there was no available house in the village, and therefore he sought the trustees' permission to rent the charity cottage, which had recently been vacated by Mrs Hales. The trustees considered his request and decided, as there was currently no application from local residents to take on Hales's cottage, that they would rent it to Groom on a weekly tenancy at the rate of 2s-6d per week. This was on the understanding that in the event of a qualified applicant coming forward he would need to vacate the property. This episode is interesting. First, it shows that the railways and their operation was vital to the national interest. Secondly, it indicates that there were not enough staff at Hallaton station and thus men from outside needed to be drafted in to help under the guise of doing work of national importance.

It is also interesting in what it reveals about the continued re-assessment of men, and their medical capabilities to serve. Orders to find work of national importance were sometimes given to those

who had moral objections to the war, and to active service. Frederick Walter Groom, though, was no conscientious objector. On 17th April 1915, he had enlisted into the 5th Battalion, Leicestershire Regiment. The following year, on 16th October, he was discharged on grounds of sickness, as no longer being fit to serve, and was awarded a Silver War Badge. His problem was that he had not served overseas. The position of discharged men was covered by the Review of Exemptions Act. Men discharged in consequence of disablement or ill health after home service only, were liable for re-examination under this act. They were:

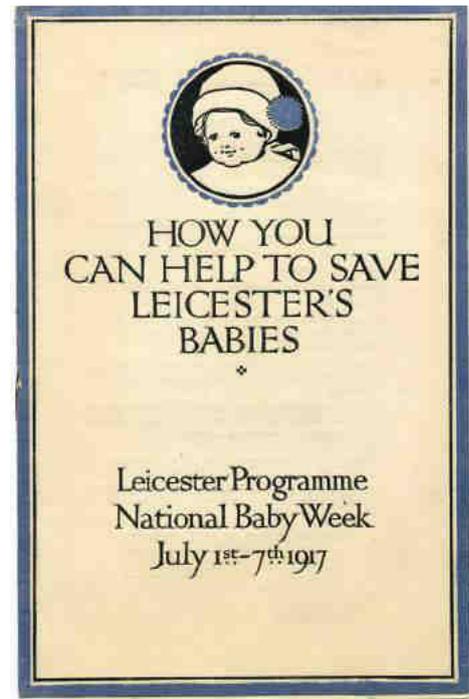
“Relieved of all liability for military service so long as they undertake work of national importance.”

Each man was allowed one month to find such work. Frederick Groom almost certainly arrived at Hallaton station in these circumstances. Whether he indeed took the house is not known.

At the same meeting, the trustees discussed a proposal by Reverend Preece that a small piece of ground in Mount Pleasant be set aside for pig sties. It was pointed out that Mr Grocock junior currently rented the land at one shilling a year, and that the proposal would need his permission as well as that of the local sanitary board. If these were forthcoming, the trustees had no objection, as this would further aid home food production.

It was not all bad news of course, and the August Bank Holiday witnessed a very successful fête organised by the Hallaton District WI, which took place in the gardens of Hallaton Hall. Despite petrol being in short supply, there was a handsome attendance of around 700. The weather was favourable, and the visitors could enjoy various sports and games, including bowling for a pig, for a rabbit and for a cockerel. There were two tugs of war, one military against civilians, and the other described as *“women against women”*. There were baskets of grapes, cakes and other refreshments and, in the evening, there was dancing. The event was primarily in aid of the Hallaton and District Nursing Association, and the Leicester County Nursing Association, but was so successful, £125 being raised before costs, that there was enough to make a donation to the Leicestershire POW fund. It was a most apt choice given that several Hallaton men were prisoners by this time.

The WI continued to meet, and on 4th September 37 members and 20 mothers with their children sat down to a tea provided by the committee at Hallaton Hall. A steady downpour prevented those further afield from attending. This was described as *“our*



Programme for Leicester's National Baby Week the previous year.

baby welfare gathering”, and was presided over by a Miss Cauter from the Leicester County Nursing Association, who gave an address with five topics: fresh air, sleep, food, cleanliness and clothing. At the end, Mrs Fletcher stood to inform the meeting that the motive in inviting mothers was to hear expert advice, not to interfere with they way they raised their children, but out of love of the children and the country. It is worth expanding on this. The previous year had seen a baby week in Leicester concerned about lowering infant mortality.

With death constant, and affecting very many families, babies became the main beneficiaries of wartime sentiment, and were seen as a symbol of hope. In 1915, whilst nine soldiers died every hour, twelve babies perished in the same period. The loss of life in the war made every baby and child's life precious. Various pro-natalist organisations started to flourish, including the Babies of the Empire Society which supported the idea that every effort was required to secure the future of the race. National baby weeks took place in 1917 and in 1918. A report entitled *“The National Care of Maternity in Time of War”* argued that it was the responsibility of the nation to help mothers as far as possible. In 1915, Parliament had passed the Care of Mothers and Young Children Act which empowered local authorities to set up facilities for the care of expectant mothers, nursing mothers, and young children. Some of these campaigns often had eugenistic overtones and, though there is absolutely no evidence of this being the case in Hallaton, it is

against this general background that the words of Mrs Fletcher need to be placed.

Birth control remained a sensitive subject, especially as it implied the possibility that intercourse could have a purpose beyond procreation. Doctors often told their patients to space out their births without telling them how to do it. Ironically, according to census figures, doctors had the smallest families of all occupations. In March 1918, Marie Stopes, the birth control pioneer, published her now famous book, *Married Love*. It sold 2,000 copies within a fortnight, and by 1924 had reprinted 22 times. The book argued that marriage should be an equal relationship between partners and, though scorned in the UK, had sold 750,000 copies by 1931. Stopes became a contentious figure in later years and, though her book was controversial at the time, it was bought by a wide spectrum of society and it is hard not to believe that at least one woman in Hallaton had a copy.

The late Spring of 1918, would have witnessed those in Hallaton absorbed, as were men on the front-line in France, with one of the most remarkable libel cases ever to be brought before the British courts, involving the Canadian dancer and actress Maud Allen, and the British politician Pemberton Billing. His trial was at the Old Bailey on 28th May 1918, and the newspaper coverage was sensational. It concerned a supposed black book, comprised by the Germans, containing the names of 47,000 British men and women, including Privy Councillors, wives of cabinet ministers, cabinet ministers themselves, members of the King's household, diplomats, poets, bankers, and newspaper proprietors. All supposedly threatened with blackmail because of their dubious moral behaviour. In truth, there was no list of names, no black book but, for a few days, the public followed the case with abandon.

As summer turned to autumn the Hallaton Rural District Council met again on 27th September. The meeting followed the usual pattern. However, it was revealed that George Plowright had only just paid his private road contribution, which had been due in May. A letter from him was read out expressing his wish to determine his agreement with the council, who resolved they would accept his proposal, which would take effect after the payment due on 1st May 1920. The same meeting finally came to the decision about what was to be done with the money from Mr Price-Dent. It was decided to spend it on widening and improving the corner of the road and setting back the bridge near Hallaton

Church. The surveyor had drawn up plans, which were sent to Mr Price-Dent for his approval. They also dealt with a letter from Mr J. R. Laundon complaining about the state of the fencing around the Hallaton Sewage Farm, and the surveyor was instructed to deal with the matter.

Food remained high on everyone's agenda and, at the end of October, the pupils of Hallaton School were part of a scheme to harvest blackberries. Within six weeks, they had collected an impressive 1,328 pounds from the local hedgerows.

Disputes between Government and the farming community continued throughout the year, with some disputes referring to the Livestock Sales Order of 1918, and regulations concerning cattle only being slaughtered at recognised slaughterhouses. The National Farmers Union was growing in numbers and importance and, though we do not know how many Hallatonians were members, we do know that Robert Fisher was one of the local NFU delegation who met with officials in London to air their grievances over the closure of markets to home fed cattle. The local papers published a very long letter from him, written in Hallaton on 10th October, as part of the correspondence between the Ministry of Food and the Rutland branch of the National Farmers Union of which Fisher was a member. Though long, it is worth quoting in full, as it is the only letter we have written by a Hallatonian expressing his opinion on farming matters current at the time.

“We producers of meat and cereals and other foodstuffs consider the Government to be under a distinct pledge to take over the fruits of our energy and patriotism. Since the increase in the production of home grown food is in direct response to urgent and oft repeated Government appeals, and since, moreover, the ordinary channels of sale are closed to us by your order, any failure on your part to carry out your side of the arrangement will have a disastrous effect on the production of food next year, since the apparent policy of renunciation adopted by your department with regard to livestock might easily spread to other articles of our production. Your statement that there is a surplus of fat stock, coupled with a practically simultaneous reduction in an already painfully inadequate ration of fresh meat, is deserving of an explanation to those that are most concerned, namely the public. Our feeling on this matter is this: we have at your request produced the meat so urgently required by the consumer,

especially coal miners and others engaged in very strenuous occupations whose output of material must and does depend on the proper satisfaction of a healthy appetite. You deny these men the supplies which we have assured them; you refuse to us a market for our produce; and, even worse you are complacently allowing the waste of these valuable supplies. We have, as you are fully aware, no concentrated feeding stuffs, and by your orders none such are available or obtainable. These fat stock are rapidly sinking in condition, losing meat and weight under circumstances over which we have no control, viz the orders of the Ministry of Food coupled with the dispensation of a far higher power in the shape of the worst autumn weather in our memory. The matter is so urgent, and moreover, one of such grave public interest that you will, I trust, agree with me that in default of immediate alleviation of the position it will become necessary to take such steps as may secure justice to the producer, the avoidance of further deplorable waste, and the proper allotment of supplies to the public to which they are fully entitled."

The Hallaton District WI also decided to restart the twice weekly soup kitchens from 1st November. By then, food shortages, the news from the front, and farming issues were not the only points of concern for Hallatonians.

*I had a little bird
its name was Enza
I opened the window,
And in-flu-enza*

At the committee meeting of the Hallaton District WI on 31st October, it was decided to postpone the next general meeting, scheduled for November, because of the epidemic of influenza. The outbreak had begun back in early May, and continued for the following three months before abating, but the outbreak in November and December was much more virulent. Local Leicester newspapers reported that scarcely any businesses or public offices remained unaffected, and that a very great many people were off work. All elementary schools in Leicester were shut, and elsewhere in the county many schools did not open. The effects on Hallaton are not known for certain, but the outbreak is likely to have affected many in the village. Jack Stamp recalled all his family being afflicted, and that the doctor made several visits to their home. This picture is reinforced by the

County Medical Officer's report covering the year 1918. There was a markedly significant increase in the death rate for the county over the previous year. In his opinion, this was entirely caused by the influenza epidemic, which accounted for 23% of the total deaths recorded in the county. A further 7.5% of the deaths arose from pneumonia, many of those casualties having developed influenza first. He gave the total deaths as 863 out of 3772 in the county. The incubation period was around two days, and the disease was spread by direct contact. The virulence of this particular strain was shown by the rapidity of the onset, followed in a day or two by (in many cases) pulmonary complications. According to his report:

"The whole of the population was attacked, whole families suffering at the same time."

For the Hallaton District in 1918, it seems that, from his report, only seven deaths were recorded as attributable to influenza, three men and four women. As far as we can tell the only death from influenza in Hallaton was Flora Preece, the Rector's wife. She died from influenza and pneumonia on 23rd November 1918.

She had at least lived to see the end of the war on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month. How and when the news reached Hallaton is not known. How did people react? Did William Denley urge his pupils to all sing the National Anthem, and send them on their way onto the streets to celebrate whilst he himself grasped a few quiet moments to remember those of his pupils who would not be returning? Did the church bells ring out? Were they in good enough condition to do so? Did the men gather in the village inns to fill their glasses, and raise a toast to the brave Hallaton men still overseas? Did workers come in from the fields? Did the remaining staff at Hallaton Hall gather for a drink at the behest of Mr and Mrs Fletcher? How many spared a thought for Mary Anne Payne, still doubtless raw from the news of the death of her son, John Henry Payne, on 23rd October, and to all those others bereaved throughout the course of the war, whose celebratory feelings were surely tempered by their losses? The end of the fighting and the imminent return of many of Hallaton's men and women, just reinforced to those who had lost loved ones that the dead forever remain dead.

I would like to think that Hallaton rejoiced in its customary manner. A village used to putting on its own entertainments before the war must surely have found a way. Certainly, big crowds gathered

locally in Leicestershire on hearing the news. In Leicester there was wild jubilation, and enormous crowds gathered in Town hall Square. In Market Harborough the news of the Armistice was spread on the sound of the parish church bells. The *Market Harborough Advertiser* recorded the events that unfolded.

“In an incredibly short time flags were hoisted up flag poles... Union Jacks and the flags of the Allies were suspended from the windows of almost every house and shop in the main streets. The work people flocked from their factories in their eagerness to get the ‘splendid news.’... Local drapers were literally raided by the work girls for ribbons with which to bedeck their hair. Many had purchased flags and before midday had arrived the Square, High Street and St Mary’s Road were crowded with townspeople celebrating.”

Though the war was over, the year was not. Hallaton was to suffer the deaths of two young people before November was out. On 13th, 26-year-old James Robert Ward died from nephritis, and, on 27th, Arthur Buxton, aged just two and a half, passed away from cerebral meningitis and convulsions. His father, away on active service, could not get home for the funeral.

The last momentous event of the year was the general election, known as the Khaki election. This took place on Saturday 14th December, with the count taking place on 28th to allow time for the overseas votes of servicemen to be counted. It was the first time Hallaton’s women could vote. The result was landslide victory for the coalition Government led by Prime Minister, David Lloyd George. The party which benefitted the most was the Conservatives who now had 382 MPs an increase of 111. The big losers were Asquith’s Liberals who put up 277 candidates, but only gained 36 seats. Asquith himself lost his seat. The Labour Party gained 57 seats. In the Market Harborough constituency, which included Hallaton, the coalition unionist candidate Sir Keith Fraser won a convincing victory with a near 4,000 majority. Of the 27,742 votes cast 11,572 were from women. The *Market Harborough Advertiser* called the overall coalition win the country’s recognition of thorough efficiency and unwavering patriotism.

Unwavering patriotism had certainly helped pull Hallaton through the war, but how would it cope now the conflict was over?

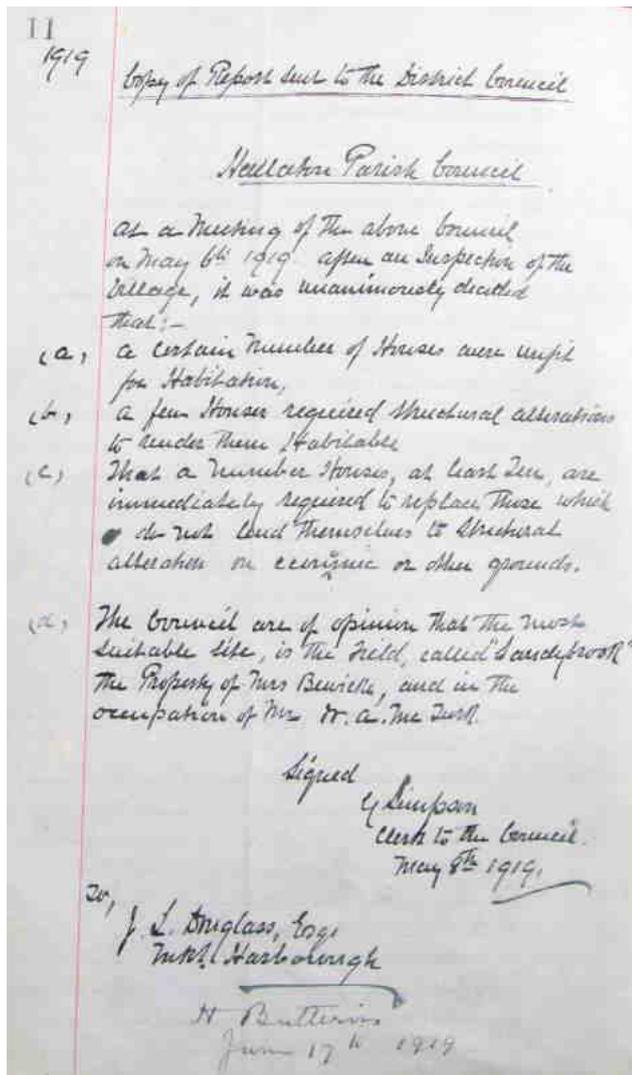
Post War Hallaton 1919: Normality Returns

The war had finished but not gone away. Many men had not yet returned, though some repatriated POWs were back in England by the end of 1918. Food was still rationed, though bakers could now sell loaves less than 12 hours old.

On 8th January Hallaton Parish Council met. Its members were Henry Butteriss, Reverend Preece, G. W. Butteriss, George Clarke, George Eaton, and Thomas Simkin. It was a straightforward enough meeting at which they decided it was time to switch back on the street lights in Hallaton. After the long dark years, it was a welcome return to have the streets lit at night once more. George Tyrrell was given the job at 14 shillings per week. However, he fell ill soon afterwards and was not able to carry out the work. There is no record of who took over. At their meeting in March they proposed William Grocock, John Victor Laundon, Frederick Barnett, and John Henry Hawke as the year’s parish constables. They also discussed a letter from the Market Harborough Urban District Council which related to a motor fire engine for use in the rural districts surrounding Market Harborough. This would have been a most useful thing for Hallaton but, because there was due to be an election for a new parish council the following month, it was considered best to let it rest for the new council. The Hallaton economy was beginning to function normally once more and the council drew cheques for Omar Neale, James Driver, H. Hawke, and Marlow and Sons for work done in recent months.

On 17th March, a special parish meeting was held to elect a new Parish Council to represent Hallaton for the next three years. As in the previous year’s general election, there were big changes. The six elected were Henry Butteriss, George Eaton, Robert Fisher, George Norman, William Harle Stott and Mark Stamp. It would be a fair assessment to say that in their first year they appear to have talked a lot but to have achieved less. On 15th April the new councillors were sworn in and Henry Butteriss was re-elected chairman.

Meanwhile Hallaton Rural District Council renewed Cecil Grocock’s petroleum licence and worked out the estimates for the next financial year which saw Hallaton’s contribution remain at £160. For the first time in recent years they accepted tenders for carting and Omar Neale was successful. He was to be paid 4s a ton for goods moved from Hallaton station to the village, 4s-6d per ton moved from Hallaton station to Blaston, and 5s a ton for a trip to Horninghold. At their meeting



Hallaton Parish Council minutes, May 1919.
ROLLR (DE 7046/2).

on 25th April, they also resolved to write to each parish council in the district about the hot topic of the moment, housing for the working class.

The letter for Hallaton Parish Council was with them before their meeting on 2nd May, at which they appointed William Harle Stott as the new school manager. About the letter on housing they decided to convene a meeting, to make an inspection on 6th May, and then send their response. The findings upon which they based this is illustrated here.

It was clear from their inspection, as it had been for some years, that the housing stock in Hallaton, and especially that provided for the less well-off, was in drastic need of improvement. It is interesting that they chose a site next to the allotments at Sandybrook, on land owned by Mrs Bewicke, as the best spot to build new houses. Given that they

had had to resort to compulsorily purchase the land for the allotments, one wonders if this was the most diplomatic of decisions.

The trustees of the Hallaton Charity were back in action on 10th January. They confirmed the continuation of the doles to those already in receipt, and considered applications for educational grants from Mr Kilbourne and Mrs Emmott. Kilbourne was awarded the standard grant of £5 but, as Gladys Emmott was going to go and qualify as a pupil teacher, it was felt that she was deserving of a higher award and £10 was afforded to her. There was an application from Mrs Fletcher for a grant for the Hallaton Nursing Association. In an example of déjà vu to pre-war days, there was some debate as this involved the parishes of Horninghold, and Blaston, as well as Hallaton. After some discussion it was decided to grant £10, of which, £3 was to be paid to Mrs Wickes towards the expense she had incurred treating her illness, and £3 was awarded to Lottie Buxton for nourishment. It was to cover three months, and to be paid in weekly 5s instalments. What exactly was wrong with either lady isn't known.

They had also received a builder's report on the state of Mrs Driver's roof. It was considered impossible to make the necessary repairs close to the chimney without excessive expenditure and, as the trustees could not countenance the required payment, they considered the house unfit for habitation, and Mrs Driver was given notice to leave. Fortunately for her, they had another house free at the time, Mrs Bussingham's old property, which was considered large enough by the trustees for Mrs Driver, into which she could move should she choose to do so.

The Hallaton District Women's Institute once again had a full programme, commencing with their first meeting of the year on 8th January. Their second meeting, on 5th February, featured a lantern slide but attendance was affected by snow. The notes on their April meeting demonstrate that the war was still very much part of people's minds, as eight schoolboys submitted their essay on the war in a competition.

Their May meeting was especially noteworthy for Miss Bodle's demonstration of a one-piece dress, absolutely without fastenings. She showed how the dress could be made suitable for all occasions by adding cleverly contrived accessories. Patterns for the dress and for blouses were supplied for members. The war had seen more women, and especially middle-class women, engaged in work, and the need arose for more practical clothing such

Hallaton and District Women's Institute.

FOR HOME AND COUNTRY.

1919.

President	Mrs. FLETCHER.
Vice-President	Mrs. LYON-BENNETT.
Hon. Treasurer	Miss NEILL.
Hon. Secretary	Mrs. GEORGE PICK.

Committee:

Mrs. ARCHIBALD NEILL,	Mrs. H. BUTTERISS,
Mrs. ELTON,	Mrs. WILLEY,
Mrs. J. EATON,	Mrs. JACK NEALE.

—* RULES. *—

1. The Annual Membership Fee is 2/-.
2. Girls over 14 are eligible.
3. Those wishing to join should send their names to a Member of the Committee.
4. Members' friends may attend on payment of 3d.
5. Meetings are held on the first Wednesday in each month, at 5 o'clock, unless otherwise stated.

Programme, January 8th, 1919.

Annual General Meeting.
Report of year's work by Secretary.
Financial Statement.
Speech by President.
Short Play—"The Vengeance of Anne," by three members.
Recitations by Children.
Show of Xmas Cards—Prizes by Mrs. Fletcher.

Programme, February 5th.

"When duty calls we must obey."

Lantern Lecture by Mr. Davis—"Dr. Barnardo's Homes."
Competition—Stocking Darning. Four prizes by Mrs. Archibald Neill.
Refreshments.

Hint—When stewing fruit, wash and soak the rind, pips, cores and stalks of the fruit, boil gently, and use the liquid instead of adding water to the fruit.

Programme, March 6th. (Thursday).

"Open windows in the house and in the heart."

Demonstration—First aid—how to take a patient's temperature. Punctures. By Nurse Lowe.
Reading from Shakespeare by members.
Hint—Raw apples are good for the liver.

Programme, April 2nd.

"Keep pushing, 'tis wiser than sitting aside and dreaming and sighing and weeping."

Lecture—Vegetable and flower growing for pleasure and profit.
Mr. Beers.

Competitions for Hallaton and District School Children—
(a) Girls—Needlework and Knitting.
(b) Boys—Essay on the late War.

Charades or Games.

Hint—Lemonade is much more refreshing made with cold water than hot.

Programme, May 7th.

"Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm."

Lesson on cutting out an easily made blouse, and hints on economising material by judicious cutting, by Miss Bodie.

Short play—Mrs. J. Neale, Miss F. Hawke, and Miss J. Butteriss.

Hint—Emery powder mixed with sweet oil and turpentine in equal parts to the consistency of cream, makes a good polish for steel.

Programme, June 4th, (at the Laundry).

"Never leave until to-morrow what you can do to-day."

Demonstration—Laundry work, by Mrs. Harrison.
Competition for Children—Wild flowers and grasses.
Lesson on re-footing Cashmere stockings.

Hint—Melt candle ends and the waste found in candlesticks, and use to seal when bottling fruit.

Programme, July 2nd.

"A stitch in time saves nine."

Lecture on Jam and Jelly making.
Demonstration—Chair-caning, by Miss Nevinson.
Games in the garden.

Hint—Meat may be kept good in summer by lightly covering with bran and hanging in a dry cellar.

Programme, Aug. 4th, (Monday).

"A cheerful grin will let you in."

Garden Fete and Sale of Work. Flower Show (if possible).
Hint—Fly marks may be removed by sponging in vinegar and water.

Programme, September 3rd.

"Even if we cannot do great things we can do small things in a great way."

Demonstration—Boot mending, *boot mending*
Exhibition of medicinal and culinary herbs.
Show of Jam.

Hint—To prevent currants falling to the bottom of a cake, sprinkle with dry flour.

Programme, October 1st.

"Never be too busy to be kind."

Demonstration—Bead work, Pen painting, Stencilling.
Hints on what to do in cases of emergency.
Short Play. Tea.

Hint—If a drawer sticks, rub the top edge with soap.

Programme, November 5th.

"Think, try, and be thorough."

Reading on Leicestershire.
Demonstration on Soup making.
Show of pickles and ketchups with recipes.

Hint—Potatoes may be roasted underneath the ordinary sitting-room grate.

Programme, December 3rd.

"Experience is a good school but the fees are somewhat high."

Exhibition of Xmas Cards. Home-made Xmas presents—Prizes.
Entertainment.

Hint—To soften hard water put orange peel in the jug overnight.

as shorter skirts fuller at the hem, which allowed easier movement. Bodices, blouses, and jackets became less restrictive. Locally, Symington's of Market Harborough, produced two garments which came into their own — the Jenyn's patent Corset, with its distinctive laced panel which supported the wearer lower back; and the Liberty Bodice, by now produced in adult sizes. The latter was comfortable to wear and contained no metal parts. The clothes available to Hallaton's women were changing.

The meeting finished with a discussion on the local housing question, with parish councillor Henry Butterriss taking the chair for this part of the meeting. Sadly, no notes survive telling us what was said. The following month saw Dr Stott give a lecture on 'What to do in cases of emergency'. This included the treatment of burns, scalds and, ironically, given the eventual demise of Dr Stott, poisoning.

Away from the women's institute, at the end of March there was a whist drive in the village, which raised money for St Dunstons. The evening also included a draw for an in-lamb ewe, which was won by Charles Russell. This helped receipts to pass £30.

Normality was really starting to return by Easter. The year's Bottle Kicking was covered by the local press. The usual festivities were carried out, and the band played at the service in the morning. With members of the old sick club and the Oddfellow's attending, there was a good number of people at the service. The weather was good and there were more visitors than there had been for many years.

"Many of the boys were home from the war, and some of these participated in the great tussle, the bottle going well nigh to the Medbourne boundary and not getting back over the Hallaton brook until 5.30pm (which was much later than usual). Several of the combatants falling bottle and all into the deep water. The second bottle was brought in quickly, and Payne getting 1st run got well away and the bottle was taken straight to the old cross with little or no opposition."

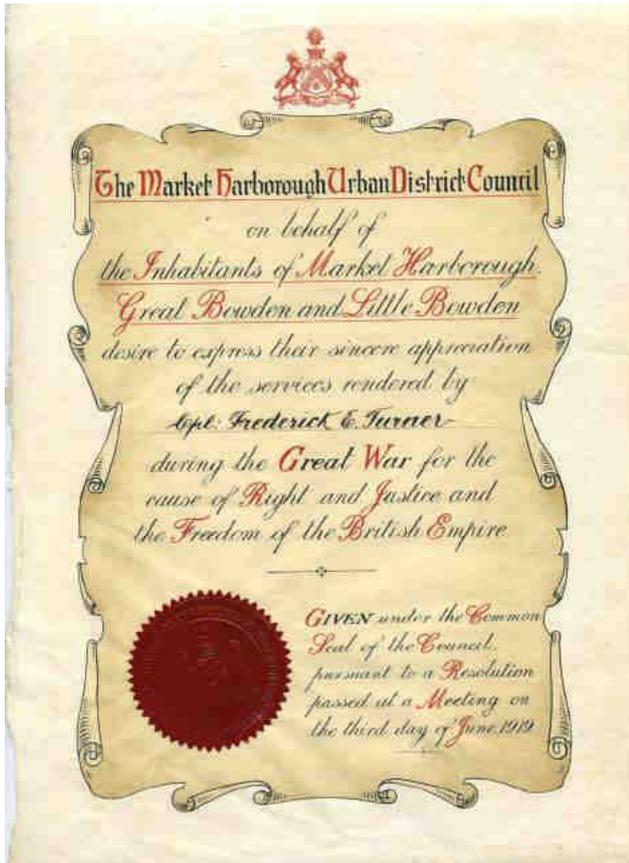
The band played around the village afterwards, and the day finished with a dance in the schoolroom.

The annual vestry meeting took place on 22nd April and was especially interesting. The deficit now stood at £16-0-10 1/2d, a significant reduction on the previous year. The offertory for the previous 12 months had been a healthy £93, perhaps a reflection on people's gratitude the war was over. There had also been a special collection totalling £49. Thanks were given to Mr Fletcher for his donation of a flag for the peace celebrations, and to Mr Price-Dent

for the flag pole upon which to fly it. It is not clear if the celebrations had already happened, or were planned for the future. Mr Fletcher was also thanked for a donation of 15 guineas from the village fête. It was decided to use this to re-gild the face of the church clock. The new vestry was discussed at some length, and the rector was instructed to get some costs and plans. Dr Stott proposed that the money be borrowed in order that the building be raised at once. This proposal was carried.

The question of how to honour the returning men was one that taxed the thoughts of Hallatonians. The *Market Harborough Advertiser* reported, on 25th April, there had been a whist drive and dance, promoted by Mrs Fisher and Mrs Eaton, to provide a fund to welcome the soldiers home. The *Grantham Journal* of 24th May stated that, on Friday week, between 30 and 40 men soldiers and sailors who had returned to Hallaton, were treated to a supper followed by a dance. On 27th May, the *Market Harborough Advertiser* reported that the previous Sunday there had been a church parade of returned soldiers and sailors. The men fell in at the top of the village under the command of Major Stott and, headed by the band, marched to the church where there was a thanksgiving service. Afterwards, they marched to the war memorial where the last post was played. However, the Parish Council minutes refer to two public meetings, on 24th June the other 12th September to discuss the peace celebrations though there is no record of either meeting taking place. Some of the men in this book would have taken part in the big feast and parade in Market Harborough, and would have received certificates, such as the one illustrated overleaf. Herbert Curtis's name is one that appears on the list of those who attended.

The Parish Council spent much of the summer occupied with the new allotments. Amazingly, it would take them 4 meetings to sort them out. The first meeting at which they were discussed was on 17th June, where they sent a proposal to Mrs Bewicke via her agent that the rents be set at £4 per acre. At the meeting on 9th September, it was reported that no agreement as to the running of the allotments had been reached between the Parish Council and the original tenant, W. A. McTurk, nor between Mrs Bewicke and the council. Eventually allotment holders were requested to attend a special meeting on 16th September, and the council also requested that all applications for new allotments were to be with them by 22nd September. The meeting on 16th September saw allotment holders, already in possession of an allotment, decide to



Certificate of thanks issued to Market Harborough military personnel.

continue, though Mr Willey did give up his half acre allotment. It was decided that any transfer of an allotment to a new tenant should occur on 10th October each year. The value of any crops in situ either to be paid by the incoming tenant, or removed completely by the outgoing tenant by 1st December. The meeting went on so long that it had to be adjourned until 23rd September. Then it was decided the maximum size of any new allotment could not exceed 600 square yards. A plan was laid out for the new allotments, which would be allocated by drawing of lots.

At their meeting on 29th May the Hallaton Rural District Council organised an inspection of all the district on 4th June which would consider the locations for new housing. The result for Hallaton was that they endorsed the Parish Council's choice and proposed ten cottages to be built on the corner of the first turn into Hallaton from Medbourne on the west side of the road, recommending that 1 ½ acres be purchased at a price not exceeding £100 per acre. Given that the owner was, of course, Mrs Bewicke, and that the differences over the allotments between her and the Paris Council remained to be

ironed out, this would not be smooth progress for the District Council.

As well as new housing, a divisive subject from 1914 reared its head once more, the issue of a village hall. The Parish Council meeting of 17th June refers to a special meeting on 24th June to discuss the peace celebrations and the village hall, but as we have seen there is no evidence it took place. Again, at the 9th September meeting, a public meeting was called for 12th September to consider proposals for the immediate erection of a village hall and it is apparent that a sub-committee of council members had been established to take the matter further. At the end of the allotment meeting on 23rd September, it was noted that permission be accorded to the village hall committee to erect a village hall on the site known as the village green on North End. A curious choice of location which surely, they must have realised was common land, for which documentation of ownership would be hard to obtain. Also, as 'ancient lords of the manor', the Bewicke family may have been the residual owners of the land, even it was thought to be 'common'. Nevertheless, the desire for a hall was growing. At the committee meeting of Hallaton District Women's Institute, on 24th April, it was resolved to arrange a prize draw to inaugurate a fund towards building a village hall. Adverts, costing 2s-6d each, were placed in both the *Market Harborough Advertiser* and *Midland Mail* newspapers, and tickets, costing £1-13s-6d, were ordered from Frederick Hawke. The prize draw was made at the very well-attended village fête, which took place in the gardens of Hallaton Hall on 5th August. The fête raised £127 for the local Hallaton Nursing Association, and other local charities. The prize draw, with several prizes, was also a great success, with 1500 tickets being sold raising £35-11d-6s towards the cost of a new hall. A cheque was presented to the committee looking at the village hall issue, who spent some of it of the transportation of a hut, presumably as a temporary hall.

Just as things were progressing smoothly, another blast from the past returned. At the Hallaton Parish Council meeting on 30th September, after Walter Eaton's application to be lamplighter for the forthcoming winter was accepted at the rate of £1 per week for labour only, a letter was read out from the Treasury Solicitor requiring the council's opinion on a village hall and recreation ground, in accordance with the Isabella Stenning fund. It is hard to understand how a relatively simple and generous bequest had still not been sorted out over the four years after her death. The chairman read the proposals, which were cordially endorsed

by the council with the following provisions. On point three, the council considered the existing Bede houses did not lend themselves to economic reconstruction and, there being land available to build new houses with gardens, it was suggested that three new alms-houses be erected where garden ground was available.

On point four, they requested a donation be made to the existing fund for re-hanging the church bells. And so back the request went, and on and on dragged the issue of Isabella Stenning's bequest. Henry Butteriss was forced to write once again to the Treasury Solicitor's Department.

Despite the urgency of Butteriss's letter, there must have been a confidence in the village that the matter would soon be resolved, as a quote for repairing the church bells was requested. A quick glance at it reveals how pressing was the need for money from the Stenning bequest, as the sum required was quite large for those days, and probably beyond what the church could raise at the time.

At the Hallaton Rural District Council meeting on 31st July, they could finally report that the planned improvement to the road opposite the

church could go ahead, the council having now received the necessary permission from Mr Price-Dent, and from Major Bewicke who was the new owner of some of the land involved. Progress with his relative, though, was not so forthcoming. The council was read a letter from Mrs Calverley Bewicke's agent, a letter highly unlikely to have been sent without her knowledge. It stated that, as Mrs Bewicke had supplied the land for the new allotments, it was considered proper that some other owner should be asked to supply the site for the new cottages. Not a surprising response. The council felt the need to reply in the strongest terms that the land chosen was considered, by the council, to be the most suitable and that she was being offered a good price. All they could now was await her response.

The trustees of the Hallaton Charity were having a standard and relatively quiet year. Their allowance to Lottie Buxton would be extended for the rest of the year, they sorted out Mrs Driver in a new house and, in July, they were able to oblige when Mr Fletcher wrote an appeal for help on behalf of Neale, the hedge cutter, who was having to

Hallaton
Market Harborough
Oct 30th 1919

Isabella Stenning's bequest

Dear Sir

yours of the 4th inst to hand
with thanks.

The Parish Council request
you to deal with the matter at
your earliest convenience so
the money will be of the utmost
use to the Parish in the furtherance
of urgent & greatly needed
improvements in village life

Yours Faithfully
H. Butteriss

Chairman Hallaton
Parish Council

To J. Pope Esq
Treasury Solicitor Dept
The Court Buildings
London

Above: Henry Butteriss's letter to the treasury Solicitor's department concerning the Isabella Stenning bequest. © National Archives (TS 18/1009).

Right: The quote and job description for repairing Hallaton Church's bells 1919. © National Archives (TS 18/1009).

COPY.

John Taylor & Co.
Bell Founders & Bell Hangers.

Bell Foundry,
LOUGHBOROUGH.

October 8th, 1919.

The Rev. T.J. Preece,
Hallaton Rectory,
Market Harborough.

Dear Sir,

We thank you for your favour of yesterday's date and in reply thereto beg to say that, calculated at to-day's prices as regards materials, labour, &c. the estimate stands as follows, viz :

£ - s. - d.

Rehanging the ring of five bells
with entirely new fittings of our latest and best make, in a new strong and massive iron framework constructed for SIX BELLS, including taking down bells, frame, &c. railway carriage and fixing 434. 0. 0

The new smaller bell to complete the ring of six, also fittings, carriage and fixing: if done at the same time 64.10. 0

Recasting the five bells into a peal of perfect tone and tune, with true harmonics 180. 0. 0

£ 698.10. 0

PARENT PRICES.

travel fortnightly to Leicester to see a Dr Ridley. A grant of £5 was awarded. The same month they agreed to give the Parish Council £25, though they were not informed for what it was required. They admonished the council, and in future said they would not make payments unless the council stated what it was for. At their final meeting of the year, on 10th October, it was decided to organise an inspection of their cottages to see if any should be pulled down, just more evidence of the need for better housing.

On 28th October, Hallaton Parish Council met again, and this time technology was on the agenda. They were willing to act as guarantor in the proposed erection of a public call office at Hallaton sub post office. Of course, there was a proviso. In this case, it was that all the line had to be within the Market Harborough Council district, and not in that of Uppingham, so the service would be more efficient. They also sought to encourage facilities for private telephone installations, should they be needed. They met for a final time in 1919, on 16th December, and it is clear that the Isabella Stenning situation was still not sorted. They proposed to send a strong letter to the Treasury Solicitor and, failing the receipt of a satisfactory reply, they would engage their own solicitor to deal with the matter. A letter from Mrs Bewicke's agent concerning a draft agreement for the allotments, was also read out. After some discussion, the council approved the draft with the following amendments: tenancy to be yearly, rent paid half-yearly, and the parts relating to the fence and gates to be deleted. And so, the saga dragged on. Since their election in March the Parish Council had failed to make significant progress on the village hall, been unable to reach final agreement over tenancy rights with Mrs Bewicke for the allotments, and apparently forgotten all about the motor fire engine, an issue especially left over by the previous council for them to consider, but had managed, over a series of lengthy meetings, to establish some basic ground rules about allotment management.

The Hallaton Rural District Council's final yearly meeting was on 23rd December. Despite negotiations by the district valuer, no agreement with Mrs Bewicke, for the purchase of the land in Hallaton for new houses had been achieved.

Normality was however, definitely returning. By the end of the year most of the men were home. Some, such as Billy Newman did not hang around long, the need for work more paramount now that army and separation pay was finished. But Cricket was back on the agenda, and the Hallaton Whist

Club and League were reformed in the autumn. By 30th September, the postmaster in Market Harborough was able to report a more reliable service and was guaranteeing that post posted in Market Harborough by 1.10pm would be sent to Hallaton by day mail the same day.

At the September meeting of Hallaton Women's Institute it was agreed to open a library as soon as possible, with Miss Jessie Little volunteering to act as librarian. She might have acquired the recently published collected poems of Rupert Brooke which sold around 300,000 copies, or perhaps a new collection of Jeeves stories by P. G. Wodehouse or another collection of tales about the Scarlet Pimpernel by Baroness Orczy.

For lovers of music, the Original Dixie Land Jazz band were in the midst of their 15-month tour to Great Britain and brought a new type of music to many people. One of the most popular songs of the year was 'My Old Man (said follow the van)', made famous by the performance of Maire Lloyd. For those in the mood for remembrance, and who preferred classical music, there was Holst's 'Ode to Death'.

On 10th December, Hallaton's Women's Institute held a concert where members could invite guests, and around 100 people attended. There were refreshments and their records note that impromptu dancing took place. The people of Hallaton were starting to enjoy themselves once again.

At 11.00am on 11th November, the whole country — including Hallaton — stopped and, for two minutes, fell silent in a mass collective moment of remembrance. They say that the war changed everything, yet had it done so in Hallaton?

Throughout the war, the Parish and District Councils had performed their tasks well, and this system of local government survived the war intact. The social hierarchy of the village survived also. A fascinating example of this lies within the memoirs of Jack Stamp.

"I well remember mother getting quite excited when we were invited to Hallaton Hall by Mrs Fletcher, wife of the owner. To be asked to go to the Hall was indeed a social achievement and mother sewed, pressed and mended to bring us up to the high standard of sartorial perfection demanded by such an invitation.

But it was labour in vain. We went to the Hall very impressed by the importance of the occasion, but our enthusiasm vanished when Mrs Fletcher gave us such a telling off for what she

described as our atrocious behaviour in church the previous Sunday. For mother it was a great disappointment. A great occasion turned out to be such a miserable event. So great was mother's distress that she told us never to bow and curtesy to the people of the Hall again." (Stamp, *op. cit.*, pp. 22–23).

Within this memory are some interesting insights into the relationship between the wealthy leaders of Hallaton society and the other villagers. Clearly, to be invited to the Hall was not only unusual, but also something to be sought after, and involved a certain amount of pride. That Mrs Fletcher felt entitled to castigate someone else's children for their behaviour in church also demonstrates a clear class divide. The fact that the Stamp children were told 'never to bow and curtesy [...] again', clearly shows that this was behaviour that was something they normally did, and presumably in the village they would not have been alone in this.

Those who were seen as the leaders of society, the wealthy landowners for example, remained in positions of authority and influence. The trustees of the Hallaton Charity were largely the same at the end of 1919 as they had been in 1914.

The village institutions were still largely run by the same people. George Pick and John Eaton were still the overseers. Henry Butteriss was still the chairman of the Parish Council, though it is true that the make-up of the council had changed. Despite the pressures on religious beliefs — the war, and the constant barrage of bad news, which must have tested the faith of some — Hallaton remained a religious place. The church and chapel still functioned, and Reverend Preece was still seen as a man of influence to be respected. In some ways, the war years had merely held Hallaton in a state of suspension, with issues like the village hall and housing dominating meetings immediately before the war in the summer of 1914 and resurfacing almost immediately once the war was over.

So, what was the war's legacy for Hallaton? In 1919, the village can be seen as an island of continuity in a sea of change. In terms of land ownership, although some land had changed hands by the end of 1919, there were still three primary landowners: the Price-Dents, the Bewickes, and the Fletchers. Most houses remained in the possession of a few people, and the housing stock remained in desperate need of an upgrade, especially that for the poorer members of society. The nearby estates of Keythorpe and Nevill Holt point the way and are typical of much of the country. Both were sold

off and broken up in 1919 with the tenants able, in several cases, to buy their own land or houses, but Hallaton was not quite there yet.

The war had, through its drain on available manpower, led to some opportunities for the women of the village to work not only in the fields around Hallaton but to venture further afield for important war work such as making munitions. There could be no turning back now to the days where some in society could realistically argue against the ability of women to do certain jobs. However, though some attitudes may have changed, practicalities had not. Though many women had done jobs in the war that they would not otherwise have done, once the men returned these jobs reverted back to the male domain. Hallaton women would not have been required to work on the land any longer, other than to help out on family farms when required. So, for many, life returned to what it was before the war: to marriage and children. Of course, for some Hallaton women, there was now the right to vote. Though limited to certain groups, this was at least a start in the right direction. The creation of the Women's Institute was important in providing women with a non-religious outlet to meet people and was one of the great innovations of the war in Hallaton.

Just as society was still divided by class and sex, so there was now a new division created by the war, and one not exclusive to Hallaton. There now existed an often-unbridgeable gap between those who had served and those who had not. Since the introduction of censorship early in the war, in both newspapers and letters home from the front, it was impossible for those at home to truly follow what those on the front-line experienced. There were also resentments that simmered below the surface between those who fought, and those that were perceived to have got away with it. Thomas Inchley admitted to his son that there were people in Hallaton he would cross the street to avoid as he knew they had found reasons, however valid, not to serve. He would not have been alone.

Like the rest of the country, most Hallatonians were the fortunate majority. Most of the men came back. Though we have 41 names on our war memorial, most of those killed did not set out from the village in 1914, or whenever they enlisted. The idea of a lost Hallaton generation would not be a correct one. The Hallaton of 1919 was not deprived of a whole generation of young men, far from it. That some women lost loved ones, and never married or re-married, is undoubtedly true, but they were a minority.

However, the people's lives unquestionably did change. The war was generally positive for the farm labourers of Hallaton, who had at long last seen their wages rise. The country was far more unionised. People were more aware of their rights.

Advances in technology included the introduction of mechanisation on local farming. Before the war, tractors were unheard of but by the end of the war, they were being used in and around Hallaton. The farming world would not look back. Other advances such as radio and telephone would have to wait.

Yet some changes are intangible, some history impossible to write. What if the real change in Hallaton was in its people? Not their physical bodies but their spirit, their inner thoughts and, with them, their hopes for the world in which they and their children could live. What was it like to be inside the mind of, say, one of those Hallaton mothers or wives who had lost a son or husband when confronted with the continuous reminders of grief and loss? First the news itself, then the memorial service, then the payment of his outstanding wages, then the receipt of any of his belongings that might have been found, then his name on the war memorial, then the receipt of his medals, then his war gratuity payment, then the receipt of a scroll commemorating his death, and then the dead man's penny. And for all, there was no body, no tangible remains, to give closure and, in some cases, no grave to visit, just a name in stone, far away in a place you've never been, never will go to, and had probably never heard of. How can it have been possible not to have changed as a person? And for those who returned, they too suffered change. You cannot say that George Coleman Driver, for example, was the same man who left these shores to fight. He may not have lost his life, but he lost his wife, now living with another man; his young son, who died of measles during the war; and now his other children were living with their mother, or in an industrial school. They were a family fragmented.

Or what about Gordon Hawke, a man so affected by his experiences that he was still being treated at a specialist centre for neurasthenia in 1922, four years after the end of the war? Nationally in 1922, 65,000 shell shock victims were receiving disability pensions, and 9,000 were still hospitalised. Or what about Frederick Horsley, and the many others like him, wounded in the war and still going through medical boards years later? In 1928 as a direct cause of the war, 5,205 artificial legs, 1,106 arms, and 4,574 eyes were issued to ex-service men for the first time. Such legacies of the war would run for a long time. On the day of the Armistice, the Guardian newspaper wrote the following:

“By the hundred thousand, young men have died for the hope of a better world. They have opened for us the way. If as a people, we can be wise and tolerant and just in peace as we have been resolute in war, we shall build them the memorial that they have earned in the form of a world set free from military force, national tyrannies and class oppressions, for the pursuit of a wider justice in the spirit of a deeper and more human religion.”

What the war did for Hallaton was to open the way by providing the catalyst for great social changes that would happen in the following decade. By the end of 1919, Hallaton had not reached this point in its history, but it was close. The psychological changes may already have been present, but the much-needed changes in things such as housing, and the opportunities for more people to own land and property, required more time to happen. The people of Hallaton were moving on, through the passage of remembrance, into what they must have hoped would be a better future, in the knowledge that their resolve had been tested but not found wanting. Beyond them, surely, lay the land of opportunity, of technological advancement, of equality, or perhaps just better times. Unlike us, with our power of hindsight, they would have to wait to see if they got there.

Hallaton's Belgian Refugees Story

In the early months of the First World War, four Belgian families, displaced by the devastation in their home country, came to live in Hallaton. This is the story of how that came about, how the local community responded, and what happened after they left.

Background

The very first shot fired by the British in the First World War was done in defence of Belgium. That shot, on 22nd August 1914, marked the moment Britain honoured a faithful undertaking to guarantee the independence, and protect the neutrality of, the Kingdom of Belgium in the event of its invasion by a foreign power.

The British people were outraged by the destruction that the Germans wrought across Belgium. As Belgians gathered outside their wrecked homes, and pondered what their future held, there was a settled will — indeed a real and positive enthusiasm — among British people to offer them refuge here. So began the single biggest refugee migration in history, which comprised

over a million Belgians in total, a quarter of whom found their way to Britain.

Included in this number were four Belgian families who were to find their refuge in Hallaton.

From Belgium to Hallaton

The journey from Belgium to Britain was a gruelling and hazardous one for many. Some had no choice but to make their way on foot, others with their meagre possessions on dog-pulled carts, in search of sanctuary. Many perished on the way, some from attack by pursuing German soldiers, and some from physical frailty. Those who survived gathered en masse on the dock-side of seaports in Belgium, Holland and France. Press reports at the time spoke of distressing scenes at ports such as Ostend.

Some people literally starved as they waited. Others relied solely on stale bread and morsels begged from local people. Some had to wait for days, sleeping rough in public toilets, hotel bathrooms, and openly on the streets, in between jostling for places on departing boats.



Courtesy of National Army Museum (NAM 1978-11-157-19-58).



Left: Belgian refugees aboard an Ostend fishing boat bound for England. © Alan F. Taylor, Chairman, Folkestone & District Local History Society.

Below: Market Harborough Advertiser, 6th October 1914.

So desperate were some, they persuaded local fishermen to take them across the English Channel in their fishing boats and trawlers. As a result, some found themselves in seaside towns as far-afield as Southwold in Suffolk. Most, however, found their way to Folkestone, which was one of the official reception points designated by the British government.

The Government responded to the unprecedented influx of refugees with a remarkable sense of purpose. A national committee was established to co-ordinate the country's response, and the skills and resources of numerous public and voluntary organisations were marshalled to the cause.

The first and most urgent task of the national committee was to share the burden of its challenge around the country, to which end around two thousand refugees were allocated to Leicestershire, the first arriving on 24th September 1914. Locally, a hurriedly established Market Harborough Committee for the Relief of Suffering of Refugees led a mission to accommodate around a hundred of these.

In the Harborough area, there was popular support for this. The *Market Harborough Advertiser* at the time recorded the enthusiastic welcome given to the refugees on their arrival.

"At the station they were presented with a bouquet... The streets were crowded with people, who gave them a warm reception, and there was quite a display of Belgian flags. At the house... which had been taken for them, they found a bountiful tea and the warmest of welcomes awaiting them."

In this spirit, suitable empty properties in the area were swiftly brought into commission. Two such

MARKET HARBORO'S WELCOME TO BELGIAN REFUGEES.

With the arrival of sixteen Belgian Refugees to Market Harborough on Tuesday night Harboroughians had revealed to them one of the tragedies of war, the sufferings evidenced by the helpless civil population when overrun by an invading force, and in the case of Belgium a force vindictive, cruel, out to conquer and crush by foul and dastardly means. Though the greeting given the Refugees was hearty one heard on all sides expressions of sympathy and sorrow for them, that, homeless and destitute with the exception of their few personal belongings--tied in bundles, and which made such a pathetic little picture when being taken to their new home by the Boy Scouts--they had to seek their safety in a foreign land, but which has always thrown open wide its doors to shelter the oppressed and needy.

The refugees, who arrived by the 5.2 train from London, were met at the Railway Station by Deau Kavanaugh, the Rev. M. T. Brown (Vicar of Market Harborough), Mr. Howard W. Symington (Chairman of the Urban District Council), others present including Rev. Father Kettels, of Lutterworth, who is a Belgian and a native of Antwerp. Father Kettel speaks Flemish, which was very fortunate indeed, for most of the refugees speak Flemish only. One or two speak French, and they will have to act as interpreters for the others. At the station they were presented with a bouquet, a kindly thought on the part of the Rev. Mother of the Convent of the Nativity. Mr. W. H. Stevens kindly sent a large motor car, and Mr. Hedley Roberts his private car, and the refugees were conveyed to their new abode in Abbey Street. The streets were crowded with people, who gave them a warm reception, and there was quite a display of Belgian flags. The Belgians were visibly touched by the warmth of their welcome. At the house in Abbey Street, which has been taken for them, they found a bountiful tea and the warmest of welcomes awaiting them. Their numbers include three pretty little girls aged respectively seven, five, and three; a youth of 17; a boy of 10, and another of seven.

properties were identified in Hallaton, and four refugee families were assigned to them.

Hallaton's Refugees

Three of the families allocated to Hallaton arrived in November 1914, and the fourth in July 1915. Their respective family names were: Bethune, Puyenbroek, Wynants and Asscherick.

The Bethunes

The Bethunes derived from Ostend. They came to Hallaton along with the Wynants and Asschericks in November 1914. Regrettably, nothing else is known about them, not even their Christian names, or their lives before and after their time in Hallaton. Nor has it been possible to trace any descendants.

The Puyenbroeks

The Puyenbroeks are also believed to have derived from Ostend, Belgium. To the best of our knowledge, they were a married couple without dependants. They transferred to Hallaton from a neighbouring village in July 1915.

All refugees were issued Registration Certificates to serve as their identity documents. Few of these survive, but those of Jos and his wife do, and remain in Hallaton's possession.

Jos's papers describe his occupation as 'Automobile Engineer'. It is possible he was motivated to move

to Hallaton because of the possibility of working in the garage that existed in the village at the time.

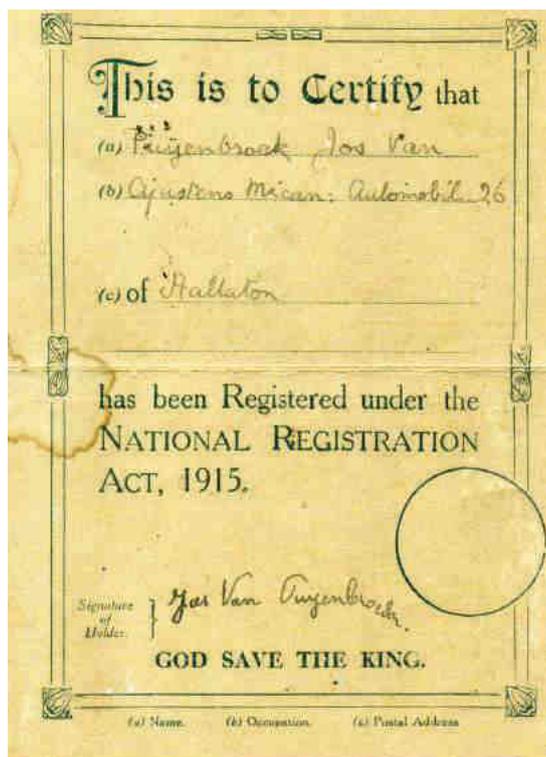
Cecillia's papers simply identify her occupation as 'Household Duties'. This may have been a euphemism for housewife — tough enough work in the straitened circumstances in which most refugees existed at the time. Alternatively, it may have reflected her interest in finding a housekeeping position in one of the grander houses that existed in Hallaton in those days. Unfortunately, there is no surviving evidence to confirm this either way.

The Wynants and Asscherick Families

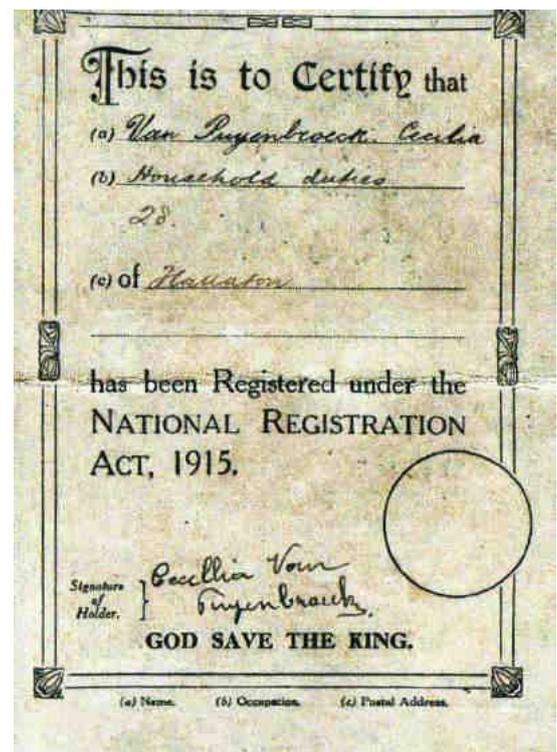
The Wynants and Asscherick families derived from Ostend, Belgium. They were related by marriage as shown in the family tree below. With the possible exception of Franciscus Asscherick, all nine of the combined family members are believed to have travelled together from Belgium and lived together in Hallaton.

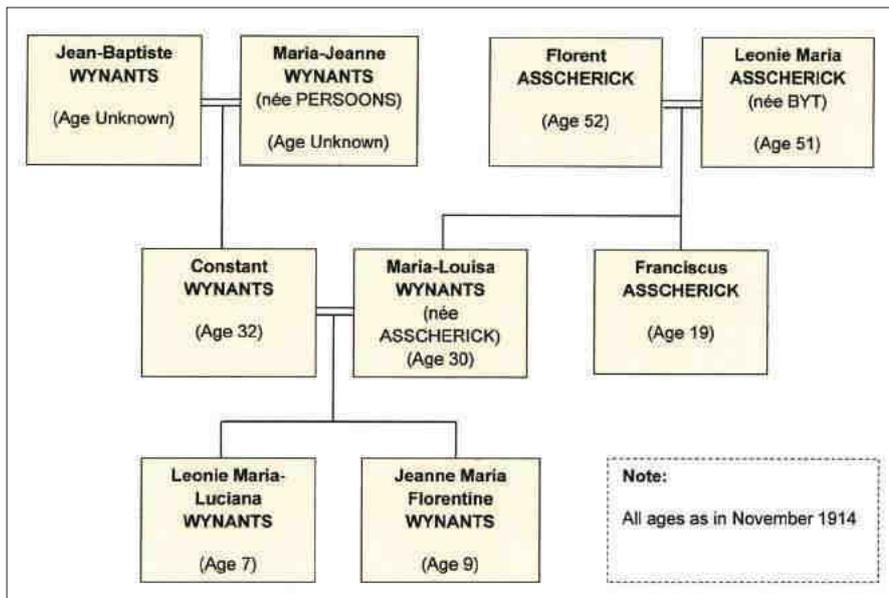
In addition to being related by marriage, the Wynants and Asschericks were partners in a substantial hotel business in Ostend, known as the Hotel de la Vieille Tour, pictured here in 1914. It is thought that Franciscus, their teenage son, worked in this family business before joining the Army. He was, however, a Private in the Belgian Army at the time of his arrival in Britain.

Precisely when Franciscus arrived is uncertain. He did not begin his basic army training until late



The Puyenbroeks' National Registration certificates.





The Wynants and Asscherick family tree.



The Wynants-Asscherick Hotel, Ostend, 1914.

September 1914, so he may not have been free to accompany his family to England in November of that year. However, Belgium was in chaos at this point, and his army service record is sufficiently ambiguous to leave open the possibility that he did.

There is, however, clear documentary evidence of his presence in Leicester in 1917 when, on 16th July, he married Thérésa Augusta Werbrouck, another young member of the City's Belgian diaspora. The wedding, at Holy Cross Roman Catholic Church in Leicester, was evidently a full-hearted Belgian celebration. It was attended by the bride and groom's respective parents, Henri and Maria Werbrouck and Florent and Léonie Asscherick, and other members of their extended families and Belgian friends.

The celebrant himself was a Belgian Priest, Father Thomas Olerts, and the signatories to the Certificate

of Marriage were also Belgian, one of them being Constant Wynants, Franciscus's new brother-in-law from the Hallaton refugee family of that name.

The romance between Franciscus and Thérésa may have begun when they were workmates in the Vieille Tour hotel in Ostend. It may also, of course, have developed after their arrival in Britain, when Franciscus was temporarily residing in Hallaton. We don't know. Certainly, at the time of the wedding Thérésa was living at Leicester's Wellington Hotel. The marriage certificate describes her trade as hotel chambermaid. This may have been a reference to her previous occupation in Belgium, or possibly her live-in job at the Wellington.

Their fathers' occupations are respectively recorded as Hotel Keeper and Farmer. These also seem to refer to their past lives rather than their

Printed by authority of the Registrar General

CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ENTRY OF MARRIAGE
Pursuant to the  **Marriage Act 1949**

TL

Registration District Leicester

1917. Marriage solemnized at Holy Cross Chapel, Wellington Street in the District of Leicester in the County Borough of Leicester

No.	When married	Name and surname	Age	Condition	Rank or profession	Residence at the time of marriage	Father's name and surname	Rank or profession of father
6	Twenty ninth December 1917	Franciscus Carolus ASSCHERICK	22 years	Bachelor	Private Soldier in Belgian Army	27 Tickbourne Street Leicester, formerly of Rue Saint Paul Ostend	Florent ASSCHERICK	Hotel Keeper
		Thérèse Augusta WERBROUCK	25 years	Spinster	Hotel Chambermaid	Wellington Hotel Leicester, formerly of 34 Rue Neuve Liege	Henri WERBROUCK	Farmer

Married in the Holy Cross Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Roman Catholics by license by me

This marriage was solemnized between us, Franciscus Carolus Asscherick in the presence of us, C Wynant Fr Thomas Olerbs Belgian priest Ang Thérèse Werbrouck Fl De Busschere Ranshall Rowe Registrar

Certified to be a true copy of an entry in a register in my custody. Deputy Superintendent Registrar Reilly
Date: 16-7-14

CAUTION: THERE ARE OFFENCES RELATING TO FALSIFYING OR ALTERING A CERTIFICATE AND USING OR POSSESSING A FALSE CERTIFICATE. ©CROWN COPYRIGHT
WARNING: A CERTIFICATE IS NOT EVIDENCE OF IDENTITY.

Marriage certificate of Franciscus Asscherick and Thérèse Werbrouck.

occupations in England, the nature of which are unknown. What these records afford us, however, in their starkly contrasting ways, is a glimpse into the wide variety of circumstances from which their fellow displaced countrymen derived.

Soldier Asscherick

We know little of Franciscus Asscherick the man. We have found no surviving pictures of him. However, we know from his description on enlistment that he would have cut a fine figure, being taller than average at 5ft 10ins, with an oval face, wide mouth, blue eyes, and brownish blond hair.

His official service record shows that he joined the Army in September 1914, and served in the 14th Linie Regiment (infantry), one of the six regiments of Belgium's 3rd Army Division. In 1914, at the outbreak of war, this was garrisoned in Liège, a major Belgian city in the Walloon region of the country.

When the regiment was mobilised for war, in the autumn of 1914, it was joined by two other units; the 34th Linie Regiment, and the 14th Fortress Regiment. The three regiments were assigned to defend the territory between the various forts along the right bank of the River Meuse, historically the western border of the Holy Roman Empire and the Kingdom of France. Their task was to defend Liège from the German attackers.

The battle that ensued was fierce. The regiments sustained heavy losses, not least, it is said, because

the Belgian government had poorly prepared and equipped their armed forces to defend against the German army, who were seeking passage through Belgium to their true target, France.

Whatever the explanation, the soldiers were ultimately unsuccessful in their attempt to defend Liège, although the strength and duration of their resistance is said to have bought valuable time for the Allied forces to reach the area. After the fall of the city to the Germans, the troops, now exhausted and depleted, were reorganised. Thereafter, the 14th Linie was the only one of the three regiments to remain an operational unit.

The now war-hardened regiment was then deployed to help in the defence of Antwerp, the largest city in the Flanders region of Belgium. Again, however, it was unsuccessful in its mission, but it is said to have distinguished itself in the battles around the Belgian municipality of Haacht and the Yperlee Canal.

In October 1914, the regiment was deployed to fight in the Battle of Yser, named after the local river linked to the Yperlee canal. Again, the regiment is said to have distinguished itself, this time in their more successful campaigns in IJzer (Iron), Ramskapelle and St Joris (St George).

In December 1914, after two months of defeats, retreats, and heroic counter-attacks, the battle of Yser finally halted the German invasion, and in so doing halted the enemy's so-called Race to the Sea.



*Above: Belgian Carabiniers and dogs pulling guns.
© IWM (Q 81728).*

Above right: The Cross of the Order of Leopold.



As such, it stabilised what became known as the Yser Front.

Although the Germans now occupied 95% of Belgium, victory in the Battle of Yser - a key strategic success in what is now known as the First Battle of Ypres — allowed Belgium to retain control of a sliver of the country's territory for the remainder of the war, albeit under constant enemy duress.

This gave those who fought it heroic status in the eyes of the Belgian people, a status that exists to the present day. This is symbolised in the Yser Tower at Diksmuide, Europe's tallest memorial to those who fell in the Great War.

The regiment saw service in further battles throughout the remainder of the war. For example, in the 1915 to 1917 period it fought with distinction in the Merkem sector, initially falling prey to a mighty German attack, and then taking part in a victorious counterattack.

During the final liberation offensives in 1918, the regiment fought alongside others to achieve key victories in the battles for the West Flanders' towns of Langemark, Poelkapelle, Westroozebeke and Oostnieuwkerke, where it achieved particular distinction.

In total, the 14th Linie Regiment lost 52 officers and 1060 soldiers during the war. In recognition of its heroic contribution to the liberation of Belgium, it was awarded the Cross of the Order of Leopold — the highest honorary order of Belgium.

Soldier Franciscus Asscherick survived these conflicts despite the destructive impact they had on his regiment. For his particular service to his country, Franciscus received the following recognition:

- Admitted to the Ancient Order of Warriors (01.10.1918)
- Mentioned in Despatches (06.08.1919)
- Awarded the Croix de Guerre (06.08.1919)
- Awarded the Medal of Victory (30.09.1919)
- Awarded the Commemorative Medal of the War 1914/18 (31.10.1919)

Precisely what role Corporal Franciscus Asscherick played in his regiment's various campaigns is not known. However, between October 1914 and October 1915 his record suggests his front-line service was intermittent. This would have facilitated him accompanying his family to Hallaton in November 1914, and possibly spared him from some of his regiment's ill-fated early engagements in Liège during this period.

He would also have been on leave of absence from the front in July 1917, when he returned to Leicester to marry his sweetheart Thérèse. Hopefully, they enjoyed a brief mid-war 'honeymoon' together before he returned for the final push to liberate his country. However, he was undoubtedly present at the front, and in serious harm's way, for much of the war — an unimaginable total of three or more years.

Without knowing all the details, we know he survived some horrendously dangerous times, when the ferocious battles that halted the German advance — and those that ultimately liberated Belgium from the German aggressors — were fought and finally won, at enormous cost to life and limb.

On 30th November 1918, the regiment returned to its barracks in Liège. It was dissolved in a reorganisation in 1926, but proudly re-established by public acclamation and Royal Decree on 15th June 1934. Franciscus himself remained on active service until he was granted indefinite leave in October 1919. There is no formal record of when he left the army, but there is an indication that he may have served in a reserve capacity until 1922.

Soldier Asscherick's heroics owed nothing to Hallaton, but Hallaton can take pride in its historical association with him, and in supporting the family that nurtured this remarkable young man.

Where the Refugees Lived

There is no definitive record of which family was where in Hallaton. However, in those days, charges known as rates were levied on properties, similar in principle to today's Community Charge.

Some records of these charges survive, and from these it is possible to deduce that at least one of the refugee families was housed in the property on the left in the photograph below.

This property, owned by the then owner of Hallaton Hall, Samuel Bankart, became tragically vacant just a few weeks earlier when the previous tenant, farmer Frederick Andrews, was killed in action in France.

The minutes of the Hallaton Charity indicate that one or more of the other refugee families was accommodated in one of the charity cottages on Hog Lane. Since demolished, this property is thought to have stood where Hallaton's rocking horse now stands. Again, there is no surviving record of which refugees resided here.

For the people concerned, their arrival was probably one of the most important and memorable moments in their shattered lives, but for their Hallatonian hosts it was apparently something taken in their stride. It has never become the legacy it perhaps deserves to be.

How their Needs were Met

The social composition of the refugees who came to England varied across a range of income and social class. Most historians agree, however, that the great majority of refugees were predominantly from the lower and middle social classes. Some were financially able to fend for themselves, and took hotel and rented accommodation rather than rely on charitable bodies and local relief committees. Most, however, had been rendered completely destitute by the loss of their livelihoods, and the destruction of their country. Many had little more than the clothes on their backs, and perhaps a few family mementos.

How Officialdom Helped

In the absence of the kind of welfare safety-net that would provide subsistence to destitute modern-day refugees, the arrival of the Belgians sparked the need for a major drive to provide them with assistance. Some of this took the form of help in kind. For instance, water rates were not charged. The price of gas, and the rates levied on Belgian houses, were reduced. The use of public baths was provided free, and free education classes were arranged to help elderly refugees learn English. Although the National Health Service did not yet exist, doctors often attended Belgian patients without charge, and pharmacists provided free prescriptions where



Early 20th century picture of properties on North End. Refugees lived in the house on the left. The house on the right is now known as The Old Laundry.

they were able to do so. However, the refugees had many additional needs.

Particular help was provided with schooling. Places were found for children in elementary and secondary schools across the County, including private schools. It is likely that Hallaton's refugee children, Leonie and Jeanne Wynants, attended the village school, or possibly travelled daily by train from Hallaton's to St Joseph's Catholic School in Market Harborough. Regrettably there are no remaining records at either school to verify this.

ARRIVAL OF BELGIAN REFUGEES.

At a meeting of the local National Relief Committee on Tuesday evening arrangements were made for the reception of Brudenell House, Melton Mowbray, of 15 Belgian refugees on Thursday. The following sub-committee was appointed to superintend the catering, etc.: Mr. W. F. Hill, the Rev. Father Hunt, Mr. A. E. Mackley, Mr. Henry Wood, Mr. J. Fletcher, Miss Muir, Mrs. Blakeney, Mrs. Swann, Mrs. T. Pacey, and Miss Markham, with Mr. G. W. Goodacre as secretary. The committee wish to acknowledge with many thanks the receipt of the following articles for the use of the refugees at Brudenell House: Five scrubbing brushes, and blacklead brushes, Mr. Grimbley; bucket, blacking brushes, house flannel, Messrs. Sharpe; three tins of soft soap, Messrs. Boot; yellow soap, Mr. Eason; blacking and boot polish, Mr. Holgate; carpet brush, Mr. Hardy; carpet brushes, Mr. Clark; dusters, Mrs. T. Pacey; eight pillow cases, Miss Marriott; two pairs of sheets, Mrs. Powell; two pairs of sheets, six pillow cases, and two pillows, Mrs. H. Whaite; two pairs of sheets and pillow cases, Mrs. Marsh; two counterpanes, one pair of sheets, and pillow cases, Mrs. Walker Pacey; firewood, Mr. Hinman; sack of flour, Mr. H. Wood; potatoes, Mr. Oakley; bread knives and table cloths, Mrs. Blakeney; benches and forms, etc., and chairs, Mr. Manchester; coffee pots, Mr. Swann; half a ton of coal each, Mr. Whait, Mr. Wyles, Messrs. Ellis and Everard, Mr. G. Dickinson, and Mr. J. Manchester.

A large crowd assembled in Burton-st. yesterday afternoon to witness the arrival of the refugees, and gave them a hearty reception. They travelled in four motor cars from Leicester, where they had spent the last week, and comprise three families consisting of three men, four women, and eight children, and were in charge of Father Caus. All the members of the above named sub-committee, together with Mrs. C. E. Yate, Mrs. F. Yate, and others, were present to welcome the refugees, one who created considerable interest being a Belgian Boy Scout in uniform. The Belgian flag was hoisted over the entrance porch. Several of the Melton Boy Scouts assisted in running errands, etc.

Melton Mowbray Times, 9th October 1914.

An official relief committee was established in Market Harborough, and in each of Leicestershire's County Towns, to raise and distribute material and financial donations according to identified need. They were keen, however, to enable the refugees to be self-sufficient, and much effort was put into identifying job vacancies and brokering refugees into them.

Despite the language barriers confronting these largely Flemish speaking people, many found employment, often filling gaps created by local people who had enlisted for war service. Inevitably, some were difficult to place. Having hailed from the industrial heartlands of Belgium, some were likely to have felt like fish out of water in rural Leicestershire.

These, in particular, remained heavily dependent on official and charitable funds. Often, those who could find only sporadic or seasonal work were allowed to continue to receive financial support from the committee, and were encouraged to open Post Office savings accounts, so that they might eventually return to Belgium in a less destitute condition than that in which they had arrived.

How Neighbours Helped

Official generosity was reflected in the giving of ordinary people. News reports of the time catalogue the huge variety of items donated to the Relief Committees in the area, and large sums of money raised by resourceful local residents, known at the time as 'sweet charity'.

Throughout the spring and summer of 1915, the Hallaton and Blaston Parish Magazine recorded sums of around £7 per month being donated by local people to the Belgian Refugee Fund. This equates to around £780 per month at today's value, an astonishing level of generosity.

There is no surviving record of specific fund-raising events for refugees in Hallaton. However, a number of war-related fund-raising events were held in the village, and it is likely that the needs of refugees, and their compatriots back in Belgium, featured in the disbursement of monies raised. In August 1915, for example, Hallaton hosted a garden fete and rummage sale. This was held in the grounds of Hallaton Hall, and successfully attracted around 500 people. According to a contemporary report in the *Market Harborough Advertiser*:

"The weather was all against outdoor amusements, but the sports... were carried through with keen zest".

BELGIAN REFUGEE FUND.						£	s.	d.
May	1st.	...	...	...	...	1	16	0
"	8th.	...	...	...	...	1	14	1
"	15th.	...	...	...	...	1	14	2
"	22nd.	...	...	...	...	1	12	1
"	29th.	...	...	...	...	1	13	5
June	5th.	...	...	...	...	1	13	11
"	12th.	...	...	...	...	1	11	9
"	19th.	...	...	...	...	1	11	10
"	26th.	...	...	...	...	1	15	9
July	3rd.	...	...	...	...	1	8	0
"	10th.	...	...	...	...	1	7	6
"	17th.	...	...	...	...	1	4	5
"	24th.	...	...	...	...	1	10	8
"	31st.	...	...	...	...	1	6	5

Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Dutry from Ghent (Belgium), regret not to have been able to see all the Hallaton inhabitants, but wish to thank them for the generous support they have so kindly given to the Belgian Refugees in Hallaton village.

Hallaton & Bloston Parish Magazine, September 1915.

Despite the inclement weather, the event raised £55 — the enormous equivalent of £5,700 today — for its designated causes, and ended with dancing late into the night to the music of the Hallaton band.

Local villages actively supported each other's events. Hallaton, for example, received particular help from neighbouring Great Easton.

Here, a meeting of residents chaired by the Rev. A. M. Harper decided that rather than try to accommodate any refugees in the limited number of possible places available in their village, they would raise funds specifically to support the needs of Hallaton's refugee families.

Similarly, the Ladies Sub-Committee of the County Relief Fund, chaired by Mrs Murray of Gumley Hall, Foxton, provided 1,250 items of clothing for local refugees.

How Faith Communities Helped

The churches in the Harborough area were also active in seeking to meet the needs of the new arrivals.

Chief amongst these was the Roman Catholic Church, reflecting the religious persuasion of the great majority of the refugees, including, in all likelihood, those who came to Hallaton. Local Congregational, Baptist, and Anglican churches are also known to have contributed extensively to meeting refugee needs.

These various faith communities were to the fore in organising welcoming parties for arriving groups of refugees. Their leaders were prominent in hosting recreational and cultural events, often working in an ecumenical way to demonstrate the all-encompassing embrace of the faith community, and to reflect the interests of the Belgian diaspora whose members were now prominent in their respective congregations.

Churches, of course, continued to perform their traditional duties, such as christenings, funerals and



Church service at the remains of Knaptoft Church, near Market Harborough, in aid of Belgian refugees.

marriages, and the press was quick to pick up on refugee-related stories emanating from these.

One report in the *Market Harborough Advertiser* on 9th February 1915 relates the story of a Belgian couple, Maurice Loiseleur and Alice Leslie, who were apparently only four hours away from being married, in their home town of Ninove in Belgium in August 1914, when the groom “*obeyed the call of his King and country... and re-joined his regiment, soon to be fighting the German hordes*”.

Their plans could have ended in tragedy but, in a remarkable twist of fate, Maurice was quickly wounded in the fighting around Quatrecht and was able to re-join his fiancé, now a refugee in Market Harborough, to recover from his injuries. In what might deservedly be called a triumph in the face of adversity, their wedding was finally held on Saturday 6th February 1915, at Market Harborough Congregational Church.

How Businesses Helped

Many business people in Leicestershire played important and honourable roles in helping the refugee relief effort.

First amongst these was Sydney Ansell Gimson, son of Josiah Gimson who was a nationally known figure in the Quaker and Secular movements. Sydney was a secularist too, but he was not a pacifist, and he resisted the call of some to oppose what he believed to be a “*just war*”.

He urged young men to enlist, and he championed the manufacture of munitions by his family’s business, Gimson Engineering. He headed a number of war-related public bodies, including Leicester Town Council’s Belgian Refugee Committee.

With Leicester as the area’s central receiving point for refugees, the work of this body was critical

to decisions about how the arriving refugees were dealt with in Leicester, and how and where they were distributed to areas like Harborough, and places like Hallaton.

Committed to the justness of the cause, Gimson persuaded the local Secular Society to raise a subscription to guarantee a house for a Belgian family. He also launched a fund-raising appeal in the Leicester Mail that, in a matter of weeks, reached £846 (£87,200 today) for the refugee cause.

In doing these things, he led the area’s business community by example, and set the tone for others to follow. A number of businesses in the Harborough area followed this lead, making generous contributions to the Relief Fund. Many business people, for example, made regular gifts of provisions and coal.

Perhaps inevitably, some business people saw a commercial advantage in pitching directly for the custom of refugees. Some were quite shameless in exploiting the commercial potential of the positive sentiment about refugees among the host community.

An example of this can be seen in advertisements for ‘Jason’ stockings and socks, which appeared daily in the *Market Harborough Advertiser* in the early war years.

A similar commercial motive is evident in a letter to the *Market Harborough Advertiser* on 5th January 1915, in which members of the Executive Committee of the Horses & Drivers Aid Committee bemoaned the UK Government’s ban on the export of old horses to the continent.

This restraint on their trade, which had previously exceeded over a thousand horses a week, had, they alleged, resulted in large-scale suffering for the affected livestock, previously destined for the



Left: Sydney Ansell Gimson. Courtesy Leicester Secular Society.

Above: Advertisement for ‘Jason’ stockings and socks, Market Harborough Advertiser.

meat markets in Belgium. It would, they argued, be a kindness to make it available for consumption by the Belgian diaspora in the Harborough area. Thinking, perhaps, of the scale of the equine industry in the Harborough area, not least in Hallaton, they acknowledged the commercial potential of establishing horsemeat as part of the staple UK diet, saying:

“...it would not be long before the example of our Belgian guests would be followed by our own people...”

Needless to say, little appears to have come of this enterprising idea.

How Refugees Helped Themselves

The collective effort by the Harborough communities to meet their responsibilities towards the Belgian diaspora was augmented by active fund-raising by refugees themselves.

Notable examples of this include a Concert at the Jubilee Hall, Market Harborough, featuring the women comprising the ‘Belgian Quartette Jean’, a classical music group consisting of family members Germaine Jean (vocalist), Gabrielle Jean (pianist), Madeleine Jean (violinist), and Daisy Jean (cellist and harpist), all believed to be from the refugee community.

An example of simple self-help fund-raising is demonstrated in the photograph (shown below) of a Belgian soldier, in full dress uniform, with a collecting tin on the streets of Leicester, around 1915. He is accompanied by a smartly dressed

woman, believed to be a Belgian lady, who appears to be pinning a memento of some kind to one of the children in thanks for their donation. They are shown on London Road, Leicester, just down from the train station, opposite the YMCA, which remains there to this day.

Moving On and Going Home

By the autumn of 1915, Hallaton’s refugees appear to have moved on. Certainly, they were no longer residing in the homes they had been allocated.

It is possible some had moved to live-in positions in the village, but the most likely explanation for their absence from the records around this time is that they had moved to places with more opportunities for work, or where there were more of their compatriots with whom to eke out a living. Hallaton was not unusual in witnessing this kind of wholesale migration of Belgian refugees from village-to-town, and town-to-city as the war progressed.

What we can be sure of is that Hallaton’s refugees did not return to Belgium before 1919 (except for soldier Franciscus Asscherick). Certainly, very few of their compatriots did, not least because there were so few surviving homes to return to. Indeed the situation for many was so dire that the Belgian government was forced to regulate how quickly their displaced citizens were able to return. As a result, a few chose to remain in Britain, others decided to emigrate to America and Canada. However, by the end of 1919 around 90% had returned to their home towns in Belgium.



A Belgian soldier with collection tin in Leicester, circa 1915. ROLLR (DE 5834/176).



Commemorative plaque at Ketton.

Their Legacy

Britain, now consumed by ambivalent joy at the war's end, and widespread grief at the millions of lives it had cost, had other things on its mind than the departure of a few thousand Belgians, or so it appeared. There are no local press reports of leaving ceremonies in Market Harborough, certainly nothing on the scale of their celebrated arrival.

The only known local press report of the work of the local relief committee at that time was a request for donors of furniture to come and reclaim their property. It was as if the host population had nodded acknowledgement at a job well done, and then turned and walked away.

Legacy of Remembrance

It is perhaps a measure of how firmly British people as a whole put the refugee story behind them, that the only Belgian person from the time that most people know about today is the fictional detective Hercule Poirot, said to be based on a Belgian refugee whom his creator, Agatha Christie, met in her home town of Torquay.

There is little else to remind them. It was the largest influx of refugees in British history, that elicited the most extraordinary response of its kind ever seen, but apart from one small monument in London's Victoria Embankment Gardens, and the occasional plaque and Belgian street name around the country, there is little or nothing to show for it.

The nearest known artefact of remembrance in the region is an engraved stone mounted into the wall of a house in Ketton, near Stamford, Lincolnshire, and this was donated in thankful memory by Belgian refugees themselves. Nothing similar — donated or

otherwise — is known of in Market Harborough, and there is certainly nothing in Hallaton.

Legacy of Gratitude

It is said that when the war ended, Britain was quick to hasten the departure of the refugees, offering them one-way tickets home, and then only for a limited period. This was said by some commentators to be undignified, and showed ingratitude for the contribution that the refugees had made to Britain in its hour of need. However, it may have accurately reflected the willingness of both the British and Belgian people to put their respective wartime traumas behind them.

It is clear, however, that many of the former refugees were profoundly grateful for what England had done for them. The Belgian nation's thanks were led by their King and Queen, but most poignantly, and perhaps more meaningful for local people, by individual Belgians, who had first-hand experience of what their English hosts had done for them.

One such person was unstinting in his gratitude, shown in a letter published in Harborough's local paper on 24th November 1914:

“Sir, Allow me to use your paper...to publicly thank, in the name of several Belgian families, all those kind persons who, without thought of distinction, have offered all necessary care to the Refugees according to the measure of their means... Let us be proud of their generosity...”

One family housed in Market Harborough wrote:

“To speak frankly, when we were living in our dear old city of Malines... we had visits from English tourists. We thought... these English are

cold people. It is only now that we are learning how warm the heart is that beats under this cold exterior. I cannot express to you how great is the kindness shown to us... Never, never shall we forget these days of consolation passed in hospitable England..."

To the Editor of the "Market Harborough Advertiser."

Sir, Allow me to use your paper as a medium through which to publicly thank, in the name of several Belgian families in Market Harborough and the neighbourhood, all those kind persons who, without thought of distinction, have offered all necessary care to the Refugees according to the measure of their means.

Yes, it is very true, we have all, rich and poor, passed through a sad time, but let us thank with all our heart these good people who, with a constant thoughtfulness, continually make us forget our unhappiness and misery, the ruin of our country and hopes, and the destruction of our homes.

Let us be proud of their generosity, for it is very deep, and proves itself under every circumstance tactful and delicate, taking care not to hurt even the most sensitive nature.

All this is written in our hearts, and can never be effaced. Thus I express my gratitude to all our benefactors who with a touching care are eager to satisfy the slightest desire expressed by any one of us.

Most remarkably, one Belgian couple — Monsieur and Madam Gaston Marien — took their expression of heart-felt thanks back to Belgium with them. They had named their baby boy, born to them in Market Harborough, in honour of both the Kings of Belgium and England, **and** the baby's birthplace:

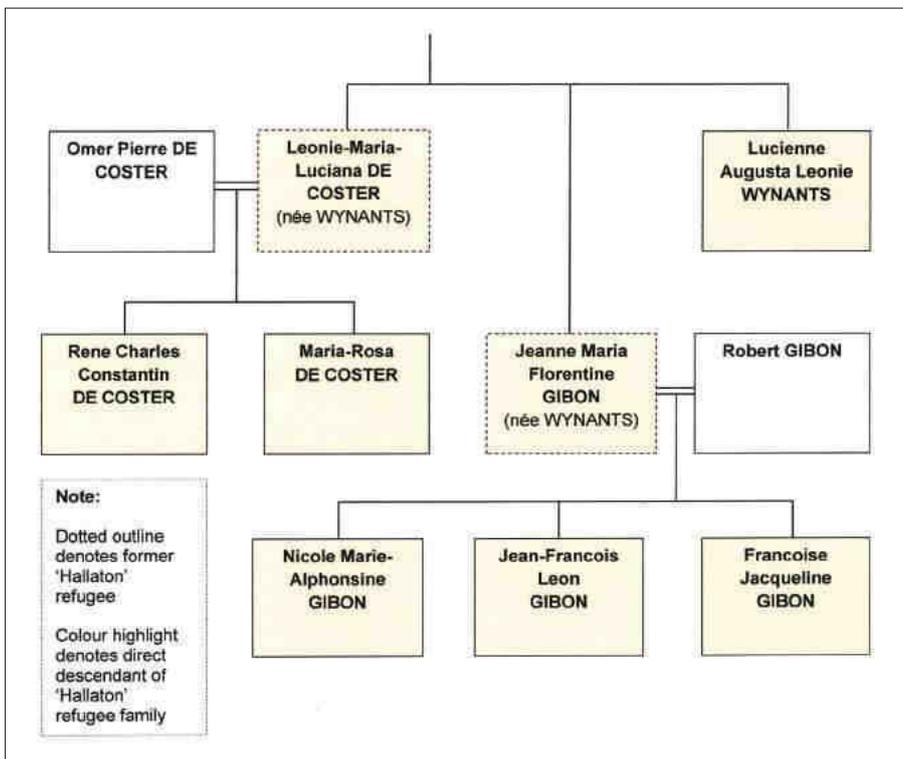
"Esmond Joseph Francois Albert George Harborough".

Legacy of a Nation Reborn

Hallaton may have nothing tangible on its walls to show for its part in the Belgian refugee story, but its profoundly real physical legacy lives to this day in the country it helped in its hours of darkness — the descendants of those who found refuge in its community.

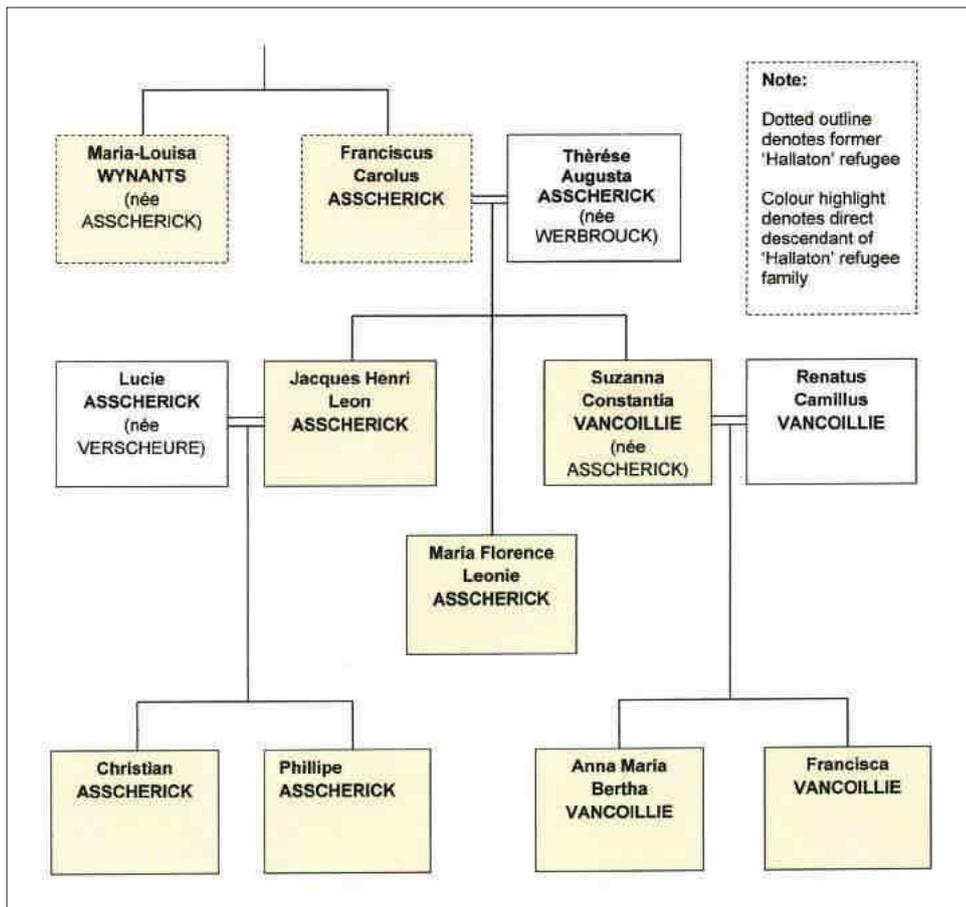
The family tree illustrated below shows the known descendants of Hallaton's Wynants refugee family. Most live on, mainly in Ostend (known locally as Oostende), from where their now-deceased refugee parents, grandparents and great-grandparents derived. There are likely to be other descendants of Hallaton's Wynants family, who are yet to be identified.

The family tree on the following page shows the known descendants of Hallaton's Asscherick family. Again, there are likely to be others who cannot currently be identified.



Above left: Letter from the Market Harborough Advertiser, 24th November 1914.

Left: Family tree showing the known descendants of the Wynants family.



Family tree showing the known descendants of the Asscherick family.

Hallaton's Legacy

Hallaton helped rescue and rebuild the lives and spirits of the ancestors of these modern-day Belgians, displaced as they had been by the almost unimaginable disaster that had benighted their country. Hallaton gave them a chance of a future.

It is clear from what we know of them that they used that chance to the full, building successful families and careers within the ruined, but tyranny-free, post-war Belgium they inherited. It is equally clear that their descendants built on the foundations they laid, helping to create the vibrant, peace-loving, prosperous country it is today.

They, and those who follow in their wake, are now better able than ever, should the need arise again, to carry the torch of freedom that Britain

once carried for their forebears, back in that fateful autumn, a century or more ago.

For many, the tragic circumstances that brought about the refugee crisis have passed into history, but Hallaton's role in helping to alleviate the plight of the refugees mustn't be allowed to slip away unnoticed. Hallaton was, and is, only part of their story, but it was, and remains, an historically important part.

Prime Minister David Lloyd George, writing in May 1919, described the hospitality afforded to Belgian refugees during the war as a "*great act of humanity*". Hallaton's legacy is to have participated in that great act of humanity.

This deserves to be recognised but, more importantly, it deserves to be remembered.

Hallaton and the Tribunal System

“men, men and yet more men”

The Kaiser’s famous description of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) as *“a contemptible little army”* was one which the British Army was more than happy to use as a propaganda tool: the 1st Leicestershire Battalion’s war diary notes that his words were shared with the men as early as 30th of September for example. But it could also be viewed as an accusation. The stark fact is that at the start of the War, for all its professionalism, the British Army was a small force indeed. Its numbers were dwarfed by those of other European powers such as France, Germany and Russia: their conscript armies numbered millions; Britain’s army numbered less than 700,000. And even this number does not give a complete picture. Only approximately 250,000 of these troops were regulars. The rest, the great majority, were reserves — the retired soldiers of the Army Reserve (approximately 145,000); the part-time soldiers of the Special Reserve (another 64,000); and the National Reserve (some 215,000 men).

In fact by the time other defensive commitments are taken into account only 150,000 men were immediately available to be formed into the BEF and sent to the Continent. The French Army, meanwhile, mobilised 1,650,000 troops and 62 infantry divisions, while the German Army mobilised 1,850,000 troops and 87 infantry divisions. In retrospect it was obvious that the BEF would be unable to prevent the German advance through Belgium and into France.

A massive and immediate transfusion of men was therefore required. Conscriptio had been discussed at the highest political and military levels for some years. There had been much reluctance to pursue this course prior to the war; and there was little stomach for it at the start of the war either. Initially, therefore, the government focused solely on encouraging voluntary enlistment. This campaign was spearheaded by Lord Kitchener, the uncompromising Secretary of State for War. And it was successful. By January 1915 over one million

men had enlisted; by December of that year the figure was two and a half million. Numbers climbed above three million. And yet despite Kitchener’s pointing finger and inescapable gaze; despite the press campaigns; despite the white feathers; despite the creation of all those Pals’ Battalions, despite all this, there still weren’t men enough to keep pace with mounting casualties.

It was in this context, and amid fierce debate between ministers willing to consider conscription, and others who wanted to continue with volunteering, that a National Registration Bill was introduced in early July 1915 by Walter Long, minister at the Local Government Board. The *Market Harborough Advertiser* notes that his speech *“went a long way to remove the suspicions of those who regard it ... as a first step towards conscription”*. But in truth what else could have been the ultimate aim of this national registration? And what else could Long really have meant when he talked about respondents being asked if they were willing to *“volunteer for any special form of labour”*?

The Bill passed into law by the middle of the month. By the middle of August personal information was being gathered on the whole adult population, both men and women, aged between 15 and 65. Forms were completed on an individual rather than a household basis, granite blue for men and white for women. Here those completing them were asked to state their occupation with great precision. For the men that meant a particular interest in any technical knowledge or skill within fields such as engineering, ship-building, and other metal trades; or an involvement in agricultural trades. Those in Hallaton would have been expected to state, for example, whether they were shepherds, horsemen, cowmen, farm labourers and the like.

Completed forms were compiled in locally-held registers between August and September 1915 — a massive undertaking. Single and married/widowed men were placed into separate lists; these were then subdivided into 46 different occupations; and

finally split into eight different age groups. (Women were put into 30 occupations and six age groups.) By October the War Cabinet had the figures they wanted. There were approximately five million men of military age still available for national service. About one and a half million of these men, however, were in reserved, or so-called 'starred' occupations, from the black star with which their forms were marked. These were men in coal mining, munitions work, and some forms of agricultural work deemed too important for them to be taken away.

At this point Lord Derby was appointed Director General of Recruiting. He had had considerable regional success in generating recruits earlier in the war, but he was now to undertake an all but impossible task: to use this new National Register to generate sufficient volunteers nationally, when all previous efforts had failed. He acknowledged this difficulty himself shortly before taking up the post. Speaking of national service as "*inevitable*", he suggested that "*there are an enormous number of men who at the present moment are waiting to be fetched...* [and that] *a vast number of these men will volunteer to go to the front*". There was clearly still a perception that there was a pool of potential recruits who had so far held back and that this stemmed at least partly from the reluctance of their employers to do without them. This tension was already visible at a local level. At the end of July, for example, before registration and before the Derby Scheme, Market Harborough magistrates received instructions telling them that they would be expected to arbitrate between employers and recruiting departments over whether potential volunteers were better remaining where they were, or joining the forces. Magistrates were expected to appoint an individual arbitrator. Harborough magistrates chose one of their own, Major Edward Hopton. He would soon have a rather different role in considering such disputes.

Meanwhile Lord Derby's optimistic talk of enormous numbers of men just waiting to be summonsed was not entirely borne out by events. All British men between 18 and 41 were now asked to attest their willingness to serve: a process which involved answering a few simple personal questions and then swearing an oath of allegiance. There was an initial rush. Married men were drawn to do so by the promise that they would not be called up until all single men had been used. (It was a promise that was not to be kept.) The vast majority of those attesting opted for deferred ('Class A') rather than immediate ('Class B') enlistment. They were given a day's pay and a grey armband with a red crown.

And then they were sent home to await the call-up of their group.

So Britain remained poised just short of committing to conscription. In Market Harborough — and indeed in Hallaton — the recruitment drives continued. The newspapers continued to air the arguments for and against conscription. They also carried clarifications and further information on the new Derby or Group Scheme, as it was officially known. It was obvious for example that there would be disputes when men who had attested were actually called up. An appeals system was required — and it would need to be more transparent and consistent than an ad hoc system reliant on individual local arbitrators. Individual men would wish to test whether their jobs meant they should be exempted — or at least whether their call-up should be deferred. Businesses similarly would want to have the opportunity to ensure that their work was not seriously dislocated by the loss of key staff. And trades unions would be keen to ensure that their members did not lose out when for many workers there was, at last, regular work and increasing wages.

Local tribunals were therefore created. Members were appointed by the appropriate local councils: in November for example the Hallaton Rural District Council chose Reverend T. J. Preece from Hallaton, Mr T. Clarke from Bringhurst and Mr W. Star from Horninghold. Clearly there was a desire to have each of the local communities represented. By the end of December the appeals procedure itself had been laid out. Anyone wishing to postpone their service was to obtain the appropriate form from the local tribunal. The application would then be considered by the military representative. Where he agreed to the appeal the local tribunal would simply let the applicant know they had been successful. Where he disagreed the tribunal was to organise a date to hear from both claimant and military representative. A Central Appeal Tribunal was also established for those claimants who were unhappy with the decision taken at a local level. Further clarifications followed from central government: local tribunals were to take the sensible precaution of noting down the reasons for their decisions to help this Central Appeal Tribunal; men were only to be starred on their "*principal and usual occupation*". And there were lists of jobs to which the tribunals could refer: munitions work on List A; coal mining on List B; and more significantly for those in Hallaton, a List C that included agriculture, mining and railway service, and a list D with a range of reserved occupations for which postponement was possible.

In December 1915 the *Market Harborough Advertiser* was still enthusiastically reporting a successful recruitment drive under the Derby Scheme. Apparently there were “*busy scenes*” at the Recruiting Depot on Coventry Road in Market Harborough. Lieutenant-Colonel Sharman Goward, the Recruiting Officer — who will feature again later — and his team were kept on their toes processing “*a steady flow of recruits, many coming long distances*” from the surrounding villages. “*The local response has, we believe, been very good*”, it added, before conceding that it had “*not [been] allowed to publish any figures yet*”. Whatever the reality of those figures, it was becoming painfully obvious that on a national basis the Scheme simply would not generate sufficient numbers of men who were medically fit and in unstarred occupations. In January 1916 the press were reporting both Lord Derby’s analysis of his recruiting figures — the headline figure for which was that there were about 650,000 unstarred single men unaccounted for; and Asquith’s introduction of a Compulsion Bill targeting, it was supposed, these very men. Later that month the Prime Minister and Director General of Recruiting talked of inaugurating “*an energetic new campaign*” designed in Asquith’s words to make the new legislation “*a dead letter*” before it became operative.

But these were empty words. The Derby Scheme had failed. Conscription had till now been viewed with varying degrees of suspicion by politicians from the three main parties. However in light of this failure — and with fears mounting that the collapse of the French army was imminent — Parliament acted swiftly and with little in the way of internal opposition. (Lord Derby noted tartly that there were a few Parliamentarians who would have picked fault even with “*a perfect scheme of mobilisation*” brought down from heaven by the Archangel Michael. Ramsay MacDonald, one of Leicester’s two MPs, was one such.) Asquith’s legislation, now more precisely called the Military Service Act, was introduced in January 1916. By March it had become law. The initial legislation imposed conscription on all single men and widowers without children or dependents, aged between 18 and 41. But still the numbers produced were insufficient. Even as early as February some of the younger ‘classes’ — a word chosen to avoid confusion with the Derby Scheme’s ‘groups’ — of married men were warned to steel themselves about what might happen to them. And by April 1916 conscription was extended to married men. Later there were amendments to the list of reserved occupations so that fewer men were

excluded — a risk in itself since the loss of staff in key industries and services during the volunteer phase of recruitment had been keenly felt. Before the war was out the age limit had risen so much that men above 50 years of age were being conscripted. At the same time the armed forces took on an increasing proportion of recruits who would previously have been deemed unfit for military service. These changes demonstrate the unquenchable thirst for more men. On a local level they will help to explain why some Hallaton men were dragged into war service even though they had initially been spared.

The legislation did at least provide various grounds for appeal. One such was a plea of conscientious objection, a course of action taken by about 16,000 men nationally. A second way out was through ill health. Thirdly it was possible to appeal on the grounds that your job fell into a reserved category. Finally you could try to argue that severe hardship would be caused either domestically or to business in your absence and that a full or at least temporary exemption should be granted. Nationally over a million men pleaded their case on one or more grounds — more than half of those who were called up. And over half received some form of exemption, though generally this was only a short reprieve.

“I do not like soldiering until I am compelled”

Such appeals were to be heard by tribunals of local worthies. In the case of those living in Hallaton that meant the Hallaton Tribunal, which also dealt with men from Blaston, Horninghold, Medbourne, Great Easton, Bringham, Stockerston, Nevill Holt and Drayton. Its members were again chosen by the Hallaton Rural District Council, and unsurprisingly most of them had performed a similar function under the Derby Scheme. There is little evidence left of its work: in 1921 the government decided to destroy virtually all papers linked to individual cases. Only the Middlesex and the Lothian and Peebles Tribunals’ records were officially preserved as examples, though there are partial survivals of records from elsewhere. To find out about the work of the Hallaton Tribunal we are therefore reliant on the reports from the *Market Harborough Advertiser*. These are generally very brief and give little in the way of specific biographical detail. What the *Advertiser* does not reveal — in common with many other newspapers — are any of these men’s names. Instead we may find out the occupation, the age and the marital status of an appellant, along with where they live, but even this is not always the case.

It is rather more forthcoming about those who sat on the tribunal itself. We learn that the meetings were chaired by Reverend Thomas James Preece who appears in the Hallaton Register of Electors throughout the duration of the war and beyond. As the Rector at St Michael and All Angels from 1907 he would have been very familiar with the locals who crossed his path and with their personal circumstances; and having been chosen to perform a similar function under the Derby Scheme he would have had some insight into the appeals process. Alongside him sat a number of others, generally seven or eight. Many of these sat, barring the occasional absence, throughout the duration of the tribunal's work. One such was the local military representative Major Hopton. It was he who had been chosen in July 1915, by his fellow magistrates, to arbitrate between the military and employers keen to retain their staff. He was now able to adopt an openly partisan approach — befitting his military rank. And he was a busy man. He continued to sit on the local Licensing Committee; he helped to set up and run the Market Harborough Volunteer Training Corps (VTC); and he also acted as the Military Representative on both the Market Harborough Rural and Urban Tribunals, the counterparts to the Hallaton Tribunal. Other tribunal members also had close connections to the Volunteer Training Corps: H. S. Payne and C. B. Mould for example were the commanders of the Medbourne and Great Easton branches respectively. Reverend Preece was the President of the Hallaton and District Corps.

The Hallaton Tribunal first sat in March 1916 and met for the final time in September 1918. Initially their meetings were relatively frequent: there were fourteen in the first eight months to December 1916. Later they met less often. By 1918 the tribunal met on only six occasions. Their work centred exclusively on the final two grounds for appeal identified above. Unlike the two Harborough tribunals there was no need for them to wrestle with the moral arguments put forward by conscientious objectors, nor indeed to rule on those claiming illness. Like most tribunals their discussions focused solely on deciding whether the work men did was too important for them to be taken by the armed forces, and on whether too great a hardship would result for them to be conscripted.

This was sensitive work. In the same month that the Hallaton Tribunal first met, a meeting at the Corn Exchange in Leicester had been packed with married men who had attested in good faith and who felt betrayed when the government reneged on its promise to them. In April over 200,000

demonstrated against conscription in Trafalgar Square. There were calls for Lord Derby to resign. He had to assuage a deputation from the newly created National Union of Attested Married Men. Members of the Hallaton Tribunal also felt this pressure. And given that they were pronouncing on men they lived alongside this was inevitable.

Three separate elements of their discussion at their meeting in September 1916 serve as an illustration. Firstly members prefaced their discussion of cases by proposing to send a letter of condolence to the family of the late Thomas Stokes Clarke of Bringhurst. He had been one of their number but had died “*only a few hours after [their last meeting] under very tragic circumstances*”. Clarke fitted the profile of other members. Prominent locally, and with a record of public service, he had been, among other things, a grazier in Bringhurst as well as a butcher in Great Easton; he was a Parish Councillor and a Churchwarden. He was also apparently “*keenly interested*” in the local Volunteer Training Corps. Major Hopton mused that he hoped nothing had happened following their meeting that had hastened his death. In truth Clarke had been in ill health and had simply died suddenly at home. An inquest was not deemed necessary. But the very fact that Hopton raised the question is telling.

Later at that same meeting H. S. Payne asked whether “*it was an offence against the Defence of the Realm Act to interfere with a member of the Tribunal. Was there not some protection against their being abused outside as he and others had experienced after Tribunal meetings?*” Exactly what he meant is unclear: the report of the meeting carries no further detail; nor indeed is there anything elsewhere in the pages of the *Advertiser*. But one of the very first Market Harborough Urban District Tribunal meetings, some six months earlier had opened with its military representative — the ubiquitous Major Hopton of course — referencing an anonymous and abusive letter he had received. There was a very great deal at stake here after all, and emotions were running high. We have already seen there were married men in particular who felt betrayed by the government. We shall see that there were other tensions too.

Finally there were conflicts within the tribunal as it wrestled with how best to go about its work, even among people well used to working together in local government and administration. Thus the Clerk, J. L. Douglass, a solicitor with a practice on the High Street in Market Harborough, was concerned that Major Hopton, a man he obviously knew well from their work together elsewhere, “*should not be permitted to make remarks or make statements ...*

unless he is asked” once the appellants and their solicitors had withdrawn. A satisfactory solution was soon reached. But the tribunal members were obviously at pains, in Reverend Preece’s words, to be seen to be acting in such a way as “*to reach a fair and just decision ... between an applicant and the State*” while also being conscious that “*as neighbours they should endeavour to make their proceedings as pleasant and agreeable as possible to all sides.*”

Not that their work was always particularly agonising. At their meeting in April 1916 for example the tribunal dealt with six separate cases, none of them on the face of it presenting major difficulties. Five of the men involved — including two from Hallaton — were employed in some sort of agricultural capacity; the other was a bricklayer’s labourer. A Blaston cowman and shepherd had his appeal dismissed simply because his group had yet to be called up. (He doesn’t reappear, at least with that combination of jobs.) A saddler and harness maker from the area received a three month exemption. Since he was apparently “*on army work*” this too cannot have detained the tribunal for very long. Meanwhile a Medbourne shepherd’s appeal was withdrawn by the employer who had initially made it. As for the Hallaton men, both of them worked in much the same capacity. Both were single. But their experience with the tribunal was to be very different. The one, described as a “*general carter ... shepherd and milkman*” received short shrift: his appeal was refused.

The other, a “*carrier and carter, assisting on land at Hallaton*” received an initial fourteen day exemption. Short exemptions such as this were commonplace, but this simple initial decision was deceptive. While the examples outlined above illustrate the relative ease with which some cases were resolved, this case was to prove rather more difficult. Thus when the next session takes place some three weeks later, we find out that one of their number had actually proposed a six month exemption on the previous occasion but had been forced to withdraw it. The same proposal would be made this time around as well, but only after what appears to have been a protracted and heated debate among the tribunal members — clearly outlined on this occasion in the *Market Harborough Advertiser*. And this debate serves to illustrate the conflicting tensions between, on the one hand, a desire to do the right thing by local families and on the other hand a desire to do the right thing by the military.

This time we learn rather more about the appellant, and his identity and that of his father soon become apparent. He is 26 years old, and the

son of a carter, grazier and carrier; indeed it is the father who applies for him on this occasion. The latter complains that he “*was not being used quite fairly*”. “*Two of his sons had joined the Army and one had been killed*”. Clearly this is Omar Neale referring to Fred and Herbert Elsdon Neale — Herbert had been killed on 25th of September 1915 — and appealing here for his middle son John. Having painted a picture of family sacrifice he goes on to outline the difficulties he had been having keeping up his business. Two of his men had left, and now all he had in the way of help was this son and a sixteen year old. With Medbourne Station now closed there was so much more work to do. People were complaining that he was not able to keep up with it — a situation recently exacerbated because “*an elderly man ... had left him as the work was too hard*”. This then is an appeal with a highly personal element to it. But it also serves to remind us that many appeals are also commercial: businesses big and small, rural and urban, sought to hold onto key workers, just as they had when the Derby Scheme was in operation.

Omar Neale clearly had allies on the tribunal, and there are further clear signs of the tensions between the hawks and doves. When pressed by another member of the tribunal Major Hopton initially refuses to comment, but then goes on to say that the Military Authorities had marked the case as “*not assented to*”. At this point another on the tribunal asserts that “they had been rather severe in several cases, and particularly in this case”; that they had been overly reliant on the Military Authorities from whom “*they got no help at all*”; and that only one total exemption had been granted since he had been on the tribunal. Major Hopton remarks that there have been a very large number of exemptions. “*Not total exemption*” counters another. On this occasion J. L. Douglass, the Clerk, is more supportive of the Major. He suggests that if anything they have been too lenient and that the Military Authorities have a duty to perform. We can sense the conciliatory tone in his voice as Major Hopton then remarks, “*I have to see you don’t let men off without a proper reason. I have to get men and not help them to get off.*” And so as the debate draws to a close the members of the tribunal haggle over a period of exemption. Six months is proposed and seconded, until someone suggests they risked “*making themselves look a lot of babies*”. They settle on a two month exemption.

In July when he reappears the *Market Harborough Advertiser* dispatches John Neale’s case in one sentence only. (On this occasion the tribunal is principally wrestling with the vexed issue of

whether thatchers are indispensable, an issue to which we shall return.) He is granted a further two months exemption and makes his final appearance in October 1916. Again Omar Neale appears to appeal that his son is a help to him in his business. But by this point much has changed. This time the *Advertiser* report contains no reference from him or from anyone else to the sacrifice the family has already made. Doubtless the tribunal needed no reminding of it; doubtless there was still a large well of sympathy. But the numbers of dead were now spiralling upwards. Two days prior to their August meeting for example, Reverend Preece had conducted a memorial service for Lance-Corporal Marlow. A fortnight later he was doing the same for Albert Tyler. The tribunal was clearly in no mood, in Hopton's words, to "*let men off without a proper reason*". This time John is given a final month's exemption and no leave to appeal.

John Neale's case illustrates that those who are to be conscripted may be represented by others at the tribunal: sometimes, as in his case, their employers may stand for them; sometimes that representation is purely legal. This gave certain appellants an advantage. One such case is that of the Second Whip from Mr Fernie's Hunt. He is from Medbourne where the Hunt's kennels were then located. The *Market Harborough Advertiser* is so impressed by the affair that it gives him his own headline — perhaps not surprising from a paper that a couple of months earlier had reproduced, in full, an article from *The Sporting Life* waxing on the agricultural, economic and sporting benefits of the continuation of fox hunting. And it would be surprising if the tribunal was not also impressed given the support he receives. He has legal representation in the form of Mr H. Linley — a regular presence at these sessions, and as Clerk to the Market Harborough Urban District Council another fixture in local government. He is there, he helpfully informs the tribunal, "*on behalf of Mr C W B Fernie*", the Master of the Hunt himself. Linley asserts that it is in the national interest that hunting should continue — perhaps he had been looking through back issues of the *Market Harborough Advertiser* — because "*the breeding and raising of light horses [is] of great national importance*". The Director of Remounts also appears and uses virtually the same phrase about hunting itself. Naturally Major Hopton opposes the appeal. He refers to an instruction that Hunt servants were not to be spared — though apparently five from the Atherstone hunt had been exempted just the week before; he also notes that women are now doing this work. At this point there is an intervention by

J. Starbuck, another tribunal regular: "*I don't know what sort of 'Whips' they would make, they don't make very good farmers*", he says, bringing laughter from those present. He then adds that he knows Mr Fernie has cut numbers as much as possible. It is heavyweight support indeed — both legal and from witnesses and personnel on the tribunal — and the Second Whip is exempted to January 1917.

At the next session arguments about the importance of hunting continue. This time the Second Whip has the Master of the Hunt in person pleading his indispensability. Again national interest is cited — at least until the hunting season has ended in mid April. Naturally Major Hopton is not to be swayed; Masters elsewhere, such as at Tiverton, have suspended hunting he says. (Fernie pleads ignorance of this sacrifice.) Others on the tribunal are more supportive though. J. L. Douglass suggests that there had been no official word opposing hunting. In a neighbourly gesture, Medbourne member H. S. Payne goes further and says that there had actually been word that hunting should go on, and that men were therefore needed. The Second Whip again benefits from this support. He is exempted to the start of April, by which point the hunting season would have more or less finished. After this we lose sight of him.

The importance or otherwise of hunting is discussed again in September 1916, when a Medbourne blacksmith appeals for his son who assists him in his work, not least in shoeing Mr Fernie's Hunt. Again Payne is swift to leap to the defence: if hunting is to continue there must be people to shoe the horses. Again the military representative is swift to oppose: on this occasion it is Lt Col Sharman Goward, Market Harborough Recruitment Officer, and like Major Hopton for whom he is deputising, founder of the Harborough VTC. He "*would stop hunting if he had his way*" and after a couple more years of war people would "*wake up and realise things*". Somebody else on the tribunal then reminds everyone of the necessity of blacksmiths in agriculture and of the shortage of them locally, and a compromise is reached (three months exemption with VTC training).

These same considerations will have weighed on the tribunal as they considered the case of a Hallaton blacksmith. In May 1916 he is appealed for by his employer and is given a two-month exemption. At the start of August he reappears, again appealed for by his employer. This time we learn that he is 32 years old and is married. Again he is given a two month exemption, this time provided he joins the VTC, a condition which he accepts. The Medbourne

wheelwright and carpenter whose case is discussed immediately prior to his, was not so keen to accept this same condition. However, the tribunal would only grant him an exemption if he did join. And so he does, “for the sake of his employer” and — as he remarks in a moment of bracing honesty — because he “*did not like soldiering until he was compelled*”. That compulsion was soon to arrive: in October he is appealed for by his employer but is granted a final month’s exemption without leave to appeal. It is hardly surprising that the Hallaton Tribunal was so eager to push those being granted exemptions into the VTC — we have already noted after all that many of its members had a command in it; and it is a condition that tribunals elsewhere had already been invoking. In any case this becomes government policy by the end of September. Meanwhile, our Hallaton blacksmith also reappears in October, again appealed for by his employer. The latter seeks to impress upon the tribunal how busy they are: 40 or 50 horses to shoe each week, as well as lots of agricultural repairs across six villages. This time the tribunal is unmoved and — as with the Medbourne wheelwright — grants him a month’s exemption without leave to appeal.

In January 1917 we see the tribunal dealing with the cases of various Hallaton men who were appealed for by their well-to-do employers. One example sees “*a Hallaton landowner*” appeal for a 41 year old single man working as stud-groom and bailiff — he has charge of six Shire stallions apparently; and for a 37 year old married shepherd and cowman. Both are given exemptions — to July 1st and April 1st respectively. A second sees a (presumably different) “*Hallaton landowner*”, four of whose men have already joined up, seek a short exemption for a 40 year old married man who is described (splendidly) as “*the odd man about the house*”. We learn that his duties include valet, butler, farm hand and general factotum. It is a fine list of posts — unsurprisingly not matched by any Census records — and its variety presumably reflects the extent to which working age men have disappeared. The Fletchers at Hallaton Hall had listed 14 staff in the 1911 Census, of whom there were only four men in total. In any case Major Hopton remarks that he was not required in the national interest in his current position and the rest of the tribunal agree. The landowner’s appeal is dismissed. And then obligingly the tribunal ask the military not to call the man up for a month anyway.

A similar appeal comes from someone the *Market Harborough Advertiser* coyly describes as “*a large property owner at Nevill Holt*”. Presumably this is Sir

Bache Cunard, Baronet, seeking to retain the services of his “*head gardener and to some extent market gardener*”. We also learn that “*his man also looked after the house property and saw that things were kept in proper repair*” and that Cunard, unsurprisingly, “*did not want his place to go to rack and ruin*”. More revealingly we learn that his employee had been rejected under the Derby Scheme but was now deemed fit enough for garrison duty abroad. By early 1916 the medical examiner’s stark verdict of either “*fit*” or “*unfit*” for military service, had been replaced by more flexible A, B, and C categories. Those fit for general service were As; those categorised as C — like the Second Whip of the Fernie Hunt were only fit for service at home; Bs meanwhile were passed fit for service abroad in a support capacity. C. B. Mould, the commander of the Great Easton VTC had been passed in Class B in September 1916 and had subsequently resigned his post on the tribunal. This was their first session without him and the late Thomas Clarke. In their stead the Hallaton Rural District Council had chosen T. Simkin of Hallaton, a farmer well into his fifties, and Thomas Sharpe of [Nevill] Holt. For Sharpe in particular this would have been an unnerving beginning — had he showed up. But the replacement was himself replaced by John Redfern Laundon, another fifty-plus grazier and Hallaton man.

There is an even starker demonstration of how the military relax or — perhaps more accurately — lower their medical standards in the experience of a Medbourne coal wharf manager. First appealed for in May 1916 by his firm, he is granted a two month exemption. Further appearances follow. By August 1917 there has, however, been a significant change in his circumstances. Medical examinations had initially seen him rejected by the military; he had then been reclassified as C3 — the 3 an indication that his fitness was at the bottom end of the scale; and yet now he has been passed for general service. His employer attempts to underline his importance in his current position: difficulties in the coal business “*became more acute from day to day and it was most important that he should retain this man*”. But the tribunal, chaired in Preece’s absence by Thomas Augustus Hardcastle of the hall at Blaston, are not prepared to grant him an exemption now he has turned out to be fit enough. It is clear that the armed forces have had to become much less choosy by this stage. Equally it is a reminder that the authorities have, by this point, laid to one side the once extensive list of reserved occupations.

Not all appeals were solely supported by concerned relatives or by employers with a vested

interest. In early September 1916 for example the appeal of a 32 year old Hallaton master plumber was made on two grounds: firstly that “*he was practically the sole support of his widowed mother*”; and if this emotional appeal was not enough to sway the tribunal, he was also appealed for by the Trustees of an Oddfellows’ Lodge, of which he was the Secretary of the State Insured Branch. These Friendly Societies were a valuable source of protection against illness, injury and death; his Branch had 107 members and apparently would close without him. We don’t know which aspect of the appeal the tribunal found more compelling but it did give him a three month exemption to Boxing Day.

However he was soon forced to defend himself again, even to retain this temporary reprieve. By mid October his case had been passed up to the Leicester County Appeal Tribunal which sat at the castle. These appeal tribunals were the first layer for appeals against decisions taken at a local tribunal level; beyond which there was a Central Tribunal with nationwide responsibility. Appeals could be made either by those who had applied to the local tribunals, or as in this case by the Military. Major Wellsman, the Military representative here, makes no mention of his role with the Oddfellows but does call into question his importance as a plumber, asserting that his cousin was also a plumber, and that he had already been granted conditional exemption. (Presumably one plumber was enough.) His legal representative asserts that the cousin is in fact a painter without connection to the plumbing business, and that the applicant has two brothers in the forces, two more waiting to be called up and, we are reminded, a widowed mother. The Appeal Tribunal validates the decision made by the Hallaton Tribunal. The biographical detail points in the direction of Richard Hawke. At the time of the 1911 Census he is a plumber and (in a clearly additional entry) a house painter, living on the High Street with his 57 year old widowed mother Mary Ann Hawke, his brother Herbert and sister Kathleen. Close by live plumber and decorator John Henry Hawke with his daughter, two sisters and two brothers, including Leonard who was 18 at the time and who is clearly working as his apprentice.

The County Appeal Tribunal was also called upon to further examine the issue of thatching. In May 1916 the Hallaton Tribunal deals with two similar cases. In the first a 35 year old Hallaton thatcher appeals for an exemption with the support of “*a gentleman*” who describes his services as “*indispensable to the neighbourhood*”, not least given the damage to cottages in recent gales. We also learn

that the applicant’s work as a sheep shearer and washer “*was very necessary to neighbouring farmers*”. Clearly this meets with the broad approval of the tribunal: they grant him an initial two month exemption and leave to appeal again. A second case however meets with a much frostier reception. A farmer appeals for a 32 year old who he describes as a thatcher. But the tribunal are not to be persuaded — it soon emerges that he only thatches on three farms after hay and harvest and that he does not thatch cottages; more damning still, one member of the tribunal recalls that he had previously been appealed for as a waggoner and had been refused. He does not like this attempt “*to get him off under another description*”. Unsurprisingly his appeal is refused.

However, at the outset of their meeting in July — when John Neale’s appeal is receiving so little attention — this thatcher’s case is back in front of them, brought forward by J. Starbuck, whose views on women as farmers we heard previously. Apparently the employer has appealed from them to the County Tribunal, where the fact that he thatches on three farms has played better. Starbuck says that it is a case the tribunal know well and that “*the public*” are unhappy. (This is another reminder that in dealing with these cases the tribunal members are firstly dealing with people they know well and secondly that their decisions will be scrutinised closely by their local community.) He contends that the man had not thatched on the biggest of the three farms, and that there is no comparison between this case and that of the other thatcher they had exempted — despite the opposition of the military. Reverend Preece notes that the official designation of an agricultural thatcher as a certified occupation, while that of a house thatcher was not, shows a basic misunderstanding of the frequency of such work: perhaps just three weeks out of the year, compared to the regularity of work as a house thatcher. And yet later in that same session Major Hopton opposes exemption for a 34 year old Hallaton thatcher — this may well be our 35 year old thatcher from May — contending that this is not his main occupation. Nevertheless the man gets a three month exemption. It is very difficult to identify who these different thatchers are: no one is described as a thatcher either in the censuses of 1901 or 1911.

In September 1916 another case at the Leicestershire Appeal Tribunal concerned an appeal by the military against a local tribunal granting exemption until 29th November to a young 19-year-old man who was helping his father on a 95 acre farm in Hallaton. The man’s father was disabled by rheumatism and “*relied entirely upon*

his son, having no other help except women on the farm.” Major Wellsman, for the military, stated that the applicant had since the previous January to make arrangements and asked that the period of exemption be reduced to end on 15th October. The chairman of the tribunal awarded a final exemption until 1st November.

Some of those who appear are much more easily identified, and Mark Stamp is a good example. He first appears in front of the tribunal in mid-September 1916. Described simply as a 40 year old tailor he receives an exemption to the end of November, a recommendation which on this occasion comes from the military authorities. When we pick up his story again in December we discover that he is “*married with a large family*”. This time the military are happy to see him given a conditional exemption. However as the war grinds bloodily onwards and the demand for men grows more and more pressing, Stamp, like so many others, finds his case being re-examined.

His second battle to avoid conscription begins in January 1918. Now described as 40 years old (he seems to have shed a year or so during 1917) and as a master tailor, we now learn that he has eight children and that he is passed B1. As a B1 Stamp had been passed fit for service abroad in a support capacity — the 1 was an indication of comparative good health. Clearly determined to avoid being conscripted Stamp reminds the tribunal that his was a “*single-handed business*” and that it would mean ruin if he were called up because “*it was impossible to find a substitute*”. Having asserted grounds of hardship he then further presses his utility on the home front by adding that he was cultivating an acre of ground single-handedly. There were clearly divisions among the members of the tribunal. The Chairman, who after all will have known his parishioner and his family well, viewed Stamp’s position with some sympathy, remarking that single men and the newly married should be sent before such men with big families who would be a source of greater expense on the country. Major Hopton predictably took the opposing view: Stamp should be required to join Section B of the Volunteers; the question of cost should not be considered. At which point Stamp remarked that he also delivered the letters at Hallaton — perhaps until now he had forgotten this further proof of his usefulness.

His case was adjourned until the next session in March. He has now aged two years and has ten children. We learn that he is “*an efficient member of the Volunteer Force*” — he had proved to be an accurate shot for example. This time the tribunal are

more forgiving, and a glance at those present perhaps shows us why. Major Hopton was absent. He is granted a six month open exemption conditional on him continuing his Volunteer training. That notwithstanding a 42 year old Master Tailor, with nine children under 15 years old, appears in June. He receives a three month exemption. This time his nemesis Major Hopton opens proceedings by pointing out a circular from headquarters in which the need for men is described as “*insistent*” and which goes on to say that “*Tribunals should require very strong grounds before exempting men of fighting age*”. As it turns out his latest exemption will last him just beyond the tribunal’s final meeting at the start of September 1918. Mark Stamp had successfully navigated the appeal process and had escaped the armed forces’ seemingly insatiable demands for men.

A similar case is that of Frederick Barnett. He makes his first appearance in late May 1916. Described as 36 years old and married, his job as a baker means that for the tribunal he is in a reserved occupation. Their decision is therefore an easy one: he is granted an exemption, conditional “*on the circumstances remaining the same*”. But of course they don’t. With the demand for men gathering pace, Barnett finds himself passed fit for general service and with his exemption under review. In January 1918, at the same session where Stamp was saying it was impossible to find a substitute, Barnett too was doing his best to outline why he was indispensable to the local community: he was managing the business single-handedly; he was supplying bread to a number of outlying lodges and villages where no other bakers went — and which without him would not be supplied; and two other bakers had left the neighbourhood since his last appearance. Presumably as a result of this last point he adds that he had been asked to take on more customers, but that he would not do so until his case was resolved.

Major Hopton mused that half his time seems to be spent delivering bread and this thought appears to sway the tribunal. Barnett is granted an exemption to the start of June but on the dual proviso that he joins the Volunteers (of course), and spends more time baking bread while someone else delivers it. (It is unclear how this rearrangement in his working practice would have made him any more available for military service.) He duly reappears before them in June, his fitness for service simply noted as Grade 1 (as was Stamp’s). This time though he has brought reinforcements in the familiar shape of Mr Linley. It is at this session where Major Hopton fires his salvo that the need for men “*in the higher categories was insistent*” and that “*Tribunals should require very*

strong grounds before exempting men of fighting age". Nevertheless Barnett does get a further exemption — of three months this time. However the tribunal wish him to use this time to make arrangements for the conduct of his business in his absence. As it is the war ends before he has to leave — and indeed find a replacement baker who was too old or too unfit to fight. There is some anecdotal evidence that suggests that Barnett was looked at askance by others in the village after the war, though it is difficult to think of a job that was more important on the home front than his. Whether or not this is true it does serve as a reminder that there was a price to be paid by those who did not serve.

There are echoes of Stamp's and Barnett's appearances before the tribunal in the story of Frederick Charles Hawke. He had obtained a conditional exemption way back in June 1916. But at the same meeting in January 1918 at which the Military was contesting the conditional exemption of Mark Stamp, it also sought to have similar reconsideration of his case. By this point he is a 41 year old widower with one child and gives his employment as "*sub-postmaster, motor agent and repairer*". Hawke fights his case on both his usefulness at home — he is a one-man business, his seven men having joined up, and his Post Office duties have increased considerably during the course of the war; and on the domestic hardship that would result from his call-up. Thus he informs the tribunal that he is the eldest of a family of eight, that one brother had been killed and that three were in the Army. In case that is not enough he adds that his parents are invalids. He is granted a three-month exemption though naturally he is to do Volunteer training. Reappearing in May, and this time described as a sub-postmaster and motor garage proprietor, he tells the tribunal that he has lately been working a motor tractor.

This seemingly unimportant extra element of his defence is perhaps rather more significant than it initially appears. When a Medbourne man applies for an exemption at the tribunal's meeting in the following month he tells them that "*his capital [is] invested in a motor repairing business and in motor tractors and [that he] was doing a considerable amount of ploughing*". Although he is only granted a one month final exemption he is then told that he should take the agricultural element of his appeal to the War Agricultural Committee. These had been established in the counties to help tribunals gauge the amount of agricultural labour required. (Incidentally the Market Harborough Rural Tribunal regularly had an 'Agricultural Representative' alongside the

Military one. For whatever reason the Hallaton Tribunal is never recorded as having such assistance.) Meanwhile after some debate, and by a majority vote, Hawke had been granted a final one month exemption. Unlike the Medbourne businessman he is not referred elsewhere, though this is perhaps what he had in mind for himself. And yet there is to be further reference to Hawke's case. In June while Major Hopton is talking about the "*insistent*" need for men, the Clerk informs the tribunal that Hawke has gone to the Appeal Court, where he has been granted an open exemption to August 1st. Like Frederick Barnett and Mark Stamp, Frederick Charles Hawke is also spared from conscription.

The work of the Hallaton Tribunal and the others comes to an end in November 1918 with the following terse declaration: "*The government has decided that all recruiting under the Military Services Act is to be suspended. All outstanding calling-up notices, whether for medical examination or service, are cancelled. All cases pending before tribunals should be suspended.*"

Reverend Preece and his colleagues had doubtless sought in his words to be "*fair and just*", but given the nature of their work and the implications of their decisions it is unlikely that even "*as neighbours [they had managed] to make their proceedings as pleasant and agreeable as possible to all sides.*" They were subjected to the competing pressures of doing right by those neighbours in whose cases they sat in judgement; while also making decisions with which the wider community would be satisfied. They had to interpret and implement government instructions with which they were sometimes unhappy, and which were prone to regular changes; temper their sympathy or indeed lack of it — for particular individuals; and ensure the continuation of local services, some of them in their own way crucial to the war effort. Finally, of course, they had to ensure that the armed forces were provided with enough men, while the military situation grew more and more perilous. Some of those they dealt with had quite understandably sought to put off joining up until they were compelled. Others had simply sought a little time to put their affairs in order. In some cases the impetus to appeal seems to have come from employers — some of whom were exceptionally well-connected — rather than from employees; and some of their business concerns may strike us as unimportant, even selfish. Under such difficult circumstances the members of the Hallaton Tribunal should be applauded for their efforts. They too had done their own bit of duty for King and Country.

The History of Hallaton's War Memorials

Introduction

Why were public war memorials erected? The reason may seem obvious — to remember those who have died. But it is more complicated than that. The memorials were not being erected where the dead were buried. In fact, in very many cases there was no body to bury. The continuous shelling and fighting over the same ground again and again meant that the original site was a total morass. In the absence of a body, war memorials with the names of the dead were erected as a focal point for expressions of grief, both by the individual's relatives but also as a communal demonstration of pride; a sense that everyone, both those who had served, those who died and those at home, whatever their position in society, were 'in this together'. Whatever else, the memorial demonstrated that they did not die in vain. The cause was noble and their death, although a sacrifice, was honoured with pride.

Before the First World War the idea of public memorials to the war dead was not quite what it became during and after the war. On the battlefield bodies were often buried together with the fallen enemy, whilst back home, though private monuments could be found, often in places of worship or in schools, and statues to well-known military leaders were placed in public spaces, the idea of a common monument listing all the war dead was not common.

However, to the people of Hallaton the idea of a public memorial to the war dead would not have been a new concept, as all would have been aware, and many probably seen, the memorial dedicated to the men of Leicestershire who died in the Boer War, which still stands today in Town Hall Square in the city of Leicester. It was unveiled on 1st July 1909 in a grand public ceremony.

What is especially poignant is that on the first Sunday of each subsequent July there was a



The 1909 ceremony in Leicester to unveil the Boer War Memorial. ROLLR (GP233).

ceremony at the memorial to remember the fallen. The following amazing description comes from the *Melton Mowbray Mercury and Oakham and Uppingham News* of 9th July 1914, and recalls the ceremony which took place the previous Sunday 5th July.

“The Town Hall-square is packed with people — for the most part silent and thoughtful; a drizzling rain is falling and there is a sense of sadness and solemnity in the very air. In the centre of the crowd is what appears to be a pile, standing several feet in height, of luxuriant flowers and foliage, and it is upon this structure — silently guarded, sword in hand, by a couple of mounted policemen — that all eyes are fixed. It is the war memorial, erected to perpetuate the memory of the gallant Leicestershire men who fought and died for King and country in South Africa. In the ordinary way it is a familiar sight, and one upon which the passing citizen bestows but a casual glance — now it is an object of interest and awe.

Looking back upon the years which have passed, we see them again, those gallant khaki-clad men swinging along to war and death, with a song upon their lips; see them on the burning Veldt fighting on and on until they drop. We can see the anxious wife and mother stricken dumb with the awful grief which comes to them with the appearance of the bulletin from the front of a beloved name in the list of those who fell in action. Dimly there comes back to us memories of sorrow and of tears, and we bow our heads and mourn for the soldiers who never came back.

Faintly to be heard in the distance is the roll of the drum and the church bells chiming out a solemn peal. It is the soldiers’ requiem. Standing out in bold relief from the summit of the petal covered eminence is the representation of Grief — the figure of a woman who stretching out her arms to the populace, seems to dumbly ask for their prayers and sympathy, and the hearts of all respond to the call. A passing breeze softly caresses the pure white petals of the lilies placed by loving hands upon the monument in memory of some brave lad who fell — a splashing raindrop falls like a tear from the darkened clouds.

Comes now the tramp of feet to martial music, bayonets appear in sharp relief against the sullen sky. The crowd opens, and serried ranks of red-coats take up a position facing the memorial to their comrades, and medals and clasps flash

upon many breasts, betokening the presence of some who came home from the war unscathed. Memories of departed comrades are doubtless recalled, and a tear trickles down more than one war-scarred face.

Now there is a silence which can almost be felt — an expectant hush — as suddenly and slowly there paces forward a white-clad procession of choristers, followed ... by a second procession of influential representatives of the borough and county, headed by the Mayor and the High Sheriff, who come to mourn officially and to hang great wreaths of snow white flowers upon the memorial. Every head is uncovered as the onlookers and troops join in the singing of ‘Soldiers of Christ Arise’ which sounds out with a grand and resonant swell, and then the aged chaplain reverently invokes the blessing Him who is the Director and Mover of all things — of war and of peace Both the Mayor and the High Sheriff speak feelingly of the departed dead, the while the rain comes softly down and weeps in unison with the little group of relatives of some of the fallen nearby.

A sharp command, and the rifles are thrown to the ‘slope’ — way is made for half-a-dozen buglers and now, as all arms are presented, the wailing notes of the ‘Last Post’ sound across the square. The succeeding silence is broken by the strains of the National Anthem; the troops swing round and go away at the quickstep; the civilians disperse slowly. The soldiers’ Requiem is over!”

The poignancy of this event, happening ironically just one month before the outbreak of the First World War, seems very familiar to all of us 100 years later. Yet, although the people of Hallaton of 1914 would have been aware of this, it was not something they would have done themselves in the village. That is not to say that the war dead of the village of that time were not remembered. Listed on the memorial in Leicester are Sergeant Fred Payne and Lieutenant Phillip Hampton Price-Dent. Both were from Hallaton and both from very different backgrounds, and both are remembered with memorials in St Michael and All Angels Church in the village. They both have their own plaques on the wall of the church.

However, whilst these are in a public place and whilst it is possible Payne’s was paid for by public subscription, it is hard to see how their family could have afforded such a monument; neither memorial represent the idea of communal memory.



Left: Memorial plaque to Philip Price-Dent in Hallaton church.

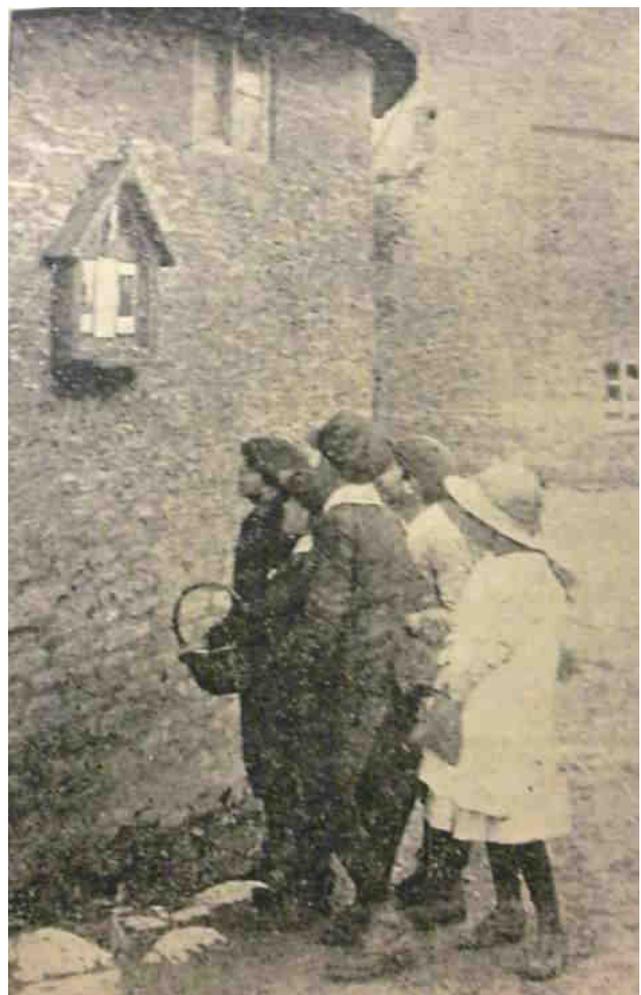
Below: A typical village street shrine. This one in Twywell in neighbouring Northamptonshire.

Both are private, specific to one person. Payne and Price-Dent are not represented together on one memorial. For Hallaton the idea of collective remembrance would have to wait, though not for as long as we might think.

It was decreed early on in the First World War, that in the interest of fairness to all, there would be no repatriation of bodies. A very few wealthy families did manage to do so at the beginning of the war, but it caused much bitterness from those who could not afford to do so. Most war memorials were planned — sometimes with much dissent and bitterness, by committee, frequently self-selected, and paid for by public subscription. The clear majority, therefore, were not unveiled until the early 1920s but some, where dissent about the form it should take or where money was slow to come forward, were not completed until the 1930s.

There had been earlier 'street shrines' erected, usually in towns where a lot of men from the same road signed on together as Pals, but these were essentially temporary structures. These could also be found in villages, but Hallaton is not believed to have had one.

The situation could not be more different in the case of the two public war memorials in Hallaton. Most people are only aware of the one near the Buttercross, so this short chapter will give the history of both.



War Memorial on the Green

As the war progressed so the names of Hallaton men among the fallen increased. The idea of some kind of public memorial to the men in the village appears to have first been raised at a meeting of the church vestry committee on 26th December 1915. There was a proposal to erect a brass plate in memory of both George Frederick Andrews, who had been killed in 1914, and for the other men of the village killed on active service, or who had died for the cause. The last part of the sentence is especially interesting, with the meeting coming just a very short while after the death of Montague Percy Killingrey. What is fascinating is that this proposal was taken up, and permission was requested from the Bishop of Peterborough. Leicester then being a part of the Peterborough Diocese and not fully a diocese in its own right until 1926. Notices to this effect were put up outside the church and there were no objections, and so on 11th February the following edict was issued on behalf of the bishop, allowing the churchwardens and parishioners to:

“Erect on the south wall of the church by the seat occupied by the late Lieutenant F G Andrews during divine service a memorial plate to his memory in accordance with the design deposited in the registry and to erect on the north wall of the church a memorial plate with the inscription, ‘to the memory of those parishioners who fell in the Great War of 1914—’ followed by the names of those who fell.”

Here then is the first known evidence in Hallaton of a desire to have a communal memorial to those who had died in the war. It of course stems from the church, and as such is not a memorial in a public space, but is the embryonic idea of collective memory in which all men are remembered together. It is not known if the plate to the parishioners was ever made. The plate for Andrews can still be seen in the church.

On 26th July 1916, Lieutenant Calverley George Bewicke, was killed at Pozières. His body was never found. At that time the Manor of Hallaton was in the hands of Mrs Effie Elizabeth Bewicke, Calverley's aunt by marriage. Her husband, the Lord of the Manor, Lieutenant Theodore Calverley Bewicke RN, had died in 1896. They had no children and Effie, who was a most outgoing and generous hearted soul, in effect looked upon Calverley George as the son she never had. She doted on him and was immensely proud of him. To her he was a fair haired, joyous blue-eyed boy

and she was devastated when he was killed. In her own words:

“I longed to put up a memorial to him and all the other fallen soldier and sailor heroes of Hallaton village...” (Effie Bewicke, *Memories*, p. 26. Privately printed, 1938).

Many memorials were placed in churchyards and she could have arranged for it to be constructed there but, perhaps thinking a more public and open space would better suit all the villagers, she proceeded with her plan and instructed her agent to write to Harry Butteriss, the chairman of Hallaton Parish Council, to request permission, which he did on 23rd June 1917. Interestingly, just five days before the temporary war memorial in Town Hall Square, Leicester, was unveiled in a great ceremony.

“Mrs Bewicke is very anxious to put up a suitable memorial upon the little green at Hallaton, near the old cross, for those of Hallaton who have lost their lives in the war.

“I am writing to you therefore as chairman of the Parish Council to ask what the views of the council would be as to the erection of a monument of this nature upon the site in question.

“I have seen the suggested sketches and it would be quite a handsome and appropriate structure, and would I think be most suitable and appropriate for the position mentioned.

“Perhaps therefore you would kindly place the matter before your council and let me know if you have any comments or suggestions as to the matter, and also their views generally, and Mrs Bewicke would be most obliged.”

On 4th July the following reply was sent.

“In reply to yours of June 23rd a parish council meeting was held on July 3rd when your letter was read and discussed and the following resolution was unanimously passed. That the council are entirely in sympathy with the object of the letter and would be quite willing for a memorial of the nature suggested to be erected on the site mentioned. The council would like to see a sketch of the proposed monument if Mrs Bewicke could kindly send one.”

There are a few things concerning this correspondence which need to be discussed. First, the letter from Mrs Bewicke's agent makes no mention of it being a memorial to her nephew, which was the primary reason for it. Though it has become a symbol of

community remembrance it was, in all essence, a private memorial to a family member upon which the names of villagers would be attached.

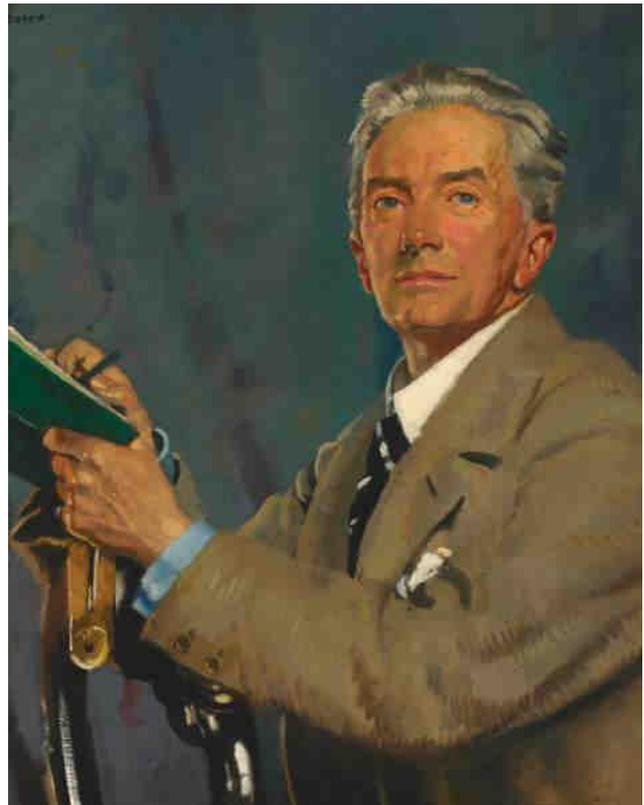
Second, there appears to have been no real debate among the council. They were happy for it to proceed without seeing any plan of what it looked like and without any form of consultation with the villagers, especially those related to the dead. Nationally, those involved with the decisions concerning commemorative structures were usually taken from the established social elites, and groups within that area. In this Hallaton is no different. The wishes of the bereaved themselves do not appear to have been paramount in the minds of the members of the parish council.

Given that it was deemed necessary and appropriate for a second public war memorial to be commissioned, as we shall see, after the end of the war, must at least open the question as to whether some in Hallaton did not consider the memorial proposed by Mrs Bewicke to be exactly what they considered appropriate.

The other major issue is, of course, the timing. The initial proposal, dated 23rd June 1917, comes well before the end of the war. 1917 was a particularly bleak year. One in which there was no real sign and very little hope that the war would soon be over. Yet it is clear from the letter above that Mrs Bewicke had already gone as far as having sketches made of the proposed monument before this date. Hallaton is not unique in this respect, but one wonders why they could not have waited for the war to end.

One of Mrs Bewicke's relations was the well-regarded architect, Paul Waterhouse FRIBA (1861–1924). He had been President of the Royal Institute of British Architects and had designed such buildings as the Whitworth Hall, Manchester; Girton College, Cambridge; and University College Hospital, London. He was in the top rank of his day. Effie asked if he would design a memorial for Hallaton. He must have studied the site and the nearby Buttercross, because the design echoed the round stepped base of the latter and sits proudly, standing silhouetted against the sky when viewed from across the Green.

“The upper part taking the form of a cross, the North side bearing a single name – Calverley George Bewicke, accompanied by the Bewicke coat of arms in colour, and the motto so singularly appropriate to him and his companions: Sacrifice Libertas et Natale Solum: for freedom and country’.”



*Paul Waterhouse, painted circa 1923 by William Orpen.
© RIBA (100478-1).*

“The lower stage consists of two circular stepper slabs, the lower one a seat, and on the upper is placed a sundial of somewhat unusual construction, the shadow being read both on the horizontal and the vertical surface. To this the architect has attached an original motto: ‘Vox Luminis Umbra’ a statement applying literally to the dial in the sense that the ‘shadow is the voice of the light’, and figuratively to a greater truth of which monuments such as this are witness — as the shade is the utterance of the sunshine, so the sacrifice of life is the very word of life itself.”
(Bewicke, *op. cit.*, pp. 26–27).

The 20 names of those others killed, known at that time, were inscribed on the other faces. Round the top of the intermediate base is carved the inscription “Erected by Effie Elizabeth, widow of Theodore Calverley Bewicke; in Memoriam, MCMXIV – XVIII”.

The memorial was built by Hallaton builder Thomas Marlow, using lovely mixed colour stone from a quarry at nearby Weldon. Hallaton's memorial, although not unique in this respect, was dedicated unusually early — 3rd April 1918. The end of the war was still very far away. It was a wonderful and moving event held on a lovely



Above: A very early photograph of the war memorial where it appears the names of the fallen have not yet been inscribed.

Below: War memorial dedication, April 1918.



spring day and reported in detail by the *Market Harborough Advertiser* on the following Tuesday.

“Dr Lang, the Bishop of Leicester, dedicated at Hallaton on Wednesday afternoon a worthy memorial to the late Lieut. Calverley George Bewicke (son of Major and Mrs Bewicke), who was killed in action, and to the brave soldiers and sailors from the parish of Hallaton who have given their lives for their king and country. The memorial is situate on the village green near the historic buttercross, and the whole proceedings were very impressive indeed, and will long be remembered by those who were privileged on such a beautiful afternoon to take part in them as indeed practically the whole village did.

“Quite a martial touch was added to the proceedings by the presence of the detachments of volunteer corps from Hallaton, Market Harborough, Melton, Medbourne, East Norton, etc under command of Capt. Saunderson Morrison, of Hallaton, who took a prominent role in making the excellent arrangements for the afternoon.”

The historic proceedings commenced with a service in the parish Church. The church was crowded.

“A shortened form of evensong was used. The processional hymn was ‘Rock of Ages Cleft For Me’. Psalms XXIII and CXXI were chanted, the lesson from Solomon III, 14,I was read by the Rev. A M Harper of Great Easton. Following the

hymn 'God of Living in Whose Eyes' a procession was formed to the cross. The volunteers lined the route, and the procession, consisting of the Bishop, clergy and choir and congregation passed between them. The processional hymn being 'Jesus Lives No Longer Now.' An eloquent and stirring address was given by the Bishop when dedicating the memorial and at the conclusion the hymn 'On the Resurrection Morning' was sung. The volunteers presented arms and the 'Last Post' was sounded by a bugler. The procession was then reformed, and the service concluded with the National Anthem and the rendering by Miss Grace Barnett, the organist of 'O Rest in the Lord'. A number of wreaths were laid in the memorial including a laurel wreath from Capt. Saunderson Morrison and the volunteers. After the ceremony Capt. Morrison entertained volunteers and guests to tea in the school — during which the members of the Bewicke family were present and Mrs Calverley Bewicke delighted all by reciting in her accomplished style a pastoral poem."

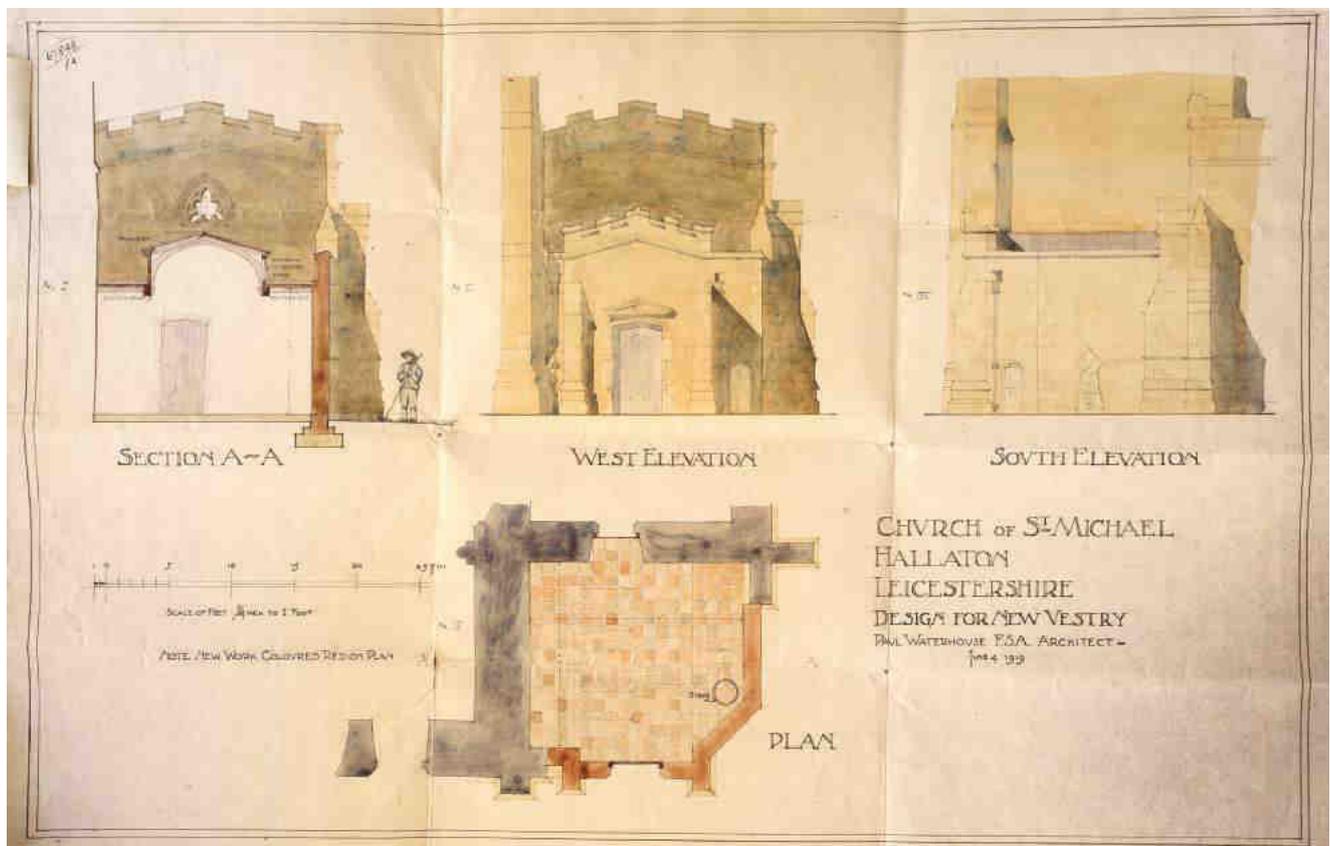
The memorial was unveiled by Cadet B. E. S. Bewicke. The wonderful photograph above, taken of the dedication, if carefully examined shows the Bishop in the dark robe with white sleeves, second clergyman

on the left. To the left of them, family. Possibly from right to left, Mrs Effie Elizabeth in black and on her right, in the grey coat and hat with her head bowed and hand to her eyes, Honoria Marcella Bewicke, Calverley George's young sister. Calverley's mother was there and no doubt in the family group, but alas his father, Hubert Bertram Nathaniel, could not be present, because although aged 64 and retired from a long career in the army, he had volunteered at the start of the war and was doing an administrative job in the Cheshire Regiment. The mourning mothers and wives with heads bowed and holding wreaths are to the right of the memorial. The troops formed in a semi circle and almost all in the crowd dressed most sombrely.

The Unknown War Memorial – the Choir Vestry

On Tuesday 22nd April 1919 the annual Vestry meeting was held. According to the surviving minutes:

"The new vestry was discussed at some length and it was resolved that the Rector set out plans and cost. It was proposed, by Dr Stott, that the money



Paul Waterhouse's plans for the new vestry. ROLLR (DE 1556/63).



*Detail from Waterhouse's plan.
ROLLR (DE 1556/63).*

be borrowed in order that the building may be raised at once."

The minutes also note that this proposal was carried.

The man that the rector turned to to produce the plans was none other than Paul Waterhouse again. In June 1919 he produced plans for a new choir vestry at the church. Until that time a small vestry was to be found in the north-west corner by the steps, but it was considered inadequate for the numbers in the choir and their robes, as well as for the clergy.

He evidently had a bit of fun doing this most elegant drawing by inserting this amusing little figure holding a rake, and with the traditional string tied just below the knees. It also gives a sense of scale.

There are three questions to consider. One, at what point was it decided to make the vestry a second war memorial, and why, and thirdly, how was it paid for?

It has proved impossible to answer the first one, but as to why, there could be several reasons. With funding required it may have been thought easier to raise money locally if the new building had a memorial aspect to those fallen in the very recent war. Or there could have been some dissatisfaction

that the war memorial put up already was not in a religious setting, or indeed that it was considered, at that time, as more of a private monument, and that Hallatonians wished for something they could claim as their own.

As to how it was paid for, again this is difficult to answer. It seems most likely that a loan was taken out as stated in the vestry minutes. It was obviously a very slow task to raise all the funds, and possibly there was not the same enthusiasm for a utilitarian addition to an ecclesiastical building. Quite how the Parochial Church Council (PCC) would have maintained loan repayments is far from clear. Their financial records hardly show a parish flush with money and their accounts show only small sums collected for the new vestry.

The PCC accounts show the small sum of £2-15-0d collected in the year 1921, with only 19s-6d in 1922, which compared badly with the generous collection in that year of £14-18-7d for building work at the Leicester Royal Infirmary, and significant sums each year for the Earl Haig Poppy Fund, Iraq Refugees and so on.

One possibility is that Mrs Bewicke paid for most of it. Whilst this may have happened we have no direct evidence to support it. Considering her reluctance to part with land for the new allotments, and continued disputes with both Hallaton Parish Council and Hallaton Rural District Council over land for the allotments and for new houses, it might seem unlikely. Of course she may have felt differently about helping the church, in comparison to giving over land to help villagers grow more potatoes at the end of the war, or for providing what was termed 'houses for the working classes' immediately after the war. It should be noted however, that she makes no reference to having paid for the vestry, or indeed to it at all, in her short autobiographical memoir.

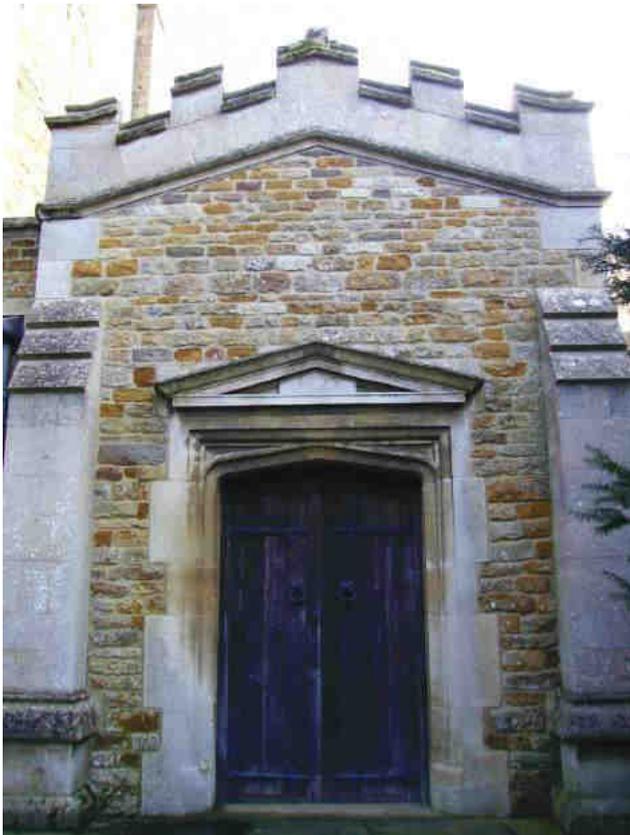
Eventually the building was complete, and the Dedication was performed by the Lord Bishop of Peterborough on 29th July 1924, when a rather better collection was raised of £3-7-3d.

However, there was still outstanding money to find towards its cost. So on Bank Holiday Monday, 4th August, a Garden Party was held in lovely weather in the Rectory grounds. No end of fun was had. There were sports and amusements of every sort, as well as many stalls selling produce and home-made crafts. 'Dainty' teas were served, the Women's Institute Folk Dancing Team danced gracefully on the lawn, with the Hallaton Brass Band playing in the background. And even a tennis tournament was held, with the prizes going to Mrs Bream and Mr Sulley.

Right: This photograph of the Band in 1930 with only 13 members compares with 18 members in a similar photograph of 1910. Walter Tyler is second from right, back row.



Below: The new vestry.



There was a treasure hunt; bowling for a pig; a tent labelled “Crystal gazing and palmistry”, which apparently had a queue outside it all afternoon. What the Rector, Rev. Preece made of that is not stated! The event which caused the most merriment was the “prettiest ankle competition”, a delightful task judged by Dr Duke and Mr K. Marlow, with prizes going to Mrs Fred Neale, Miss Millie Marlow and Miss K. Hawke.

The Vestry had been completed in 1923, but all in all it had taken a long five years from plans to dedication. It was a fine addition which fitted in very well with the ancient church. It continues to benefit the village, but in a new way by being converted in the year 2000 to a kitchen, lavatory and storage cupboards, thanks to a most generous bequest from Miss Dorothy Butteriss, daughter of George William Butteriss.

King George V instigated what was then known as Armistice Day, the first one being 11th November 1919. Events spread across the nation. From 14th May 1918 it had been the custom in Cape Town to observe a two-minute silence and play the ‘Last Post’ daily. After a Reuter’s correspondent cabled a description of this event to London word soon reached Canada and Australia, and reports soon reached London of it occurring in many towns across the Commonwealth. At the end of the war it became a widely accepted practice and the trend for a day of remembrance was set. Hallaton was to play its own role in remembering over the years to come.

The following newspaper reports from just a few years give a flavour of how Hallaton marked Armistice Day.

In 1923

“The Hallaton band headed a procession of ex-servicemen and other residents on Sunday last to the war memorial cross where a short service was held. The bells rung a half muffled peel, and collections were taken at church and chapel for Earl Haig’s fund for disabled soldiers. A poppy day was held on Saturday for the same fund.”

In 1924:

“On Sunday members of the British legion paraded on the green and Mrs Tyler placed a wreath from the village upon the memorial cross. Men then attended the Congregational Chapel and in the evening they paraded again followed by a service in the church.”

In 1932, someone with the initials E. A. R. produced a beautiful illuminated tablet, now with 27 names rather than the original 20 on the memorial on the Green, proclaiming the fact that *“This tablet and the choir vestry adjoining were erected as a memorial of the Hallaton men who fell during the Great War 1914 – 1918”*. It is a lovely piece of work with the illuminated initial letter T enclosing a variation on the theme in the tympanum in the north porch, of St Michael slaying the dragon with a spear and holding a shield in his left hand, with supplicants gathered on the right.

The *Market Harborough Advertiser* of 18th November recorded that year’s Remembrance Sunday.

“Remembrance Sunday was celebrated on November 13th by the Welland Valley and District Branch of the British legion at Hallaton by a church parade and service at the parish church

of St. Michael and All Angels. The parade was under the command of Major F A H Part, and fell in at the North End of the village, upwards of 50 strong. Headed by the Hallaton brass band, the bugler and the branch standard, it marched through the village to the church. The church was crowded and the standard bearer and supporters (Messrs A W Warner, G Brown and F Timson), together with the wreath carrier (Mr Bodger Hon. Secretary) along with officers of the branch, formed in procession behind the clergy and choir. During the service the ‘Roll of Honour’ was unveiled by Admiral of The Fleet, Earl Beatty supported by general Sir E Locke Elliott. Earl Beatty gave an impressive address before unveiling and also read the lesson. The dedication ceremony was performed by the Rector, the Rev Fairlee-Clarke, assisted by the Rev C G Cavalier, rector of Dingley. Miss M Eaton presided at the organ. The brass band, conducted by Mr W Watson led the singing of the hymns. The buglers were from the Market Harborough boy scouts. The ‘Roll of Honour’ has been placed on the new vestry in the church which was given as a war memorial from the people of Hallaton. After the service the parade marched to the memorial cross, where Admiral Beatty placed his own wreath and one from the British legion.”



Hallaton's Roll of Honour tablet.



Detail from the tablet.

And so Hallaton remembered and continued to do so for the following decades, and continues to do so today. Our War Memorial currently bears 31 names from the Great War and three from World War II. Having been dedicated in April 1918 with only 20 names inscribed.

After World War II the names of the two Payne brothers and Eric White were added.

With the passing of the years and the death of those who recalled those grim days and the men

remembered, the service of Remembrance became less intimate — a list of names was read out but who were they? In early 2004, before easy access to numerous websites, the author of this short account decided to do some research and at least find out in which units they had served and when they died. In so doing four additional names were found and added in 2006. This gave a total of 31 names.

Remembrance Sunday 2005 saw the presentation of the Honour Books with additional family information about each man; his Commonwealth War Graves certificate; photograph of his gravestone — many of which had been visited personally. The second volume contained details about all the cemeteries and memorials and a brief history of our own War Memorial.

As we have reached the centenary of the Great War, and as the survivors of World War II decrease in number, there become fewer of us who can remember those who served in the two world wars. Though modern conflicts have produced a new crop of memories and losses for many, Remembrance Sunday no longer retains such a widespread feeling of intimacy it once did, though the sense of respect for those who paid the ultimate price remains as strong as ever.

On Remembrance Sunday 9th November 2014 this photograph (below) was taken from the same angle as the one taken at the dedication in 1918. The scene is much the same. As usual, while their names were read out, a cross was placed for each of the 41



Remembrance Sunday 2014.

Hallaton men killed in the Great War and the three in World War II. In that centenary commemoration year, while the poem 'On the Idle Hill' from *The Shropshire Lad*, by A. E. Housman, was read out, one cross was placed for every 1000 deaths in 1914 of Great Britain and the Empire – 37 crosses for the 36,941 men and women killed in specially made hardwood boxes, which fit around the seat.

In addition, since the Remembrance Day service of 2014, while appropriate poems are read, one



War memorial with the boxes of crosses representing the war dead. 12th November 2017.

cross for every 1,000 men and women of Great Britain and the then Empire, killed in that year one hundred years ago, has been placed in specially made sand-filled boxes, which fit round the circular base.

The effect has been most moving. In 2014 – 35 crosses; 2015 – 154; 2016 – 225; 2017– 301; and this year, 2018 – 265, giving the appalling total of 980 crosses, equivalent to nearly 1,000,000 men and women killed in that terrible conflict.

To commemorate the centenary of the dedication the memorial has been professionally cleaned, and a re-dedication service held on Sunday April 8th. As a result of our researches for this book, another ten men who had close connections with Hallaton, and who died in the Great War, and one from World War II, will have their names added on a separate stone tablet.

Though the church still plays a significant role in Remembrance Sunday it is the memorial cross that provides the true focus for the village to pay its own tribute. Effie Bewicke would surely be both proud and delighted that her idea of a commemoration of her nephew and the men of Hallaton who gave their lives still holds such a strong and resonant place in the hearts of the people of Hallaton.

To conclude we can surely do no better than to recall the following words from the *Market Harborough Advertiser* of 12th November 1926.

“The sacrifices made by the men who fell appear no less as time goes on, and alas! The sense of personal loss gets no smaller either. The older children too, although not realising to the full all that Armistice Day meant, saw enough and heard enough to know that it was one of the most important days of history, and, with fuller knowledge they, too, will realise what the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month means. The younger children... will learn of the day as history and even in the perspective that history furnishes, November 11th will take its place with the world’s greatest days and future generations will regard it as such.”